Albuquerque: A Brief History

The Rio Grande Valley has been home for some peoples for over 4000 years. The Pueblo people who lived in the area when Europeans arrived had a sophisticated culture and advanced skills in stone masonry, ceramics, and a wide range of arts and crafts. The first Spanish explorers arrived in Albuquerque in approximately 1540 under General Francisco de Coronado, and later expeditions brought settlers deep into New Mexico’s river valleys. In 1706, a group of colonists were granted permission by King Philip of Spain to establish a new villa (city) on the banks of the Rio Grande (which means Big or Great River). The colonists chose a spot at the foot of the mountains where the river made a wide curve, providing good irrigation for crops and a source of wood from the bosque (cottonwoods, willows, and olive trees). The site also provided protection from, and trade with, the Native Americans in the area. The colony’s Governor, Francisco Cuervo y Valdez, penned a letter to the Duke of Alburquerque back in Spain to report

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1 Red or green? In 1999, the NM state legislature voted to make this the state’s “Official Question.” No ordinary staple, chiles are as much cultural icon as food, representing the blend of Native American and Spanish histories in these parts. From breakfast to dinner, no dish is quite complete without the smoky heat of red chile or the fresh tang of its green brother. The two are equally hot, so with no right or wrong answer to the question, those in the know say “Christmas,” and get both. [Adapted from “Portrait Albuquerque” in the 2008 issue of Delta-Sky].

their newly founded villa, named La Villa de Alburquerque in honor of the Duke. Over the centuries the first “r” was dropped, leaving Albuquerque spelled as it is today.\(^3\)

The early Spanish settlers were religious people, and the first building erected was a small adobe chapel where today’s San Felipe de Neri Church still stands in Albuquerque’s Old Town. Its plaza was surrounded by adobe homes, clustered close together for mutual protection. The chapel collapsed after the particularly rainy summer of 1792 but was rebuilt a year later. While the San Felipe de Neri Church has been enlarged and remodeled several times since the 1700s, its original thick adobe walls remain intact. The church is the anchor of Old Town, the historic and sentimental heart of Albuquerque, and the Plaza is host to many cultural events and local celebrations.

Today, Albuquerque is a major Southwestern city with a diverse population and some of the nation's leading high-tech research facilities including Sandia National Laboratories, Intel, and the University of New Mexico. At the same time, its cultural traditions continue to be an essential part of everyday life in the city. With one foot in the past, one foot in the present, and both eyes on the future, Albuquerque is a fascinating place to visit.

**During Your Visit to the Beautiful 505\(^4\)**

We realize that you might not be spending every waking moment at the Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town, so below we have suggestions for several activities that you might like. This is by no means an exhaustive list, just a collection of our favorites, so please don’t hesitate to ask the hotel staff or Albuquerqueans attending the conference for additional suggestions or to query them about a destination you have heard of that is not listed here. All destinations described below use the Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town (800 Rio Grande Boulevard NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104) as the starting destination for distance estimates. If you have questions about this guide the creators of it will be happy to answer them.

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**Old Town Eateries**

The center of Old Town is 0.4 miles from Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town. Below is a list of our favorite places to eat in Old Town. Don’t forget the excellent restaurants located at the Hotel Albuquerque too.

- Blackbird Coffee House
- Church St. Café
- Hacienda del Rio Restaurant & Cantina
- High Noon Saloon

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\(^3\) Some say that Albuquerque is a weak translation of the Arabic, ‘color of a plum’. Seeing Albuquerque from the Westside just before dusk, the granite in the Sandia Mountains glows the color of a plum or watermelon pulp.

\(^4\) 505 is the telephone dialing area code for this part of New Mexico.
-La Placita Dining Rooms
-Little Anita’s
-Old Town Pizza Parlor
-Seasons
-Steve’s Ice Cream & Java

Route 66 Eateries
The following list of dining/drinking establishments can be found along Albuquerque’s historic Route 66 (or a few blocks from) and are easily accessible via foot and/or bus.

