

Socorro Area Attractions

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge

Each season the Bosque del Apache offers unique bird and wildlife viewing opportunities. Peak visitations occur in winter when bald eagles and thousands of sandhill cranes and snow geese are present. Plan to visit the weekend before Thanksgiving during the Annual Festival of the Cranes. This event includes speakers, special tours and wildlife displays. A visitor center open all year round contains current information on wildlife sightings, exhibits, videos and a bookstore/gift shop.

The 1.5-mile auto tour loop takes visitors through a full range of wildlife viewing and photography possibilities. There is a nominal fee for the self-guided tours and nature trails, ranging from one mile to nine miles. The Bosque del Apache is situated east of I-25 just south of San Antonio. Exit 139; east ¼ mile on US 380 to the flashing signal at San Antonio; turn right onto Hwy. 1. The Visitors Center is south nine miles.

(575) 835-0424, 835-1828.

The Very Large Array (VLA)

The VLA is made up of 27 radio-telescope antennas in a “Y” pattern spread across the Plains of San Agustin, 50 miles west of Socorro, off U.S. Hwy. 60. The VLA has been used by more astronomers and produced more scientific papers than any radio telescope in the world. Each antenna has a 82-foot dish and weighs 230 tons.

Visitors are welcome at the VLA. The on-site visitor center and gift shop contains displays and videos that describe radio astronomy and the VLA telescope. A self-guided walking tour allows visitors to see the antennas up close. The visitor center is open all year round from 8:30 a.m. to sunset. (575) 835-7000.

www.nrao.edu

Trinity Site

The location of the world’s first atomic bomb explosion in 1945. The Trinity Site is opened twice a year for the public to tour the site. (First Saturday, April & October). Visitors can enter through the Stallion Range Center, five miles south of U.S. Hwy. 380. The turnoff is 12 miles east of San Antonio, N.M. (575) 835-0424.

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

The visitors center is now open to the public. The majority of the refuge is closed to general public use, however, there are a few areas open for the public’s enjoyment. Sevilleta holds an Open House Event in October, and offers guided tours at that time. Located off of I-25, exit 169. (575) 864-4021, 835-0424.

Gran Quivira

Part of the Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument, Gran Quivira is the only site of three located within Socorro County. Dating back to the 1300’s, Gran Quivira was an important trade center before and after the Spanish *entrada*, but Apache raids, drought and famine caused the 500 remaining Pueblo Indians to abandon the site in 1672. Two churches, excavated Indian structures, museum exhibits and a 40-minute video can be seen at the site. (575) 847-2770.

Located on U.S. Hwy 54, 25 miles south of Mountainair in the eastern edge of Socorro County.

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology

801 Leroy Pl., Socorro. (800) 428-8324 Ext. 4.

New Mexico Tech’s acclaim in the sciences has helped to draw major research facilities to the area, including the headquarters for the National Radio Astronomy Observatory’s Very Large Array, the lightning research facility of Langmuir Lab, a planned telescope in the Magdalena Mountains, and research efforts located on New Mexico Tech land.

Mineral Museum

Originated in 1889. The early collection was assembled to assist with the education of engineers and geologists and grew to be one of the finest in the world. A fire destroyed many of the specimens in 1928 but donations and purchases immediately reestablished the museum. Three thousand mineral specimens have now grown to a collection of over 15,000.

Admission is free to visitors Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment. Call (575) 835-5140

NMT Library

Contains artwork from the "1% for the Arts" program as well as regular shows of local interest.

Performing Arts Series / Macey Conference Center

This is where you'll find entertainment, performances and music. Tech's Performing Arts Series puts on regular shows here and Tech's students put on a show every spring.

Call for schedule, (575) 835-5688.

Etscorn Observatory

Etscorn is used by Astronomy Club members for research, classes and observing for fun. There are frequent public star parties, and the club hosts an Enchanted Skies Star Party every fall, attracting amateur astronomers from around the nation.

NMT Golf Course

Tech's beautiful 18-hole, championship-level golf course is open to the public. Several tournaments are held at the course every year.

801 Leroy Pl. Socorro 87801. (575) 835-5335.

Quebradas Backcountry Byway

A 24-mile drive along scenic colored cliffs, arroyos, and rock formations. This back country byway which includes travel atop a portion of the historic El Camino Real is managed by the Bureau of Land Management and provides a great opportunity to see the protected wildlife of two separate wildlife reserves. Two access areas. 1) Go 2 miles north of Socorro on I-25, take Escondida exit. Head east, then north. Turn right past Escondida Lake. Go east through Pueblitos. Turn south on road following east side of Rio Grande. Take dirt road east, about .6 miles down road. Stay on road, follow Back-Country Byway signs. 2) Drive 9 miles south of Socorro on I-25, go 11 miles east of San Antonio on N.M. 380. Turn left on CR A-129 for 3 miles north. Turn west, and follow the signs. (575) 835-0424, 835-0412.

