

Southwest WC Alumni Trip September 27-October 5, 2020 Hot Air Balloon Festival and Southwest Cultures & Environments

Note: This is a preliminary schedule only, and can change due to logistics, reservation issues, weather, and other events outside our ability to control.

Sunday, September 27: Arrival in the American Southwest

- Anytime Fly on your own to Durango, Colorado (preferably arrive before 5pm). Note that our vehicles will pick you up at the DRO airport and shuttle you to town.
- After 3:00pm Check-in to the historic Strater Hotel (circa 1887) in the heart of downtown.
<https://strater.com/>
Stroll around the downtown area and lunch on your own until everyone arrives according to their schedules.
- 6:00pm Dinner at a Gazpachos (authentic Southwestern food) included.

Monday, September 28: The Anasazi Cliff Dwellings of Mesa Verde

- 7:00am Breakfast in the Mahogany Grille in the Strater Hotel is included.
- 8:00am Drive 40 minutes to Mesa Verde Cliff Dwellings, and ascend the mountain to the ruins <https://www.nps.gov/meve/index.htm>
- 11:00am Tour of Balcony House Note: there are narrow passages requiring crouching, and 2-3 wooden ladders, including a 30 foot wooden ladder, one must climb to get out.
- 12:00pm Lunch at Spruce Tree Terrace Café included, tour the museum at your convenience, or, if it's open, short hike to Spruce Tree House (closed for last 2 years due to a rock fall).
- 1:30pm Drive to Durango.
- 3:00pm Relax, freshen-up and stroll through downtown.
- 6:00pm Dinner at Steamworks Brewery (a locals favorite) included.

Tuesday, September 29: Exploring the Colorado Back-Country in Autumn

- 7:30am Breakfast in the Mahogany Grille in the Strater Hotel included.
- 8:20am Walk over to the Durango-Silverton Train Depot. This famous "narrow gauge" steam engine is powered by coal. For over three hours it winds through the gorgeous back country of Colorado from 6,500 feet to 11,000 feet in elevation. <https://www.durangotrain.com/>. Note: Be sure to wear layers and bring very warm clothes (including hats/gloves) as it could be snowing in Silverton (11,000 feet in altitude!). Carry water, snacks, camera, sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat.
- 8:45am Train leaves for Silverton.
- 12:15pm Train arrives in Silverton. Stroll around Silverton and learn about its history as a mining boom town. Lunch on your own.
- 3:00pm The bus leaves to bring you back to Durango. Please be on-time to catch the bus, as there is no other way to get back!!

4:30pm Arrive back in Durango. The remainder of the afternoon is free time to enjoy Durango. You can walk part of the 10 mile Riverwalk, shop the art galleries, and have dinner on your own at a restaurant of your choosing (we can offer ideas).

Wednesday, September 30: The Anasazi Ceremonial Center of Chaco Canyon

7:00am Breakfast in the Mahogany Grille in the Strater Hotel included. Please have your luggage packed and ready to go. We will not return to Durango after departing.

8:00am Drive 2.25 hours to Chaco Canyon Anasazi Ruins. Note: About 30 miles of this ride is on unpaved roads (Chaco is an extremely remote region known as “high desert”). Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses necessary. No strenuous climbs or ladders on this tour.

10:15am Anasazi ruins tour that includes picnic lunch. Dr. Markin relates the prehistory of the region; walk through some of the largest ruin clusters and kiva groups.

2:00pm Drive 3 hours to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

5:00pm Check in to the beautiful Inn of the Governors. Feel free to stroll around downtown (and eat dinner on your own downtown). The hotel restaurant - Del Charro – is a locals favorite!

Thursday, October 1: Santa Fe & Native Arts

8:30am A delightful full breakfast in the hotel restaurant is included.

9:30am Walk through downtown to the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native American Arts.

10:00am Private Tour of the museum. <https://iaia.edu/mocna/>

11:30am Explore Santa Fe on your own. Grab lunch in one of the hundreds of local restaurants. Go to Native American outdoor art market on the central plaza. Visit the absolutely wonderful New Mexico History Museum, or the Georgia O’Keefe museum on your own if desired.

5:30: Dinner at the historic “La Plazuela at La Fonda” included.

Friday, October 2: Meow Wolf & Canyon Road Art Galleries

8:45am A delightful full breakfast in the hotel restaurant is included.

9:45am Drive to Meow Wolf. Meow Wolf is arguably the hottest art installation in America right now! <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/meow-wolf-expansion-psych-art-728202/>

12:00pm Drive 15 minutes to Museum Hill Café. Lunch included.

1:45pm Drive 15 minutes to Canyon Road for a 2+ hour private tour of this famous avenue of art galleries.

4:00pm The afternoon is free to explore. Dinner on your own.

Saturday, October 3: Hot Air Balloon Festival Evening Light Show

Morning Have a leisurely morning packing your bags and enjoy a delightful breakfast in the hotel restaurant (included).

9:30am Drive one hour to Albuquerque, NM.

10:30am Stop at prehistoric Petroglyph Park and take a leisurely hike through the rock formations and petroglyphs.

- 12:30pm Lunch included at the High Noon Saloon restaurant in Old Town, Albuquerque. Stroll through the shops and galleries of Old Town after lunch.
- 3:00pm Check in to Holiday Inn Express and relax and freshen-up.
- 4:30pm Take the included shuttle 1 mile to Hot Air Balloon Festival. Our VIP "Gondola Club" tickets to the Balloon Fiesta include a dedicated parking lot, access to a viewing gondola, live entertainment, dinner with open bar included, dedicated restrooms, and a shuttle to other areas in the park.
- 6:00pm Twilight Twinkle Glowing Balloons
- 8:00pm Afterglow Fireworks Show
- 8:45pm Drive back to Hotel. Note that tomorrow we have a very early morning!!

Sunday, October 4: Hot Air Balloon Festival Morning Ascension & Mountain Vistas

- 5:30am Take the included shuttle 1 mile to the Balloon Fiesta Park. Our VIP "Gondola Club" tickets to the Balloon Fiesta include a dedicated parking lot, access to a viewing gondola, breakfast included, dedicated restrooms, and a shuttle to other areas in the park.
- 6:00am Dawn Patrol Show
- 6:30am Morning Glow Balloons
- 6:45am Opening Ceremonies
- 7:00am Mass ascension of 400+ balloons into the sky
- 7:30am Stroll through the park and engage with activities. Take the included shuttle back to hotel.
- 11:00am Meet back at the Holiday Inn Express. Drive to Sandia Tramway. Take the tram up the mountain to view the trees changing colors and the sky full of hot air balloons. Lunch at the mountain base Sandiango's Grill included.
- 3:00pm Return to Holiday Inn Express. Relax, freshen-up. Pack for the trip home.
- 5:00pm Dinner together at Nick & Jimmy's, or something similar, included.

Monday, October 5:

Fly home.