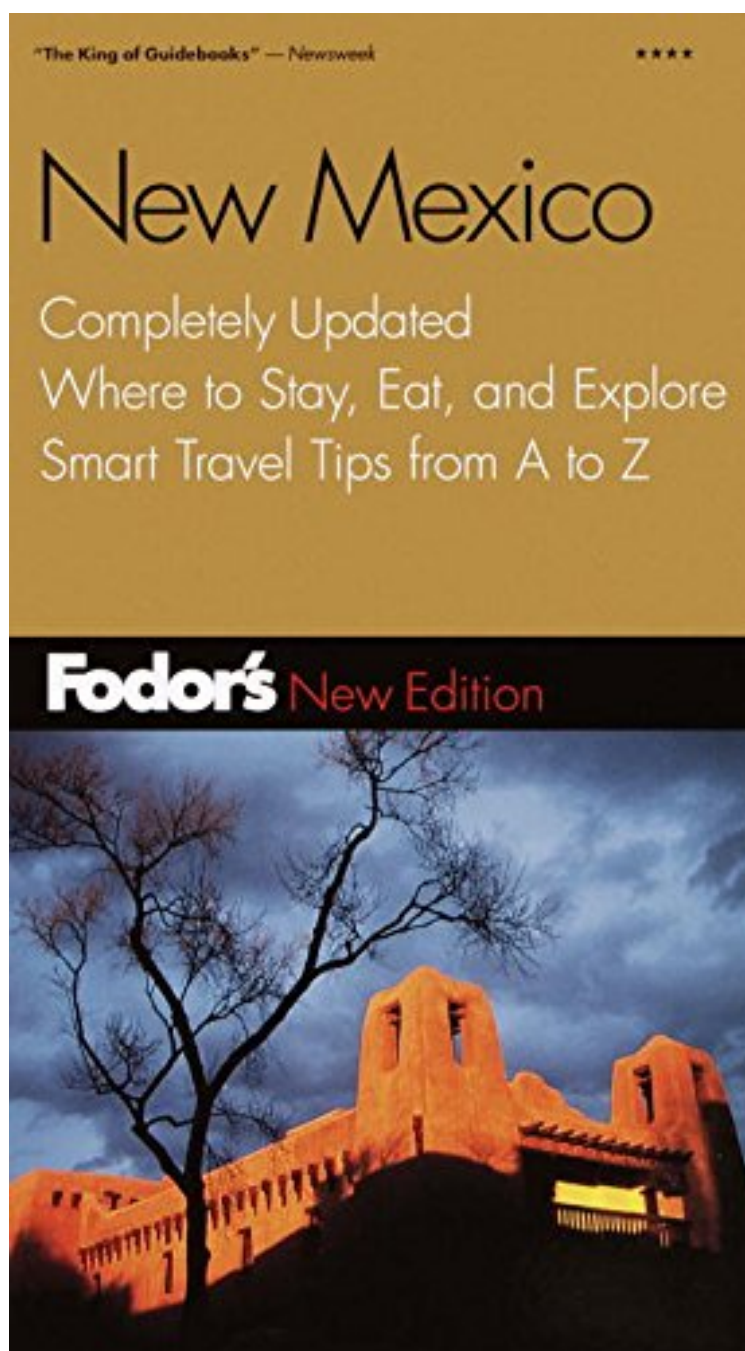




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feel confident after reading this book (and talking to people who have been there before) that we have chosen the best destination for our vacation.

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From the Inside Flap Fodor's New Mexico 2000 "Fodor's guides are always a pleasure." - The Chicago Tribune "Teeming with maps and loaded with addresses, phone numbers, and directions." - Newsday Experienced and first-time travelers alike rely on Fodor's Gold Guides for rich, reliable coverage the world over. Updated each year and containing a foldout Rand McNally map, a Fodor's Gold Guide is an essential tool for any kind of traveler. Insider info that's reliable and smart Local experts show you all the things to see and do -- from top sights to off-the-beaten-path adventures, from sports to shopping, from nightlife to recommended walks. Hotels and restaurants in all price categories From BBs to luxury hotels, from casual eateries to elegant restaurants, we list hundreds of detailed reviews that show what is distinctive about each place. Practical info that's completely up-to-date Useful maps and background information; key contacts; how to get there and get around; when to go; what to pack; local do's and taboos; costs, hours, and tips by the thousands. We've compiled a helpful list of guidebooks that complement Fodor's New Mexico 2001. To learn more about them, just enter the title in the keyword search box. Fodor's Compass American Guides New Mexico: A full-color guide, providing in-depth coverage of the history, culture and character of New Mexico. Fodor's Compass American Guides Santa Fe: A full-color guide, providing in-depth coverage of the history, culture and character of Santa Fe. Fodor's Pocket Santa Fe Taos: The best of both cities for travelers who want the highlights. Fodor's The Southwest's Best Bed Breakfasts: A guide to the best BBs of the South, plus suggestions on what to do once you're there. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Destination New Mexico: A Land Apart Almost every New Mexican has a tale or two to tell about being perceived as a "foreigner" by the rest of the country. There is the well-documented case of the Santa Fe man who tried to purchase tickets to the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, only to be shuffled over to the department handling international requests. Even the U.S. Postal Service occasionally returns New Mexico-bound mail to its senders for insufficient "international" postage. Though annoying to residents, such cases of mistaken identity are oddly apt (keep an ear open to how often New Mexicans refer to their state, one of the nation's poorest, as a Third World country). New Mexico is, in many ways, an anomaly: it has its own cuisine, architecture, fashion, and culture, all of these an amalgam of the designs and accidents of a long and intriguing history. In prehistoric times Native Americans hunted game in New Mexico's mountains and farmed along its riverbanks. Two thousand years ago Pueblo Indians began expressing their reverence for the land through flat-roofed earthen architecture, drawings carved onto rocks, and rhythmic chants and dances. The late-16th and early 17th century brought the Spanish explorers who, along with the Franciscan monks, founded Santa Fe as a northern capital of the empire of New Spain, a settlement that was contemporaneous with the Jamestown colony of Virginia. The resulting mlang of cultures has produced a character that is uniquely New Mexican: Spanish words are sprinkled liberally through everyday English parlance; Spanish itself, still widely spoken in the smaller villages, contains numerous words from the Pueblo Indian dialects. Architectural references and culinary terms in particular tend to hew to the original Spanish: you'll admire the vigas and bancos that adorn the restaurant where you'll partake of posole or chiles rellenos. But beyond the linguistic quirks, gastronomic surprises, and cultural anomalies that give New Mexico its sense of uniqueness, there remains the most distinctive feature of all -- the landscape. At once subtle and dramatic, the mountains and mesas seem almost surreal as they glow gold, terra-cotta, and pink in the clear, still air of the high desert. The shifting clouds overhead cast rippling shadows across the land, illuminating the delicate palette of greens, grays, and browns that contrast with a sky that can go purple or dead black or eye-searingly blue in a matter of seconds. It's a landscape that has inspired writers (such as D.H. Lawrence and Willa Cather), painters (Georgia

O'Keeffe), and countless poets, dreamers, and assorted iconoclasts for centuries.