

50 HIKES IN THE LOS ALAMOS AREA

Spring 2012

Many years ago, Frances Arnold, Carol Carlson, and Maxine Ellis created a *50 Hikes* trail list for friends who wanted to explore our beautiful mesas, canyons, and mountains. The Santa Fe National Forest later adopted the list as a convenience for visitors. Despite subsequent publication of a number of hiking books for the area, the list still serves its purpose as a quick introduction to the east side of the Jemez Mountains. As years go by, changing conditions require that the list be revised periodically. This edition of 2012, updated by Dorothy Hoard and Craig Martin, reflects changes wrought by the catastrophic Cerro Grande Fire of 2000 and the Las Conchas Fire of 2011 that ravaged the mountains behind Los Alamos.

Most of these hikes are easy to find and follow, but some are in rugged areas. Always prepare appropriately. Tell someone where you are going, be ready for changes in the weather, carry **WATER** and gear and equipment appropriate for the hike. Any good hiking book has excellent tips on hiker safety.

All hikes on the list are on public land and reached from a paved or good gravel road. Do not trespass on Pueblo property, National Laboratory restricted areas, or private property. Various area maps are available from the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce, Bandelier National Monument, Forest Service, Otowi Station at the Bradbury Science Museum, and local bookstores. Trails with numbers are Forest Service trails. For more information, call the Forest Service office in Los Alamos (667-5120) on Monday, Wednesday or Friday; the Española office (753-7331 or 438-7801) Monday through Friday; or the Jemez Ranger Station (829-3535 or 438-7694) in Jemez Springs; and Bandelier National Monument at 672-3861, ext. 517.

This guide presumes you have a highway map and a copy of the free *Los Alamos Visitors Guide* with the excellent map insert.

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Ratings—*Easy*: usually a dirt road, level or with gentle grades. *Moderate*: a good trail with only few rocky and/or steep sections, *Difficult*: steep, rocky, and/or indistinct in places.

Average time—morning hike: return by noon; all day hike: return before 5:00; long day hike: return after 5:00

Type—One way: other routes available at end of listed trail. Round trip: up and back the same way; no other options. Loop: return to a trailhead without repeating most segments. May involve a car shuttle.

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3.	Aquatic Center to Pueblo Canyon	0.6	one way	Moderate
4.	Pueblo Canyon Loop	6.5	round trip	Moderate
5.	Canyon Rim Trail	1.5	one way	Easy
6.	Bayo Canyon Loop	4.5	loop	Moderate
7.	Deer Trap Mesa Natural Park	2	round trip	Moderate
8.	Townsite Perimeter Trail	5	one way	Moderate
9.	Natural Arch	1	one way	Difficult
10.	Mitchell Trail to Guaje Ridge	2.6	one way	Difficult
11.	Guaje Ridge Trail	5.3	one way	Difficult
12.	Cave of the Winds	1.5	one way	Moderate
13.	Ski Hill to Cañada Bonita	2	one way	Easy
14.	Ski Hill to Los Alamos	9.5	one way	Moderate
15.	Caballo Mountain	7.5	one way	Difficult
16.	Pajarito Canyon-Nail Trail	1.9	one way	Moderate
17.	Valle Canyon	3.2	one way	Moderate
18.	Water Canyon	0.7	one way	Moderate

19.	Anniversary Trail	1.5	one way	Moderate
20.	Camp Hamilton Trail	1.2	one way	Moderate

White Rock and the Rio Grande

No.	Name	Miles		Rating
21.	White Rock Canyon Rim Trail	3	one way	Easy
22.	Blue Dot Trail	1	one way	Difficult
23.	Red Dot Trail and Pajarito Springs	1.5	one way	Difficult
24.	White Rock Canyon River Trail	3.5	one way	Difficult
25.	Potrillo Canyon to White Rock Overlook	2	one way	Moderate
26.	Lower Water Canyon	1.5	one way	Moderate
27.	Powerline Mesa	2	one way	Easy
28.	Ancho Rapids	3.5	one way	Difficult

Bandelier National Monument

No.	Name	Miles		Rating
29.	Tsankawi	2	loop	Difficult
30.	Amphitheater to Tyuonyi Overlook	2.4	loop	Easy
31.	Frey Trail to Visitor Center	2	one way	Moderate
32.	Visitor Center to Alcove House	1	one way	Easy
33.	Visitor Center to Upper Falls Overlook	3	round trip	Moderate
34.	Visitor Center to Frijolito	0.75	one way	Difficult
35.	Visitor Center to Lower Alamo Canyon	6	one way	Difficult
36.	Ponderosa to Yapashi to Visitor Center	13	loop	Difficult
37.	Visitor Center to Painted Cave Loop	10.7	one way	Difficult
38.	Burnt Mesa	4	round trip	Easy
39.	Ponderosa Campground to Upper Crossing	2	one way	Moderate
40.	Ponderosa Campground to Visitor Center	8	one way	Moderate

