

ALBUQUERQUE VISITOR'S GUIDE

Prepared for FJC National Workshop for Bankruptcy Judges (April 18-20, 2016)¹

A. A Very Short Introduction to Albuquerque

Albuquerque is New Mexico's metropolis, with an area population of about 900,000. The next biggest city, Las Cruces, has about 200,000, while Santa Fe tallies a paltry 150,000. True, Santa Fe is much older, has tons of history, and is much more of a tourist destination, but Albuquerque is a real city. Unlike Santa Fe, in Albuquerque it is hard to find New-Agers, affected would-be artists, Native American flute music, movie stars, howling coyotes, or rich Texans.

The Rio Grande runs the length of the state and bisects Albuquerque. The city sits in the Rio Grande Valley and spreads up both sides. The Hyatt hotel, which is downtown, is 5,000 ft. above sea level, two miles east of the river. To the east the city rises toward the Sandia Mountains, which run generally north and south along the city's eastern edge. Elevation at the base of the mountain is about 6,500 ft.; the peak is 10,500 ft. West of the river the "west mesa" slopes up from the valley bottom, culminating in the five volcanos that form the western skyline.

Albuquerque can be divided roughly into Downtown, Old Town, Uptown, the North and South Valleys, the Northeast and Southeast Heights (shown as the "Eastside" on the attached map), and the West Side. Surrounding towns include Rio Rancho, Bernalillo, Los Lunas, Corrales, and Placitas.

Route 66 ran through Albuquerque before I-40 was built. Central Avenue, two blocks south of the hotel, is old Route 66. Central is an interesting street, running through Old Town, Downtown, EDO (east of downtown), the University of New Mexico, Nob Hill, the fairgrounds, and on out to Tijeras Canyon east of the city. Refurbished double-wides, neon signs, cappuccinos, tattoo parlors, horse racing, Chinese herbs; you can find it all on Central. If you need some companionship or a mind-altering substance, east Central Avenue after dark is a good place to lurk. Or so I am told.

This guide focuses on Albuquerque's restaurants and microbreweries, but also highlights a few things to do other than washing down blue corn enchiladas with an IPA.

B. Neighborhoods and Restaurants

1. Downtown

The city started in Old Town, near the river, but the population and commerce shifted east to Downtown (then known as "New Town") with the coming of the railroad in 1880. Downtown,

¹ This is mostly the work of Hon. David Thuma, with valuable thoughts and comments from the New Mexico Bankruptcy Court Clerk of Court and other members of the Chambers and Clerk's office staff. The Clerk and court staff should get the credit for any good advice; their input was helpful. Thuma alone bears the blame for any offensive comments and wrong-headed recommendations. No aspersions should be cast at Denise Neary, the FJC, or the excellent seminar faculty.

the home of city government, the courts, lawyers, and government agencies, has not enjoyed the renaissance many other urban centers have. Not yet anyway, but we are still trying. In a way that is part of Albuquerque's charm. You might want to stroll down Central Avenue, the city's historical main drag. The *Kimo Theater*, 421 Central Ave. NW (505) 768-3522 (.3 miles from hotel), a 1927 movie theatre in the "Pueblo Deco" style, is worth a look. The *El Rey Theater*, 622 Central Ave SW (505) 510-2582 (.4 miles from hotel), has a colorful history. Built in 1941, it is the only example of Mediterranean theater architecture in New Mexico, and hosted acts such as Ella Fitzgerald, Lyle Lovett, and Bo Diddley. Sadly, the glory days of the El Rey are over.

Anatolia Turkish Mediterranean Grill – 313B Central Ave NW (505) 242-6718 (.2 miles from hotel). I have only been here for lunch, but the food is good, the atmosphere relaxed and informal.

Boese Brothers Brewery (see the entry in the Microbrewery section).

The Brew – 311 Gold Ave. SW (505) 363-9453 (.3 miles from hotel). Another good alternative to Starbucks. The coffee is locally roasted.

