



www.aztecnm.com

New Mexico, USA

  @CityofAztec

Chaco Canyon – Bisti Loop



This approximate 200 mile road trip will take you through some high desert landscape and provide the opportunity to experience some cultural diversity from ancestral Puebloan to modern Navajo traditions. In addition, witness some geology which took millions of years to form.

Great Road Trips Series

110 N. Ash Ave ~ Aztec, NM 87410 ~ (505) 334-9551

Bloomfield

1. Salmon Ruins

Salmon Ruins is an 11th century pueblo ruin related to the Chaco Culture group, which originated in Chaco Canyon. Covering an area of over two acres, the pueblo had two distinct cultural occupations: the first from the Chaco Culture group, the second called the San Juan Occupation.



In addition to the puebloan ruins is Salmon Ruins Museum, Heritage Park, and Pioneer Homestead. The Salmon Ruins Museum offers a variety of exhibits featuring the best of artifacts from our excavation collections. Historic materials on display range from unique cultural textile samples to rock art, mining, and more. The Heritage Park offers architectural replicas of Tipis and Hogans, a Wikiup and Pithouse, and a Trading Post and Sweatlodge for your enjoyment. The Pioneer Homestead was built by George Salmon in the early 1890s.

Travel tip: Ask about the special "pueblito" tours to Largo Canyon.
www.salmonruins.com

U.S. 550

2. Angel Peak Scenic Area

This 10,000-acre landscape is celebrated for its rugged and scenic wonders, including 7,000-foot Angel Peak. Managed by the New Mexico Bureau of Land Management, there are overnight camping and picnic areas available. Camp sites consist of parking space with picnic table and metal BBQ pit and pavilions are covered picnic tables with metal BBQ pits.



Geology

About 70 million years ago it was! Then the oceans withdrew and the dinosaurs that once ruled the earth vanished, scientists are still not sure why. Then the face of the land changed, when between 50 and 30 million years ago the Rocky Mountains rose to the north and east and other mountains formed the west. New kinds of animals (the mammals) developed in these new lands. They had fur instead of scales and gave birth to live young instead of laying eggs. Plants were different too, as there was much more rain. Temperatures were more equable than they are now, as summers were cooler and winters were warmer.

As rains washed down into the San Juan Basin from surrounding mountains, the water carried with it sand and silt from the mountains. Streams and rivers formed, flowing into a rich land of grasslands, marshes, lakes and forests. Horses, camels, wild dogs, huge cats and bears (some looking very different from their descendants today) made this area home. Slowly the streams eroded the highlands and filled the basin with more than 10,000 feet of sand and silt.

Over time these deposits formed the layers of rock you see around Angel Peak. The top layer you can see is mostly sandstone, much harder than the siltstones and mudstones below it. And as generations of animals and plants lived and died here, they were buried in the sand and silt, then preserved as fossils.

www.blm.gov/visit/angel-peak-scenic-area

Chaco Canyon

3. Chaco Culture National Historical Park

Formerly a major ceremonial and trade center, this UNESCO World Heritage site was active from 850-1250 A.D. Regarded as central to the ancestral Puebloan culture, it is located in a canyon that contains the largest excavated ruins in the Southwest. The area features hundreds of small sites and 13 major ruins, most of which are accessible by car or on foot. The Park preserves the monumental architecture and complex community life of a major center of ancestral Puebloan culture that took root and flourished for a thousand years.

Culture and History

The Chacoan culture began to flourish in the canyon in the mid-800s with continual habitation and building lasting for another 300 years. The ancient Puebloan people constructed massive stone buildings, called great houses. These great houses were multiple stories in height and much larger than what had previously been built. Construction on some of these buildings spanned decades and even centuries. These structures were often aligned with solar, lunar, and cardinal directions and placed within a landscape surrounded by sacred mountains, mesas, and shrines. The buildings in the canyon are believed to be "public architecture" that were used periodically by the people for times of ceremony and commerce.



www.nps.gov/chcu

NM 371

4. Crownpoint

Famous for its area weaver auctions of Navajo rugs, auctions are usually held the second Friday of each month. Artisans also sell jewelry and pottery.

5. Bisti De-Na-Zin Wilderness

A federal wilderness area, the Bisti De-Na-Zin Wilderness is a desolate area of eroded badlands that offer some of the most unusual scenery in the Four Corners region. Time and nature have etched a world of fantastic rock formations that have become a favored wilderness experience. The Bisti is world renowned for the discovery of the "Bisti Beast" a Tyrannosaurs Bistahieversor sealeyi discovered in 1998 and now on exhibit at the New Mexico Natural History Museum. In addition, the remains of an adolescent Pentaceratops was recovered in 2015 and is now the New Mexico Natural History Museum.



www.aztecnm.com/recreation/bisti/visit.html

Farmington

Farmington is surrounded by world-class cultural treasures, magnificent landscapes, and thrilling river sports. Local museums highlight everything from fish and game to developments in electrical history to children's activities. Farmington Museum and Visitors' Center at Gateway Park exhibits the city's history, oil and gas industry, a trading post reproduction and rotating exhibitions.



<https://farmingtonnm.org>

Road Mileage

<u>Segment</u>	<u>Road</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Miles</u>
1	US 550	Aztec to Bloomfield	8.3
2	US 550	Bloomfield to CR 7950 (turn off for Chaco)	39.3
3	CR 7950	U.S. 550 to Chaco Canyon	20.9
4	NM 57	Chaco Canyon to NN Route 9	18.3
5	NN 9	NM 57 Intersection to Nm 371	13.3
6	NM 371	NM 371 Intersection to Crownpoint	3.2
7	NM 371	Crownpoint to Farmington	78.2
8	US 516	Farmington to Aztec	15.0

