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Southwest WC Alumni Trip October 1 - 9, 2023 **Southwest Cultures & Environments w/ Hot Air Balloon Festival**

Note: This schedule sometimes changes in small ways due to logistics, reservation issues, weather, and other events outside our ability to control.

Sunday, October 1: Arrival in the American Southwest

Fly on your own to Durango, Colorado (preferably arrive before 5pm).

- Make your way to the Strater Hotel (ca. 1887) in the heart of downtown. Check-in starts at 4:00pm <https://strater.com/>

Stroll around the downtown area and lunch on your own.

6:00 pm: Dinner and a drink included at a Gazpachos (authentic Southwestern food).

Monday, October 2: The Anasazi Cliff Dwellings of Mesa Verde

7:00am: Breakfast on your own in the Mahogany Grille in the Strater Hotel.

8:00am: Drive 40 minutes to Mesa Verde Cliff Dwellings <https://www.nps.gov/meve/index.htm>

10:00am: Tour Cliff Palace.

- Note: there are stone stairs going down and two wooden ladders to climb out. For those who don't want to climb we will view landscape, wildlife, and ruins from the mesa top.

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. For those who don't want to climb we will view landscape, wildlife, and ruins while hiking the rim.

12:00pm: Lunch at Spruce Tree Terrace Café on your own, tour the museum at your convenience, or, if it's open, short hike into a canyon with Spruce Tree House ruins.

2:30pm: Drive to Durango

The remainder of the afternoon offers free time to enjoy Durango. You can walk or bike part of the 10 mile Riverwalk, visit the art galleries, and have dinner on your own at a restaurant of your choosing (we can offer ideas). If you want to meet up, we'll see you at Steamworks (a favorite locals restaurant and brewery).

Tuesday, October 3: Durango-Silverton Train through the Mountainous Back Country

7:30am: Breakfast on your own in the Mahogany Grille in the Strater Hotel, (or nearby restaurant).

8:20am: 5 minute walk over to the Durango-Silverton Train Depot. This famous “narrow gauge” railway winds through the gorgeous back country of Colorado from 6,500 feet to 11,000 feet in elevation for about 3 hours. It is autumn and the aspens will be blazing orange, yellow and red colors. <https://www.durangotrain.com/>

- 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.

9:00am: Train leaves for Silverton

12:30pm: Train arrives in Silverton. Stroll around Silverton and learn about its history as a mining boom town. Lunch on your own.

2:45pm: 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!!

6:15pm: Arrive back in Durango.

Enjoy your last night in Durango. Dinner on your own at a restaurant of your choosing (we can offer ideas). Maybe go eat at Animas Brewpub and restaurant on the river, or make your way to nationally renowned Ska restaurant and brewery.

Wednesday, October 4: Chaco Canyon Ruins - Anasazi Ceremonial Center in the Desert

7:00am: Breakfast on your own in the Mahogany Grille in the Strater Hotel, or at one of the restaurants nearby.

- Please have your luggage packed and ready to go. We will not return to Durango after departing.

8:00am: Drive 2 hours to Chaco Canyon Anasazi Ruins.

- Note that 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. We’ll supply water and Gatorade.

10:15am-2:00pm. Anasazi ruins tour that includes picnic lunch. Dr. Julie Markin (Archaeology Professor) will narrate the prehistory of the region; walk through the ruins and kiva groups.

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

5:00pm: Check into the beautiful Inn of the Governors. Take a leisurely stroll around downtown and eat dinner on your own. The restaurant adjacent the hotel - Del Charro – is a locals favorite with great food!

Thursday, October 5: Santa Fe & Native Arts

8:30am: Included is a delightful full breakfast in the hotel restaurant.

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

12:00pm: Take the afternoon to explore Santa Fe! Grab lunch in one of the local restaurants.

Peruse the Native American outdoor art market on the central plaza. Enter Loretto Chapel with

the “Miracle Stairway.” Visit the absolutely wonderful Georgia O’Keefe museum, or the New Mexico History Museum.

5:30: Dinner and one drink included at the historic La Plazuela at La Fonda restaurant.

Friday, October 6: Meow Wolf Art Museum & Canyon Road Art Galleries

8:45am: Included is a delightful full breakfast in the hotel restaurant.

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 on your own at Museum Hill Café’.

1:45pm: Drive 15 minutes to Canyon Road. Stroll at a leisurely pace along this famous avenue of art galleries.

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

Saturday, October 7: Hot Air Balloon Festival Evening Light Show

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

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 Native American petroglyphs.

12:30pm: Visit historic Old Town, Albuquerque, and lunch on your own. Stroll through the shops and galleries of Old Town after lunch.

4:00pm: Check in to Holiday Inn Express @ the Balloon Festival Park and relax and freshen-up.

5:00pm: Take the shuttle 1 mile to Hot Air Balloon Festival. Our VIP “Gondola Club” tickets include access to a viewing gondola, live entertainment, included dinner with open bar included, dedicated restrooms, and a shuttle to other areas in the park.

6:00pm: Twilight Twinkle Glowing Balloons

7:30pm: Skydiving Team Show

8:00pm: Afterglow Fireworks Show

8:45pm: Take the shuttle on your own back to Hotel

- Note that tomorrow we have a very early morning!!

Sunday, October 8: Hot Air Balloon Festival Morning Ascension & Mountain Vistas

5:30am: Take the shuttle 1 mile to the Balloon Fiesta Park. Our VIP “Gondola Club” tickets include access to a viewing gondola, hot buffet breakfast, dedicated restrooms, and a shuttle to other areas in the park.

6:00am: Dawn Patrol Show

6:30am: Morning Glow Balloons

7:00am: Mass ascension of 400+ balloons into the sky

7:30am – 10:30am: Stroll through the park and engage with activities (Fiesta of Globes, Fiesta of Old Cars). Take the shuttle on your own back to hotel by 10:30am.

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 on your own Sandiago’s Grill included.

3:00pm: Return to Holiday Inn Express. Relax, freshen-up. Pack for the trip home.

5:00pm: Dinner and one drink included at Bosque Restaurant & Brewery, (or similar).

Monday, October 9: Fly home from Albuquerque Airport.