Espresso Fino – 222 Gold Ave. SW (505) 779-6078 (.3 miles from hotel). Our Clerk of Court likes this place; our Deputy Clerk likes *The Brew*. I like my own coffee, so have no opinion, but I bet I'd like both (and *Java Joe's*) better than Starbucks.

Forque – 330 Tijeras Ave. NW (505) 843-2700. The hotel restaurant. Not very imaginative, but not bad.

Java Joe's – 906 Park Ave. SW (505) 765-1514 (.6 miles from hotel) a hip, funky place for morning coffee or a lunch-time sandwich. You may catch live music, and a dog or two on the sidewalk.

Ibiza – 125 2nd St. NW (505) 897-9090 (.2 miles from hotel). Rooftop patio and bar in the Hotel Andaluz. A good place for a beer if the weather is nice.

Le Troquet – 228 Gold Ave. SW (505) 508-1166 (.5 miles from hotel). Very good, very small French bistro. Authentic too, from what I can tell.

Marble Street Brewery (see the entry in the Microbrewery section).

Más - Tapas y Vino – 125 2nd St. NW (505) 897-9090 (.2 miles from hotel). Pretty good restaurant in an Albuquerque landmark hotel (Hotel Andaluz) that was recently extensively refurbished. The hotel itself is worth a look; it was built by Conrad Hilton, a native son, in 1939.

Q Burger – 301 Central Ave NW (505) 224-2747 (.2 miles from hotel). Upscale burger joint. The burgers are good! Try the saganaki kobe or mesquite bison burger.

Rio Bravo Brewing Company (see the entry in the Microbrewery section).

Tractor Brewing Company (see the entry in the Microbrewery section).

Tucanos Brazilian Grill – 110 Central Ave. SW (505) 246-9900 (.3 miles from hotel). A chain restaurant serving grilled meats and salad. Not haute cuisine; not bad for a chain restaurant.

N.B.: Consult with a knowledgeable, cautious (or at least not reckless) local before walking around Downtown after dark. It may be quite safe, depending on your destination, the hour, and the size of your group, but it may be ill-advised.

2. EDO (East of Downtown)

Just east of the hotel, between the railroad tracks and the freeway (I-25). Formerly known as Huning Highland, this is Albuquerque's first residential subdivision, developed in the late 19th Century. Quite a few Victorian houses, built in the 1890s-1900s, are still standing. This is our version of urban renewal chic.

The Artichoke Café – 424 Central Ave. SE (505) 243-0200 (.6 miles from hotel). An upscale restaurant with attentive service, good wine list, and broad menu. Always good food for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended for dinner.

The Standard Diner – 320 Central SE (505) 243-1440 (.5 miles from hotel). Not really a diner. Good food of the American classic variety. Not too expensive, but not greasy spoon cheap.

Farina Pizzeria – 510 Central Ave. SE (505) 243-0130 (.6 miles from hotel). Good brick-oven pizza place. You can also get salads, beer, and wine. Not too hip for bankruptcy judges.

The Grove Cafe – 500 Central SE (505) 248-9800 (.7 miles from hotel). Specializes in great breakfasts (they make their own English muffins, which are outstanding)—including a fresh fruit crepe, and very nice sandwiches. Only open for breakfast and lunch. University professors who wish they lived in Manhattan, New Haven, or Berkeley stop here for a cappuccino and biscotti.

Holy Cow – 700 Central SE (505) 242-2991 (.7 miles from hotel). Good hamburgers, hand cut fries, and local beer.

Hotel Parq Central – 806 Central Ave SE (505) 336-8005 (.7 miles from hotel). A nice boutique hotel, in a 1926 building originally used as a hospital for railroad employees. It does not have a restaurant, but it has a rooftop bar (the Apothecary Lounge) that is fun if the weather is nice. Not sure what the chances of that are in mid-April.

Albuquerque Press Club – 201 Highland Park Circle SE (505) 243-8476 (.7 miles from hotel). It doesn't have a restaurant, and you probably can't even get in for a drink. It makes the list because it is one of the funkier places in town, in the historic, ramshackle Whittlesey House (built in 1903) with a cool bar in the back. The house is next to a small park with beautiful trees. Drive by if you get the chance; maybe you could talk your way inside for a quick tour and/or drink.

