

DAY TRIP 1: Historic Silver City

Known for its vibrant arts community, downtown Silver City hosts a variety of galleries, gift shops, historic buildings, fine restaurants and bars, and quaint homes. It is definitely worth exploring by foot. For a glimpse of at the region's history and archeology you may also enjoy the Silver City Museum and the museum at Western New Mexico University.

Silver City Museum

Silver City has a fascinating history, from Apache campground to Spanish settlement to bustling tent city mining camp. "The Big Ditch," now a linear park behind Bullard St. (the current main street of town) was originally Main Street until turn-of-the-century thunderstorms flooded the town and simply washed the street away. A young Billy the Kid once lived nearby. You can learn more about the town's rich history at the Silver City Museum, housed in a restored 1881 mansion at 312 W. Broadway. Open Tuesday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., weekends 10:00 - 4:00, \$3 per person suggested donation, phone: 575-538-5921.

Boston Hill

Take a hike on Boston Hill. Just off Market St. above downtown, Boston Hill offers 12 miles of trails winding in and around many of the old mines above Silver City, giving the hiker a spectacular view of town and the surrounding area. Your hosts at the Lodge will gladly provide additional information on Boston Hill and similar area hiking opportunities.

Western New Mexico University Museum

Home to the largest permanent collection of prehistoric Mimbres Pottery in the world, along with basketry and other artifacts. The collection includes Casas Grandes pottery, Maria Martinez, San Ildefonso, and Santa Clara pottery, heirloom Navajo rugs, historic photographs of Silver City and surrounding areas, and traveling exhibits. The museum is on the University campus in Fleming Hall, 1000 W. College Ave. at the west end of 10th Street. Open daily; Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Saturday & Sunday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., phone: 575-538-6386.

DAY TRIP 2: Gila Cliff Dwellings, etc.

Pinos Altos

Six miles as the crow flies from Bear Mountain Lodge but eleven driving miles, Pinos Altos, "tall pines" in Spanish, began as an early Grant County mining town when gold was discovered nearby in 1860. The town still retains its historic feel and much of its original architecture. Take State Highway 15 north seven miles from its intersection with U.S. Hwy. 180 in Silver City. Visit the Museum, the "Fort," the old Post Office/Ice Cream Parlor, the Hearst Chapel, and the Buckhorn Saloon & Opera House (closed on Sundays).

Cherry Creek Campground

About fourteen miles north of Silver City, past Pinos Altos on the east side of State Highway 15, is Cherry Creek

Campground, where you'll find good birding and a nice place to stretch your legs.

Signal Peak

Park your car left of the highway about 1.5 miles past McMillan Campground, just before Forest Road 154, and look on your right for trail #742. It's a beautiful 2 1/2 mile hike (5 mile round trip) up one of the highest peaks in the Pinos Altos Range on a forested trail surrounded by wildflowers in season, up to the fire tower where you'll find 360° views at about 9000' elevation. OR... Drive Forest Road 154 through the forested north slope ending at the saddle just below the fire tower lookout. From here, you can walk the last quarter mile to the tower and some amazing vistas.

Gila Hot Springs

Located about forty miles north of Silver City, four miles south of the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, Gila Hot Springs is the remains of an old ranching community settled in the 1880's by the Hills Brothers. It was once the site of a military camp established to guard local homesteaders. Operated by the Campbell family since 1940, soaks in the hot springs are available for \$3/person.

Gila Cliff Dwellings

Continue north on State Highway 15, only 44 miles from Silver City, but approximately two hours travel time due to the twisting road and mountainous terrain. The roadway is steep in places, and is not plowed on nights or weekends.

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument offers a glimpse into the homes and lives of the Mogollon people who inhabited the area through the early 1300s. It is surrounded by the immense Gila National Forest and lies on the edge of the Gila Wilderness, our nation's first officially designated wilderness area.

The Cliff Dwellings are open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, with the Visitor Center open until 5:00. The rest of the year, the Cliff Dwellings are open 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the Visitor Center until 4:30. The monument closes on Christmas Day. Visitors are free to tour the cliff dwellings on their own, but a guided tour is offered daily at 1:00 p.m. as part of the \$3 per person (or \$10 per family) entrance fee. Tours start at the Cliff Dwellings themselves, about a half hour hike up from the trailhead. Phone: 575-536-9461.