D.H. Lescombes (formerly St. Clair) Winery and Bistro
901 Rio Grande Blvd NW (0.2 miles) | Sun-Thurs 11a-9p, Fri-Sat 11a-10p

Range Café
1050 Rio Grande Blvd NW (0.5 miles) | Daily 7a-9p

Vinaigrette
1828 Central Ave SW (0.6 miles) | Daily 11a-9p | (505)842-5507

Golden Crown Panaderia
1103 Mountain Rd NW (0.7 miles) | Sun 10a-8p, closed Monday, Tues-Sat 7a-8p

The Original Garcia’s Kitchen
1736 Central Ave SW (0.7 miles) | Sun 7a-8p, Mon-Thurs 7a-9p, Fri-Sat 7a-10p

Java Joe’s
906 Park Ave SW (1.4 miles) | Daily 6:30a-3:30pm | (505)765-1514

Farina Pizzeria and Wine Bar
510 Central Ave. SE (2.3 miles) | Sun 5p-9p, Mon 11a-9p, Tues-Fri 11a-10p, Sat 12p-10p

The Grove
600 Central Ave SE (2.4 miles) | Sun 8a-3p, closed Monday, Tues-Sat 7a-3p

Frontier Restaurant | 2400 Central Ave SE (5.1 miles) | Daily 5a-1a
A must see, iconic University of New Mexico area historic restaurant. Everyone has been to the Frontier. Famous for sweet rolls and New Mexican food. Very crowded on Sunday mornings and very popular with UNM students. You typically find your neighbors eating here as well as local politicians, celebrities, and an occasional candidate for national office on an Albuquerque visit.

Yanni’s
3109 Central Ave NE (6 miles) | Daily 11a-10p (closing time varies)

Bars/Breweries
Ponderosa Brewing Co | 1761 Bellamah Ave NW (0.3 miles)
El Vado Taproom | 2500 Central SW (0.7 miles)
Anodyne | 409 Central Ave NW (1.7 miles)
Gecko’s Bar & Tapas | 3500 Central Ave SE (6.1 miles)

Outdoor Entertainment

Petroglyph National Monument (5.3 miles) | https://www.nps.gov/petr/index.htm
Tent Rocks (55 miles) | https://www.blm.gov/visit/kktr
Elena Gallegos (16 miles) | https://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/open-space/lands/elena-gallegos-open-space
Sandia Tramway (17 miles) | sandiapeak.com
Albuquerque BioPark (1 mile walking)

Indoor Entertainment

ABQ Trolley Co. Best of ABQ City Tour (from hotel) | Abqtrolley.com

Breaking Bad RV Tours (0.4 miles) | breakingbadrvtours.com

Century Rio 14 Cinema (2 miles)

Museum of Natural History (0.3 miles) | www.nmnaturalhistory.org/

Explora (across the street from the Museum of Natural History) | www.explora.us/en/

National Atomic Museum (10 miles) | www.nuclearmuseum.org/

Albuquerque Museum (near Explora) | https://albuquerquemuseum.org/

Odds and Ends

Tourist and local Information: Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau in Old Town, open 10:00 – 18:00
Emergency: dial 911 on your phone
Closest coffee: Starbucks 901 Rio Grande Blvd NW
Closest ATM: Bank of America ATM, across the street (west) from main hotel entrance
Closest Post-Office: In Old Town, next to Rocky Mountain Chocolate
Closest Pharmacy: Walgreen’s 2105 Central Ave NW (food, snacks, gifts too)
Closest Hospital: Lovelace Medical Center on Martin Luther King Drive
Closest Bank: Downtown Albuquerque
Car rental: Airport location
Cinema: Century Rio 14 Downtown
Jogging: Tiguex Park, Rio Grande Nature Park
Library: Main Library, Central East Downtown