Jemez Mountains

No.	Name	Miles		Rating
41.	Forest Road #181 to Water Canyon	1.5	one way	Moderate
42.	Cerro Grande	4	round trip	Difficult
43.	Alamo Boundary Trail	1	one way	Easy
44.	Valle Grande Trail	2	round trip	Moderate
45.	Coyote Call Trail	2.7	loop	Moderate
46.	Obsidian Ridge	2	one way	Easy
47.	East Fork of the Jemez River	2	round trip	Moderate
48.	East Fork Trailhead to Jemez River	1.5	one way	Difficult
49.	Jemez Falls to Battleship Rock	4	one way	Difficult
50.	Cañon de San Diego Overlook	0.5	loop	Easy

Los Alamos

- 1. Pueblo Bridges Loop**
Morning hike—2 mile loop. Moderate
A spectacular walk in the middle of town! From the big parking lot at the intersection of Orange (off Diamond Drive at the High School) and Olive streets at the Pajarito Environmental Education Center, walk down Olive Street (closed to vehicular traffic) into Pueblo Canyon. Turn left onto the first dirt road just before reaching a large clearing. Skirt along the trail on the west edge of the clearing to the rim of the inner canyon and cross Pueblo Bridge. Turn left and walk the North Pueblo Bench Trail up-canyon to Homestead Bridge. The trail gets a bit rough crossing some small drainages. Cross Homestead Bridge, turn left and follow the South Pueblo Bench Trail back to Olive Street.
- 2. East Fork Walnut Canyon to Aquatic Center**
Morning hike—3.5 miles one way. Moderate
This semi-wilderness walk traverses the geographic center of Los Alamos townsite. Park along San Ildefonso Road (North Mesa side) on the wide shoulder south of the Diamond Drive roundabout. Walk in on the gravel utility road toward the golf course. Within a couple hundred feet, take the unmarked trail that leads left into the pine forest. Turn left at the intersection with the Walnut Canyon Rim Trail. At the rim of the East Fork, take the steps leading into the canyon, then head downstream. Watch on the right for a narrow, but definitely constructed, trail. Climb out toward the pipeline crossing the little side canyon. Turn left (downstream) and follow the trail over to the utility road. Where the road divides, take the upper (right) branch. At Pueblo Canyon, turn right and follow the North Pueblo Bench Trail up the canyon. Cross Pueblo Bridge and go left through a large clearing, then bear left to pick up the dirt road to the point of the mesa. Turn right and follow the trail into Acid Canyon, crossing a bridge to another dirt road. Jog right, then a quick left for a steep ascent to the Aquatic Center on a pretty trail, or turn right and follow the dirt road to the parking lot on the rim.
- 3. Aquatic Center to Pueblo Canyon**
Morning hike—0.6 mile one way. Moderate
This trail is historic, built by Los Alamos Ranch School students in the 1920s. Watch for the fine drywall stone masonry in the lower canyon. Drive to the Aquatic Center at the intersection of Central Avenue and Canyon Road downhill from the library. The trailhead is at the end of the sidewalk left of the entrance to the Aquatic Center. Follow the trail to the rim and descend into Acid Canyon. Where the trail divides halfway down the slope, take the right branch, the Ranch School Trail. Follow the trail along the level bench to main Acid Canyon, where the trail descends toward Pueblo Canyon, a massive gash separating Los Alamos central core from the residential areas to the north. At the stream crossing, it's best to return the same way. The alternatives are either very steep or very long.
- 4. Pueblo Canyon Loop**
Day hike—6.5 miles round trip. Moderate
Grand loop centering on Pueblo Canyon, the main drainage through town. Start at the aquatic center and head down the Ranch School Trail. Before dropping into the narrow part of Acid Canyon, turn right on the Pueblo Canyon Rim Trail. In just over a mile, climb the Graduation Canyon Trail to the paved Los Alamos Mesa Trail. Turn left, picking up the dirt continuation of the Pueblo Canyon Rim Trail in a half mile. Traverse along the north edge of the airport, then drop on the switchbacks of the Zipline Trail to the Tent Rocks Trail. Turn left and at the end of the trail, turn left onto the Pueblo Canyon Road. In two miles, climb the Ranch School Trail back to the trailhead.
- 5. Canyon Rim Trail**
Morning hike—1.5 miles one way. Easy
A paved pathway on the north rim of Los Alamos Canyon. The trail is an easy stroll year-round and offers long-range views along the entire length. The west trailhead is located at East Park on SR 502 near downtown. The east trailhead is across from the Entrada business park near the eastern county line. Walk from either trailhead and return by the same route, or connect with the Los Alamos Mesa/Pueblo Canyon Rim Trail at East Park and make a loop by traveling along the north side of the airport.
- 6. Bayo Canyon Loop**
Day hike—4.5 mile loop. Moderate
Great views of Bayo Canyon toward the end of the mesa; the trail is level and wide, but with sheer cliffs on the canyon side. Watch children!! Start at the parking area at the Diamond Drive/San Ildefonso Road roundabout. Head into Bayo Canyon. Bear left at the first junction to remain on the Barranca Mesa side. Follow the trail along the foot of the cliff to the end of the mesa. This part is level and easy for children. A steep trail continues down the left (north) side of the mesa into Bayo Canyon. At the bottom of the canyon, the trail crosses the wash to the dirt road on the North Mesa side, where an old homestead wagon road angles up the canyon wall to loop back to Diamond Drive.

