

HEAVENLY TERRAIN

ANGEL FIRE LURES BIKERS WITH
BEGINNER-FRIENDLY FUN

EARTH MOVERS

ECOLOGISTS WORK TO
RESTORE THE LORDSBURG PLAYA

SWEET LEGACY

HEIDI'S RASPBERRY FARM
BRANCHES INTO ICE CREAM

New Mexico

AUGUST 2024

GUIDED

Adventures

SPECIAL

Take a Sneak Peek
at Zozobra's
Centennial Bash!

Experience New Mexico like never before
with expert tours that bring our art, history,
culture, food—plus a few ghosts—to life.



HAND MADE

BLIND SCULPTOR
MICHAEL NARANJO
CELEBRATES ONE
FINAL SHOW

WORLD VIEW

ARROYO VINO
BRINGS LOCAL
INGREDIENTS AND
GLOBAL WINE TO
THE TABLE





Grand Tour

Angelisa Murray has some advice for travelers, whatever their destination: “Take a tour,” says the CEO of Heritage Inspirations tour company. “Beginning with a tour is positively the best way to start your trip.”

As a longtime hospitality professional and guide, Murray should know. She has led adventure trips in New Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Arizona, Utah, and the San Juan Islands. But for Murray, it’s more than a job, it’s also how she lives her life. “The first thing I do when I travel is seek out a local guide,” she says, recalling how her seventy-something guide in Saint Lucia added humor and insight to the experience. “The whole thing is so much richer.”

That’s especially true in a place like New Mexico, with its tightly woven tapestry of history, culture, art, food, people, and natural wonders. “Tours allow you to go off the beaten path, on a road less traveled,” Murray adds. “In New Mexico, we *are* that.” So Heritage offers guided experiences that include an e-bike tour of Santa Fe, a walking tour of Old Town Albuquerque, an horno baking tour at Taos Pueblo, and a two-day immersion in Acoma Pueblo and Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

For Murray, the value in curating these trips comes from breaking down barriers and giving voice to the storytellers who know a place, its history, and its traditions best.

That’s also why this month’s “Tour de Nuevo México” feature (p. 32) takes you along to explore Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area’s otherworldly landscapes, Ghost Ranch’s artistic legacy, Los Alamos’s atomic history, Acoma’s amazing Sky City, Santa Fe’s culinary scene, and Albuquerque’s haunted spots.

In fact, we at *New Mexico Magazine* feel like your own trusted guides. Our staff works hard to bring you the heartbeat of the Land of Enchantment in every issue. So I’m proud to announce that the International Regional Media Association recently recognized those efforts at its 44th annual awards by bestowing 20 honors on this publication, including the coveted title of Magazine of the Year.

We know what a privilege it is to tell the stories of this place and its people. But you need to be here to truly understand. “Experiences tell those stories,” Murray says. “They create those aha moments. The power of travel is profound.”

Steve Gleydura
Editor in Chief

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WHAT TO READ THIS MONTH

Looking to get in touch with northern New Mexico culture? Dive into the second book in Alisa Lynn Valdés’s bestselling thriller series starring state game warden Jodi Luna.

In *Blood Mountain* (Thomas & Mercer), the fictional Rio Truchas County comes alive with familiar characters and scenery: small farmers, land-hungry billionaires, predatory oil-and-gas frackers, bears, elk, and breathtakingly beautiful landscapes. Amid this backdrop, Luna investigates a missing person tied to the county’s wealthiest ranch owners, a mostly dysfunctional band of outsiders whose internal drama rivals that of *Yellowstone*’s Dutton family. When a blizzard hits their fishing lodge, snowing Luna in along with the rest, she must ferret out a killer.

—Molly Boyle



Tour

de

Nuevo

México

Looking to gain a deeper connection with the Land of Enchantment? Then let an expert guide help you better understand the art, culture, history, food, and natural wonders that make this place so special.

BY MOLLY BOYLE, LYNN CLINE, JULIAN DOSSETT, MONIKA DZIAMKA,
KATY KELLEHER, AND JENNIFER C. OLSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELLA MARKS



CULTURE

Sky's the Limit

Atop a millennia-old, windswept mesa, Acoma Pueblo guides continue to tell the long story of a stunning place—on their own terms. **BY MOLLY BOYLE**

O

One day in the 1960s, four men with identical suits and haircuts walked into a house

at Acoma Pueblo's Sky City. Tour ambassador Brandon "Turtle" Valdo, whose family began guiding visitors around their ancestral village in the forties, says his great-grandmother complimented the foursome on their style as they signed the guest ledger. "You all look very handsome," she said. One of

the men replied, "You don't know who we are?"

