

A trek to Taos proves to be filled with outdoor adventures, art venues and shopping beyond compare.

Magic in the MOUNTAINS

BY RONA DISTENFELD

“You cannot come to Taos without feeling that here is one of the chosen spots on earth,” said

poet and author D.H. Lawrence a century ago. And it still holds true today.

Most people think of Taos, N.M., as a winter destination, and logically so, since Taos Ski Valley is renowned for its runs. Many consider this one of the most challenging places to ski in the world, although there are slopes for less advanced skiers. A blue square (intermediate) run here is often compared to a black diamond (difficult) run at other top ski destinations.

But there is so much more to delight the eye and refresh the soul in Taos. Come during the summer months to escape the heat and humidity and find lots to do, indoors and out.

The snow that makes Taos such a great ski destination fills the rivers in the spring and summer months. As it rushes down the mountainsides, it invites those looking for excitement to brave the river in rafts and kayaks.

Far Flung Adventures has been helping visitors enjoy the rivers since 1976. It puts a premium on safety and constantly refreshes the training requirements of every guide. Many guides are trained emergency medical technicians, and all have first aid and water rescue certifications. Whether opting for a paddle boat that requires you to take an active part in the adventure or an oar boat that lets you hold on while a guide does all the work, look forward to a trip you'll talk about for years.

Want to try something a bit more unusual? Wild Earth Llama Adventures will take you on a day-hike with a gourmet lunch or a multiday pack trip. Walk along with a llama and learn about flora, fauna and regional history from a naturalist guide. If getting off the beaten path appeals to you, this is a fun way to backpack without carrying your own weight.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RONA DISTENFELD

INDOOR BEAUTY

Taos has long been known for its thriving art community. Artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz reveled in the light, scenery and some indefinable essence that made them want to stay.

New Mexico's second-oldest museum, The Harwood Museum of Art, which houses more than 1,700 works of art and 17,000 photographs, is located here.

The Millicent Rogers Museum is home to an incredible collection of American Indian jewelry, weavings and pottery. Rogers was a beautiful heiress who hobnobbed with movie

stars like Clark Gable. She was drawn to the Indian culture and made Taos her home. She acquired a stunning collection of silver-and-turquoise jewelry, some of which she wore. She also had duplicates made for every gown she had designed in order to preserve the fashions for another time.

TREASURES YOU CAN TAKE HOME

Shopping in Taos is as uncommon as everything else here. Many of the shops offer handmade treasures—jewelry, pottery, paintings, textiles, clothing and more—by local and international artisans. The best part

Plan Your Trip

- Far Flung Adventures: (800) 359-2627; www.farflung.com
- Harwood Museum of Art: (505) 758-9826; www.harwoodmuseum.org
- The Historic Taos Inn: (505) 758-1977; www.taosinn.com
- Inn on the Rio: (800) 859-6752; www.innontherio.com
- Mesa's Edge: (505) 758-3500
- Millicent Rogers Museum of Northern New Mexico: (505) 758-2462; www.millicentrogers.org
- Taos Chamber of Commerce: (877) 587-8915; www.exploretaos.com
- Taos Ski Valley: (800) 347-7414; www.skitaos.org
- Taos Tin Works Studio & Gallery: (505) 758-9724; www.taostinworks.com
- Wild Earth Llama Adventures: (800) 758-llama (5526)



Winter isn't the only time to head for Taos Ski Valley—hikers can find plenty of adventurous trails and peaceful resting spots when the snow clears (far left). Shopping holds its own adventures, such as finding handcrafted metal wind chimes at Taos Tin Works Studio & Gallery (left). And a visit to the Millicent Rogers Museum yields a treasure trove of pottery like the piece above.

SLEEP WELL

The Historic Taos Inn has been welcoming visitors since 1936. Once several separate houses, the inn offers fine dining at Doc Martin's Restaurant and live music in the indoor courtyard, making it a popular meeting spot for locals and visitors.

A quieter escape can be found at Inn on the Rio, which takes pride in providing comfortable beds, organically grown breakfast items, natural soaps and a peaceful feeling. It's located just down the road from the bustling downtown area, but you'll leave the traffic and noise behind. Hand-painted flowers and vines grace the walls in every room. Start the day with a sumptuous breakfast and end it with a relaxing soak in the hot tub or a swim in the pool.

Whatever you think it takes to make a great vacation, Taos holds something for every interest, every age and every season.

H&A

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