

Deer Trap and Kwage Mesa Trailheads



STUNNING VIEWS FROM THE END OF KWAGE MESA

USING LOS ALAMOS COUNTY OPEN SPACE

The Los Alamos County Trail Network is open to non-motorized use only.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

All cultural resources such as Ancestral Pueblo room blocks, pot shards, petroglyphs, and historical artifacts are protected by Federal and State law. Let all cultural resources lie undisturbed.

SHARE THE TRAIL

These are multi-use trails for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. Bicyclists should yield to all other users.



DOGS IN LOS ALAMOS COUNTY OPEN SPACE

All dogs must be on a leash when within 100 yards of a trailhead. Dogs must be under voice and sight control at all times.

SAFETY

When exploring, please stay on marked trails. Always carry water, sunscreen, a hat, extra clothing, a flashlight, and a navigational aid.

Trailhead guides are available at major trailheads, the Los Alamos County Customer Care Center in the Municipal Building, the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce, and online.

For more information, visit www.losalamosnm.us, then follow the links to Open Space and Trails.



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

A 58-mile network of trails links the foothills, canyons, and mesas in and around Los Alamos. Hikers, runners, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and other trail users delight in the variety of trails from which to choose. The trails offer a quick escape from the hectic pace in town; a route to commute to work, an easy stroll or a physical challenge, the chance to observe wildlife, or simply soaking in the impressive views. The County Trail Network connects over 100 miles of trails on the surrounding Santa Fe National Forest and the adjacent Valles Caldera National Preserve.



TENT ROCK FORMATIONS CAN BE FOUND IN PUEBLO CANYON



PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS IS A COMMON SIGHT



MULE DEER FORAGES IN THE CANYON



THE DEER TRAP (GAME PIT) FOR WHICH THE MESA IS NAMED

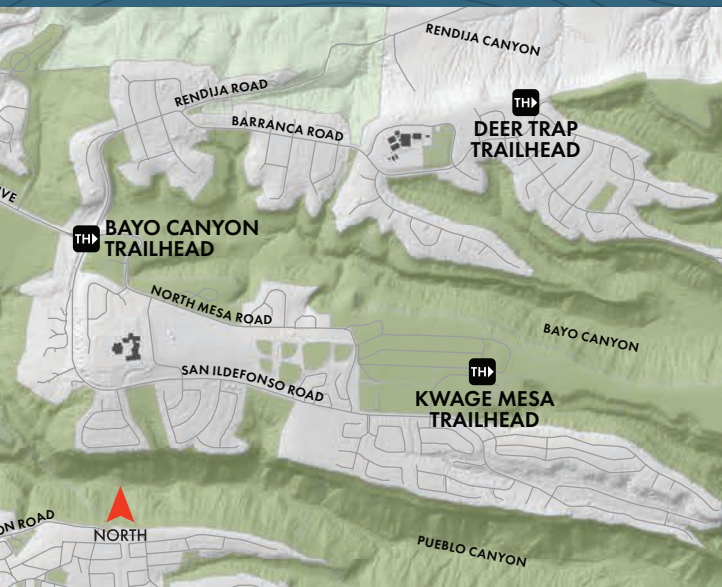
The mesa top trailheads on Deer Trap and Kwage mesas offer trail users access to flat, easy trails that head east to stunning viewpoints overlooking the Rio Grande rift. Loop trip opportunities are limited, but the out-and-back excursions offered here are worth exploring.

FINDING THE DEER TRAP & KWAGE MESA TRAILHEADS

Finding the Trailheads: From 15th Street and Central Avenue in downtown Los Alamos, head west (towards the Jemez Mountains) on Central. In 0.8 miles, past Ashley Pond and the Aquatic Center, turn right onto Diamond Drive. Pass the Los Alamos High School and the Los Alamos Golf Course to reach the San Ildefonso roundabout located 2.4 miles from the intersection of Central and Diamond.

To access the Deer Trap Trailhead, circle three-quarters through the roundabout and head uphill on North San Ildefonso Road. In 0.3 mile, continue straight onto Barranca Road as San Ildefonso Road makes a sharp left. Follow the road 1.3 miles to a dead end just past the intersection with Navajo. There is parking for a few cars along the dead end section of the road.

Get to the Kwage Mesa Trailhead from the roundabout by bearing right on South San Ildefonso. Head south, then east on this road, passing the Los Alamos Middle School. About 0.1 mile past North Mesa Road on the left, turn onto an unnamed road heading toward the stable area. The road swings to the right and ends at a parking area at the North Mesa Tennis Courts. The trailhead is on the left of the playlot.



