



The superb setting at Paa-Ko Ridge Golf club



NIMDET/JIM ORR

Red Rock

# New Mexico

Take on The Monster, follow the Santa Fe Trail or play Alien territory in America's south-west

PHOTOS: NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM/DAN MONAGHAN

**F**rom its desert lowlands to courses high up in the towering Rocky Mountains, New Mexico offers an incredibly diverse range of golf.

There are nearly 80 courses throughout the state, from great-value municipal tracks to luxury resorts on Indian lands. You can golf and ski on the same day, tee off on a working cattle ranch, or play along the trail pioneering settlers drove their wagon trains 150 years ago. You can even let fly in Roswell, famous for the UFOs which are said to have crashed there over 50 years ago. Just don't look for extra-terrestrial help in trying to find lost golf balls.

Albuquerque has more than 20 golf venues

in and around the city, most of them open to the public. Low humidity, moderate temperatures thanks to the mile-high elevation of central New Mexico and an average 310 sunny days a year make it a year-round golf destination.

Its courses include the Championship Course at the University of New Mexico, known locally as UNM South or "The Monster", one of nine excellent high-desert courses along the historic Santa Fe Trail. Other courses on the trail include the 27-hole Isleta Eagle, with three combinations all over 7,000 yards; Robert Trent Jones Jr's Pueblo de Cochiti Golf Course, 50 minutes north of Albuquerque; 7,736-yard Twin Warriors, which routes around several 800-year-old Native American cultural sites and has accommodation at the Hyatt Tamara resort; Paa-Ko Ridge, 6,500ft high and carved through a forest of pinon pine and juniper evergreens on the eastern side of the Sandia Mountains; and Black Mesa, with its verdant fairways and greens contrasted by the barren sandstone ridges and native arroyo water courses of its hazards.

Towa Golf Resort, another trail facility, has 27 holes, the Boulder Nine's par-3 4th featuring the state's only island green. Newest trail



Black Mesa: mind the arroyo

member is the Sandia Golf Club, another 7,700-yarder with a Pueblo-style clubhouse.

New Mexico's value is underlined by the municipal Pinon Hills course, in its far north-west corner. Rated America's top municipal course in 2002 by *Golf Digest* and set among winding canyons and sandstone hills, it costs



## New Mexico Facts

### GETTING THERE

New Mexico has no non-stop flights from the UK, but there are many options to go via gateways in other states. The fastest one-stop connection is via Dallas to Albuquerque with **American Airlines** (aa.com; 0845-7789-789) and takes about 13 hours. Renting a car is the best way to get around the state, which is bordered by Texas and Oklahoma to the east, Mexico to the south, Arizona to the west and Colorado to the north.

### GENERAL INFO

**Time difference:** GMT -7.

**Climate:** The state is renowned for its good weather, but temperatures and rainfall amounts vary because of the differences in altitude between the mountains and high desert plains. **Golf is year-round and average daily highs** in the Albuquerque area range from about 8°C in January to about 33°C in July.

**Information:** newmexico.org; **brochure line:** 01489-557534.

**For information on holiday packages contact 3D Golf 08701-200-300; 3dgolf.com**

### KEY ATTRACTIONS

■ The multi-storey adobe Taos Pueblo village has been continually inhabited for 1,000 years and is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Other pueblo villages include Acoma, also known as Sky City for its position on top of a 350ft mesa.



Roswell: not a streetlamp

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

### Fort Sumner State Monument

was the centre of a huge reservation where thousands of Navajo men, women and children were marched in the 1860s before returning to the homeland. It also marks the spot where Sheriff Pat Garrett killed outlaw **Billy the Kid in 1881**.

■ Albuquerque's historic Old Town buildings include the **1706 San Felipe de Neri church**.

■ Museums range from dinosaur displays at the **New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science** in Albuquerque to those chronicling the atom bomb story and space exploration, as well as the world's largest rattlesnake collection.

### FAMILY ACTIVITIES

■ The truth is out there. **Roswell's UFO museum** will delight everyone, while the streetlamps on the town's main road are alien-shaped.

■ **The Carlsbad Caverns**, in the state's south-east, are among the largest and most beautiful in the world. **A huge colony of bats flies out from the caves** at dusk.

■ Life in a Spanish settlement in the 17th and 18th centuries is depicted in the El Rancho do las Golondrinas Living History Museum near Santa Fe, while Albuquerque's Indian Pueblo Cultural Centre depicts **centuries of Pueblo Indian culture**.

■ The **Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad** takes you on a 64-mile ride through mountain scenery behind an 1880s locomotive train from Chama to Osier, Colorado.

### NEW MEXICO FACTS

■ The annual **Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta** is the world's largest balloon festival. More than 700 hot air and gas balloons take to the skies during the 10-day event each October.

■ The first **atomic explosion took place at Trinity Site**, between Socorro and Alamogordo, on July 16, 1945.

Twin Warriors, a potent mix of golf and 800-year-old Native American culture



less than \$35 to play on weekdays and below \$40 at weekends, with golf carts an extra \$10.50.

For high drama, The Lodge at Cloudcroft is the highest course in the state and one of the highest in the world, at 9,200ft up in the southern mountains. A nine-hole course, it plays 18 with two sets of tees and separate flags on each hole. Angel Fire Resort Golf Course, near ski resort Taos, is only slightly lower at 8,400ft. Golfers playing its signature par-3 6th hole tee off 200ft above the aspen-surrounded green.

UFO fans can hope for a close encounter when they play Roswell's Spring River Golf Club, while at the intriguingly-named town of Truth or Consequences golfers could be left pondering what might happen if they lie about their score on its nine-hole course.

Silver City, to its south, is famous for two Billies. It was the hometown of outlaw Billy the Kid and its 18-hole Scott Park Memorial Golf Course is the home course of PGA pro Billy Casper.

And at The Links at Sierra Blanca, in Ruidoso, avid sports lovers can combine a round in the morning with skiing in the afternoon in the nearby Ski Apache resort.

### WHERE TO PLAY

#### Paa-Ko Ridge Golf Club

7,562 yards, par 72  
\$57-\$71, carts \$18 per person

**Contact:** 00-1-866-898-5987  
paakoridge.com

*Challenging course in rugged mountain setting requiring plenty of strategy*

#### Twin Warriors Golf Club

7,736 yards, par 72  
\$100-\$145

**Contact:** 00-1-505-771-6155  
twinwarriorsgolf.com

*Desert gem where ancient culture comes to the fore*

#### Pinon Hills Golf Course

7,198 yards, par 72  
\$35-\$40, carts \$10.50 per person

**Contact:** 00-1-505-326-6066

fmrtn.org/pinonhills/  
*Great-value golf on one of America's top public courses, but mind the rocks*

#### Angel Fire Resort Golf Course and Country Club

6,641 yards, par 72  
\$54-\$62, carts \$15 per person

**Contact:** 00-1-505-377-3055

angelfireresort.com  
*High-altitude golf among aspen, spruce and pine canyons*

### WHERE TO STAY

#### Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa

**Contact:** 00-1-505-867-1234  
tamaya.hyatt.com

#### Angel Fire Resort Golf Course and Country Club

**Contact:** 00-1-505-377-3055  
angelfireresort.com