**Southern New Mexico - East to West**

**DAY 1**
Depart El Paso, Texas International Airport and transfer to Carlsbad via Carlsbad Caverns National Park. A UNESCO World Heritage site, this area has a rich and diverse history dating back to prehistoric and Native American cultures. The temperature in the caverns stays a mild 56 degrees year-round.

Have lunch and then spend a delightful afternoon at Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park, an indoor/outdoor living museum featuring flora and fauna of the Chihuahuan Desert.

♦ Enjoy dinner, a cruise down the Pecos River and overnight in Carlsbad.

**DAY 2**
Transfer to Roswell, world renowned for the “Roswell Incident” and its International UFO Museum and Research Center. Keeping with the space theme, be sure to see the re-creation of Robert Goddard’s workshop and namesake planetarium at the Roswell Museum and Art Center.

En route west, make a stop at the beautiful Hondo Iris Farm and next-door at the Peter Hurd Gallery to see works by the America artist, apprentice to and family of Andrew Wyeth.

Step back in time at the Lincoln State Monument. Start at the museum for an overview then move on to the courthouse from where Billy the Kid made his last great escape.

Smokey Bear State Park & Museum in Capitan, where in the nearby mountains, a badly burned bear cub was found clinging to a tree. “Smokey” became a national symbol of fire prevention and is interred at this State Park.

Complete your day’s sightseeing with Fort Stanton State Monument, historic home of Kit Carson, Black Jack Pershing and the Buffalo Soldiers.

Dinner and entertainment at Flying J Ranch and overnight in Ruidoso.

**DAY 3**
In Ruidoso visit the Hubbard Museum of the American West featuring over 10,000 equine artifacts including a sculpture of art and engineering featuring 8 bronze horses balanced on one hoof.

Move from the mountains to the high desert town of Alamogordo for lunch and a visit to the home of the New Mexico Museum of Space History. Exhibits include Robert Goddard’s early rocket experiments and a mock-up of the International Space Station. The museum is also home to New Mexico’s only IMAX Theater and houses a Planetarium.

White Sands National Monument is 275 square miles of surreal white gypsum dunes.

Dinner and overnight in Las Cruces.

**DAY 4**
Las Cruces boasts 350 days of sunshine allowing visitors to enjoy a wide variety of attractions and outdoor activities any time of year. Start in Historic Mesilla, site of the Gadsden Purchase and Butterfield Stage stop, where Billy the Kid was held behind bars and today shops, restaurants, entertainment and more make this charming plaza a pleasant place to pass the afternoon. After an authentic lunch including some locally grown green chiles, tour the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum. This interactive facility and working ranch tells the 3,000 year story of agriculture in New Mexico through indoor and outdoor exhibits.

Travel west through Deming, home of the Great American Duck Race, to City of Rocks State Park with its 35 million year old geologic formations.

Silver City, once a bustling copper mining town, has today a charming downtown arts district filled with antiques, coffee shops, galleries and restaurants and bars.
DAY 5
Explore the Gila High Country. Wind through one of the largest national forests to the Gila Cliff Dwellings, impressive structures built into the mountainside that sheltered the Mogollon people from approximately 1280 to 1300 (road appropriate for smaller vehicles only).

Return to Silver City and head for the Gila's other main attraction, the Catwalk National Recreation Trail. Whitewater Canyon was used by both Geronimo and Butch Cassidy's gang as a hideout. The Catwalk got its name in 1890 from the narrow path built along a pipeline that supplied water to the mining town of Graham.

See the general store, mercantile, saloon and theater of Mogollon ghost town (this road also for smaller vehicles only).

Very Large Array is comprised of 27 radio antennas spread over 22 miles that are able to detect extremely faint radio emissions from the distant stars. Visitor center informs guests about radio astronomy and the future of this science.

Socorro is home to San Miguel Mission, built in 1891 on the same site as the original mission from 1627. Visit the historic plaza, arrange a star party, have dinner at Socorro Springs Brewery.

DAY 6
Take a Preview Tour of Spaceport America, the world's first purpose-built spaceport and see Virgin Galactic's Gateway to Space, launching the future of space commerce and travel.

Peruse the funky downtown of Truth or Consequences, the Geronimo Springs Museum or soak in one of its hot mineral springs.

Return to Las Cruces for last-minute gift shopping and farewell New Mexico dinner.

DAY 7
Depart for home

ADDITIONAL SITES OF INTEREST

Guadalupe Mountains National Park (100 miles north of El Paso) – The park features multiple zones of biodiversity as its range climbs to the highest point in Texas at 8,700 feet.

White Sands Missile Range Museum (25 miles east of Las Cruces) – Find out how the atomic age began and trace the origin of America's missile and space activity. The missile park outside the museum displays several rockets and weapons tested at White Sands and used by the Department of Defense.

Three Rivers Petroglyph Park (35 miles north of Alamogordo) – One of the largest and most interesting petroglyph sites in the southwest with over 21,000 glyphs created by Jornada Mogollon people between 900 and 1400 AD.

Cloudcroft (16 miles east of Alamogordo) - Established in 1899 as a logging and railroad mecca, the town soon courted tourism and remains today a relaxing and quaint mountain getaway.

Sunspot National Solar Observatory (17 miles south of Cloudcroft) – Dedicated to the study and science of the sun since 1997.

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (20 miles south of Socorro) – Driving and walking tours provide visitors with a full range of wildlife viewing and photo opportunities. Winter is the best time to visit when bald eagles and thousands of sandhill cranes and snow geese make the refuge home. Make plans to attend the annual “Festival of Cranes” in November.

Rock Hound State Park (13 miles south of Deming) – A treasure trove of geologic evidence in the form of minerals and semi-precious stones that can be found and kept.

Shakespeare Ghost Town (Lordsburg) – The perfect mid-way point between Las Cruces and Tucson, original structures still stand at the 1858 town site.

Elephant Butte Lake State Park (Truth or Consequences) – Visit the largest lake in New Mexico for boat rentals and recreation opportunities.

ENHAANCE YOUR VISIT:
Let us arrange guided tours, demonstrations or living history at one or more of your stops. (Additional fees may apply)

FINE TUNE YOUR ITINERARY:
Build it around one of our ongoing or annual events. For a complete list, visit our Calendar of Events link on our web site at exploreLasCruces.com

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