3. Nob Hill

If Albuquerque has a hip area, Nob Hill (I assume the name was ripped off from San Francisco) is it. Close to UNM, Nob Hill gets a mixture of students, professors, aging yuppies, hipsters, etc. I live in the Northeast Heights so don't get down to Nob Hill much anymore, but it is nice to know it's there. Nob Hill is not the place to go if you want New Mexican cuisine.

Scalo Northern Italian Grill – 3500 Central Ave. SE (505) 255-8781 (2.8 miles from hotel). Fairly upscale by Albuquerque standards. The food is good, wine list is good, and the location, at the epicenter of Nob Hill, can't be beat. Almost a place to see and been seen.

Yanni's – 3109 Central Ave. NE (505) 268-9250 (2.6 miles from hotel). Albuquerque's best known Greek restaurant. Great location. The food usually is good. Try the Retsina, which is preferred by one out of 500 white wine drinkers.

Zinc Wine Bar & Bistro – 3009 Central Ave. NE (505) 266-3566 (2.5 miles from hotel). French-inspired bistro, with good food and drink. Don't expect Carne Adovada and Tecate.

Elaine's – 3503 Central Ave. NE (505) 433-4782 (2.9 miles from hotel). A nice, nouvelle cuisine restaurant. It styles itself an American Bistro. The food is good; the atmosphere perhaps a bit pretentious by Albuquerque standards.

Il Vicino – 3403 Central Ave. NE (505) 266-7855 (2.8 miles from hotel). One of the early places to feature brick oven pizzas and local microbrew beer. Informal, but the food and beer are good.

Two Fools Tavern – 3211 Central Ave. NE (505) 266-7447 (2.8 miles from hotel). Irish pub and grill. If you like Guinness and Bangers & Mash, this is the place for you.

4. Old Town

Albuquerque was founded in 1706, after the Pueblo Indian revolt of 1680 was quashed. By then Santa Fe was almost 100 years old. Albuquerque began in Old Town as a small farming village with a central plaza. The San Felipe de Neri church, on the north side, dates back to 1793. Today Old Town is a little touristy, with its share of gimcrack shops, but it is interesting nevertheless, and worth a visit.

La Placita (see the discussion in the New Mexican cuisine section, below).

High Noon Restaurant and Saloon – 425 San Felipe St. NW (505) 765-1455 (1.9 miles from hotel). A steak house in an 18th century building on the north side of Old Town. You can also get blue corn enchiladas or a green chile cheeseburger.

Church Street Café – 2111 Church St. NW (505) 247-8522 (1.7 miles from hotel). Housed in one of the oldest buildings in New Mexico, this restaurant features New Mexican cuisine. The wines are mostly New Mexico wines, so choose carefully. The building was the home of the Ruiz family from the early 1700s until 1991, and is still owned by them.

Seasons Rotisserie & Grill – 2031 Mountain Rd. NW (505) 766-5100 (1.8 miles from hotel). Another good nouvelle cuisine restaurant, across the street from Old Town, with a fun upstairs bar. Tasty food and wine; don't expect sopapillas with your entrée.

La Crepe Michel – 400 San Felipe St. NW (505) 242-1251 (1.8 miles from hotel). A French café in Old Town, which seems strange, but it works. It is small, tucked away, and the food is very good. The wine is mostly French and the beer mostly French, Belgian, or English. Good dessert crepes.

5. I-25 Corridor North of Downtown

Some of the big franchise restaurants are here: Bubba's, Cheddars, Fuddruckers, Outback, Pappadeaux, P.F. Chang's, Texas Land & Cattle, Texas Roadhouse, and Twin Peaks. They need no introduction. Albuquerqueans flock to these chains, for reasons I do not fully understand. A local restaurant, *Chama River Brewing Company* – 4949 Pan American Freeway NE (505) 342-1800 (6.0 miles from hotel), has been around a while and is pretty good.

