

# Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta

## October 2<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>

### TRIP INFO AND ITINERARY

Up, up and away go to the balloons into the New Mexico sky each October. Few spectacles on Earth rival the Mass Ascension, when hundreds of multi-colored balloons lift off from Balloon Fiesta Park to drift in the crisp early-morning high-desert air. We will see it in comfort from the Chasers Club, as well as enjoying the evening balloon glow with fireworks, a trip to Santa Fe and the culture/history of the Southwest.

#### Sunday - October 2nd

We meet at the airport for our early morning flight aboard Southwest Airlines heading non-stop to New Mexico, the Land of Enchantment! Upon arrival in Albuquerque, our local tour guide will meet us in the baggage claim area of the Albuquerque International Airport and lead us to our waiting motor coach. We begin our journey with a **driving tour of Route 66**, the fabled Mother Road. This highway carried countless Americans from Chicago to California and stretched over 20 miles through Albuquerque. After Route 66 was decommissioned, it is now known as Central Avenue, yet it remains a vibrant and fascinating blend of historic roadside architecture from the 1930's and 1940's.

Next, we visit the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of Pueblo Indian culture, history and art. The Center is committed to educating all generations of visitors and is your gateway to the lifeways and culture of the indigenous inhabitants of New Mexico. The Center has a museum, gallery and gift shop. The museum documents the origins, spoken traditions, arts & crafts and cultural development of the Pueblo Indians.

Enjoy some free time and lunch on your own in Old Town and explore hidden courtyards, stroll under covered portals and shop on your own at the many fine specialty stores and galleries around the Plaza. We then head towards our hotel, where we will **stay at the Marriot for all 4 nights**. You will have time to freshen up before we travel to Balloon Fiesta Park for the spectacle of the evening Glowdeo. During the glow, balloons inflate at dusk, remain tethered and light their burners in a synchronized fashion. The "glow" effect is created by the same burner system used in flight; however, pilots use various means to bypass the "pre-heat" coils on the burner. These coils help the burner work efficiently, but the flame is a dull blue and does not emit a lot of light. We have included admission to the **Chasers Club**, which provides us with **guaranteed seating in a private patio** located on the north end of Balloon Fiesta Park, as well as beverages, dessert and a hot food item. You can also explore the field and enjoy the offerings of the many concession stands. **(D at Chasers Club)**

#### Monday - October 3rd

Enjoy a free day to relax and recoup after yesterday's activities and our early morning flight. Our hotel has many amenities such as an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, fitness center and one of the top rated restaurants in town! You can also set up golf at a local course, take the "Breaking Bad" tour, visit the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History, go biking or hiking nearby. We can help set this up prior to departure or concierge at the hotel will also be willing to help upon arrival.

#### Tuesday - October 4th

We head out this morning to Santa Fe via the historic Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway. Encompassing some 15,000 square miles in the heart of central New Mexico, you will feel like you have stepped back in time as we head through the historic mining towns of Golden, Madrid and Cerrillos, whose mines once yielded gold, silver, lead, zinc and turquoise. During its heyday in the 1880's, Cerrillos boasted 21 saloons and 4 hotels!



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When we arrive in Santa Fe, we will be greeted by our friend, Clarice. A Texas native, Clarice moved to Santa Fe and has put on some amazing events, including celebrity weddings! Enjoy lunch in her home with live entertainment. She's showcasing her new Route 66 show with a singing trio! Her home has a highlight of our Route 66 tour, and after seeing her home and enjoying the incredible food, you will understand why! Then we will head out on a private tram tour. She'll give us the scoop on what his happening in Santa Fe, both historical and modern. After some time to explore Santa Fe, we return to our hotel in Albuquerque. **(B,L)**

### Wednesday - October 5th

We leave the hotel bright and early (Like 4:30a.m. Yikes!) to enjoy the Flight of the Nations Mass Ascension at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. Few spectacles on Earth rival the Mass Ascension of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, as upwards of 500 balloons lift off from Balloon Fiesta Park to drift in the crisp high-desert air of New Mexico. Ballooning enthusiasts from around the world converge on the Duke City each year to delight in the amazing range of balloons in every color, size and shape imaginable. As we have tickets to the Chasers club, we have guaranteed seating in a private patio located on the north end of Balloon Fiesta Park, as well as beverages, dessert and a hot food item.

The thermal currents above Albuquerque make for some of the finest ballooning conditions in the world. The famous "Albuquerque Box" effect enables pilots to ascend from the field, move with air currents at different altitudes and in different directions and even backtrack along their original course to land in the spot from which they originally started. This is easily one of the most photographed spectacles anywhere and it is also a great place to shop for souvenirs at a wide range of vendor booths.

**NOTE: BALLOON FIESTA IS A WEATHER-DEPENDENT EVENT.** While early October weather is generally ideal for hot-air ballooning, strong winds or storms may delay or cancel balloon events. October mornings in the high desert of New Mexico can be chilly so be sure to dress in layers for warmth and bring sunscreen for when the sun comes up. Average low temperature during October is 40F and average high is 71F, however, you will be out on the open field during the event so plan on cooler temperatures. It is recommended you bring a warm coat, gloves, hat and scarf.

After an incredible morning, we return to the hotel, where you have the remainder of the day at leisure. **(B at Chasers Club and Hotel)**

### Thursday - October 6th

It's time for us to ascend, this time by plane, not hot air balloon. We transfer to the Albuquerque International Airport and head back to Saint Louis. Thank you for traveling! **(B)**



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### Price Includes:

- Round Trip flights on Southwest - where bags fly free!
  - Round trip Airport shuttle between ABQ to the hotel
- Stay all 4 nights in Albuquerque Marriott - only unpack once!
  - A day in Santa Fe, where we dine in a private home
- Admission to the Glowdeo and Mass Ascension, with seating at the Chasers Club
  - 6 meals, including 4 Breakfasts, 1 Lunch and 1 Dinner
    - Visit the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
    - Tour of Santa Fe and Albuquerque's Route 66
      - Baggage Handling
      - Professional Tour Directors
- All gratuities including step-on guides, included meals, driver and director

### Pricing: (per person)

Single Occupancy:	\$1606
Double Occupancy:	\$1339
Triple Occupancy:	\$1275
Quad Occupancy:	\$1275

Make your reservation with a \$500 deposit per person plus Trip Cancellation and Interruption Insurance if you choose to take it. By purchasing this insurance when you make your initial deposit, you will be protected in case something happens before or during the tour that prevents you from traveling with the group, even if it is a pre-existing condition.

Balance on base tour price is due August 15, 2016, and no refunds will be given after that time except via Travel Insured Insurance. Balance on Optional Tours due at final payment, with no refunds after that time. Note this price reflects airfare when purchased at final payment. If you attempt to book after this date, there may be an increase in price or you may have to arrive on a separate flight.