"Then they all kind of bowed down," Valdo says, "and said, 'We're the Beatles!' My great-grandmother just said, 'Oh, okay, you're the Beatles. Do you want to go on tour or not?'"

Everyone wants to tour Sky City, I learn from Valdo. He

mentions similarly storied visits from John Wayne, who made a few movies there. On the sunny spring Friday Valdo shows me around the beautiful 367-foot mesa that's home to one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in North America, we encounter another tour in progress. Asked how

► The Sky City mesa offers stunning views.

Facing page: Guide Brandon “Turtle” Valdo points out the architectural hallmarks of Old Acoma Village.

he’s liking his visit, one group member eagerly replies, “Best day of my life!”

Ninety-minute tours with Pueblo guides—who are trained by Valdo using knowledge gained from years of oral histories and research, along with his own tour guide DNA—immerse visitors in Acoma history, art, architecture, and lifeways, which date back to around AD 1150. It all starts an hour west of Albuquerque at the imposing Sky City Cultural Center & Haak’u Museum, which was built in 2006 to honor several aspects of Acoma architecture, including Chacoan masonry. Visitors ground themselves in museum displays that include the distinctive traditional Acoma pottery, featuring intricate geometric black and earth-toned designs that indicate flowers, corn, rain, and mountains, among other prizes of nature. Other museum items include sterling silver housewares, for which Acoma people began trading pottery after the advent of the railroad in the 1880s.

Vendors sell art, jewelry, and pottery in the courtyard

HERITAGE INSPIRATIONS

The tour company employs Brandon Valdo for its Acoma tour and offers an Acoma Pueblo Day Tour + Chaco Canyon Day Tour bundle, taking place over two days. Book it March 1–November 30, though it is not offered in July or August. \$565; heritageinspirations.com

outside the cultural center. There, I meet Tyanna/Donnie Willie, a seventh-generation Acoma potter and landscape photographer who etches prints with traditional designs. While studying photography in Oregon for high school and college, the gender-fluid artist explains, “I didn’t have a lot of access to pottery, but I didn’t want to forget any of the designs and the stories my mom was passing down to me.”

A quick van ride up the sandstone bluff where Old Acoma Village is perched begins the formal tour, which circles the 300-plus adobe

and sandstone structures where about 50 tribe members, mostly elders, still live today. Many of them greet us along the route with exquisitely crafted pots and jewelry for sale. Inside the awe-inspiring San Estévan del Rey Mission Church, built between 1629 and 1641, Valdo tells the painful

story of his enslaved Acoma ancestors who constructed the massive house of worship under the fierce leadership of Fray Juan Ramírez. The infamously abusive Spanish priest insisted the workers haul timbers from Mount Taylor, 40 miles north, for the viga beams. Valdo segues

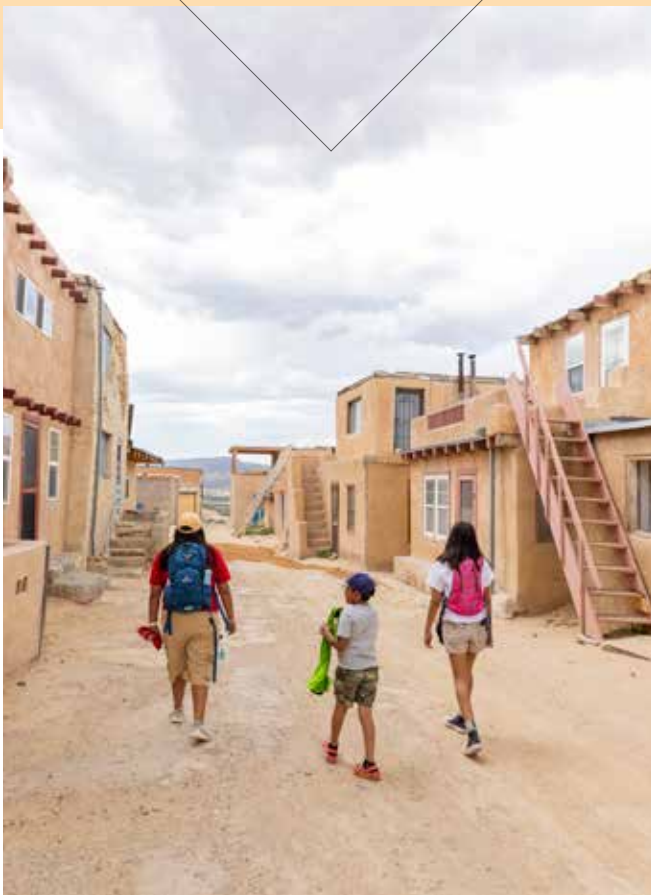
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DID YOU KNOW?

Acoma Pueblo’s Christmas dances, held from December 25–28, take place inside San Estévan del Rey Mission Church and are open to the public.



