

LOS ALAMOS

Historical 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 nearly 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 pioneers have created ground-breaking innovations. Move at your own pace and discover the interactive museum exhibits and unique shopping and dining opportunities along your way.

*Spanish for cottonwoods

LOS ALAMOS
where discoveries are made

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 for Boys, 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 Historic 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, 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 WW2 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

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

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 visit the art gallery on the third floor for unique rotating exhibits year-round.

Historic Sculptures

Bronze sculptures of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer and Gen. Leslie R. Groves are located on the south side of Historic Fuller Lodge.

Other Historic Tours

Docent-Guided Historic District Tour - Los Alamos History Museum
Self-Guided Homestead 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: 10am-4pm
Sunday: 1-4pm Monday: CLOSED
505-667-4444 | lanl.gov/museum

LOS ALAMOS HISTORY MUSEUM

1050 Bathtub Row, Los Alamos
Hours: Monday-Friday: 9am-5pm
Saturday: 10am-4pm
Sunday: CLOSED
505-709-7794 | 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 May-October. 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 a nurse, 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 in 1942 for the Manhattan Project. In 1984, the cabin was moved down-

town, and in 2010 it was restored. 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, KRS. 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 hand-hewn 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 beside the front porch.

8 Performing Arts Center

Built in 1943 as the East Cafeteria or "Mess Hall," this building was one of few Manhattan Project structures left after World War II. The post-war community used it as a recreation hall for 25 years, but in 1971 it was converted to a playhouse operated by the Los Alamos Little Theatre, a drama group originally formed by scientists, their families, and military personnel in 1943. That original troupe had performed a variety of shows to relieve the tension of their mission, including the well-known Arsenic and Old Lace, featuring Manhattan Project Director J. Robert Oppenheimer in a cameo role as "the corpse!"

9 Power House

This building housed the diesel generators for the Los Alamos Ranch School. In 1944, explosives expert George Kistiakowsky moved into these small rooms with his daughter. The building is currently used for 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 with mud and 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 to commemorate both the fire and community re-building.

12 Ashley Pond Park

The pond in the center of the park began as a natural depression in the landscape. The Los Alamos Ranch School ensured the water supply by constructing a dam and a pipeline from Los Alamos Canyon. The pond was named for Ashley Pond Jr., the founder of the Ranch School whose students couldn't resist the geographical pun. The boys used the pond 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 a 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. It was the site of a simple ice house, erected to store ice cut from Ashley Pond during the winters. Then, 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 on July 16, 1945.

14 Historic U.S. Post Office

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