

OUTDOOR RECREATION

With 310 days of sunshine per year, Albuquerque is the ideal location for outdoor activities with four distinct seasons and fantastic year-round weather. With dependably sunny days, crisp mountain air and stunning vistas everywhere, Albuquerque provides attractive high-desert conditions for athletes of all interests. Mild winters and pleasant warm summers make Albuquerque a year-round destination.

The environmental heritage of Albuquerque's natural landscape is marked by striking variations in terrain at elevations ranging from one mile in the cottonwood forest of the Rio Grande Valley to 10,678 feet at Sandia Peak. Elite athletes come from around the world to train here alongside locals and visitors who take advantage of the miles of hiking and biking trails that crisscross the metro area from the valley to the foothills of the Sandia Mountains on the eastern edge of the city.

The two-mile high Sandia Mountains provide excellent terrain for hiking and mountain biking in the summer, and skiing or snowboarding in the winter. The city's location in a high desert rift valley also lends itself to hot air ballooning, cycling, golfing, rock climbing, bouldering, geocaching, bird watching, fishing, rafting, llama trekking, horseback riding and much more throughout the year.

Albuquerque is an active city for locals and visitors who are all invited to participate in annual fitness events ranging from a winter sport quadrathlon in February (Mount Taylor Quadrathlon) to a family friendly bike/run event each October (Day of the Tread). Century cycling events and marathons take place in Albuquerque each year, and more recreational competitors can find a 5K almost every weekend. Visit www.itsatrip.org/outdoors for a complete list of fitness events in Albuquerque.

Bosque Trail

Albuquerque also has a vast network of paved bike trails throughout the city, including the gem of the network, the Bosque Trail. Traversing the city for approximately 16 miles along the Rio Grande, the Bosque Trail winds through mature cottonwoods, wetlands and ample open space, where roadrunners, lizards and coyotes can often be spotted. Bike lanes on many of the city's streets and miles of open road on the outskirts are more reasons that Albuquerque has earned a solid reputation as an excellent city for cyclists. View a trail map: www.cabq.gov/openspace/paseodelbosquetrail.html

Outdoor Recreation Accolades

- 3rd Fittest City in the Unites States, *Men's Fitness*
- 3rd Best City for Biking, *Bicycling Magazine*
- Paseo Del Bosque Trail Ranked No. 1 for Top 10 City Bike Rides by *Sunset Magazine*
- Top 50 Places to Live & Play, *National Geographic Adventure*
- One of America's 50 Greenest Cities, *Popular Science*
- The Albuquerque BioPark was named No. 8 of *Sunset Magazine's* Top 10 Urban Parks
- No. 1 for Open Space (percentage of parks and preserves) by a study of the Trust for Public Land



©NewMexicoStock.com



©Jay Blackwood Sandia Peak Tram & Ski

Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway & Ski Area

The world's longest double reversible bi-cable aerial tramway, a glorious mountain setting and a varied recreational playground come together to make a marvelous getaway anytime of the year. The Sandia Peak Tram travels 2.7 miles from the base of the foothills northeast of Albuquerque to the 10,378-foot Sandia Peak. From the lower terminal, the tramcar travels suspended over rugged boulders and rocky mountain landscapes, and the city drops beneath you as you glide over the lush ponderosa forest. The view is one of deep rugged canyons, extinct volcanoes, distant mountains, unusual formations carved by erosion and a sensational desert landscape encompassing more than 11,000 square miles on a clear day. Tram riders may choose to take a hike or have dinner and then ride down, ski down the east side during winter/spring seasons, or ride the primary chairlift at the Sandia Peak Ski Area in the summer and fall.



©Jay Blackwood Sandia Peak Tram & Ski

During the winter, the Sandia Peak Ski Area is a popular destination among visitors and residents alike. In addition to the tram, you can also access the ski area via the Turquoise Trail to the Crest National Scenic Byway. Ski and snowboard rentals are available at the ski lodge, but skiers can also take equipment with them on the tram. In the summer, enjoy the cool temperatures and fresh mountain air while riding a chairlift or mountain biking on a series of trails across Cibola National Forest. Bike rentals are available at the base or the top of the chairlift. (505) 856-7325 www.sandiapeak.com

Rio Grande Nature Center

Located on 270 acres of riverside forest and meadows, the bosque, as this wooded area is called in the Southwest, is home to 100-year-old stands of cottonwoods and a cattail marsh alongside a pond. Threaded throughout are more than two miles of trails offering a sense of isolation and tranquility. More than 260 species of birds make this their temporary or permanent home. The visitors center, built partially underground, houses a library and exhibits on the ecology, geology and history of the Rio Grande Valley. (505) 344-7240 www.rgnc.org

Wildlife West Nature Park

The 122-acre wildlife refuge and enhanced zoo features native New Mexico plants and animals. All the animals and birds in the enhanced zoo are non-releasable. The park is an educational project of the New Mexico Wildlife Association and is staffed by volunteers and members of the New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps. The park offers educational programs, weekend cultural celebrations and space for private parties. (505) 281-7655 www.wildlifewest.org

Petroglyph National Monument

Petroglyph National Monument contains more than 20,000 images pecked in stone. All of the images are inseparable from the landscape and from the spirits of the people who created them. The images carved onto these black rocks provide an opportunity for people today to share the cultures of those who long ago inhabited and traveled through the Rio Grande Valley. The monument provides a variety of hiking opportunities from basic nearly flat hikes to moderate hikes of several miles to discover hundreds of petroglyphs. (505) 897-8814 www.nps.gov/petr

Golf in Albuquerque

The Albuquerque high desert climate is perfect for golf with desert links, parkland and mountain courses. The region offers arguably the most diverse golf experience available in one area. The Albuquerque area offers 14 public and private courses in varying levels of difficulty, several of which are on Native American land. For additional information, check out page 17 or visit www.itsatrip.org/golf.

For additional information on outdoor recreation opportunities, visit www.itsatrip.org/outdoors.