6. Northeast Heights

One of the middle-class residential areas, without much to attract tourist interest. There are some good restaurants in the Heights, but nothing to draw an occasional visitor away from Downtown, Old Town, the North/South Valley, EDO, and/or Nob Hill. I'm not knocking the Heights, it's where I live. *The Savoy Bar & Grill* – 10601 Montgomery Blvd NE (505) 294-9463 (9.9 miles from hotel), is good and has a nice patio. *The Whole Hog Cafe*, 9880 Montgomery Blvd NE (505) 323-1688 (9.1 miles from hotel), a sister restaurant to the original in Little Rock, has tasty southern barbecue. There are good Chinese, Indian, Thai, and Vietnamese restaurants in the Heights as well. *The Mykonos Café and Taverna*, 5900 Eubank Blvd NE (505) 291-1116 (10.6 miles from hotel), has pretty good Greek fare.

7. North Valley

If there are any rich people in Albuquerque, they mostly live along Rio Grande Boulevard in the North Valley. It's worth a drive. Further east, Fourth Street heads up the middle of the valley en route to Santa Fe. This used to be a spur of Route 66, and the roadside stores have that feel. North Fourth street is home to (at least) three good New Mexican restaurants – *Sadie's*, *Casa de Benavidez*, and *El Pinto*. See the write-ups in the New Mexican cuisine section. *The Casa Rondena Winery* – 733 Chavez Rd. NW (505) 344-5911 (5.5 miles from hotel), is very pretty and has an attractive tasting room. The winery rivals some Napa Valley counterparts in every way except wine quality.

8. South Valley

While the North Valley has been partially Anglicized, the South Valley retains much of its rural, Hispanic culture. Near downtown is the *Barelas Coffee House* (discussed in the New Mexican cuisine section). Further south, on Isleta Boulevard, is *Lollie's New Mexican Food*, 424 Isleta Blvd SW (505) 452-9096 (3.5 miles from hotel). This is the real McCoy, to use an inapt

metaphor. Strangely, most New Mexican food aficionados I talked to don't eat in the South Valley. If you have the time, a drive down Isleta Boulevard is rewarding.

9. The West Side

Anything west of the Rio Grande is the "West Side." Along Central (old Route 66) heading west is *El Charritos*, reviewed in the New Mexican section. You can also find *Pro's Ranch Markets*, 4201 Central Ave. NW (505) 831-8739 (2.8 miles from hotel), a large grocery store and cafeteria combination featuring Mexican (not New Mexican) food. Inside feels like south of the border. The food is very good. The rest of the west side is home to many younger families, a shopping mall, and lots of chain restaurants and retail stores. My advice—not a bad place to live, but not worth visiting.

10. Uptown

There's Downtown, Old Town, and also Uptown, a business area on I-40, 6 miles east of the hotel. Historically, both Albuquerque shopping malls were in Uptown, about a mile apart. One is now closed, a new mall opened on the West Side, and Uptown now boasts the city's first "Life-style" mall. So you get the idea. I don't spend much time in Uptown, and don't recommend it to tourists unless you have to buy a shirt or a pair of shoes. There are a number of chain restaurants, including the Macaroni Grill, Elephant Bar, Buca di Beppo, and their ilk. *Marcello's Chophouse* – 2201 Q St. NE Ste. B (505) 837-2467 (6.3 miles from hotel) is an independent steakhouse with a good reputation and high prices. I can't think of much else local, let alone serving New Mexican food.

C. Restaurants Serving New Mexican Cuisine

New Mexican cuisine is *sui generis*. It's not Mexican and it's not Tex-mex. The signature ingredients of New Mexican cuisine are red and green chile, prepared in a variety of ways. The blue corn tortilla is also distinctive, as are sopapillas (something akin to a fried doughnut, but you can eat it with dinner). Try carne adovada, chile rellenos, green chile enchiladas, and burritos (breakfast and otherwise) flavored with green or red chile, or both. The local salsas vary from ordinary to excellent. Sample as many as you can.

Barelas Coffee House – 1502 4th St. SW (505) 843-7577 (1.2 miles from hotel). Old school coffee shop serving New Mexican comfort food for breakfast and lunch for over 30 years. In the South Valley but close to downtown Albuquerque. It serves excellent green chile chicken enchiladas. It's closed for dinner.