The Loop (The Trail of the Mountain Spirits)

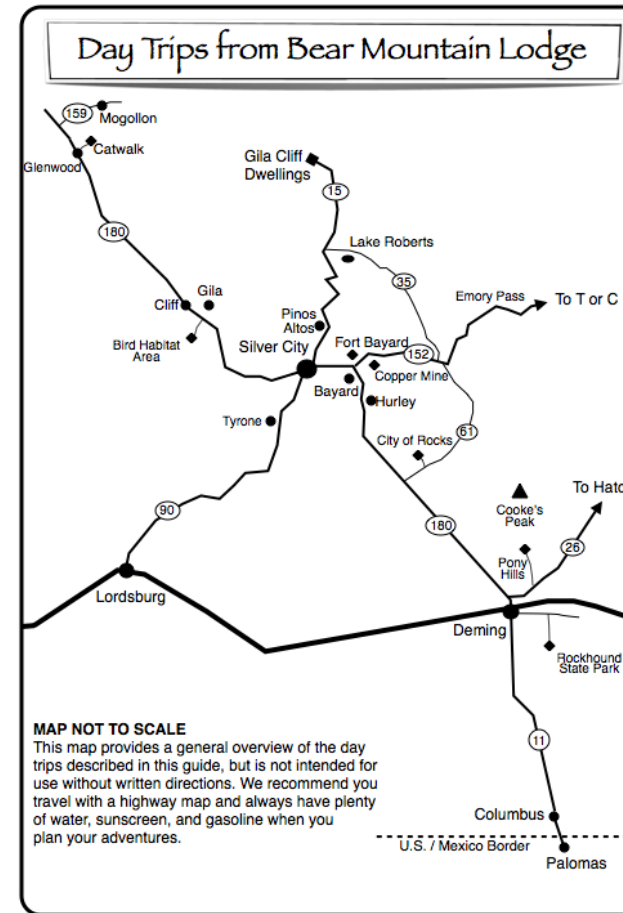
For some different but equally spectacular scenery on the way back to town, take State Hwy. 35 and loop through the beautiful Mimbres River Valley. Where Hwy. 35 dead ends at the intersection of Hwy. 152, turn right to return to Silver City. Although this route is a bit longer than simply retracing your steps, you will avoid the winding roads of Hwy. 15.

TRIP 2, continued:

Lake Roberts

Stop at Lake Roberts, near the intersection of New Mexico Highway 15 and Highway 35. Lake Roberts is a 72-

Together, these journeys will reveal the rich natural and cultural tapestry of our region, but any combination should make for an interesting and enjoyable adventure. Some of these trips can be a lot to fit into one day, depending on how much ground you want to cover and how long you choose to stay at a given location. Remember to have plenty of water, sunscreen, and a hat, and fill up your gas tank, as distances between gas stations can sometimes be greater than expected.



© 2011
BEAR MOUNTAIN LODGE
60 Bear Mountain Ranch Road
P.O.Box 1163, Silver City, New Mexico 88062
T: (575) 538-2538
W: www.bearmountainlodge.com

DAY TRIPS

from BEAR MOUNTAIN LODGE



acre man-made lake in the Gila National Forest. Fed by Sapillo Creek, the lake can be fished for 10 to 14 inch rain-bow trout (best late March to late May) as well as crappie, catfish, and some bass. An oasis for wildlife, it's common to see herds of deer grazing along the road near the lake. There are numerous trails leading into the forest and a self-interpretive Mimbres Indian site.

Continental Divide Trail

A little farther down Hwy. 35, look for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, a long, primitive hiking route. The loop made by the Trail of the Mountain Spirits crosses the Continental Divide Trail twice, accessing a 14-mile-long segment through forested country that is a visual feast of butterflies, birds, and wildflowers.

Santa Rita Copper Mine

Returning to Silver City via “the Loop” and State Hwy. 152, near the end of your journey you will pass the natural rock formation known as the Kneeling Nun. Beneath it lies the former townsite of Santa Rita, now swallowed by the gaping pit of the Chino Copper Mine. Metal has been extracted here for over two centuries, and for a few years in the early 1800’s local copper supplied the Spanish Royal Mint in Mexico City, making the torturous 1300 mile frontier journey by mule train. An overlook offers views into the incredibly deep, wide hole, today about 1.8 miles across and 1400 feet deep.

