

LOS ALAMOS

Historic Walking Tour

visitlosalamos.org



Ancestral Pueblo Dwellings

Walk in the footsteps of pioneers...

Visit an 800-year old Ancestral Pueblo site. See one of the first Homesteaders' cabins. Explore the unique architecture of the Historic Fuller Lodge that has been a community gathering place for more than 100 years. Stand in the very spot where the first atomic bomb components were assembled. This Historical Walking Tour map leads you to places in Los Alamos* where generations of true pioneers have created ground-breaking innovations. Move at your own pace and discover the interactive museum exhibits, and unique shopping and dining opportunities long your way.

*Spanish for cottonwood/poplar/aspen trees



1,000 Years to the Atomic Age

Los Alamos is located on the Pajarito Plateau of the Jemez Mountains, formed by eruptions of a supervolcano more than a million years ago. Pueblo ancestors, and later homesteaders, used the plateau for seasonal farming and grazing. In 1917, H.H. Brook's Los Alamos Ranch was purchased by Ashley Pond Jr. to start Los Alamos Ranch School, a boys school which combined academics and a physical curriculum. During World War II, the U.S. Government took over the plateau and sealed it for a secret mission to end the war: the Manhattan Project.



Sheep graze contentedly at the H.H. Brook homestead in 1915 on the site of today's History Museum and Fuller Lodge.



A mid-1940's view (to the east on Central at 20th Street).



The Big House, built in 1917 as the dormitory for the Los Alamos Ranch School, was the largest building on the plateau at the time, thus earning the name. It was torn down by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1948 to make way for the Community Center.



From 1943-1947, the Ashley Pond was surrounded by the Manhattan Project base of operations.

Manhattan Project National Historical Park

This National Park site tells the stories of the more than 6,000 scientists and personnel who came with their families to Los Alamos to work on the Manhattan Project. Learn about the science and events of this controversial project at the MAPR Visitor Center.

Bradbury Science Museum & Shop

Named for Norris E. Bradbury, second director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, the Bradbury features two films and 60 interactive exhibits interpreting the Lab's contributions to modern science, research and technology, including its role in the Manhattan Project and current national security mission.

Los Alamos History Museum & Shop

Built as an infirmary in 1918 and later used as the guest cottage for Los Alamos Ranch School, the museum is in the oldest continually occupied structure in town. During the Manhattan Project (1943-1947), the cottage continued to serve as guest quarters, notably for General Leslie R. Groves, commander of the Manhattan Engineer District, whose office and residence were in Washington, D.C. Today, it serves as a comprehensive historical museum which presents the world-changing and varied history.

Mesa Public Library & Art Gallery

Originally located in government surplus buildings and then in a former cafeteria, the library is an important institution in this highly educated community. The 1993 award-winning design is by architect Antoine Predock. Make sure to stop by the third-floor Art Gallery for unique rotating exhibits year-round.

Historic Sculptures

Life-sized sculptures of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer and Gen. Leslie R. Groves are located south of Fuller Lodge.

Other Historic Tours

Docent-Guided Historic District Tour - Los Alamos History Museum
Self-Guided Homestead Tour - visitlosalamos.org
Self-Guided Atomic City Spy Tour - visitlosalamos.org

Plan Your Visit

LOS ALAMOS VISITOR CENTER

475 20th St., Suite A, Los Alamos
Hours: Monday-Friday: 9am-5pm
Saturday: 9am-4pm
Sunday: 10am-3pm
800-444-0707 | 505-662-8105 | visitlosalamos.org

MANHATTAN PROJECT NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK VISITOR CENTER

475 20th St., Suite C, Los Alamos
Hours: Hours vary. Please call before visiting.
505-661-6277 | nps.gov/mapr

BRADBURY SCIENCE MUSEUM & SHOP

1350 Central Ave., Los Alamos
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday: 11am-4pm
Sunday-Monday: CLOSED
505-667-4444 | lanl.gov/museum

LOS ALAMOS HISTORY MUSEUM & SHOP

1050 Bathtub Row, Los Alamos
Hours: Monday-Friday: 9am-5pm
Saturday: 10am-4pm
Sunday: CLOSED
505-662-4493 | losalamoshistory.org

LOS ALAMOS NATURE CENTER & SHOP

2600 Canyon Rd., Los Alamos
Hours: Monday: 10am-4pm
Tuesday: CLOSED
Wednesday-Saturday: 10am-4pm
Sunday: CLOSED
505-662-0460 | losalamosnature.org

BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT & SHOP

15 Entrance Rd. off NM4, White Rock
Park Hours: Dawn to Dusk
Visitor Center Hours: mid-May to mid-Oct: 9am-6pm*
mid-Nov to mid-April: 9am-5pm
505-672-3861x0 | nps.gov/band

*Visitors must use the shuttle from White Rock Visitor Center between 9am-3pm. Some exceptions apply.

VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL PRESERVE & SHOP

NM4, 18 miles west of Los Alamos
Visitor Center: May-Oct: 8am-6pm
Nov-Apr: 9am-5pm
575-829-4100 x3 | nps.gov/vall



1 Historic Fuller Lodge

Built in 1928 as the Ranch School dining hall, with nurses, staff, and guest quarters, the Lodge was named for Edward P. Fuller, a Ranch School staff member. It is made of 771 massive pine logs, each selected by architect John Gaw Meem and Ranch School Director A.J. Connell.

