



FALL USPA FLY-IN TO LOS ALAMOS, NM 27-30 SEPTEMBER 2018 By Spencer Hamons

Los Alamos is associated with some great history, and mentioning the name often elicits visions of teams of scientists working on The Manhattan Project and secret projects that helped the United States emerge victorious in World War II. While many of our members will be attending the Los Alamos Fly-in this September, this story is part of the allure. However, Northern New Mexico has a lot to offer members with other interests as well, and some of these may intrigue you enough to encourage you to add a day or two to your trip, or arrive early because the same room rate will apply.

Because of the unique landing configuration at Los Alamos, combined with the nuances of mountain flying, many participants of the fly-in will likely arrive in Santa Fe and drive to Los Alamos. Take advantage of this opportunity and explore the highest elevation capital city in the United States. Santa Fe is well known for its Spanish influenced food, beautiful historic churches, as well as visual and literary arts. An evening in Santa Fe with a stroll around the Plaza and Palace of the Governors, concluded with a margarita or sangria is well worth your time.

Just 27 nautical miles north of Los Alamos is the town of Taos, New Mexico, home of the Taos Pueblo UNESCO World Heritage Site, and some of the best art museums in the country, including the Harwood Museum of Art, the Millicent Rogers Museum, and Georgia O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch just south of town. River rafting, golf, and other outdoor activities are popular in the summertime, including a moderately difficult hike to the top of Wheeler Peak, the highest mountain in New Mexico at 13,161 feet.

For those with some mountain flying experience, Angel Fire is another adventure waiting for you just 29 nautical miles northeast of Los Alamos. The airfield in Angel Fire sits at 8,382' and is capable of landing larger aircraft with its 8,900' x 100' asphalt runway. However, this airport can be tricky during the heat of the day with gusty crosswinds and density altitudes in excess of 10,500'. Activities in Angel Fire include high mountain golf (your drive just goes on forever), mountain biking where you put a rental bike on a chairlift and ride down over 50 miles of bike trails, ziplining, and trout fishing. Angel Fire Resort has plenty of housing, and VRBO and other home sharing accommodations are popular in the area.

For those who may elect to participate in this event, but need to fly commercial, Albuquerque International Sunport is less than an hour's drive from Santa Fe and offers competitive flight rates from all the major airlines. For those who may want to fly to Albuquerque on their own, the airspace is Class C, easy to navigate, and the controllers are friendly. Rental cars are readily available in Albuquerque for the drive to Santa Fe and on to Los Alamos. For those history buffs wanting to learn all they can

about how Los Alamos contributed to the U.S. victory in WWII, the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History is located northeast of the Albuquerque airfield.

There is not enough room here to present all the unique things to do in the area, but visitors will not be disappointed with the sheer variety of offerings within a short flight. As already mentioned, this part of the country, while often associated with the idea of the "high-desert", can be tricky to fly in. Airfields in the area are at high elevations (meaning density altitude issues), and because of rising terrain, not all are oriented to take advantage of prevailing winds. Santa Fe Regional Airport (KSAF), the largest in Northern New Mexico has a field elevation of 6,348', and boasts two runways (the third is currently closed). Taos (KSKX) is at 7,096', and boasts two runways, one of which has been open less than a year. Angel Fire (KAXX), is the highest airfield in New Mexico at 8,382', but has a single 8,900' x 100' runway. For those looking to get some mountain flying experience, the New Mexico Pilot's Association is offering a Mountain Flying Clinic in Santa Fe from September 13th through 16th. The New Mexico Pilot's Association Mountain Flying Clinic info is at http://www.nmpilots.org/registration.asp?event_id=mtnfly2018. For those that would like to arrange for private mountain flying instruction, Michael Szczepanski, owner of New Mexico Sport Aviation is an excellent local instructor with all of the gear to facilitate safe mountain instruction. Michael's website is: <http://www.nmsportaviation.com> and his email is michael@nmsportaviation.com. Phone is 505.490.6222. He is out of Santa Fe.

Finally, don't forget to bring a jacket. In September, average highs in the area will likely be in the mid-to-upper 70's, and depending on how far north you go, evening lows can range from the low 50's to the upper 20's. While I wish there were more room here to provide more details, feel free to contact me directly with your questions. I will do my absolute best to respond to you quickly with any details that can make your trip to New Mexico more enjoyable. Feel free to contact me at spencer.hamons@hotmail.com or contact my mobile at 575.770.4976.

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Registration information will be posted at www.uspilots.org as it is developed. Plan to join us on this interesting flyin.

Jan Hoynacki, Executive Director
USPA

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