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# New Mexico: A Guide For The Eyes



## **Synopsis**

Visually focused, packed with cultural insight, and sized for portability, Guides for the Eyes celebrate the local traditions and visual vernacular that surrounds us. Operating at the intersection of art and anthropology, each edition in the series explores place through 100 of the most notable features of a region. Vivid photography and informative text provide insight into the significance of each topic, covering regional architecture, design, flora, fauna, food, crafts, folklore, landscape, and other facets of local identity and style. Ranging from the obvious to the obscure, these distinguishing elements define a locale as somewhere as opposed to anywhere. As one of the most unique and colorful regions of North America, New Mexico is the first subject of the series. Throughout thousands of years, the state's striking landscape has inspired the art, design and traditions of its three dominant cultures: Native American, Hispanic and Anglo/Western. These distinct groups continue to blend and evolve, infusing the rustic land with a compelling vibrancy, unrivaled in its beauty.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

What a great way to introduce guests to the beauty and allure of this place, as well as serve as a resource for those of us who have lived in and loved New Mexico for many years--a fun and thought provoking read. --Cathy L. Wright, Director of the Albuquerque Museum of Art & History I highly recommend this 'blue corn, blue door, blue sky' delight, not only as a guide for travelers, but as a book on teachers' desks, here at home and around the world. Somehow this writer takes us across centuries of landscape while leaving that green chile taste on our lips and that vast blue sky in our hearts. --Marth Becktell, Interim Museum Director of Albuquerque's Indian Pueblo Cultural Center Like a secret decoder ring for the state--Parhad's approach is a genius way of sharing New

Mexico's unique culture. No guidebook (not even mine) is both so focused and so informed. --Zora O'Neill, Author of Moon New Mexico

A cultural anthropologist at heart and by trade, Elisa Parhad is passionate about exploring place, space, design, and culture. She was first introduced to New Mexico as a child, when her family moved to Albuquerque from Seattle, Washington. After completing Bachelors degrees in Cultural Anthropology and International Business at the University of Texas at Austin, she spent eight years studying American subcultures and communities to inform marketing messaging and advertising campaigns. She and her husband make their home in Los Angeles, California.

I have several shelves full of books on New Mexico, particularly photo essays, but the most recent addition stands out, and for very good reason. Elisa Parhad's *New Mexico: A Guide For the Eyes* captures something of the essence of the Land of Enchantment in a way that other books do not. Between the significantly colored turquoise end papers of this small book, Parhad takes us through a pantheon of cultural icons of the state. Some are well-known: adobe, chile, pickup trucks, hot air balloons, and the ocean of limitless blue sky, but also included are the not so well-known. Spending time with this book, one learns of Avanyu, the spirit of a serpent, which folk legend tells us resides in the rivers of New Mexico. There are also pawn shops, which have a surprising and historically important history in the state, and the Ditch Witch, a fictional creation of the Albuquerque city government intended to warn children away from playing in potentially dangerous arroyos, which can become flooded after a sudden rain storm. The visual contribution to this book by an array of photographers is clear, graphic and very engaging. It's amazing how, by focusing on a small detail, the spirit of a much larger subject can be conveyed. An example is the vigas. At first look it appears to be a photograph of a Navajo blanket, but we soon realize that the pattern is of the wooden ceiling structure traditionally found in older adobe buildings. The state symbol, the Zia sun, is cleverly illustrated by a shot of rusty license plates nailed to a wall. I would recommend this book without hesitation to anyone who loves New Mexico and reading about American history and folklore. Parhad's writing takes the reader far below the surface detail usually covered in travel books. Even grumpy old Zozobra would love this book.

I have never read a book in which photos actually have their own "voice." I have spent time reading and looking, again and again. Even though I live here and love our landscape, this book deepens it. Full of photos and color, it is in fact a history book, an art study, and an insight into Native American

culture. Well done!

Book format has an image on the left and a brief explanation on the right. Typical New Mexico concepts are illustrated that way, such as food or customs or locations. The book is fairly small, so it may fall short as a coffee table book, but it succeeds as a visual NM dictionary.

love it

In my opinion, this is not a guide to New Mexico...just pictures. Not worth the money at all. Don't buy it if you are looking for a guide to New Mexico.

I love to travel, but I'm not so hot on having my nose buried in a guidebook, reading all the history about every single place we go. What I want when I travel is to have my own experience, but I also don't want to miss anything. My daughter gave me this guide when my husband and I took a road trip through New Mexico. This is EXACTLY the kind of guide a person like me wants. It's like a cultural dictionary of the location that points out what's important in brief, one-page descriptions that are packed with rich detail. I probably would have passed up all the dreamcatchers I saw for sale, assuming they were hokey tourist stuff, but the accessible format of this guide allowed me to enjoy it cover to cover, and so I knew a dreamcatcher, when hung above a bed, catches all the bad dreams, only letting the good ones through. So guess what I brought home to all my friends and family? That's right, you guessed it. I honestly wish there were a guide like this for every city.

My parents recently traveled to New Mexico for an extended stay and I gave them this book as a gift. Three times now my mom has told me how interesting and helpful this guide has been because it has helped them understand what to notice, what to seek out, and the cultural significance of the small things they experience throughout their days. I absolutely love giving travel gifts that enhance the experience for the travelers, and I hit a home run with this book. Highly recommended for anyone planning a trip to New Mexico.

I also write about Albuquerque and Central New Mexico for my Bed and Breakfast guests and potential guests, and in my opinion New Mexico: A Guide for the Eyes is a New Mexico must-read. One day a guest bought this book and showed it to all our B&B guests. No one could put it down so I decided to stock them and offer a sample copy in each of our rooms, because this book gives such

perfect insight and understanding of the New Mexico, the Land of Enchantment. It is often hard for visitors who are new to the southwest to understand the blending of cultures here, never mind all the new words and nuances because there is so much to take in on your first visit. I recommend getting this book before you visit. The knowledge it will bring you is priceless. The photography is top notch and will quickly lure you into our diverse culture. This book will make you an expert before you even get here. If you are already hooked on New Mexico, having this book in your library will take you back in your mind to all the beauty and wonderment of your first visit to the Land of Enchantment.

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