The Catwalk

The Catwalk National Recreation Trail is a hanging walkway that winds up narrow, spectacular Whitewater Canyon, onetime hideout for both Geronimo and Butch Cassidy. Sixty five miles northwest of Silver City via Highway 180, The Catwalk is approximately 5 miles north of Glenwood, off NM Highway 174 at the end of Cat Walk Road.

The Catwalk National Recreation Trail follows the path of an 1890’s water pipeline, offering a fascinating glimpse into the geologic and historic foundations of the region. The pipeline supplied water to an ore mill in the former town of Graham, (now the picnic area), and was suspended above the canyon floor to avoid washouts. Improved by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930’s and again by the Forest Service in later years, the Catwalk now provides a beautiful picnic spot next to Whitewater Creek, a challenging one-mile trail along the historic 1890’s mining water-way, and a sense of place that conjures up images of an earlier and wilder time.

The Catwalk Recreation Area is a day-use area open from sunrise to sunset. A parking fee of \$3 per vehicle is payable at a self-pay station in the parking lot.

Mogollon

If you have time, continue 4 miles further west on Hwy. 180, then right on Hwy. 159 to reach Mogollon, just 25 minutes from Glenwood up a very narrow one lane road that winds tightly through the mountains with beautiful vistas and overlooks of the valley below.

Part ghost town and part secluded retreat, Mogollon be-

gan as a mining camp, grew during the 1890’s into a busy town with up to 6000 transient miners, then shrank into the small, isolated community seen today. Historic buildings predominate along the half-mile stretch of Highway 159 that serves as the main, and only, street in town.

New Mexico Highway 159 should never be taken in the dark or in poor weather conditions, and may be closed above or below Mogollon in the winter, so check driving conditions beforehand.

City of Rocks State Park

This park 35 miles from the Lodge has rock formations so unique they are known to exist in only six other places on earth. Billowing volcanic ash from ancient eruptions far greater than Mt. Saint Helens welded itself together by intense heat, then slowly eroded through wind and water into fantastically sculpted shapes. Besides geology, visitors can experience a variety of southwestern plant and animal life native to the Upper Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem. The park’s desert botanical garden is home to cow’s tongue and bunny ear cacti, yucca, and towering century plants. Deer, antelope, javelina, and jackrabbits are frequently seen in the area, along with over 35 species of birds ranging from Golden Eagles to finches.

Take US Highway 180 east and south from Silver City. Travel through Bayard and past Hurley and the mine tailings of the Santa Rita pit. Turn left on NM Hwy. 61 and drive four miles northeast to the state park access road. Park hours are 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and the entrance fee is \$5 per vehicle. Phone: 575-536-2800.

Faywood Hot Springs

Near the City of Rocks on Highway 61, about 2 miles from its intersection with Highway 180, is Faywood Hot Springs, a high desert oasis with many geothermal pools of different temperatures. A century and a half ago the re-freshing mineral springs served as a resting place for two different stage lines running between the tiny but important settlements of Mesilla and Pinos Altos. By 1896 a hotel with 60 guest rooms, considered the finest in all New Mexico Territory, stood here, but by 1951 the hotel was gone and things had calmed down considerably. Faywood Hot Springs is open to the public from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Phone: 5750-536-9663.

Fort Bayard Historic Site, the “Big Tree”

Established in 1866, Fort Bayard was an important military outpost whose troops, including the famous Buffalo Soldiers, protected the local mining settlements of Pinos Altos and Santa Rita. The last active troops left in 1900, at which time the post became a medical facility. Currently, Fort Bayard is a wildlife refuge known for its resident elk herd. There are some enjoyable short interpretive walks through the old parts of the fort.

To tour the fort, turn north from U.S. Highway 180

at the traffic light in Santa Clara onto the Fort Bayard Medical Center access road. From Fort Bayard you can hike to an immense alligator juniper known as the Big Tree.

The Big Tree is ranked as the second largest alligator juniper in the country. It is 63 feet high with a trunk diameter of 70 in., circumference of 18 ft., and crown spread of 62 ft. The tree is accessible by hiking a 5.5 mile round trip through piñon and juniper in the foothills of the Pinos Altos Range. To visit the Big Tree, drive past the hospital complex by taking the right fork and follow the signs to the Forest Administrative Site and National Recreational Trails, (4.5 miles up the Ft. Bayard Nursery Road). The parking lot for the trail is 1/10 mile left of the fenced Administrative Site.