CULTURE



► **From top:** Guide Gail Toribio leads visitors through Old Acoma Village. Trained reenactors live the history of El Rancho de las Golondrinas.

into the Acoma version of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, during which another resident priest was killed but the church survived.

Most visitors take the shuttle back down the mesa, but more intrepid (and agile) folks can steeply descend via the 300-step staircase hand-carved into a sheer sandstone wall, which provides a window into pre-car pueblo life. Back at the cultural center's Yaaka Café (named after the word for corn in Keres), Valdo—who doubles as the restaurant's manager and talented chef—serves us delicious frybread tacos with red and green chile. While we eat, he reminisces about

life growing up on the pueblo, catching jackrabbits with his friends and roasting them over a fire. "I'm a storyteller," he admits.

He pauses to reflect on just what that means. "You can go to Chaco Canyon or Aztec Ruins or any other place where a non-Native person is giving the tour. They can tell you what they researched, what they think this was. But then you come here, and that's the beauty of it: We can tell you, *That's what this is for. This is how this is. That's why we did it.* We're a part of living history."

SKY CITY CULTURAL CENTER AND HAAK'U MUSEUM
Open Wednesday through Sunday during summer hours; tours leave every hour from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. \$25; acomaskycity.org

CULTURAL IMMERSION

LEARN FROM THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPED NEW MEXICO ON THESE GUIDED TOURS.

El Rancho de las Golondrinas. The 500-acre historic rancho on the Camino Real is a living history site dedicated to 18th- and 19th-century New Mexico heritage. Daily tours at 10:30 a.m. are guided by trained reenactors. Special tours center on women's and children's perspectives, including that of Josefina Montoya, an American Girl doll whose 1824 story is based on a historic resident of a rancho much like Golondrinas. "The guides' passion for history is super strong," says tour coordinator Suzan Schaaf. \$8; golondrinas.org

Taos Pueblo. Tour coordinator Luis Trujillo says all guides who give the 35- to 45-minute tours of beautiful Taos Pueblo are enrolled tribal members. In addition to visiting the church, cemetery, and plaza, he says, "We also talk about our battle for Blue Lake in 1970. That's a big highlight." \$25; taospueblo.org

Zuni Pueblo. Historical, culinary, arts, and archaeological tours by Zuni cultural interpreter Shaun Latone are run out of the Zuni Visitor Center. \$35-\$85; zunitourism.com. Zuni archaeologist Kenny Bowekaty's tour company, A:shiwi Adventures, offers trips to backcountry ancestral villages around Zuni Pueblo. "Most of the places I take people to are sites where I've done a lot of archaeological research in my career," says Bowekaty. \$20-\$85; 505-728-6764; bowekatykenny@gmail.com



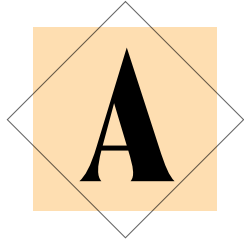
STEFAN WACHS

FOOD

Savoring Santa Fe

Explore layers of culinary and cultural history on the City Different's original restaurant walking tour.

BY LYNN CLINE



As our group settles into the theater-style classroom at the Santa Fe School of Cooking, chef Michelle “Mica” Chavez serves up a taste of what’s to come on our Restaurant Walking Tour. The Southwest gazpacho spiced with New Mexico’s famous green chile grounds our palates and feeds Chavez’s culinary story. “Santa Fe is special,” she says, “with layer upon layer of people who left their footprint. We’ll be walking in the steps of moccasins, bootheels, wagon wheels, and so many others who came through this way.”

The first stop on our journey, however, is a simple stroll across the street to Pranzo Italian Grill. Our group of 16 finds room along the long, L-shaped bar and digs into chef and owner Steven Lemon’s creamy carbonara with cured pork and Calabrian chili.

“This is the original sushi bar of Shohko Café,” Lemon explains, “the first sushi restaurant in New Mexico.” The Fukuda family ran their beloved Japanese restaurant from 1977 until they retired in 2019. When Pranzo relocated after three decades in the Santa Fe Railyard, the

Johnson Street space was a perfect fit. The old adobe building needed renovating before Pranzo reopened in 2021, but out of respect, Lemon kept Shohko’s original sushi bar. “We honor the food and traditions of Italian cooking,” he tells us. But it’s also clear that Santa Fe’s culinary traditions have special meaning to him as well.

This rich layering of history and cuisine is a key ingredient in the cooking

school’s three-hour walking tours, which visit four different restaurants for private tastings and visits with the chefs.