7. Deer Trap Mesa Natural Park
Morning hike—2 miles round trip. Moderate
Start at the end of Barranca Road on Barranca Mesa. Cross the narrow neck of Deer Trap Mesa; this requires a bit of scrambling down Ancestral Pueblo steps. The deer trap is that rectangular hole carved into the tuff at the little saddle. Continue east (away from the road) and climb up onto the level mesa top. Follow the trail straight out to the point for a wonderful view of the Jemez Mountains and the Rio Grande Valley.
8. Townsite Perimeter Trail
Morning hikes—5 miles one way. Easy to moderate
Sections of Los Alamos were severely burned in the fire of 2000. Parts of this trail have nice examples of landscape recovering after a fire and some good views of the town. The Perimeter Trail extends around Los Alamos townsite from Guaje Pines Cemetery to Quemazon Communities. There are several access points: Rendija wash behind Guaje Pines Cemetery; the Mitchell Trailhead at Arizona and 45th; and Pipeline Road accessed from Quemazon Road at Torreón. Pipeline Road is one-way, paved just to the top of the steep slope. The Perimeter Trail nears the road on the right just beyond the pavement. The trail continues south of Pipeline Road to Ridgeway Dr. near the intersection of Sandia and 49th, but becomes steep and rocky. Most of the trail contours in and out of little drainages, but much of it is level. The trail is popular with mountain bikers.
9. Forest Trail #69 Mitchell Trail to Natural Arch
Morning climb—1 mile one way. Very difficult
This area was severely burned in the fire of 2000. The fire cleared away the trees so you can see the arch from the canyon floor. Even before the fire, the trail to the arch was a challenging hike. From the Mitchell Trailhead on Arizona Ave near the Yucca/45th/46th intersection, hike up the trail. Cross the dirt road and continue on the trail into Rendija Canyon. Follow the trail as it parallels the main wash and watch for a trail that climbs up the slope on the right that is usually marked with a large cairn. As this trail levels out, a primitive trail goes up the rough, rocky gully on the right. Some rock cairns and yellow dots try to help lead you. Just climb where it appears other people have scrambled. The arch is on the spine of the ridge at the top of the gully. Keep looking to the left, back behind the boulders when you reach the rim. The reward is a great view of town.
10. Forest Trail #69, Mitchell Trail to Guaje Ridge
Day hike—2.6 miles one way. Difficult
This area was severely burned in the fire of 2000; you may encounter newly fallen trees across the trail. Great views of Los Alamos from fire-scarred hillsides. Take the Mitchell Trail (See Hike 9) into Rendija Canyon and follow it upstream. In 1.1 miles, the trail turns right and climbs steeply out of the wash up onto a narrow ridgeline, then angles across the mountain slope to the Guaje Ridge Trail #285. Best to return the way you came. If you turn left, it is a long way to Pajarito Mountain Ski Area, 4.3 miles away. It is even more rugged if you turn right to Guaje Pines Cemetery, 5.2 miles away.
11. Forest Trail #285, Guaje Ridge Trail
Day hike—5.3 miles one way plus access. Difficult
Parts of this area were severely burned in the fires of 2000 and 2011; you may encounter deadfall on the trail. Guaje Ridge Trail extends from Pipeline Road to the abandoned Guaje Canyon Road north of Guaje Pines Cemetery. This trail is a favorite with runners and mountain bikers. From Pajarito Mountain Ski Area, hike 2.8 miles on Forest Trail #282 over to Pipeline Road (Hike 14). Turn right down the road. Watch on the left for the Guaje Ridge Trail sign. Follow the 5.3-mile trail down Guaje Ridge, noting nice views. At the bottom of the trail, turn right on the wide dirt road and hike 2.2 miles down to the cemetery. You can bail out on the Mitchell Trail, (Hike 10).
12. Forest Trail #287, Quemazon Trail, Cave of the Winds
Morning hike—1.5 miles one way. Moderate
This area was severely burned in the fire of 2000. At the intersection of 48th and Trinity Drive, turn left (south toward the canyon) onto the short alleyway; park at the trailhead. Hike up the dirt road to the little water tank, then onto the old road up the hill. Just past the gate, a nature trail branches off to the left with informative stops describing fire recovery. It loops back to the main trail in about 1 mile. Otherwise, hike up the old road. The trail to the Cave of the Winds branches left about 1 mile from the trailhead, about 700 feet beyond the upper nature trail junction; watch carefully for a rock cairn that marks the turnoff. The cave entrance is in a steep, rocky talus slope over the canyon rim. Best left to teenagers; bring flashlights. The Quemazon Trail continues up though the burn to Pipeline Road.
13. Forest Trail #282, Ski Hill to Cañada Bonita
Morning hike—2 miles one way. Easy
Very popular in October when the aspens are golden. Start the Cañada Bonita Trailhead on the dirt road going off to the north

(right) in the little draw between Pajarito Mountain Ski Area parking lot and Camp May. Stay on the road or take the cross-country ski trail that branches left in about a half mile. This portion of the trail was severely burned in the Las Conchas Fire. Both go through the forest to Cañada Bonita, a beautiful, grassy meadow. Trail #282 continues to Pipeline Road (Hike 14) and toward Caballo Mountain (Hike 15).