2 Memorial Rose Garden

In 1947, Los Alamos did not have a cemetery, so the Los Alamos Garden Club began planting rose bushes in memory of Los Alamos residents who died during the Manhattan Project and the early days of the townsite. This site is also a Blue Star Memorial Byway site, and a Los Alamos National Laboratory memorial to those killed in the line of duty.

3 Romero Homestead Cabin

Homesteading began on the Pajarito Plateau in the late 1800s. The Romero family built this cabin in 1913 on a nearby mesa. Like all homesteads on the plateau, it was acquired by the U.S. government for the Manhattan Project. In 1984, the cabin was moved downtown, and in

2010 it was restored. Los Alamos History Museum Guided Tours provide an opportunity to see inside for a glimpse of life as a homesteader.

4 Fire Cache

Local homesteader Severo Gonzales Sr. built this stone building in the 1920s for the Los Alamos Ranch School to house firefighting equipment. Fires have always been a danger on the Pajarito Plateau due to droughts, log construction, and even wood burning stoves. The building is made of stone from the nearby Ancestral Pueblo site.

5 The Big House

Across the street from the Romero Cabin was the site of the original main building for the Los Alamos Ranch School. The Big House design inspired the style of Fuller Lodge and other Ranch School structures. Students slept on screened porches year-round as part of the physically and academically challenging education. The Big House contained a library and, during the war years, the non-broadcast radio station, KRSN. In 1943, it housed some of the first scientists.

6 Ancestral Pueblo Dwellings

In roughly 1225 CE, this site was home to a group of Tewa-speaking people, ancestors of Pueblo groups now living along the Rio Grande. They built with blocks of tuff, the welded volcanic ash common in this area, creating separate rooms for cooking, sleeping and storage.

7 Bathtub Row

These cottages were built for the Ranch School as residences and classrooms. Having the only bathtubs in town, these homes quickly acquired the name "Bathtub Row." J. Robert Oppenheimer lived in the house at the corner of Bathtub Row and Peach Street. Today, this home is on its way to becoming a new stop on the Historic Walking Tour, as it undergoes historic preservation, renovation, and exhibit development. The house next to the Oppenheimer house, now known as the Hans Bethe House, displays Cold War exhibits as part of the History Museum Campus. Don't miss the Victory Garden planted out back!

8 Performing Arts Center

Built in 1943 as the Manhattan Project East Cafeteria or "Mess Hall," this building was destined to be an entertainment center. One of the few GI* buildings left from WWII, it was used by the growing post-war community as a recreation hall for 25 years. In 1971, it was converted to a full-time playhouse operated by the Los Alamos Little Theater, a non-profit drama troupe formed by the civilian scientists, their families and military personnel in 1943. The troupe performed a variety of shows, including a community production of the play "Arsenic & Old Lace," featuring Manhattan Project Director J. Robert Oppenheimer in a cameo role as "the corpse."

*GI (Government or General Issue) is a term for a U.S. soldier

9 Power House

The building housing the diesel generators for the Los Alamos Ranch School was built in the early 1930s. In 1944, explosives expert George Kistiakowsky and his new bride moved into it. As a joke, his friends carved a half-moon in the door of the attached shed the Army built. It is now used as the NMSU Cooperative Extension offices.

10 Hopper Fireplace

These rocks were part of the fireplace in the homestead cabin of William Mackwood "Mack" Hopper, who settled here in 1908. Originally constructed of Ancestral Pueblo stones and mud/clay mortar, the chimney was rebuilt in 2016 for the Los Alamos Historical Society as an Eagle Scout Project.

11 Touch the Sky Sculpture

In May 2000, Los Alamos County and adjacent lands were devastated by the 48,000-acre Cerro Grande wildfire. Nearly 400 Los Alamos homes were destroyed. This sculpture was erected a year later, commemorating the fire and community rebuilding.

12 Ashley Pond Park

The pond began as a natural depression in the landscape. The Ranch School ensured its water supply by constructing a pipeline from a dam in Los Alamos Canyon. It was named for Ashley Pond Jr., the founder of the Los Alamos Ranch School, whose students could not resist the geographical pun. The boys used it for summer and winter sports. Blocks of ice were cut from the pond in the winter and stored in the Ice House. Ashley Pond Park contains a number of sculptures that are part of the County art collection, curated by the Art in Public Places Board.

13 Ice House Memorial

This memorial marks a unique spot in history. First, it was the site of a simple ice house, erected to store ice cut from Ashley Pond by Ranch School boys during the winters. During WWII, it was repurposed as a technical area laboratory where the nuclear core of the "Gadget" (the prototype atomic bomb) was assembled—the same Gadget that was later tested at the Trinity Site, the successfully detonated on July 16, 1945.

14 Historic U.S. Post Office

During WWII, mail to Los Alamos residents was simply addressed to P.O. Box 1663, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Los Alamos Post Office, designed and built as part of the Community Center, opened at this location in 1948 on the site of the Ranch School Trading Post. Recently the Post Office was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is still the main working U.S. Post Office for Los Alamos County.