Casa de Benavidez – 8032 4th St NW (505) 897-7493 (6.5 miles from hotel). Mexican and New Mexican Dining – locally owned and operated. It has a nice patio, although not quite up to El Pinto's standards.

Duran Station/Pharmacy – 1815 Central Ave. NW (505) 247-4141 (1.2 miles from hotel). A unique, old fashioned drugstore with a restaurant in the back. The red chile enchiladas are worth

ordering. Duran's has the best enchilada sauce in town, and excellent huevos rancheros, served with red chile and mashed potatoes.

El Charritos – 4703 Central Ave. NW (505) 836-2464 (3.0 miles from hotel). Family owned and operated. Solid all-around New Mexican fare, with good sopapillas and carne adovada.

El Modelo – 1715 2nd St. SW (505) 242-1843 (1.4 miles from hotel). Established in 1929. It has a small patio, but everyone takes out. You will see why if you go there. Really good tamales.

El Pinto – 10500 4th St. NW (505) 898-1771 (8.9 miles from hotel). Elegant patio & indoor garden room. El Pinto does not have the best New Mexican food in town, although it can be pretty good, but it does have the best patio. The setting, among huge cottonwoods, is great. Judge Jacobvitz thinks the food is great, and that I am being too hard on El Pinto. You decide.

La Mexicana Tortilla Co. – 306 Coal Ave. SW (505) 242-2558 (.5 miles from hotel). A Downtown eatery with a small (10 tables) dining area that serves breakfast and lunch. Really good green chile cheeseburgers and ground beef tacos. The breakfast burrito ain't too shabby either.

La Placita – 206 San Felipe St. NW (505) 247-2204 (1.7 miles from hotel). Located in Albuquerque's Historic Old Town Plaza. The restaurant, right on the Plaza, is in a historic building that has a large cottonwood growing through the roof of the main dining room. The food is good. A nice way to get a feel for how Albuquerque used to be.

La Salita – 1217 Eubank Blvd NE (505) 299-9968 (9.2 miles from hotel). Family owned and operated since 1965. Really great chile rellenos, good enchiladas, and the B.O.G. Burrito (slow roasted green chile pork topped with melted Swiss) on Tuesdays and Thursdays is to die for. You also can't go wrong with a combo plate.

Monroe's Restaurant – 1520 Lomas Blvd. NW (1.0 miles from hotel). Close to downtown, with pretty good New Mexican food. The chile is not too scary hot.

Padilla's Mexican Kitchen – 1510 Girard Blvd. NE (505) 262-0115 (4.5 miles from hotel). Small dining area – fills up quickly.

Sadie's of New Mexico – 6230 4th St. NW (505) 345-5339 (4.5 miles from hotel). Family owned and operated for over 50 years, starting life as a bowling alley restaurant. Sadie's is good all-around but the chiles may be too hot for most out of towners. Tacos are excellent here; try the Billy's beef with the corn tortilla.

D. Microbreweries

Boese Brothers Brewery – 601 Gold Ave. SW (505) 382-7060 (.5 miles from hotel). Very convenient to the bankruptcy court (across the street), and a pretty nice tap room, but so far the beer has been only so-so.

Bosque Brewing Company – 8900 San Mateo Blvd, NE, Ste. L (505) 750-7596 (9.3 miles from hotel). Best beer in town; can't beat their IPA. It's a cab or Uber ride, though, for sure.

La Cumbre Brewing Company – 3313 Girard Blvd, NE (505) 872-0225 (4.6 miles from hotel). Great IPA; an industrial look, like so many new microbrew beer joints.

Marble Street Brewery – 111 Marble Ave. NW (505) 243-2739 (.6 miles from hotel). A very successful microbrewery that makes great beer. I like the IPA and the Red Ale. The Double White is also very good. A downtown destination for beer lovers; music on the patio in good weather, and food trucks when it's busy.

Rio Bravo Brewing Company – 1912 2d Street NW (505) 900-3909 (1.3 miles from hotel). Relatively new; a nice facility. I don't think their beer is yet in the first rank.