14. Forest Trail #282, Ski Hill to Pipeline Road to Los Alamos
All day—9.5 miles one way. Moderate
Parts of the slopes along Pipeline Road were severely burned in the fires of 2000 and 2011. Leave a vehicle at the bottom of Pipeline Road. Have someone drive you to the ski hill. Start hiking on the dirt road to Cañada Bonita (Hike 13). Continue to the pipeline cut on the ridge above the Valles Caldera. Great view of the caldera grasslands! Turn right on Pipeline Road and hike down. Joggers like this route, but they start at the bottom and run up.
15. Forest Trail #277, Caballo Mountain
Long day hike—7.5 miles one way. Difficult
Wonderful views from the grassy meadow on the south side of the peak, but much of the trail passes through severely burned forest. The trail will likely (as of 2012) be impassable for several years as trees burned in the Las Conchas Fire fall across the trail. From the Cañada Bonita Trailhead at Pajarito Mountain Ski Area, follow Forest Trail #282 past the Bonita and Pipeline grasslands, then descend 900 feet into Guaje Canyon. Turn left onto Forest Trail #277. The trail climbing 1700 feet up the flank of Caballo Mountain is steep and arduous. Fire and floods have twice decimated Guaje Canyon below the junction. The only feasible return trip is to take the same route back to the ski hill or down Pipeline Road to town (see Hike 14).
16. Forest Trail #280, Pajarito Canyon-Nail Trail
Morning hike—1.9 miles one way. Moderate
Parts of this area were severely burned in the fires of 2000 and 2011, with subsequent flooding. There is a permanent stream with wonderful wildflowers, and a heavy regrowth of aspen in the twice-burned upper area. From the Diamond Drive/SR 501 intersection at the traffic light just west of the national laboratory security portal, drive on SR 501 west (toward the mountains) 2.0 miles to a parking area on the little hill on the right. Hike on the dirt road a few hundred feet into Pajarito Canyon, or take the bike trail up the slope a bit left of the parking area, then bear right, north toward Pajarito Canyon. The road and trail both end at a rocky narrows, where the trail continues upstream. In about 1.3 miles, the trail climbs out of the canyon and heads east on the Nail Trail. Take that trail to a double track road, turn right and follow the road downhill. Just before reaching SR 501, bear right and follow the trail back to the parking area.
17. Forest Trail #289, Valle Canyon
Morning hike—3.2 miles one way. Moderate.
Good place for wildflowers and butterflies. Parts of the canyon were burned and flooded in the fires of 2000 and 2011. From the Diamond Drive/SR 501 intersection at the traffic light just west of the national laboratory security portal, drive on SR 501 west (toward the mountains) 3.0 miles, turn right onto a dirt road leading to a parking area tucked behind the trees. The trail in the canyon was heavily damaged by post-Las Conchas Fire floods and may be impossible to follow until it is rebuilt. Hike on the washed out dirt road around the gate and into Valle Canyon (Cañon del Valle on the maps). At the big bend, you can follow a piece of the South Perimeter Trail 1.3 miles up onto the mesa and over to the Pajarito Canyon parking area, or you can follow the old road up the canyon to the Valles Caldera National Preserve fence. The public property beyond the fence is closed to the public.
18. Forest Trail #281, Water Canyon
Morning hike—0.7 miles one way. Moderate
The Water Canyon trailhead is on SR 501 4.1 miles from the Diamond Drive/SR 501 intersection at the traffic light just west of the national laboratory security portal, at the bottom of the draw just before its intersection with SR 4. A short dirt road leads down to a small parking area by a gate beside the stream. The road in the canyon is a nice walk up to a pleasant meadow where a permanent stream enters from the north (right). The 2000 and 2011 fires burned through Water Canyon and caused significant flooding. The canyon is recovering from the catastrophes, but the trail is washed out and difficult to find. The old road that once continued up the canyon to Forest Road 181 and the trail that was established after the Cerro Grande Fire were both destroyed in the post-Las Conchas Fire floods. A new route up the canyon is planned.
19. Anniversary Trail
Morning hike—1.5 miles one way. Moderate
At the east end of town (toward Santa Fe) are wonderful views over the Rio Grande Valley. Start at the water tank across SR 502 from Eastgate Industrial Park at the Los Alamos/Santa Fe county line sign. Hike up the road to the ridge. The trail goes

east (toward Santa Fe). It is on bedrock with parts of a prehistoric trail still visible. Keep an eye on young children because the trail is close to the cliff edge in a few places. You can also start at the gate where SR 502 starts down the hill. A level, abandoned road leads to the point of the mesa where a nice bench looks out over spectacular views in all directions.

20. Camp Hamilton Trail

Morning hike—1.2 miles one way. Moderate

The log cabin at Camp Hamilton was a camping destination for students of the Los Alamos Ranch School in the 1930s; the boys built the trail. Park on SR 502 on the wide shoulder on the north (canyon) side of the road just east (toward Santa Fe) of Eastgate Industrial Park. The trail goes through the fence, along the canyon rim to the tip of the mesa, then down the wonderful old trail. At a fence in a small drainage, bear right to follow the trail around a resource protection area, then drop to the floor of Pueblo Canyon. At the road, jog left for 200 feet and watch for a cairn that marks the continuing trail to the right. The trail crosses Pueblo Canyon toward the cabin near a large clearing. Return the way you came and enjoy the boys' wonderful trail again.

