Once you've made the journey to Los Alamos, you can begin to understand how much the culture and the people are defined by this remote and beautiful landscape. While Los Alamos is known to many as the birthplace of the atomic bomb, the town’s history dates back 1.6 million years with a different kind of energy—volcanic eruptions that created the Pajarito Plateau and the mesas and canyons where communities have settled for millennia. Ancestral Pueblo people, Homesteaders, Ranch School students, and thousands of scientists, soldiers, and engineers from all over the world came to work on the Manhattan Project and stayed to create the Los Alamos community. Experience all over the world who came to work on the Manhattan Project, the head scientists called them home, including Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer. These were the only homes in town with bathtubs.

The Historic Performing Arts Center was constructed in 1943 and served as the East Mess Hall during the Manhattan Project, while also hosting a variety of shows, including a community production of the play “Arsenic & Old Lace,” featuring Lab Director J. Robert Oppenheimer in a cameo role as “the corpse.”

There’s a Historic Photo Gallery in the lobby outside the Blue Window Bistro, in downtown Los Alamos, with historic photos of Lab directors, facilities, and noteworthy scientists.

Must Do Discoveries:

Local Museums

- Find the Nobel Prize at the Hans Bethe House, and learn about the honored scientists who lived there.
- Take the Guided Walking Tour of Los Alamos Historic District and learn the stories behind the buildings, gardens, parks, monuments, and the people who put Los Alamos on the map.
- What if you could power your life using pond scum? Learn about turning algae to biodiesel at the Bradbury Science Museum.

Manhattan Project National Historical Park

- Get your National Park Service Passport stamped with the special 3-section Manhattan Project stamp.
- See replicas of Fat Man & Little Boy at the Bradbury Science Museum.
- Learn about the “Secret City” at the Los Alamos History Museum.

Bandelier National Monument

- Pueblo Loop Trail - Walk in the footsteps of Ancestral Pueblo people, search for petroglyphs, and watch wildlife along the creekside.
- Alcove House - Climb four ladders and stone steps to this alcove home, located 140 feet above the floor of Frijoles Canyon.
- Cultural Demonstrations - Every weekend between Memorial Day and Labor Day, enjoy a variety of programs, including pottery-making, drum-making, and dancing.

Los Alamos: Gateway to Three National Parks

Imagine your home carved from volcanic tuff rock and your crops planted in mesa top fields. Corn, beans, and squash were central to your diet, supplemented by native plants and meat from deer, rabbit, squirrel, and domesticated turkeys. Your dogs assisted in hunting and provided companionship. Step onto the trails, ladders, and into the past as you experience life as an Ancestral Pueblo person.

Bandelier Shuttle Information - May to October: Visitors must use the shuttle from White Rock Visitor Center between 9am-3pm. Some exceptions apply.

Valles Caldera National Preserve

NM-4 (18 miles west of Los Alamos)
Visitor Center: May-Oct: 8am-6pm
Nov-Apr: 9am-5pm
575-829-4100 x3 | nps.gov/vall

Picture ancient volcanic eruptions so large it created a 13-mile-wide crater. This is the Valles Caldera. Discover extraordinary views and sulfur springs as you find yourself in the midst of an active geothermal system. Find evidence of ancestral native peoples in obsidian used for tools and weapons and shepherd’s signatures carved on trees. Reflect on a landscape where hunting and gathering were practiced successfully for more than 10,000 years. Let the mosaics of expansive meadows, lush forested volcanic domes, meandering streams, and old-growth Ponderosa pine groves take your breath away, as they fade into the dark night and a blanket of stars is unveiled above you. Try to count the stars as you listen to the elk bugling in the distance.

Bandelier National Monument

15 Entrance Road off NM-4, Los Alamos
Park Hours: Dawn to Dusk
Visitor Center Hours: mid-May to mid-Oct: 9am-6pm
mid-Nov to mid-April: 9am-5pm
505-672-3861 x0 | nps.gov/band

More than 6,000 scientists, engineers, technicians, military, and support personnel came to live in Los Alamos and work on the Manhattan Project. This National Historical Park was established to tell the stories of these people, events, and the science that led to the creation of the atomic bomb that helped end WWII.
Los Alamos History Museum
1050 Bathtub Row, Los Alamos
Monday-Friday 9am-5pm | Sat 10am-4pm | Sun CLOSED
Admission $5 | 505-662-4493 | losalamoshistory.org

Los Alamos History Museum Guided Tours
Step inside the homestead-era Romero Cabin, visit an Ancestral Pueblo site, hear about the famous 20th-century physicists who walked these streets, and learn how Bathtub Row got its name. Tours last approximately 1.5 hours. Tickets include museum admission and are available at the Los Alamos History Museum Shop. Tours limited to 16 people.