Tractor Brewing Company – 1800 4th Street NW (505) 243-6752 (1.2 miles from hotel). It's been around a while and makes very good beer. Funky atmosphere, in a good way. Friendly staff. They also have a location in Nob Hill – 118 Tulane Dr. SE (505) 433-5654 (2.7 miles from hotel).

E. Things to Do in Town

Albuquerque Biopark Zoo, Botanic Garden, and Aquarium – 903 10th Street SW (505) 768-2000 (1.1 miles from hotel). Close to downtown, the zoo, gardens, and aquarium are small by big city standards, but are nicely laid out and maintained. A pleasant way to spend a couple of hours next to the Rio Grande.

Albuquerque International Balloon Museum – 9201 Balloon Museum Dr. NE (505) 880-0500 (9.5 miles from hotel). All about hot air and gas balloons, on the grounds of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta Park. An interesting place to visit, even if their museum shop is spelled “shoppe.” What is this, Olde London?

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center – 2401 12th Street NW (505) 843-7270 (2.4 miles from hotel). A pleasant museum that gives a good introduction to the 19 pueblos of New Mexico and their history, art, and culture.

Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Organic Farm – 4803 Rio Grande Blvd, NW (505) 344-9297 (7.6 miles from hotel). Former residence of Congressman Albert Simms, the inn is a magnificent example of architect John Gaw Meem's territorial style, set in 25 acres of fields, trees, and gardens.

National Museum of Nuclear Science & History – 601 Eubank Blvd SE (505) 245-2137 (9.3 miles from hotel). New Mexico is the birthplace of The Bomb, for better or worse, and this museum gives an excellent overview of the military and peaceful development of nuclear power.

National Hispanic Cultural Center – 1701 4th Street SW (505) 246-2261 (1.3 miles from hotel). A beautiful facility with an art museum, library, auditorium, and exhibition hall. The center is dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and advancement of Hispanic culture, arts, and humanities.

Old Town/Museums – Near Central and Rio Grande Boulevards (1.8 miles from hotel). An old Spanish plaza surrounded by shops, art galleries, restaurants, and the first Catholic church in Albuquerque. Nearby are the Albuquerque Museum of Art – 2000 Mountain Road NW (505) 243-7255; the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science (505) 841-2800; and Explora (a hands-on science museum for children) (505) 224-8300. Recommended.

Outdoor Recreation – Unless its windy, which it could well be, mid-April in Albuquerque is pretty nice; cool in the morning, warm in the afternoon, and sunny. It's probably too late for skiing, but you can certainly hike, bike, or play golf or tennis. There are walking and biking trails along the Rio Grande (these get busy, most of them), and hiking trails in the Sandia Mountain foothills. The truly adventurous can hike up to the top of the Sandias from the foothills. The views and change of scenery are incredible, but the hike is not to be undertaken lightly. You can freeze to death or break your neck if you are not careful and in good condition. Easy foothills hikes are plentiful at *Elena Gallegos Park* – east of Tramway on Simms Rd (505) 857-8334 (13 miles from hotel). If you're lucky you will see a rattlesnake, a giant centipede, or a tarantula! And bring your binoculars; the birding is very good in New Mexico, and you might catch the spring migration. For golfers, I am told *UNM's Championship Golf Course* – 3601 University SE (505) 277-4546 (5 miles from the hotel) is a very good public course. If you want to play tennis, let me know and I will put you in touch with my wife, who knows all the local courts. Whatever you do, wear a hat and sunscreen, bring plenty of water, and remember the elevation – there's a reason the Kenyan marathoners train in the Northeast Heights.

Petroglyph National Monument – 6001 Unser Blvd NW (505) 899-0207 (10 miles from hotel). A national monument with hiking trails that weave in and among Native American and Spanish petroglyphs. Nice views of the city and the Sandia Mountains, from the far west side of the city.

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park – 2901 Candelaria Rd NW (505) 344-7240 (6.0 miles from hotel). A beautiful spot near the river, with walking trails, a duck pond, and lots of bird-watching opportunities. It is particularly nice in the winter when the Sandhill Cranes are in the valley.

