

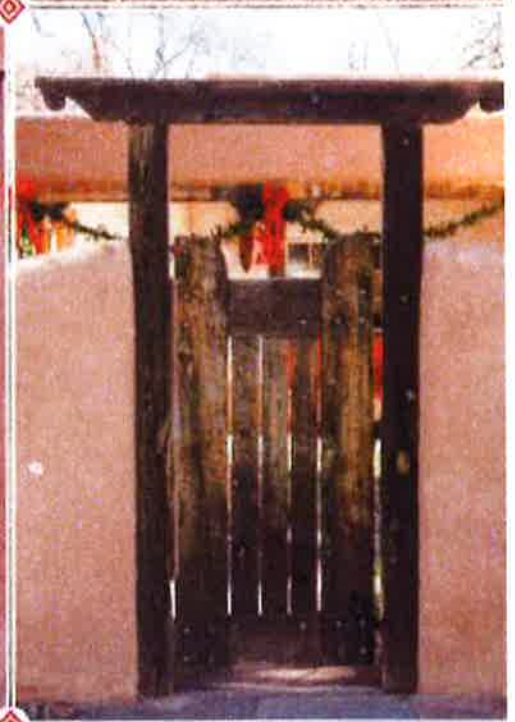
Christmas

in Santa Fe

This charming Southwestern town is a dreamy holiday getaway.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELLA MARKS

Anyone who lives in Santa Fe, NM, will tell you that it's a magical place, and at no time is that more true than around Christmas. Farolitos (paper-bag lanterns) line the rooftop of nearly every building, casting a soft glow over the town, and almost everyone with a fireplace burns piñon wood, filling the air with a spicy, woody scent. The city has deep Native American, Mexican and Spanish roots, and during the holidays you can bet that whatever food you taste—tamales smothered in green chile sauce, cinnamon-dusted biscochitos (traditional Christmas cookies)—will be memorable. Here's where to eat and what to do on a Santa Fe holiday.



Doors all over town are dressed for the holidays with wreaths, ribbons and ristras (hanging arrangements of dried chiles).

What to Do

MUSEUM HILL

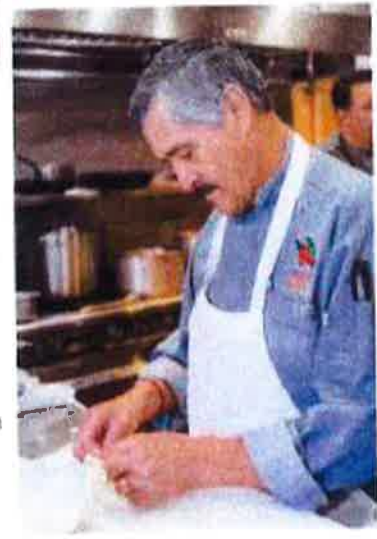
This spot on Camino Lejo is named for its concentration of public art spaces, including the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, the Museum of International Folk Art and the Santa Fe Botanical Garden. Many venues celebrate the holidays with free workshops, open houses and parties. At the botanical garden, make sure to stop by Glow, a nightly light show. museumhill.net; santafebotanicalgarden.org

SANTA FE FARMERS' MARKET

Local growers set up stalls at the farmers' market every Saturday throughout the winter, but between Thanksgiving and Christmas, vendors also sell homemade items, including yarn, wreaths, soap and baked goods. santafefarmersmarket.com

SANTA FE SCHOOL OF COOKING

New Mexico is the land of green chiles, and you'll learn all about them at this culinary school. Look for special holiday classes starting in November that cover tamales, posole, chile sauce and other Christmas dinner essentials. santafeschoolofcooking.com





PLAZA SHOPPING

The area around the Plaza in Santa Fe's downtown is home to dozens of first-rate boutiques. Topping the list is Shiprock, a loft-like gallery that sells blankets, rugs, jewelry and pottery from the Navajo and other Southwestern Native American tribes. Across the street is the Palace of the Governors, where American Indian artists from local pueblos sell authentic jewelry, pottery and artwork for unbelievably fair prices. shiprockSantaFe.com, nmhistorymuseum.org



LAS POSADAS

The whole town turns out for this holiday event, held on the second Sunday of December, to watch actors playing Joseph and Mary search for a place where Mary can give birth. Join the throngs for a candlelit procession around the Plaza, then catch the grand finale at the Palace of the Governors, where musicians play Christmas carols and everyone gets a cup of hot cocoa. nmhistorymuseum.org



MEOW WOLF: HOUSE OF ETERNAL RETURN

Part art installation and part fun house, the House of Eternal Return is a Victorian mansion with a fictional backstory: The family who lived there disappeared after conducting an experiment that opened the house to other dimensions. Kids will go nuts for the zany rooms and secret passages, and adults can try to figure out just what happened. meowwolf.com