White Rock

21. White Rock Canyon Rim Trail

Morning hike—3 miles one way. Easy

(If you haven't been, check out the Overlook first.) Wonderful views the whole hike. Start at Overlook Road off Meadow Lane. Along the entrance road, watch on the right for the sign to the Blue Dot Trail. The trailhead is at the upper parking lot. Follow the trail the short distance toward the rim, then turn right onto the rim trail. The trail wanders along the White Rock Canyon rim to the spectacular confluence with Pajarito Canyon. Bear right and follow the trail beside Pajarito Canyon to Sherwood Boulevard. You can follow sidewalks back to Overlook Park, but it's nicer to hike back the way you came.

22. Blue Dot Trail

Day hike—1 mile one way. Difficult

Rough and rocky and usually hot in summer; take lots of water! White Rock Canyon is a wondrous, but formidable, place. From the Blue Dot Trailhead (Hike 21), walk to the rim. The trail starts where the fence crosses a little gully; it rapidly descends 700 feet down the canyon wall to the Rio Grande. At the bottom of the trail, you can turn right and follow the river trail downstream to the Red Dot Trail (Hike 24 and 23) or come back uphill the way you came. White Rock Canyon is an ineffable place—it's difficult to say in words why it is so special, but it is.

23. Red Dot Trail and Pajarito Springs

Day hike—1.5 miles one way. Difficult

Take water. From the SR 4/Pajarito Road traffic light, drive south (toward Bandelier) on SR 4, turn left onto Piedra Loop, stay left where the road branches and follow Piedra Loop to La Senda Park at the bottom of the hill. The trail crosses the park to White Rock Canyon, where it plunges over the rim, becoming very steep and rocky for 700 feet down to the Rio Grande. Not for the faint of heart or weak of knees or ankles. There are petroglyphs along the trail down to the springs. Most people miss them because they wisely watch their feet and concentrate on each step. It's easier to watch for the glyphs on the way back up. Near the floor of the canyon, the trail follows a lovely desert stream to the Rio Grande. You can turn left at the big pool and follow the river trail upstream to the Blue Dot Trail (Hike 24 and 22).

24. White Rock Canyon River Trail

Day hike—3.5 miles one way plus access and egress. Difficult; take lots of water.

The River Trail extends along the Rio Grande from the Los Alamos County line to Water Canyon. Follow the Blue Dot Trail to the River Trail and turn downstream. The trail doesn't always follow the river, but wanders o'er hill and dale among boulders and cactus. Upstream of the county line is San Ildefonso Pueblo land (private property and they mean it!). Downstream, it is advisable to turn around at the end of the big flat before entering the breaks of Water Canyon and climb out at the Red Dot Trail. Although the trail continues on, it is indistinct south of Water Canyon, becoming very rough and hard to follow. Ancho Canyon (Hike 28) is the next exit point.

25. Potrillo Canyon to White Rock Overlook

Morning hike—2 miles one way. Moderate

Spectacular view of the confluence of Water Canyon and White Rock Canyon. From the intersection at SR 4 and Pajarito Road in White Rock, drive south on SR 4 (toward Bandelier) 1.0 miles (a few yards past Monte Rey Drive S) to Gate 11. There is a parking area on the left just before SR 4 bends to the right. Take the right hand trail into Potrillo Canyon, cross the wash, and turn left. Where Potrillo Canyon opens up at Water Canyon, cross left back over the wash. There is a maze of trails in here;

find one to turn right to follow the wide ledge out to the end of the mesa. Sadly, the many dead trees were piñon pines weakened by drought and killed by bark beetle infestations.

26. Lower Water Canyon
Morning hike—1.5 miles one way. Moderate
A wide, low canyon in the piñon-juniper woodland. From the SR 4/Pajarito Road intersection in White Rock, go south 2.8 miles on SR 4 (toward Bandelier) and park on the left hand shoulder of the highway. Hike on the steep dirt road down to Gate 5 and follow the road to the end, where the canyon starts cutting down into black basalt. It's best to turn back here. Narrow and rocky trails go north to Potrillo Canyon (Hike 25) and south around the rocky promontories of Water Canyon to Powerline Mesa (Hike 27), but they are indeed narrow and rocky.
27. Powerline Mesa
Morning hike—2 miles one way. Easy
A wide open mesa with great views of the Jemez Mountains. From the intersection of SR 4 and Pajarito Road in White Rock, drive for 3.3 miles south (toward Bandelier). Park at Gate 4 on the left side of SR 4. Hike the dirt road 2 miles to the rim of White Rock Canyon overlooking the Rio Grande 1000 feet below. The road is level to the big power line, and not too steep climbing up to the rim. Joggers run from the big power line north to Potrillo Canyon (Hike 25) on a narrow, rocky little trail.
28. Ancho Rapid
Day hike—3.5 miles one way. Difficult
Take **WATER**. It is hot and dry in White Rock Canyon, but still a magical place. Ancho is the most challenging rapid on the old White Rock Canyon river run. Hike in on Powerline Mesa (Hike 27) about 1.5 miles from entrance Gate 4 to where a fainter road branches to the right and over to the canyon rim. Here, a trail descends through the loose pumice, rocky tuff, and hard basalt of the canyon wall to the rapid. From the rapid, old trails go downstream to Frijoles Canyon (no exit) or upstream to the Red Dot Trail (Hike 23). The trails are rough and become indistinct in either direction. It's best to climb back the way you came.

