It’s unexpected—the first visit to Los Alamos, New Mexico. It starts with the drive, as you wind through canyons framed by golden cliffs on your journey to the mesa tops. As you round the last curve, you are struck by 360 degrees of spectacular scenery—the Jemez Mountains to the west, and the Sangre de Cristo range to the north and east. It’s nature’s playground. At 7,400 feet elevation, the Los Alamos townsite community is perched on mesa top “fingers” separated by rugged canyons—part of the Pajarito Plateau formed by a neighboring supervolcano 1.6 million years ago. In 1944, this was the perfect location for a “Secret City,” now home to Los Alamos National Laboratory. Come and discover our unique outdoors, centuries of world-changing history, and find your next adventure!

Know Before You Go
How to Drive on Lab Property
(see inset map above)
When using NM501 (aka East & West Jemez Road) to travel between Los Alamos and the mountains, you will need to enter the Los Alamos National Laboratory’s (LANL’s) Vehicle Access Portals. Think of it as a little part of the Secret City’s past you can still experience today! Public access is available for drivers of cars, large trucks, RVs, and trailers. Simply slow down and stop when you arrive at the portal. Please have a photo ID ready (valid driver’s license, passport, or federal/DOE badge) to provide to the representative at the gate. No photography, firearms, alcohol, or illegal drugs are allowed. Random vehicle inspections do occur.

“Like” us on Facebook
Find us at Visit Los Alamos to like and follow for news, events, and tidbits & treasures about Los Alamos, right in your newfeed.

Follow us on Instagram
Find us @losalamosco to follow for photos of Los Alamos and the surrounding National Parks.

WiFi in Downtown Los Alamos
Connect to LA Discoveries for FREE WiFi in the Historic District.

Need a charge?
Park at the Los Alamos Nature Center or County Municipal Building to charge your electric car, and enjoy a picnic under the Solar Tree, while charging your devices!

Helpful Hints
High-Altitude Health
Bring your water bottles, and drink water all day to prevent dehydration. You can refill water bottles at all of the local attractions. Also make sure to wear and reapply sunscreen. Visiting locations at higher elevations than you are used to increases the chance of dehydration, sunburn, headaches, nausea, dizziness, and the aggravation of pre-existing medical conditions.

Tips From the Locals
Los Alamos has several specialty parks where you can enjoy a picnic, play a round of disc golf or miniature golf, let your four-legged friends play off the leash in a dog park, enjoy skate boarding, or play tennis by yourself or with a friend! Stop by the Aquatic Center to rent disc golf or miniature golf sets, or to learn more! For a fun winter outing, swing by the Aquatic Center and rent snowshoes and poles for the whole family. Then take a 5-minute drive to the Los Alamos County Golf Course for a great place to snowshoe and cross-country ski! Afterwards, warm up with snacks and drinks at the Cottonwood on the Greens restaurant inside the Golf Course Community Building.

Leave No Trace - LNT.org
When exploring the outdoors in and around Los Alamos, please remember these seven principles:
1. Plan ahead and be prepared for terrain and weather
2. Dispose of waste properly (pack in, pack out)
3. Leave what you find—ancient artifacts, wildflowers, etc.
4. Abide by fire restrictions, and put campfires dead out
5. Do not feed wildlife—help protect their habitat!
6. Respect others’ privacy
7. Maintain courtesy toward other visitors

Wildlife Encounters
In the Jemez Mountains and on the Pajarito Plateau, there are black bears, mountain lions, elk, deer, bobcats, coyotes, and more. Approaching, feeding, or disturbing wildlife is dangerous. Always keep a safe distance, and be aware of your surroundings.

Pets in the Parks
Pets are not permitted on any park trails within Bandelier, but are allowed on the La Jara, Valle Grande, and Coyote Calf trails in the Valles Caldera. Pets are also allowed in the parking lots outside the Bandelier Visitor Center and the Valles Caldera Entrance Station, as well as in the Lupin Campground and the picnic area across Frijoles Creek. Pets must be kept under physical control at all times—crated or on a leash not to exceed six feet in length.

Travel Truths
When visiting Los Alamos on the weekdays, remember our unique little town almost doubles in size as commuters and visitors spend the day with us. During mornings heading into town, and evenings heading out of town, Trinity Dr., Diamond Dr., Central Ave., and NM-4 can be very busy. In addition, the lunch hour in downtown is a bustling time, with friends, students, families, and coworkers eating together at the local restaurants. Plan ahead to avoid delays.