

For those who want to continue their education and have fun at the same time, Santa Fe offers just the menu, from ongoing archeological digs to ancient Indian villages to more museums than you can visit in a week to a selection of restaurants that will please every palate and educate you at the same time about real southwestern food.

The ancient Plaza evokes the influence of the Spanish and offers tourists not just a lot of shopping but even more history. The historical place to visit on the Plaza is the Palace of Governors, once the seat of government for the Spaniards and now a registered national historic landmark. This museum falls under the aegis of the Museum of New Mexico and so buying a four-day pass for \$15 gets you into the Palace and four other museums. Otherwise, you pay \$7 a person per visit.

Perhaps even more important than the Palace Museum are the Native American vendors who sell jewelry, pottery and artwork from the



Palace's Portal. All of the vendors are registered through the Palace and may sell only handmade goods. The goods can be expensive (I've seen pottery for \$300), but they are authentic and unmatched in the many stores downtown. The Native vendors, by the way, don't take credit cards.

And while you're downtown, check out the Georgia O'Keeffe museum and the Institute of American Indian Arts Museum and St. Francis Cathedral. The museums are separate from the Museum of New Mexico and do have modest admission fees. Enroute to the cathedral just off the Old Santa Fe Trail, you'll pass the La Fonda Hotel and you should keep it in mind for lunch.

After lunch, walk over to Canyon Road. This will be an all-afternoon trek as you walk up one side of the road and down the other, visiting the many galleries. Of course, if you ate a big lunch, you will walk it off on this road, which includes several restaurants where you can stop for refreshments and a rest. (You can, by the way, drive to Canyon Road and park in a public lot near the top and then walk down toward town, but you still have to walk back up to get to your car.)



Santa Fe tends to be a pedestrian-friendly city, as long as the pedestrians are crossing in designated areas. The city claims it enforces its jaywalking law. And, unfortunately, New Mexico has a major DUI problem so be careful, especially at night.

There's so much to see and do in Santa Fe that you'll probably find yourself overstimulated very quickly. A visitor from Australia exclaimed

to me: “You live in a movie set.” She was referring to the scenery, not the cowboys. If you find yourself on sensory overload, you can get out of town, but that will merely whet your appetite for more. Several good day trips await the curious.

Because most of the museums are closed on Mondays, use Monday for a trip to Los Alamos and Bandelier National Monument,



which was once the site of a Native American pueblo. What you can see by walking on a level surface allows you to get some notion of what life was like, but if you want a closer view you’ll need to climb a little, so bring good walking/hiking shoes.

And don’t forget your camera. The scenery on the way to Los Alamos will take your breath away and you’ll find yourself taking advantage of the occasional roadside pull-off to take

photographs. At the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos (which is open on Mondays), you’ll learn about the development of atomic power and what the Los Alamos National Laboratory has done since.

Another day trip of interest is a visit to Madrid, which is south of Santa Fe on Route 14. Until the 1950s, Madrid



(pronounced MAD-rid) was a coal-mining town and it includes a mining museum. But it’s known today for its art shops and crafts stores. There are no sidewalks so natives and visitors alike walk in the street. Drive carefully.



In New Mexico, tourists have a choice of visiting 19 pueblos. The two most famous are Acoma, which is west of Albuquerque and thus a long day trip, or Taos, which is about 90 minutes north of Santa Fe. You must pay an admission fee to enter a pueblo and an additional fee for each camera you take in. Within the pueblo you will

encounter vendors selling jewelry, pottery and art—and you’ll get a chance to take some spectacular photographs. As with the Native American vendors at the Palace of Governors, the vendors at any pueblo are selling authentic goods. Surprisingly, not all vendors take credit cards but they will take a personal check.

On your return from Taos, if you've left enough time, you can take a slight detour and visit Ghost Ranch at Abiquiu, where O'Keeffe did much of her painting. As you travel about the area, you will understand why O'Keeffe and other artists settled in New Mexico. They drew their inspiration from the land and you too will be inspired.

Back in Santa Fe for another day, you can use more of your four-day museum pass by visiting Museum Hill. Right now, there are three museums within walking distance of each other but two more are being constructed. You can drive there or take the aptly named Santa Fe Trails, the equivalent of CATA.

A student who spends a week in Santa Fe should ask for extra credit in art, geology, anthropology, archeology, photography. An adult will just enjoy the experience. The area has both sights and sites too numerous to mention. On good days (which are most days), you can be treated to sunsets to die for and sunrises to live for. They're brief, beautiful and never repetitive. Bring sunglasses no matter the time of year and drink extra water. At 7000 feet, you'll need to protect your eyes and make sure you don't dehydrate.