

Discovering the Land of Enchantment

Feature and Photos by Eva Redding



I have long been in love with the Southwest and its wide-open spaces, colorful plateaus & towering buttes. New Mexico is one of the states that comes calling every so often for a road trip. Recently, we decided to discover and explore the northern part of the state. We spent one day in Santa Fe admiring countless works of art on Canyon Road, followed by a “Christmas style” (containing red and green chili sauce) lunch at the highly recommended Tomacita’s Restaurant (\$\$) before we set out for Taos.

Taos, located at an elevation of nearly 7,000 feet, has a mountain atmosphere with a small-town feel, plenty of shopping opportunities, and restaurants. We elected to stay at the beautiful El Monte Sagrado Resort & Spa (starting at \$200.00 per night). The property is surrounded by pristine grounds, koi ponds, and fruit bearing trees. During early autumn, you will find ripening apples and pears throughout the property. The resort is uniquely designed to pamper its guests with extras such as kiva fireplaces, complimentary bottled water, a spacious library/game room, and an on-site restaurant/bar featuring delicious southwestern cuisine. The real surprise and enjoyment can be found in their indoor saltwater pool and hydrotherapy spa, all surrounded by lush foliage.

The resort is a great launching place to visit many local attractions. Check out the nearby Taos Pueblo—a UNESCO world heritage site (adults \$16.00, seniors/students \$14.00, children 10 and under free) where you can immerse yourself in the ancient history of the Native American community still residing in the Pueblo, which has been inhabited for more than a thousand years. Take a scenic drive on the Enchanted Circle and discover ski resorts, mountain retreats, pristine rivers, lakes, and breathtaking views all while traveling through the Alpine-like setting. Just a short drive from Taos, marvel at the impressive heights from the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge. If you feel brave enough, walk over the bridge and observe this incredible wonder of nature from 650 feet above. Be on the lookout for big-horn sheep resting on the cliffs while admiring the landscape.

If you are in the mood to rejuvenate your senses and experience deep relaxation, visit Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs located about forty miles from Taos. As one of the first mineral spas in the United States, you can purchase a day pass to relax in their nine mineral pools. If you wish to stay longer, enjoy the overnight accommodations ranging from private cliff-side suites to historic hotel rooms and vintage trailer all well equipped to make



this a one of kind experience (starting at \$239.00 per night). Feel soothed while soaking in the iron, lithia, soda, arsenic, or mud spas offering different healing properties. Keep in mind, this is a quiet place where rest & relaxation are always on the menu. If you are a lodging guest, you can enjoy the spas from 7:30 am until 10:00 pm. The

pools are shut down when lightning is present within ten miles of the resort. Due to the property's remoteness, the only dining option for breakfast, lunch, and dinner is the welcoming Artesian restaurant located right on the property. Plentiful hiking trails and lots of history surrounding the site complete this unique experience.

Road trips in New Mexico never disappoint. Although driving distances can feel lengthy in the remote and uninhabited areas and as I often joke, an hour on the road in New Mexico can feel like two hours in California, the Land of Enchantment and its mystique has forever captured my heart and will continue to call me back for more.