Bandelier National Monument

The entrance fee of \$12 per private vehicle or \$5 per person in commercial vehicles, bicycles, motorcycles, etc. is good for 7 days to both the main section of the monument and Tsankawi (Hike 29). During busy periods, Bandelier's parking lot may fill up; try to arrive before 10 AM to avoid long waits. As the monument deals with post-fire flooding, access to the canyon may be restricted to riding a shuttle bus from White Rock. Pets and bicycles are NOT allowed on trails. Permits are needed for overnight camping. Most of Bandelier is part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Much of the wilderness was severely burned in the 2011 Las Conchas Fire. The monument has over 70 miles of hiking trails; the trails listed here are readily accessible. If you hike into the wilderness, take a map. Bottled water is available at the gift shop. You will need it.

29. Tsankawi
Morning hike—2 mile loop. Difficult
Tsankawi is an abandoned mesa top village dating from the 14th-16th century. It is located in a detached section of the monument at the junction of SR 4 and East Jemez Road (also known as the truck route). It is part of Bandelier, so an entrance fee is charged; leave your Golden Eagle Pass on your dashboard. Guidebooks are available at the entrance. Follow the Park Service trail. Steep climbs with several ladders lead to the village, cliff dwellings, petroglyphs. Great views.
30. Amphitheater to Tyuonyi Overlook
Morning hike—2.4 miles loop. Easy
Ends at a beautiful overlook of Frijoles Canyon and Tyuonyi Pueblo. The trail begins in Bandelier at the amphitheater near Juniper Campground. It is marked with several interpretive signs noting plants and archaeological sites. A bit rocky at the end, but otherwise relatively flat; nice hike for children.
31. Frey Trail to Visitor Center
Morning hike—2 miles one way. Moderate
The cliff portion was the original tourist route into Frijoles Canyon. Have a non-hiking buddy drive your car down to Visitor Center. The Frey Trail begins at the Juniper Campground amphitheater parking lot. It winds for a mile across the mesa, then descends on a good trail 400 feet into Frijoles Canyon to the Main Loop Trail. Stunning views of the canyon.
32. Visitor Center to Alcove House
Morning hike—1 mile one way. Easy

Alcove House was a spectacular living area perched in a cave on a sheer cliff. The hike starts at the Visitor Center picnic area where the paved road heads upstream. Better yet, tour Tyuonyi and Long House on the other side of Frijoles Creek en route. A brochure is available at the Visitor Center. The 140-foot climb up four ladders to get into Alcove House is a challenge for some. It's a pleasant wait amidst the ponderosa pines by the stream while the kids make the climb.

33. Visitor Center to Upper Falls Overlook
Day hike—3 miles round trip. Moderate
A rare permanent stream in the high desert. Take water. The trail starts at the loop at the end of the left-hand parking area across Frijoles Creek from the Visitor Center. A self-guided trail book is available at the Visitor Center. The trail leads down massive Frijoles Canyon. Upper Frijoles Falls is 1.3 miles. Flooding following the Las Conchas Fire destroyed the trail below the falls. Return by the same route.
34. Visitor Center to Frijolito
Morning hike—0.75 mile one way. Difficult
Frijolito was a medium-sized village contemporaneous with Tyuonyi. From the comfort station at the Cottonwood Picnic Area just across the bridge from the Visitor Center, the trail climbs 400 ft up the canyon wall and proceeds along the rim to Frijolito village. For a loop, from the pueblo follow the trail along the canyon rim toward the mountains. At the first trail junction, follow the signs back to the Visitor Center. There are great views of the Frijoles Canyon pueblos and cavates from this trail.
35. Visitor Center to Lower Alamo Canyon
All day hike—6 miles one way. Difficult
Here is a glimpse into the world of the ancient farmers of the piñon-juniper woodland. At Frijolito Pueblo (Hike 34), turn left and follow the signs toward Lummis and Alamo canyons. Level mesa with small farmstead roomblocks along the way. The trail passes through a woodland treatment area; notice the better ground cover. Views of the Jemez Mountains and Rio Grande Valley, Rio Grande and Lummis canyons. Trail continues into Alamo Canyon at the Rio Grande. Hot! Carry plenty of **WATER**. Return the way you came; any other route is an off-trail wilderness hike.
36. Ponderosa Campground to Yapashi to Visitor Center
Long all day hike—13 mile loop. Difficult
Strenuous hike to the largest pueblo in the monument. Leave a car at the Visitor Center. From Ponderosa Campground, follow Park Service signs across Frijoles and Alamo canyons to unexcavated Yapashi. The trail passes through severe burn areas of the Las Conchas Fire and nicely recovered parts of the La Mesa Fire of 1977. From the pueblo, head east (toward the valley) and follow Park Service signs back to the Visitor Center, crossing 400-foot deep Alamo Canyon. This trip encompasses the essence of Bandelier. Do it in cool weather and take plenty of water. Can be done from Visitor Center, but this way as described is the closest you get to downhill.
37. Visitor Center to Painted Cave
Very long all-day or two-day hike— 10.7 miles one way. Difficult
This is the Grand Tour of Bandelier to the most famous site in the monument. Much of the trail in Capulin Canyon was destroyed by post-Las Conchas Fire flooding. Start at the Visitor Center or Ponderosa Campground. Follow well-signed trails to Capulin Canyon. Working downstream toward Painted Cave may be impossible. You can continue down Capulin Canyon to the confluence with Hondo Canyon, turn left and return on the Alamo Rim Trail for a loop trip. This round trip crosses Alamo Canyon twice at deep points. Best done as an overnighiter, except, of course, for runners. Painted Cave is also accessible from St. Peter's Dome, but the roads are not in good condition following the 1996 Dome Fire, and much of the trail has been destroyed by floods.
38. Burnt Mesa
Morning hike—4 miles round trip. Easy
Great for wildflower and butterfly viewing in summer and elk in winter. The trailhead is on SR 4, four miles west (toward the mountains) of the main entrance to Bandelier. The trail traverses the nearly level mesa toward Frijoles Canyon. Return the way you came unless you want to go cross country without a trail. Along the way are many small roomblocks and mounds; think of the number of people this narrow mesa must have supported in prehistoric times.
39. Ponderosa Campground to Upper Crossing
Morning hike—2 miles one way. Moderate
Rito de los Frijoles is a permanent stream in a beautiful canyon. Begin at Ponderosa Campground near the junction of SR 4 and SR 501. From the parking lot, follow Park Service signs to the rim of Frijoles Canyon. The steep descent into the canyon is on