Sandia Peak Tramway – 10 Tramway Loop NE (505) 856-7325 (16.0 miles from hotel). The tram runs from the base of Sandia Peak (6,559 ft.) to the peak (10,378 ft.). It is the longest aerial tram in the United States. The High Finance restaurant is at the top, as are hiking/cross-country skiing trails and a downhill ski operation. The view and hiking from the top are magnificent, and the ride is fun.

F. A Few Out of Town Activities.

Abiquiu (110 miles from hotel). Georgia O'Keefe lived in nearby Ghost Ranch and bought a house in Abiquiu. If you are a fan of her work, this is a necessary pilgrimage. Gorgeous scenery.

Acoma Pueblo (60 miles from hotel). An Indian pueblo southwest of Albuquerque that sits on a 365 foot high mesa. Touring the pueblo is fascinating, and the view from the inside of the church built on top of the mesa is spectacular. The best tamale I ever had was sold to me by an Acoma woman while I walked around on top of the mesa. A guided tour is required.

Carlsbad Caverns National Park (314 miles from hotel). It makes some of the “Seven Wonders of the Natural World” lists. The main chamber, one of the largest in the country, is magnificent.

Chaco Canyon (160 miles from hotel). Massive Anasazi pueblo ruins, in the middle of nowhere.

Gila Wilderness (260 miles from hotel). Everyone heads north, it seems, but southern New Mexico is great as well. The Gila Wilderness is more than 550,000 acres of remote mountainous terrain. Geronimo used to retreat to the Gila when things got too hot. You probably won’t get down to the Gila this trip, but it is nice knowing it’s there, looking much as it did a thousand years ago.

Mosquero (216 miles from the hotel). When you absolutely, positively have to get away from it all, head to Mosquero, New Mexico, the seat of Harding County. Harding County is twice the size of Rhode Island and is home to 700 hardy souls. Mosquero (pop. 120) has no motel, gas station, or restaurant. The drive to and through Harding County is delightful if you are not an agoraphobe.

Santa Fe (62 miles from the hotel). It’s easy to be rough on Santa Fe and decry its touristy, New-Agey, holier than thou aspects, but despite all that Santa Fe is a remarkable city, definitely worth a visit. If you like art (Native American and otherwise), excellent restaurants, wine, and Indian/Spanish/Mexican/American history and/or culture, you will love Santa Fe. At 7,200 ft., it definitely is high country.

Taos (151 miles from the hotel). It takes about 2 ½ hours to get to Taos from Albuquerque. Part of the drive is tedious, but part is breathtaking. Taos itself is a fun place to visit; a fabulous pueblo, nice restaurants, and beautiful scenery. You will feel the elevation (7,000 ft.). The justly-famous Rio Grande gorge is not far from Taos, and then of course there is the ski valley. Another well-known activity is driving the “High Road to Taos,” several small, twisting state roads between Santa Fe and Taos that pass through a number of old Spanish villages, including Nambe, Chimayo, Cordova, and Truchas. Extremely interesting.

Turquoise Trail (starts 18 miles from the hotel). New Mexico Highway 14 runs north of I-40 on the east side of the Sandia Mountains, from the town of Cedar Crest to Santa Fe. The road twists and turns through beautiful scenery, passing through the old mining towns of Golden, Madrid, and Cerrillos. Madrid (pronounced Ma´drid) is now an art colony, and is a fun place to stop for lunch. A number of movies have been shot in Turquoise Trail locations (e.g. Wild Hogs and Silverado). This back road from Albuquerque to Santa Fe is worth the extra time if you have it.

