

Observing Sites in or near Albuquerque, New Mexico

This list provides the user with some suggestions on where they may be able to observe in the Albuquerque area. The user must evaluate the safety of the site on their own. The Albuquerque Astronomical Society has not made any arrangements concerning the use of any of the sites on this list. Users should comply with all posted notices concerning access to and use of the site.

Name	Location	Access & Parking	Viewing Surface	Notes
Observing Sites in Albuquerque				
Harrison H. Schmitt Big Sky Hang Glider Park	10900 Signal Ave NE. https://www.google.com/maps/@35.1811506,-106.5192622,17z	Small paved parking lot.	After a very short paved walkway, a large flat scrub area, with a flat gravel area & a paved ring path.	Good view in all directions, especially for setting planets & crescent moon in west. West half of sky shows city light dome. Neighbor homes are a few hundred feet away. No streetlights.
La Luz Trailhead Parking Lot	End of Pinion Place off Forest Service Road 333. https://www.google.com/maps/@35.2117803,-106.4943637,16z	Medium sized paved parking lot.	Paved parking lot.	Good south viewing. Viewing in other directions limited by trees and terrain. A check with the Sandia Ranger District indicated no problem with using the parking lot at night.
Mesa Del Sol Regional Sports Complex	I-25 Exit 220 to Rio Bravo Blvd, east a short distance to University Blvd, take a right on University. The complex is 2 miles on the right. https://www.google.com/maps/@34.9969534,-106.6266335,16z	Very large paved parking area next to a large grass field.	Flat parking lot or grass field.	Soccer might be in progress on one of the lighted fields. Good viewing in all directions.
North Domingo Baca Park	7521 Carmel Ave NE. https://www.google.com/maps/@35.1751242,-106.5648786,16z	Large paved parking lot.	Large grass field.	The parking lot tends to be busy in the early evening. You need to move well out into the grass field to get away from the parking lot and tennis court lights.

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Vista Sandia Equestrian Park	11809 Pino Ave NE. https://www.google.com/maps/@35.1707707,-106.5095987,17z	Short paved road to large gravel parking area.	Flat playground and dirt parking area. Slightly sloping scrub space nearby.	Good viewing in all directions. West half of sky shows city light dome. Entrance signs indicate that the park is closed after dark but the website says it is open 24 hours. Call Bernalillo County at 505-224-2119 to verify before using.
Observing Sites East of Albuquerque				
Coyote Trailhead (Chamisos Canyon)	I-40 Exit 175S to Tijeras. Go south on Hwy 337. Turn left at Chamisoso Canyon Road (Look for sign that says "Coyote Trailhead / 462"). The trailhead is 0.7 miles on the left. https://www.google.com/maps/@35.0643209,-106.3743577,17z	Fairly large gravel parking lot.	Parking lot slopes slightly to the south.	Viewing good in all directions but the surrounding trees and hills limit low elevation viewing. Two vault toilets and some picnic tables. This is a favorite viewing spot for TAAS members who live in Albuquerque due to its short distance from the city while providing dark skies.
Oak Flat Picnic Grounds (outside the gate)	I-40 Exit 175S to Tijeras, south on Hwy 337 for 8.6 mi, left on Oak Flat Road for 0.9 mi, left into Oak Flat. https://www.google.com/maps/@34.9945474,-106.3248972,17z	On short paved u-shaped access road to/from Oak Flat.	Flat paved areas, with gently sloping dirt/scrub between.	Trees on sides of roads reduce visibility of objects near horizon.

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Observing Sites North & Northwest of Albuquerque				
Rainbow Park	301 Southern Blvd SE, Rio Rancho, NM https://www.google.com/maps/@35.242236,-106.7299742,17z	Large paved parking lot.	Flat grass field. Paved game areas.	Good view to N, W, NE and SW. Although SE part of sky shows city light dome, the west and north is dark. No streetlights, but traffic light on Southern and passing cars are bright. Grass is watered at night. An observatory for Rio Rancho Astronomical Society (RRAS).
White Ridge Bike Trails Parking Lot	Traveling northwest toward Cuba on US 550 from Bernalillo, the drive is approximately 20 miles. Before San Ysidro (about two miles), turn left onto Cabezon Road (County Road 906) at the intersection of Cabezon Road and US 550. Follow the left fork. Travel 4.4 miles to the gravel parking lot. https://www.google.com/maps/@35.498283,-106.8018605,14z	Gravel parking lot.	Flat gravel parking lot.	This parking lot has a minor ridge to the east that helps hide the light dome of Albuquerque. Skies are best to the west. Beautiful views of Cabazon Peak are to the south west. Although not frequent, there is nighttime traffic on this road. This is the favorite viewing spot for observers who live in the Bernalillo area.
Observing Sites West of Albuquerque				
El Morro National Monument Campground	I-40 west to Exit 81, then follow signs to Rt 53 south ~42 miles SW of Grants good signage. https://www.google.com/maps/@35.0322344,-108.3412564,15z	Paved access road, gravel vehicle pullout at each campsite, no fees.	Generally sloping gently to south, somewhat soft dirt surface with vegetation clumps.	<u>Very dark skies</u> , no campsites clear of trees, but the central area is. The entire north lower sky has some skyglow (Grants, Gallup, & Black Rock).

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Observing Sites South of Albuquerque				
Datil Well Campground (BLM)	I-25 south to Exit 150, then follow signs to Rt 60 west ~62 miles west of Socorro good signage. About 17 miles past VLA & 3 miles past Rt 12 turnoff. https://www.google.com/maps/@34.1536259,-107.8601378,15z	~1/2-mile gravel access road, gravel vehicle pullout at each campsite, \$5 overnight fee, 22 campgrounds	Generally flat, somewhat soft dirt surface with vegetation clumps.	Very, very dark skies, only a few campsites are near areas clear of trees, light on each latrine building very minor light dome to NE a public/RV campground, perhaps best in spring/fall when colder. Elevation is 7440 ft.
Valley of Fires Recreation Area (BLM)	I-25 south to Exit 139, then follow signs to Rt 380 east (~60 miles east of San Antonio) good signage. https://www.google.com/maps/@33.6820079,-105.9251278,16z	Paved access roads, visitor center, \$7-\$18 fees 19 campgrounds (some for tents, some for RVs)	Somewhat soft dirt surface with vegetation clumps.	Very minor light dome from Carrizozo, 4 miles to SE. Subtle brightening on NW horizon (Socorro/Albuquerque). Stars bright to the horizon. Sometimes dust in air. Best at the end of the paved road, in the group campsite, down in a minor bowl, blocking Carrizozo lights.