Water Canyon Campground

Located 21 miles west of Socorro on Hwy. 60. Enjoy hiking, bird watching and camping. (575) 835-0424, 854-2922.

Escondida Lake Park

Located 2 miles north of Socorro, exit 152. Go east at stop sign until road turns; go north 6 miles to Escondida Lake Park sign. Enjoy fishing and camping. The Park has RV hookups, tent sites, bathrooms and water.

(575) 835-0424, 835-2041.

San Lorenzo Canyon

Open for hiking and you can explore the Chihuahuan Desert plant and animal life. The geological formations make it an excellent spot for photography. (575) 854-4021

Socorro Fat Tire Trails

Mountain bikers will find that Socorro is a gateway to adventure, and a dream come true: here you can bike year-round. To the east, we have the Quebradas and hundreds of miles of roads winding through exceptional geologic terrain. To the south, the Rio Grande floodplain and the Bosque del Apache provide

intimate views of wildlife. To the west, you will find the Magdalena and San Mateo Mountain ranges with peaks over 10,600 ft. high. To the north are the ancient petroglyphs at San Acacia and the steep-walled beauty of San Lorenzo Canyon. (575) 835-0424.

Fullingim, Isenhour, & Leard Studios

A cooperative of three or more local professional artists. Located on Abeyta St. just north of the Historic Socorro Plaza. (575) 835-4487

The Hammel Museum

The original Hammel Brewery produced Illinois Beer. It continued to operate as an icehouse and soft drink bottling plant until the 1950s'. It is currently being restored as a museum. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places is still standing on it's original site. The Socorro Historical Society celebrates Oktoberfest at the Hammel Museum. It is located at 600 Sixth Street, is open the first Saturday of each month and by request. (575) 835-0424 or Hal at: 835-2794.

Historic Walking Tour

A walking tour of historic homes surrounding the Socorro plaza features the architectural styles from the Spanish colonial and territorial past. The Historical Society has many sites listed in a directory that includes the 400-year old San Miguel Mission, Garcia Opera House. For a walking tour map call (575) 835 0424.

San Miguel Mission

This historic church, still the center of Catholicism in the area, was built in 1891 and stands on the site of the original mission built in 1627. It has massive adobe walls, large carved vigas and supporting corbel arches. The church remains the symbol of the Spanish heritage and an inspiration to generations.

Socorro's Historic Plaza

Also known as Kittrell Park the Plaza is often lively with community events. (575) 835-0424.

Parks and Recreation

The City of Socorro Parks and Recreation provides leisure activities for the entire family. Sedillo Park offers family fun, athletic fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, horseshoe pits, playgrounds and an Olympic size pool, or jog around Clarke Field. Socorro's Parks often play host to seasonal sports. (575) 835-0242

Magdalena

An attraction in itself, this old cattle and mining town is rich in history and culture. As of late, the village atmosphere has attracted artists and the town now has some excellent galleries, along with historic buildings, things to see and do and some great coffee shops. 30 miles west of Socorro on U.S. Hwy 60. 1 866-854-3217.

Lady of the Mountain

Natural rock formation resembles profile of Mary Magdalene on the side of Magdalena Mountain.

Cibola National Forest Magdalena Ranger District

Hiking Campgrounds 204 1st St. at south side of U.S. Hwy 60/Kelly Rd.

Box Car Museum

Local history, artifacts of Wild West, cattle drives, circa 1885-1930. Located next to AT&SF RR Depot.

Magdalena Stock Driveway/Shipping Pens

At end of longest "Hoof Highway" in N.M. Used from as far away as Springerville, AZ. Closed in 1971 when AT&SF RR ceased. Just north of visitor center.

London Frontier Theater

Year-round serial theater. Tales of what might have happened in days past in the Magdalena area.

Written, directed, produced, acted in and promoted by Donna Todd, of Magdalena. For a schedule call: (575) 854-2519.

San Antonio

In the late 1880s, A.H. Hilton arrived in San Antonio, NM, and opened the Hilton Mercantile Company that also served as the first Hilton Hotel. It was here that the world-renowned Hilton Hotel had its beginning and claimed for San Antonio a famous son, Conrad Hilton. Born December 25, 1887, Conrad became business partners with his father in 1915 and bought his first hotel four years later in Cisco, Texas. Today, the once prosperous Hilton section of San Antonio is reduced to an old post office building, a few other deserted buildings, and ruins. Present-day San Antonio, a functioning community, lies just north of the older section.

San Antonio has some excellent Bed and Breakfast establishments that cater to visitors who come to see the migrating birds at the nearby Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.