Chavez is easy to follow in her black chef’s jacket and colorful bandanna. On our way to the second stop, she points out brick-lined Burro Alley, a European-style passageway that housed a rowdy 19th-century gambling saloon and brothel owned by the notorious Doña Tules. She

played a mean game of monte and served her customers regional fare like picadillo and carne adovada.

We reach Horno Restaurant, an elevated gastropub owned by James Beard Award-nominated chef David Sellers and his wife, Heather. As we savor house-made fettuccine with pork belly, Heather points out a miniature horno in the entryway. The Spanish introduced the outdoor, hive-shaped mud oven to Pueblo peoples in the 16th century. Today, the ovens continue to

► Mica Chavez, left, teaches at Santa Fe School of Cooking. Facing page, from left: Art fills Sazón’s dining room. Sip at Mesilla Valley Wine & Brew Tours.





bring people together to bake bread and other food. It's an apt name for this restaurant, where locals and travelers break bread—Horno focaccia, in this case—and enjoy Asian dumplings, bouillabaisse, and other globally inspired cuisine.

"We decided that Horno would be about super excellent food with quality ingredients and no fine dining," Heather says. "We wanted to make Horno affordable."

Following in the footsteps of traders and merchants, we cross the Santa Fe Plaza and pause at La Fonda on the Plaza, with its multilevel Spanish Colonial Revival-style architecture. Undercover U.S. agents were posted at the hotel, Chavez says, looking for spies seeking intel about the top-secret Manhattan Project from its scientists

who socialized here.

"La Fonda was a renowned Harvey House then," Chavez adds. I bet the scientists, agents, and spies relished the hotel's beef empanadas and chile-roasted chicken, examples of the fine dining and fresh ingredients that were hallmarks of Fred Harvey's hospitality empire.

As we trod uphill on Old Santa Fe Trail, we're walking in the wagon wheel tracks that Chavez mentioned, left by travelers reaching the old trade route's end at the Plaza. Inside the bistro-style 315 Restaurant & Wine Bar, a 30-year destination for classic and contemporary French cuisine, we learn that Italian immigrants built this small centuries-old adobe home. The influence of European settlers on Santa Fe becomes tangible as we enjoy chef

and owner Louis Moskow's French country pâté with grilled bread and mustard.

Our tour ends a few blocks away at the venerated Sazón, where the unique blend of traditional and contemporary Mexican cuisine earned co-owner and chef Fernando Olea the James Beard Award for Best Chef of the Southwest in 2022. The Mexico City native is a master of mole and mezcal. Both are on today's menu. "Mole is a dish, not a condiment," Olea says, as we sample five versions. His New Mexico mole, an intoxicating blend of apricots, red chile, and other regional ingredients, pairs nicely with a smoky mezcal, which can be an aperitif, a meal companion, and a digestive, he says. (In other words, anytime.)

We leave the tour sated, stuffed with fabulous food and the many stories we've heard along the way. Our guide is equally content. "Being able to interact with people from all over the world and to show them a street-level view of my favorite city is what I most love about leading these tours," she says.

For me, an afternoon spent walking through ancient streets and tasting foods inspired by global and regional cuisines has fed me a new appreciation for Santa Fe, the many cultures that have called it home, and the chefs of today who pay homage to them all in new and inspiring ways.

SANTA FE SCHOOL OF COOKING

Launched 20 years ago, the Restaurant Walking Tours are held on Fridays from 2 to 5 p.m., February through December. \$140; santafeschoolofcooking.com



GOOD EATS

DIG INTO THESE FLAVORFUL EXCURSIONS.

Routes Bicycle Tours & Rentals. Hop on two wheels to taste birria, al pastor, and other epic tacos in Albuquerque, handpicked by the experts on Routes ABQ Bike & Taco Tour. The leisurely, 10-mile guided tours, which run twice on Saturday, also highlight some of the area's eclectic art scene. \$125; routesrentals.com

Mesilla Valley Wine & Brew Tours. Find your hoppy place by visiting three popular Las Cruces breweries and distilleries while sampling flights of award-winning beers on the 3½-hour weeknight Hoppy Hour Brewery Tour. \$135; mvwineandbrewtours.com

Heritage Inspirations. Learn how to build an horno and use it to bake bread in the half-day Horno Baking at Taos Pueblo tour, which includes a riverside picnic lunch of traditional Pueblo food. "We put you in conversation with the people from the pueblo," says Angelisa Murray, CEO of Heritage Inspirations. \$299; heritageinspirations.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Apricots, like the ones in Fernando Olea's New Mexico mole, were among the prized fruits grown in the late 1860s by Archbishop Jean-Baptiste Lamy in his lush six-acre garden behind the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi. He also had peach, pear, apple, and cherry trees, as well as a half-acre spring-fed pond. The fruits of his garden and the fish he stocked in his pond helped to feed those in need.