

A Few Santa Fe Recommendations: Wedding Edition!

After years of adding and barely editing this little email, I've put this guide into something a little more like order. I'd love to hear what you end up getting into, what surprises find you and what new spots compelled you. I spend a few weeks in Santa Fe each year—and was born and raised there—but some of my information may not be fully up-to-date. People talk about it as a magical place and they're right—let the strange magnetism of light and space guide your dérives. Among its many charms, the hills have gnarled, twisty, ancient streets making Santa Fe a great city to get lost in by foot, by car or by bike. Because it's wonderful and wondrous (in one way or another) to be outside just about all of the year (as a walker, wanderer, skier, hiker, fisher, painter, photographer, human animal more sensorial than censorious), the season can help decide what kind of things you want to see. This [60 year old guide](#) to the Historic Sites feels like a fun way to explore history twice. More germane to the moment, my sister wrote a guide to [Santa Fe for Vogue](#), which is just for you and everyone else.

Recommendations in **bold** are extra recommended.

Art/Museums:

[International Folk Art Museum](#) (and the other musea around there too, though this one is mindblowing and the Alexander Girard wing is legendary and an **absolute 100% must see**)
[Site Santa Fe](#) is a world-class non-collecting museum; the exhibitions are rotating but generally quite good. From the parking lot you can see the now shuttered Warehouse21, my teenage haunt, and across the street is the twice weekly Farmers' Market. It's also in the recently renovated Railyard District which has some good galleries; I particularly recommend the [Thoma Foundation's Art Vault Santa Fe](#), [TAI](#) and [El Museo Cultural](#).

[ICA Santa Fe](#) is a very exciting, new contemporary art space. Their programming is excellent.

[Museum of Contemporary Native Arts](#) is excellent

[Georgia O'Keefe Museum](#) (obv)

[Meow Wolf](#) (maximalist extra-dimensional fun house installation, best to see when they have concerts so that you can explore with fewer people around [and see a show])

[New Mexico Museum of Art](#), [New Mexico History Museum](#) and the [Palace of the Governors](#) are all right downtown

[CCA](#) (check to see what's up there; there used to be a James Turrell there so if you stand in the parking lot and look straight up, you get a little sense of his sense)

[Smoke the Moon](#) (is one of the few vital contemporary art spaces on Canyon Road, which is all galleries and very beautiful but not always the most interesting space for art art [let's say])

[Best Western](#) is another newish contemporary art gallery with interesting programming

[The Children's Museum](#) is an absolute delight if you are or have a child (in which case I would also rank MW as unmissable [and underline and bold and italicize the Folk Art Museum again]).

Outside:

Bandelier (and nearby Tsankawi)

Tent Rocks

Hiking near the ski basin (Aspen Vista)

Hiking up Atalaya or Sun Mountain

Diablo Canyon (the first fifth of the walk is truly mind-blowing, the *middle* 7/10th are a little tedious if still very beautiful, and the last 1/10th brings you to the river; depending on the weather, that second part is maybe less fun)

Abiquiu and Cochiti are both really lovely water zones

Hot Springs in Montezuma by the World College (also "dope af")

Ten Thousand Waves is an incredible (not cheap) spa zone

Ojo Caliente is really cool natural hot springs recently fancified but a pretty amazing treat

La Cieneguilla Petroglyph Zone

Puyé

Chimayó is a really lovely and funny little town with a Santuario filled with holy dirt—cures your ailments!

Food:

Breakfast (and beyond):

Tune Up (maybe my favorite place for any of the two to seven meals you might want a day)

The Pantry (unfussy classic, excellent red and green; best green chile stew)

Tia Sophia (super charmer downtown)

Café Fina (slightly out of town but excellent chile)

Dolinda (Slovakian classics alongside a top notch breakfast burrito)

Plaza Cafe (diner on the plaza, quite good!)