Dragonfly Petroglyph Site

Look for the Dragonfly Trailhead sign on U.S. Highway 180 about 1.5 miles west of the Fort Bayard turnoff. Take Arenas Valley Road northward 1 mile to the parking area at the sharp curve. Hike the more traveled trail to the right, and in about 200 yards the trail forks to make the well marked 3.5 mile Dragonfly loop. There are several nice petroglyphs in the rocks halfway, indicated by an arrow on a wordless sign. Arenas Valley Road is a short loop, so it is possible to continue along it back to Highway 180 as you return to town.

Cooke’s Peak

Driving southward towards Deming on Highway180 E., the distinctive landmark on your left is Cooke’s Peak, 8000 feet in elevation. The mountain honors Phillip St. George Cooke, who led the U. S. Army’s Mormon Battalion through the area in 1846 while scouting an overland wagon route for frontier military use. Later, a Butterfield Overland Stage station and then a Pony Express station operated at the nearby spring. The Army constructed Fort Cummings near Cooke’s Spring in 1863 as protection from Apaches, and staffed it intermittently until Geronimo surrendered in 1886. Later, the Cooke’s Peak Mining District produced much metal, predominantly lead and zinc, through the years.

Pony Hills Rock Art Site

This isolated treasure is 70 miles from Bear Mountain Lodge. From U.S. 180 E. just north of Deming, turn east on State Highway 26 towards Hatch. Drive 5.1 miles and turn left on Green Leaf Mine Rd. (Co. Rd. A016). Go 9.9 miles on the dirt road to a parking area below the second large earthen dam. Numerous Mimbres era petroglyphs are left of the dam among the boulders up atop the hill. Walk up the left side of the dam and follow the

faint footpaths upward. Petroglyphs are in many places among the rocks, usually in groups. Be alert, you may encounter snakes. Have sunscreen and extra water.

Deming Luna Mimbres Museum

Located in downtown Deming at 301 S. Silver St., the red brick Museum was originally the first New Mexico National Guard Armory begun after statehood in 1912. Completed soon after Pancho Villa’s 1916 Raid on Columbus, the Armory later served as a community social center and a USO. Displays include artifacts and pottery of the Mimbres culture, rocks and geodes, and historical, military, and ranch life exhibits. The museum is open daily 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Sunday from 1:30 - 4:00. Closed Sunday during the summer. Admission is free, but donations are welcome. Phone: 575-546-2382.

Rockhound State Park

Perched on the rugged slopes of the Little Florida Mountains 13 miles from Deming, the rocks and semiprecious gem stones in this park are yours for the taking. Search for agates, quartz, jasper, opals, and translucent chalcedony in many shades. There are short hikes and panoramic views from the highest northeast shelter. From Deming, take NM 549 east seven miles, then south on NM 143. Open daily, 7:30 a.m. to sunset; entry fee is \$5 per vehicle; phone: 575-546-6182.

Columbus, NM

Thirty miles south of Deming is Columbus, New Mexico, the U.S. town famously attacked by Mexican revolutionaries under Pancho Villa on March 9, 1916. Pancho Villa State Park preserves the grounds of the former Camp Furlong, one of a string of army posts protecting the U.S./Mexico border from marauders and bandits. The park office is an original structure, as is the adjacent dining hall. The park’s 49 acres feature beautifully xeriscaped grounds and a new 7000 square foot Exhibit Hall with displays relating to the raid and the Army’s subsequent Punitive Expedition against Villa, which marked the Army’s first use of automobiles and airplanes in warfare. Highlights include a Curtiss “Jenny” biplane like those flown by the 1st Aero Squadron and a 1916 Dodge Touring Car such as used by General “Black Jack” Pershing as a field office. There are also walking paths and well-labeled botanical gardens. The Exhibit Hall is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. seven days a week. Entry fee: \$5 per vehicle. Phone: 575-531-2711.

The town of Columbus itself hosts a museum, The Shrine To The Perfect Man, and, on its northwestern edge, The City Of The Sun - a community with some unique one-of-a-kind earthship homes built of “green” materials such as papercrete, tires, adobe, and discarded bottles.

Palomas, Mexico

Three miles south of Columbus is the Mexican border and, across it, the quiet, dusty town of Palomas. If you have your passport it’s easy to park on the U.S. side and walk across to shop. Visit the *dentista*, *farmacia*, or optometrist, or simply enjoy a meal and do some shopping at the famous “Pink Store.”