Where to Eat



DR. FIELD GOODS KITCHEN

Three notes about our visit here: The servers were tattooed, there was monster-truck racing on TV and the food was totally delicious. The chef sources most ingredients from local farmers, and the meat comes from the restaurant's butcher shop a few doors down. Don't miss the *Pizza de Gallo*, which is fired in a wood-burning oven built by the chef. drfieldgoods.com



ELÓISA

The food at Elóisa looks like a work of art, which makes sense considering chef John Rivera Sedlar's great aunt was Georgia O'Keefe's private chef for more than 15 years. Call ahead for the five-course O'Keefe tasting menu featuring ingredients the artist loved, like lamb and watercress. Or try a high-end take on tacos, stuffed with crispy pastrami or other unexpected fillings. eloisasantofe.com



SANTACAFÉ

This Santa Fe mainstay (run by a chef who won an episode of *Chopped*) explores all sorts of cuisines, including Southwestern and Asian. Come for Sunday brunch—the mascarpone-stuffed French toast is out of this world—or for happy hour, when favorites like the dumplings are a steal. On Christmas, the restaurant serves a holiday menu. santacafe.com



THE TEAHOUSE

Canyon Road is home to more than 80 galleries, and on Christmas Eve the street is lined with *farolitos* (also called luminarias). Before joining the crowds on the *Farelo Walk*, warm up with a specialty latte at this cozy café on the trail. Also on the menu, soups, salads and hearty comfort food. teahousesantofe.com



C.G. HIGGINS

This jewel box of a candy shop right off the Plaza specializes in sweets with a Southwestern twist, such as chile truffles, spicy Mexican cocoa and chile caramel corn. During the holidays, look for gingerbread- and peppermint-flavored chocolates and festive drinks, like eggnog lattes. [cgHiggins.com](http://cg Higgins.com)



TIA SOPHIA'S

This no-frills diner has been a Santa Fe institution since 1975, drawing hordes of locals for breakfast and lunch with classic northern New Mexican dishes (green chile stew, carne adovada, blue-corn pancakes). It's the ideal spot to try chile sauce, a Southwestern staple that's ladled over eggs, burritos and enchiladas. You'll be asked if you want red or green chile; if you want both, ask for "Christmas." tiasophias.com

Toast the Holidays!

Here's where to go for a festive cocktail.



SECRETO LOUNGE

Santa Fe was the first American city to import tequila from Mexico, and the town takes its margaritas seriously. At this candid bar in Hotel St. Francis, the drink is made with a smoked sage leaf. hotelstfrancis.com



GRUET WINERY

This well-known sparkling wine producer opened a tasting room in Santa Fe last year. Pull up a seat at the marble-topped bar for a flight (four vintages for \$16) or try a bubbly cocktail. gruetwinery.com



SANTA FE SPIRITS TASTING ROOM

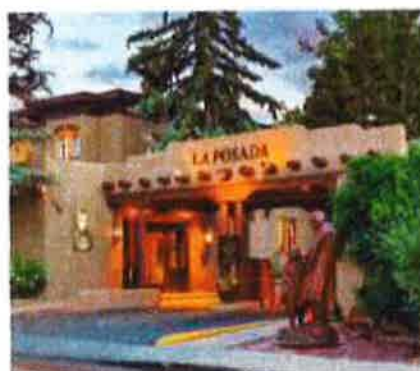
You'll be full of holiday spirit after a trip to this bar, an outpost of New Mexico's largest distillery. Get a pre-dinner cocktail made with the signature white whiskey, or try the Arapaho, a liqueur made from pine nuts and ponderosa pine sap. santafespirits.com

Where to Stay



LA FONDA ON THE PLAZA

The most centrally located of Santa Fe's hotels lit's right on the Plaza downtown. La Fonda pays homage to the area's artists by featuring local artwork and hand-painted headboards in every room. After checking in, explore the lobby, home to a lively bar and restaurant and more than a dozen small boutiques selling Southwestern crafts, home goods, clothing and jewelry. From \$239 per night. lafondasantafe.com



LA POSADA DE SANTA FE

La Posada is like a private village in the center of Santa Fe. Spread over more than six acres downtown are nearly 90 adobe casitas, each with two or three guest rooms, and most have their own patio or deck overlooking the gardens and terra-cotta pathways. The main house was built in the 1880s by a wealthy merchant; if you're brave, stay in suite 100, which is supposedly haunted by the (benevolent) ghost of his wife. From \$156 per night. loposadadesantafe.com



ROSEWOOD INN OF THE ANASAZI

This luxurious boutique hotel feels especially festive during the holidays. The entrance is lined with twinkling lights, the lobby is home to a giant Christmas tree and local musicians play Christmas music in the lounge on Saturday evenings. Do yourself a favor and book a table here for a fancy Christmas dinner—you'll be served decadent versions of gnocchi, grilled shrimp and gingerbread. From \$275 per night. rosewoodhotels.com