Pasquals (gussied up classic, excellent food and vibe with a wait)

Lunch/Dinner:

The Shed (touristy but has amazing red chile; amazing posole) and its sister resto **La Choza**

Santa Fe Bite or **Shake Foundation** for a green chile cheeseburger

Tune Up (again. neighborhood joint)

Jambo! (top notch Afro-Caribbean)

Paloma (hip new Mexican [not New Mexican] spot with great food, on the pricey side)

Izanami (wildly expensive and delicious Japanese spot at Ten Thousand Waves; great splurge)

Tomasitas (classic New Mexican joint yum yum yum)

Posa's (great tamales)

Café Castro (great New Mexican)

Harry's Roadhouse (local fave, great pie)

The Cowgirl is a good spot for BBQ, karaoke, its eclectic crowd and a couple drinks

Paper Dosa (south Indian food)

Some Great Food Trucks: El Chile Toreado, **Santa Femous Street Eats**, Fusion Tacos, Craft Donuts, **Pupuseria Y Lonchera La Providencia**, **Saya's Frybread & Indian Tacos**

Bars:

La Reina (hip newer spot in a converted motel; I quite like it even as I make the joke that you can plug into your GPS "the geographic center between Joshua Tree and Marfa")

Matador and **Evangelos** are across the street from each other and great, funny, weird **dive** bars

Secreto is a bit more upscale, quite lovely; I get the sage margarita usually because it's fun to see a tiny fire inside

Cowgirl and **Tiny's** are two top karaoke zones and spots to tip a few back (is that the phrase?)

Coffee, etc.:

Betterday (third wave regular, very near good new vintage place, great Co-Op and a hard Kombucherie/venue)

Kakawa is an amazing chocolatier, especially recommend the drinking chocolates

Iconik (the one on Lena St. is also right by **Bread Shop**, a great bakery run by friends)

CrashMurderBusiness is very imaginative and run by a childhood friend

Downtown Subscription (standard spot for boomers and where many pals worked as kids, it's next to a cute shop Folklore and a good bookstore Garcia Street Books and in one of my favorite places to walk around, the east side)

Java Joe's

The Farmers' Market (in the railyard zone) is charming and funny and delicious and a great place to people watch in the way that farmers' markets are. You might already be there.

Books and Records

Books of Interest (owned by local poet Leo Romero, who's had a half dozen little bookstores over the years, good art and poetry selection; next to a great place for herbs [Herbs Etc.] and thrift store [PMS Thrift] where my grandmother used to volunteer)

Lost Padre Records

The Ark (obscure, arcana, new age, old age, spiritualities, tarot, very woo in a classic Santa Fe way)

OpCit (used books, last time I was there there were litera(ri)ly higher and stackier stacks than I'd ever seen in my life; architectural, epic)

Garcia Street and Collected Works (both good bookstores in a more conventional way)

Photo Eye (great photography bookshop and gallery)

Book Mountain (paperbacks only, a kind of monument to a certain kind of reading)

A little bit out of town:

El Parasol in Española

Tesuque Village Market

Mine Shaft in Madrid (now a tourist town)

Mary's Bar in Cerrillos (great hikes near there and a really cool museum / petting zoo in town, not always open though)

San Marcos (on highway 14 — decent food and PEACOCKS that are so fun to be near)

You can visit my parents' old store, **Spirit of the Earth**, which still has lots of my dad's jewelry and was just bought by some younger hipper types. The fajitas stand on the plaza is good and it's nice to wander around downtown. Lots of stores, some of which are really amazing

(**Shiprock, Earthfire Gems, Alla Books, Seret and Sons, Doodlet's, Keshi, TradeRoots**) and some of which aren't.

The **SUNSET** is always amazing. The Cross of the Martyrs is a great spot to watch it. I have other secret spots, but basically would just recommend getting high (geographically) and looking west, which the foothills offer lots of opportunities for.

Canyon Road is all galleries, mostly terrible, but a cute walk. El Farol at the end and a nice place for a cold one or some tapa\$; across the street is the Tea House for a cup of tea or short respite.

Depending on how you're willing to go, there are many, many amazing zones within a few hours.

I think driving around Santa Fe — getting lost on the east side or on Agua Fria or out Old Santa Fe Trail and up the mountains — is about as nice a way to exist as there is.

No Name Cinema (exciting new microcinema), **CCA** and Jean Cocteau are nice places to see good films.

The Santa Fe Reporter and Pasatiempo have good weekly events listings.

I'm also genuinely ecstatic to offer **any** more specific recommendations (honey sticks? dog parks? artisanal brandy? birdfeed? cat-supporting thrift shop? antiquarian books?), just text me 505-690-7899 (or email me, jesse.malmed@gmail.com but actually definitely just text me) and I'm happy to help.