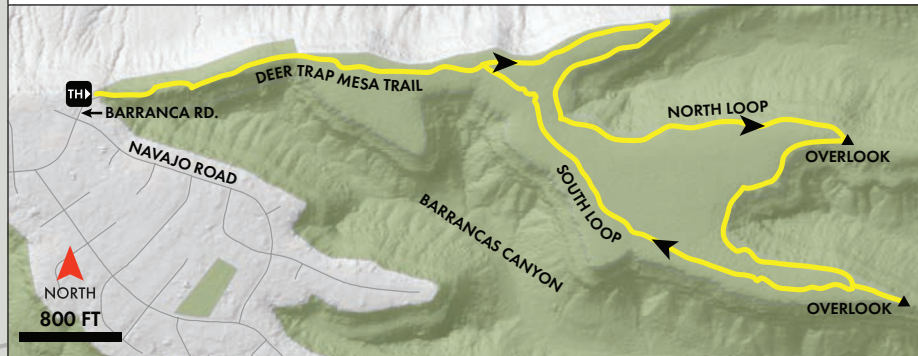
DEER TRAP MESA TRAILS

LENGTH: 1.6 OR 3.0 MILES OUT-AND-BACK	ELEVATION GAIN: 50 FEET
FITNESS LEVEL: EASY	FEATURES: GAME PIT, VIEWS
TRAIL SURFACE: PACKED DIRT, ROCK	FIELD NOTES: FOOT TRAFFIC ONLY

Deer Trap Mesa extends east from Barranca Mesa and is named for a game pit found close to the start of the trail. The mesa top with its fragile soil is not recommended for bicycles or horses. Its relative isolation makes it an attractive location for wildlife viewing, for studying wildflowers, and for simply enjoying the view. Walking is easy, except for a short section of rock stairs near the trailhead. The mesa has three points, each of which can be explored on foot. Most hikers head out to the northernmost point and return by the same route. For a longer trip, hikers can use the Loop Trail to connect the two mesa points.

Start from the trailhead, walk to the end of the road. Skirt around the guardrail and onto the dirt path. As the mesa quickly narrows, pass interpretive signs providing details about homesteading in the area. In another minute, watch for a steep rock stairway that drops to a saddle on the mesa. The game pit is located at the saddle. The trail traverses the north side of the mesa for about 200 feet, and then ascends a modern rock stairway to reach the mesa top. From here, the trail is level and easy to follow.

To reach the northern point, turn left at the only trail junction marked with a sign, located about 0.6 miles from the start. The overlook is a quarter mile ahead. For a longer trip, near the northern point the Loop Trail, branch off to the south (right as you face the point). The trail is marked with signs as it parallels the rim of the mesa. Follow the trail south, then east along the north rim of the middle point. After about a half mile, watch for a horseshoe bend that sends the trail back to the west. Continue along the rim of the southern point to meet the South Fork near the overlook on the north point. Head left a few yards to the point, then turn around and take the South Fork to the junction with the main trail. Turn left and retrace your steps back to the trailhead.



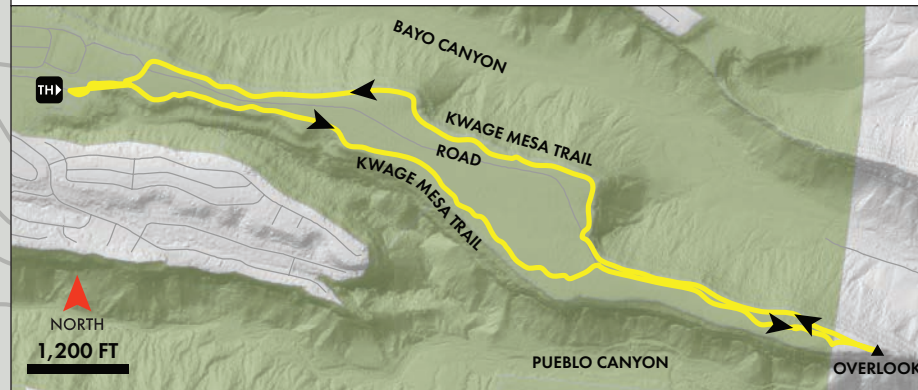
VIEWS TO THE EAST FROM THE TOP OF DEER TRAP MESA

KWAGE MESA TRAILS

LENGTH: 4.5 MILES OUT-AND-BACK	ELEVATION GAIN: 200 FEET
FITNESS LEVEL: EASY	FEATURES: 360 DEGREE VIEWS
TRAIL SURFACE: PACKED DIRT	MOUNTAIN BIKE SKILL LEVEL: MODERATE

The Kwage Mesa Trail winds along the south rim of the mesa for more than a mile. The route continues on a road to the tip of the mesa where long-range views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and the Rio Grande rift await.

From the trailhead, head east and in a few yards, curl to the north along a fence line. In a minute, turn right on the trail as it passes by the covered riding arena. The trail has plenty of twists as it skirts the mesa rim and heads east. In 1.5 miles, the trail meets the road. Bear right onto the road and follow it toward the overlook. The road narrows to a track near the end of the mesa, but it is easy to follow as it winds through piñons and juniper. The track ends on a rocky viewpoint. After enjoying the scene, retrace your route along the road. At the junction with the trail, bear right to stay on the road. The road soon swings to head west, with the Sierra de los Valles straight ahead. At the next trail junction, jog left for a few yards, and then turn right onto the Kwage Mesa Trail. The trailhead is less than a quarter mile from the junction.