G. Helpful Internet Links

Granted, none of these links will be as informative or amusing as this Guide, but for what it's worth:

Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau: <http://www.visitalbuquerque.org/>

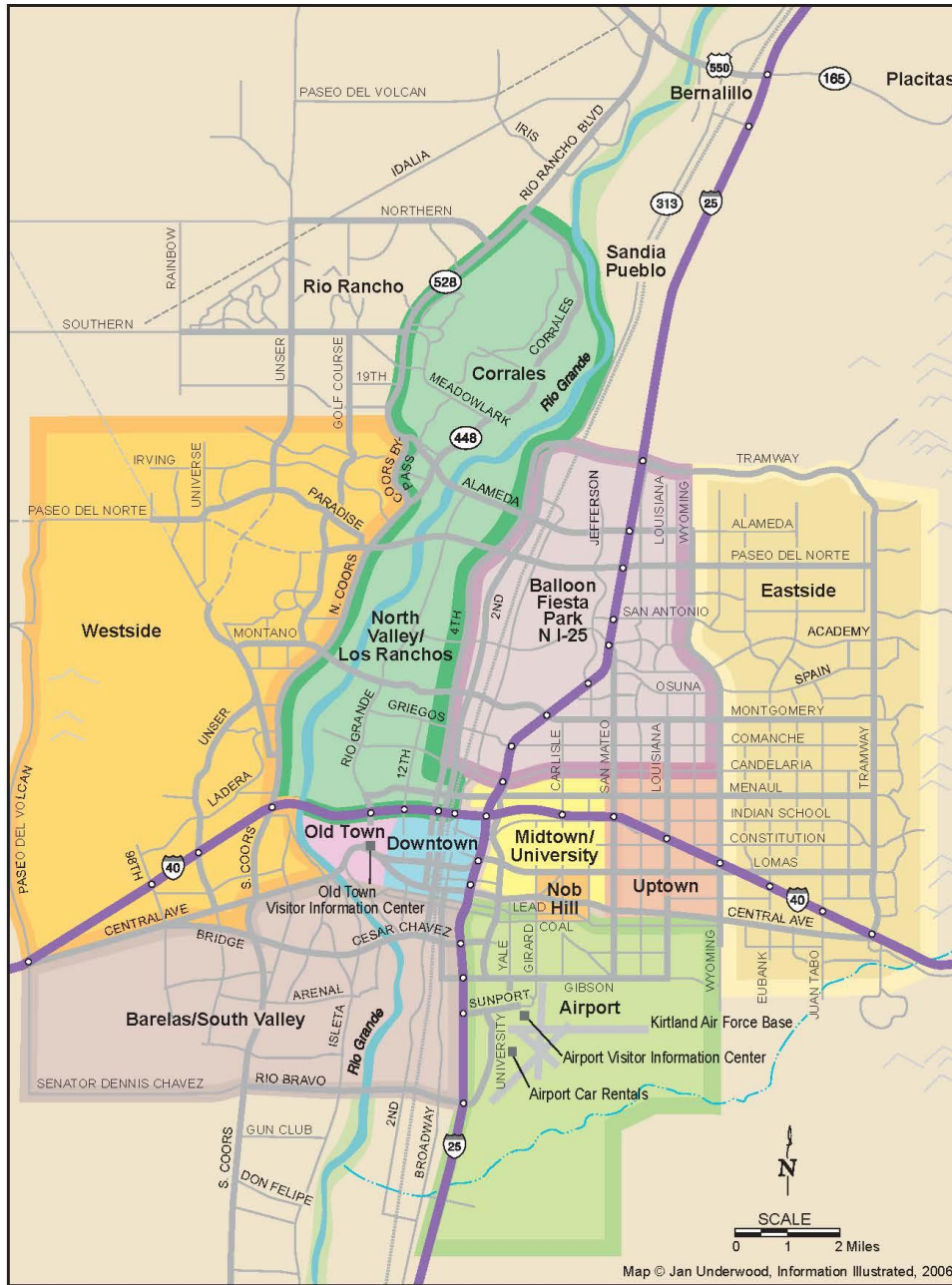
New Mexico Tourism Department: <http://www.newmexico.org/>

Santa Fe Visitors Guide: http://santafe.org/Visitors_Guide/

Albuquerque Information: <http://www.albuquerque.com/>

Call me if you have any questions or compliments about this guide. David Thuma (505) 348-2420. For complaints, call my law clerk, Jaya Rhodes (505) 348-2423. Not that it will do you any good.

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