a good trail with many switchbacks, but may be scary for people afraid of heights. The climb back out seems steep, but worth the effort.

40. Ponderosa Campground to Visitor Center

Day hike—8 miles one way. Moderate

This hike beside the stream through a special canyon is a favorite of local hikers. Leave a vehicle at the Visitor Center. From Ponderosa take Hike 39 above. At Upper Crossing, cross the stream and turn left, heading down canyon toward the Visitor Center. There are numerous washouts from flooding after the Las Conchas Fire; at times the trail is completely gone. Don't do this hike during the summer monsoon season as runoff from the burn scar above can fill the canyon with water in a matter of minutes.

Jemez Mountains

The core of the Jemez Mountains is the Valles Caldera, a giant bowl with expansive grasslands. State Road 4 is a designated National Scenic Byway, quite suitable just for going for a ride. Still, even some short walks greatly enhance the experience. Distances to the trailheads are all measured from the intersection of State Road 4 (SR 4) and State Road 501 at the base of the steep switchback climbing into the mountains. To find that point from the intersection of Diamond Drive and Trinity Drive in Los Alamos, cross the bridge to the south, turn right on SR 501 and continue 4 miles to the "T" at SR 4. From the Bandelier entrance station, turn left and follow SR 4 to the base of the mountains.

41. Forest Road #181 to Water Canyon

Morning Hike—1.5 miles one way. Easy

Exuberant example of fire recovery! From the SR 4/501 intersection, drive up the SR 4 switchbacks (toward Jemez Springs) 1.4 miles. The big parking area and Forest Road #181 are on the right. Except in winter, the gate is open and you can drive in, but it's much more uplifting to walk. Parts of this area were incinerated in the fire of 2000 and again in 2011. Soon after Cerro Grande, volunteers and fire crews swarmed over the mountain slopes throwing grass seed and spreading straw mulch. From the ashes, in the intervening years, the grasses thrived, wildflowers proliferated, and shrubs grew luxuriantly. Most amazing are the aspen groves that crowd the hillsides. The wide road contours north, passing the turnoff to American Spring, a watering hole dating from the days of cattle drive to the Valles grasslands. The CCC encased the spring in the mid-1930s. It's only a short detour over to the spring. The main road continues to Water Canyon, which is a good place to turn around. The road crosses to the mesa beyond. Much of that mesa burned in the fire of '54, so was not so badly damaged in 2000 or 2011. The road continues for another mile, with a maze of side roads. A rough and rocky abandoned road descends the cliff to SR 501, used now as a bike trail.

42. Cerro Grande

Morning hike—4 mile round trip. Difficult (with an easy alternative)

Views from the grassy meadows are fabulous and it is all down hill on the return trip. This hike requires an elevation gain of 1,000 feet in 2 miles; otherwise it is not too difficult. Drive up SR 4 (toward Jemez Springs) 5.9 miles beyond the SR 4/501 intersection. Park on the right at the paved area for the Bandelier cross-country ski trails. The Cerro Grande Trail begins at the opening in the parking lot fence; the route is marked with yellow diamonds. If some members of the party can't make the climb, the level ski trails across the road are a pleasant alternative stroll while they wait.

43. Alamo Boundary Trail

Morning hike—1 mile one way. Easy (with moderate extensions)

An easy stroll through lovely meadows. Drive up SR 4 (toward Jemez Springs) 6.0 miles to graveled Forest Road #289 (Dome Road). Turn left onto the Dome Road and drive 1.6 miles to the trailhead parking on the right. This area was burned over during the Las Conchas Fire in 2011. A wide, nearly level, abandoned logging road leads up to Scooter Pass on the rim of the Valles Caldera. Turn around here, or the main trail continues through Scooter Pass to intersect the Coyote Call Trail (Hike 45). With a car shuttle, the hike combines nicely with downhill sections of the Coyote Call Trail.