BAYO/PUEBLO LOOP

LENGTH: 11 MILES	ELEVATION GAIN: 600 FEET
FITNESS LEVEL: MODERATE	FEATURES: TENT ROCKS, OPEN PINE STANDS
TRAIL SURFACE: PACKED DIRT	MOUNTAIN BIKE SKILL LEVEL: MODERATE, SOME HIKE-A-BIKE

The Bayo/Pueblo Loop offers a long trip within the canyons of Los Alamos. The loop is suitable for all trail users, although the canyon bottoms can be hot at mid-day in summer.

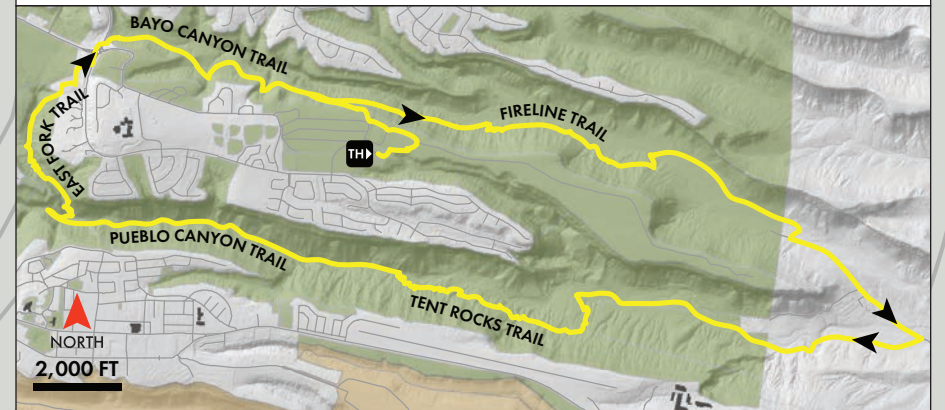
From the Kwage Mesa Trailhead, follow the Kwage Mesa Trail to the trail junction near the east side of the white-fenced riding arena. Turn left and in a few yards turn right to parallel the fence to reach the Kwage Mesa Road. At the road, turn left and skirt the north edge of the arena. Pass around a green gate and continue along the north side of the rodeo arena. Watch for a sign pointing to the Bayo Canyon Trail and turn right to

head down that trail. After 0.3 miles, turn right onto the main Bayo Canyon Trail. Here the trail follows an old road and in places is worn three feet into the soft rock, making for challenging travel. Near the bottom of the canyon, about 1.6 miles from the start, bear right onto the Fireline Trail. Wind along this trail to its eastern end, cross a dirt road and the sandy channel of Bayo Canyon, and then continue on a more sandy trail on the north side of the drainage. The route swings to the east and parallels a fence for about a mile before re-crossing the drainage and meeting the Bayo Canyon Road.

Follow the road to the left, passing several intersections. Just past a concrete low-water crossing, turn right onto the Pueblo Canyon Road. Head up the canyon, making two wet stream crossings. After two dry crossings, about 1.8 miles from the Bayo Canyon Road, turn left onto the winding Tent Rocks Trail. Follow this trail as it climbs for 1.7 miles up the canyon before again rejoining the Pueblo Canyon Road.

Turn left and continue on the road for about 2 miles to meet the East Fork Trail. Turn right onto this trail and climb steeply on a twisting track. After crossing a short bridge (not suitable for horses), turn right onto a road, climb a hill, then in 0.1 mile bear right to rejoin the East Fork Trail. (To avoid the stairs ahead, equestrians should (and mountain bike riders may want to) stay on the road and rejoin the East Fork Trail in a half-mile via the Walnut Canyon Rim Trail.) Descend to the canyon bottom; head upstream amid huge pines, then climb wooden stairs to reach the mesa top. Pass the Walnut Canyon Rim Trail on the right and follow the trail to its end at San Ildefonso Road.

Carefully cross San Ildefonso to the sidewalk on the east side. Turn left and cross North Mesa Road at the San Ildefonso roundabout. Pass a culvert tunnel on the left, bear right across a disturbed area, and pick up the Bayo Canyon Trail to the right. Follow this trail 1.1 miles to the access trail leading back to the trailhead at the stables.



THINK SAFETY: Keep your high desert hike safe & enjoyable! Stay on marked trails, know your limitations and your route. Avoid hiking in the heat of the day, drink plenty of water, use sunscreen, bring snacks, wear a hat and appropriate footwear. Remember that cell phone coverage may not be available for navigation or summoning help—consider other options and carry a map.