

ADVENTURE ABOUNDS ALONG THE TURQUOISE TRAIL

This 65-Mile National Scenic Byway Offers Outdoor Exploration And Genuine Old West Adventure

THE TURQUOISE TRAIL—Whether you are searching for that special bird watching spot or a more adventurous hiking trail or some family horseback riding excitement, you’ll find it all along The Turquoise Trail, a National Scenic Byway that connects Albuquerque and Santa Fe offering authentic Old West adventure.

The Turquoise Trail, Highway 14 and the “high road” to Santa Fe, is a spectacular 65-mile drive offering everything from “soft” adventure to outrageous year-round outdoor excitement. From the Southern most entrance in Tijeras, a gateway to the 2 million-acre Cibola National Forest, to the Northern end and the new Cerrillos Hills Historic Park, the Turquoise Trail offers outdoor activities for everyone. Vacationers can simply drive the trail and enjoy the views or get out and really explore the land and get to know the people who live here. The road also incorporates Hwy. 536, which continues to Sandia Crest.

“The Turquoise Trail offers an abundance of wonderful and exhilarating outdoor adventure”, comments Lynn McLane, president of the Turquoise Trail Association. “The list of activities is endless and includes exotic bird watching, hiking, camping, turquoise mining, rock collecting, skiing/snowboarding, golfing, biking, rock climbing, fishing and horseback riding. And all of this adventure is enhanced by a dramatic history steeped in Native American culture, gold and turquoise mining, Spanish conquests, ghost towns and early American pioneering.”

The Trail, situated high above the Chihuahuan Desert, incorporates plateaus, hills and mountains reaching as high as 10,600 feet above sea level at Sandia Crest. The drive along well-maintained Highway 14 allows easy access to the many activities and scenic points that make up the Trail. “There are few adventure spots as accessible as The Turquoise Trail or as authentic in “Old West” hospitality and history, she added. “The variety of outdoor activities available between two major tourist destinations, is amazing.”

Select from a Wide Variety of Adventures

- **Cibola National Forest:** Day picnics, backpacking, horseback riding and more are all available from the entrance in Tijeras to the Cibola National Forest. Covering three states and 2 million miles, this national forest can be accessed just east of Albuquerque at the southern most entrance to The Turquoise Trail.
- **Birdwatching:** A wide variety of birds live and migrate through The Turquoise Trail, including spectacular hawk and eagle migrations, which can be witnessed in the Sandia Crest mountains. This is just one of many great bird watching spots found along the trail. Owls, hawks and eagles are spotted along with other rare birds including American pipits, in the Ortiz Mountains Educational Preserve, just above Cerrillos. And all along the Trail in summer months, a complete variety of Hummingbirds arrive all along The Trail.
- **Sandia Peak Tram:** The world's longest tram climbs to 10, 378 feet and offers spectacular views Access the tram along the Sandia Crest National Scenic Byway—part of the Turquoise Trail—with incredible vistas and a unique experience incorporating five different eco-systems.
- **Snowboarding and Skiing:** Sandia Peak ski area offers six lifts and a certified ski school. In the summer the same mountains offer exhilarating trail biking with over 15 trails to explore.
- **Horseback Riding:** Explore old turquoise mines and the historic mining hills of Cerrillos, while horseback riding year-round! Adventurers can even hire a local guide at the Cerrillos Mining Museum and personally experience mining for turquoise.
- **Golfing with Great Views:** Paa-Ko Ridge Golf Course is an 18 hole privately owned public golf course designed by award-winning architect, Ken Dye, with an additional 9 holes currently under construction. The course is situated on the east side of the Sandia Mountains, at elevations ranging from 6,500 to 7,000 feet. Surrounded by the mountainous terrain and vegetation of the New Mexican high desert, the layout of the course features landing areas and greens separated by arroyos, native vegetation, and rock outcroppings.
- **Biking:** From bottom to top and top to bottom the Trail offers challenging biking on and off road. Structured biking tours are available or experienced adventurers can explore on their own.

- **Ortiz Mountains Educational Preserve:** This preserve is now open to the public with regular tours. What a great new treasure for naturalists and true adventure seekers! There are two guided hiking options: a 1 1/2 mile lower elevation trail or a five-mile look that takes hikers to the top of Placer Peak at 8,897 feet. Once home to the first gold mines west of the Mississippi, this preserve offers a real treasure for outdoor adventure.
- **Garden of the Gods:** Right along the Trail, just north of Cerrillos lie razorback rock formations known at the “Garden of the Gods.” A simple step out of the car and travelers find themselves up close to these formations! The rocks are so distinct that they can be seen from far out into space.
- **Buffalo and Antelope:** Toward the North end of the Trail drivers can view buffalo and antelope grazing. In the distance rise the dramatic Sangre de Cristo Mountains, which offer dramatic and awe inspiring beauty and the backdrop to Santa Fe.

There’s Much More To See and Do

Travelers along the trail should not overlook the adventure of stepping back into time and visiting the small traditional towns along the Trail: Golden, once a booming gold mining town, now a quiet spot with a great photo op at the historic San Francisco Catholic Church, which dates back to 1830. Madrid, a coal mining town, turned ghost town, turned artist haven. Galleries are open year-round, with entertaining events scheduled seasonally, including a festive Christmas lighting display with roots dating back to the 1920s. Cerrillos, a traditional New Mexico village, charms visitors with it’s mostly dirt roads and distinctive adobe homes and Spanish-style courtyards.

How to Reach The Turquoise Trail

The Trail is easy to access just east of Albuquerque off Interstate 40 to exit #175 Highway 14. From Santa Fe, just head south on Cerrillos Road, which turns into Highway 14 and the Turquoise Trail at the edge of the city. The Trail can also be accessed from Interstate 25 by taking the “Cerrillos” exit, south of Santa Fe. The Trail offers accommodations and dining experiences to complete travelers’ experience along this National Scenic Byway. For additional information on the Turquoise Trail visit our website at www.turquoisetrail.org or call 1(888)263-0003.