Monday - Saturday 11:00am
tickets at $15 ages 19+, 18 and under - FREE with a ticketed adult

Self-Guided Tours
800-444-0707 | 505-662-8105 | losalamoshistory.org

Self-Guided Historic Walking Tour
Visit 14 points of interest, including 800-year-old Ancestral Pueblo dwellings, early 20th-century architecture, a homesteader’s cabin, story-telling art, memorials to those who came before us, and the very spot where the first atomic bomb components were designed and assembled. Move at your own pace, and enjoy the museums, shopping, and restaurants along your way.

Self-Guided Spy Tour
Where there are secrets, there are spies. The Los Alamos Spy Tour reveals the rich story of 20th-century espionage during a time when “loose lips sink ships.” Visit historic sites around Los Alamos where atomic spies like Klaus Fuchs, Theodore Hall, and David Greenglass lived, worked, and played. Pick up a Spy Tour brochure at the Los Alamos Visitors Center or download one online.

Self-Guided Homestead Driving Tour
Try to imagine Los Alamos without its neighborhoods, shops, parks, and national laboratory. Imagine yourself back in a time of isolated log buildings, fields planted with pinto beans, families tending and protecting the crops, wagons laden with produce for the autumn trip to the valley before the winter sets in. This was everyday life for the homesteaders who lived here before the dawn of the nuclear age that brought Los Alamos to international attention. This tour will introduce you to seven sites that indicate everyday life for the homesteaders who lived here before the dawn of the nuclear age that brought Los Alamos to international attention.

Very spot where the first atomic bomb components were designed and assembled. Move at your own pace, and enjoy the museums, shopping, and restaurants along your way.

Los Alamos History Museum
Located on Bathtub Row and named for one of the famed resident Manhattan Project physicists, the Hans Bethe House hosts the Harold Agnew Cold War Gallery, including exhibits highlighting 70+ years of post-World War II history of the Los Alamos community and the Laboratory.

Romero Cabin
Step into this authentic homestead cabin and step back in time more than a century to a bygone way of life, and learn why homesteading on this plateau differed from anywhere else in the country. Join the History Museum’s daily walking tour to see the interior of one of only three remaining area homestead cabins and the only one open to the public.

Historic Fuller Lodge
Built in 1928 for the Ranch School, the Lodge served as a cafeteria and home for bachelor staff members and distinguished visitors. During the Manhattan Project, the Lodge was the dining and meeting hall for project staff. In 1947, the Atomic Energy Commission added three two-story wings extending north, south, and west from Fuller Lodge, so it could function as a hotel for official visitors. Today Fuller Lodge continues to serve as a gathering place for residents and visitors alike. Room 234 upstairs has been converted into a museum exhibit, showcasing items that might have been used by one of the Ranch School masters.

Los Alamos History Museum Campus
1050 Bathtub Row, Los Alamos
Monday-Friday 9am-5pm | Sat 10am-4pm | Sun CLOSED
Admission $5 | 505-662-4493 | losalamoshistory.org

Los Alamos History Museum Guided Tours
Step inside the homestead-era Romero Cabin, visit an Ancestral Pueblo site, hear about the famous 20th-century physicists who walked these streets, and learn how Bathtub Row got its name. Tours last approximately 1.5 hours. Tickets include museum admission and are available at the Los Alamos History Museum Shop. Tours limited to 16 people.

Monday - Saturday 11:00am
Admission at $15 ages 19+, 18 and under - FREE with a ticketed adult

15-Minute Movies
Racing Toward Dawn - The story of the Manhattan Project
Heritage of Science: Stockpile Stewardship at Los Alamos National Laboratory - The story of LANL’s current mission.

Gadgets Museum Shop
Stop by Gadgets, located in the museum, to find the perfect souvenir for your visit. As a non-profit store, all proceeds go to S.T.E.M. education outreach in Northern New Mexico!

Manhattan Project National Historical Park
“Behind the Fence” Tours
Experience a “top-secret” tour of historic Manhattan Project buildings! Tours of the Pajarito Site and the Slotin Building are offered 2-3 times per year and last approximately three hours. Registration is done in advance and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 505-667-4444 to learn more.

At San Juan Cultural Center, guided walking tours are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 505-667-4444 to learn more.

Aquatic Center
Guided Walking Tour
Nestled in the heart of downtown, the Los Alamos History Museum presents the stories of Los Alamos from multiple perspectives via indoor and outdoor venues, historic buildings, artifacts, documents, photographs, recordings, and interactive experiences. Begin your visit in the restored Los Alamos Ranch School Guest Cottage, where exhibits take visitors from the Pajarito Plateau’s Ancestral Pueblo people to its homestead history, through the Ranch School era, and into the Manhattan Project. Find books and unique local gifts in the Museum Shop before you head out!

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