44. Valle Grande Trail

Morning hike—2 miles round trip. Moderate

The trail is an old stock road that descends through a thick forest to the grasslands of the Valle Grande. A section of the trail passes through the burn scar of the Las Conchas Fire of 2011. Great views of the valle. The trailhead is at the pass between Bandelier National Monument and the Valles Caldera National Preserve on SR 4, 6.8 miles beyond the SR 4/501 intersection. Watch for the Preserve highway sign. Parking is on the left. Cross the road CAREFULLY to the trailhead. All uphill returning.

45. Coyote Call Trail
Morning hike—2.7 mile loop. Moderate
A pleasant hike on the wall of the ancient volcano. The trailhead is on SR 4, 8.8 miles beyond the SR 4/501 intersection, 2.0 miles beyond the Valles Caldera National Preserve sign at SR 4 Pass noted above in Hike 43. The trailhead is on the left (mountain) side of the highway. The trail follows a loop of old logging roads up through the forest, then back to the trailhead. The route passes through some areas severely burned in the Las Conchas Fire in 2011. With a car shuttle, this hike can be combined with the Alamo Boundary Trail (Hike 43).
46. Forest Road #287 Obsidian Ridge
Day hike—2 miles one way. Easy
There's more obsidian than you can imagine at Obsidian Ridge. From the SR 4/501 intersection, drive 6.0 miles and turn left onto graveled Forest Road #289 (Dome Road). In 2.3 miles, turn left at Forest Road #287 (across from the large parking area at Graduation Flats). FR #287 is an adequate graveled road in good weather; bear left at all junctions. At the locked gate a half mile in, park and hike on the road. The surrounding forest was severely burned in the Las Conchas Fire of 2011. Obsidian Ridge, about 2 miles in, is a narrow mesa dividing massive Frijoles and Alamo canyons. The road gets steeper and rougher as it continues to the end of the burned mesa 5 miles from the gate (great views!).
47. Trail #137, East Fork of the Jemez River
Morning hike—2 miles one way. Moderate
Undoubtedly the most popular hike in the Jemez Mountains, this stroll along the stream is noted for lovely scenery, wildflowers, birds, and small animals. The Las Conchas Trailhead is along SR 4 on the right, 13.6 miles beyond the SR 4/501 intersection. Steps lead down to the stream at the highway culvert. The trail follows the stream, crossing it several times on (sometimes wobbly) rustic bridges. The streamside trail ends where the canyon narrows and the river enters a narrow gorge. Return the same way or follow the trail up the canyon wall and across the mesa to the East Fork Trailhead (Hike 48).
48. East Fork Trailhead to Jemez River
Morning hike—1.5 miles one way. Difficult
From the SR 4/501 intersection, drive 17.4 miles into the Jemez to the East Fork Trailhead on the right. The trail goes along the mesa for about a mile, with some nice views of Redondo Peak. The trail then descends the canyon wall to a bridge over the river. Turn back here, or go left downstream back to SR 4 at El Puente Blanco parking area where you left a car, or walk on the highway 0.8 miles back to the East Fork Trailhead. Lots of fishermen line the stream.
49. Trail #137, Jemez Falls to Battleship Rock
Day hike—4 miles one way. Difficult
The trail is on the canyon wall through dense forest. The turnoff to Jemez Falls Campground is on SR 4, 18.1 miles beyond the SR 4/501 intersection. Leave a car at Battleship Rock picnic area (there is a modest fee) or on the free parking lot west of the river along SR 4. Drive back to Jemez Falls Campground and hike down the canyon wall well above the river. Popular McCauley Warm Springs is along the way. The trail is steep downhill between the hot springs and Battleship Rock.
50. Cañon de San Diego Overlook
Morning hike—0.5 mile loop. Easy
This overlook stroll hardly counts as a hike, but provides a spectacular view of a typical canyon of the Jemez Mountains. From the SR 4/501 intersection, drive 21.3 miles into the Jemez on SR 4. The trailhead is on the left, with a wide trail quickly reaching the canyon rim. SR 4 lies below the cliff, snaking its way to Jemez Springs. The Forest Service once put in some interpretive signs, especially about lightning, but hasn't had the resources to maintain them. Still interesting though.

Resources

For further information, the following books and maps are excellent hiking guides for the area around Los Alamos.

Martin, Craig, 2006: *Los Alamos Trails*, Second Edition. Detailed trail descriptions.

Salzman, Joan and Gary, 2006. *Hiking Adventures in Northern New Mexico*. Topographic maps, UTM points for GPS, beautiful color photography.

Isaacs, Judith Ann, 2005. *Guide to the Jemez Mountain Trail National Scenic Byway*. Actually, a driving guide to State Road 4, but with interesting comments on the landmarks.

Hoard, Dorothy, 1993. *Los Alamos Outdoors*. Outdated, but contains historical information about many trails.

Kron Andrea, 1993, *Hiking Trails and Jeep Roads of Los Alamos County, Bandelier National Monument and Vicinity*. The classic workhorse map of the vicinity from the Rio Grande to del Norte Pass

Sky Terrain Travel Maps, 2006 *Santa Fe • Bandelier • Los Alamos • New Mexico*. Full-color, shaded topographic map on waterproof paper with descriptions of trails. Los Alamos to del Norte Pass (no White Rock); Sangre de Cristo Mountains above Santa Fe including parts of the Pecos Wilderness.