

Three Days Of Wellness: Santa Fe



Raquel Baldelomar Contributor 
Careers

Business executives who are longing for rest and relaxation should take a trip to the American Southwest—Santa Fe, New Mexico in particular. It has a distinctive atmosphere with its Pueblo-style architecture and stunning views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. It's known for having sunny weather, a vibrant artistic community, a health and wellness culture and delicious cuisine. In short, it's the perfect backdrop to alleviate stress and be inspired.



Santa Fe has a distinctive look due to its Spanish Territorial or Pueblo style architecture. ALAN BECKER

Santa Fe became the capital of the New Mexico province in 1610, making it the oldest state capital in the United States. In the early 1900s, it adopted a unified building style--the Spanish Pueblo Revival look--to keep the city distinctive, which is why, even today, you may feel like you have entered a different country or time period as you stroll through the streets downtown. Add to that the mystique

of Santa Fe, stemming from its Native American and Spanish roots combined with the current mystical nature of the city, which boasts churches of all denominations, New Age institutes, Zen centers, Tibetan shrines and yoga centers, and it's no surprise that it is viewed as a spiritual mecca. The following three-day itinerary will help business leaders hone in on ways to relax, find inspiration and learn from the artisans of Santa Fe.

Day one: Learn from other artisans of business.

There is creative inspiration everywhere. Leaders simply need to slow down and be present. One of the best ways to do this, whether you are on vacation or a business trip, is to stay in unique hotels. Look for places that can inspire you as you walk to and from your room. One such place is the [Inn of the Five Graces](#), which is a 24-room hotel located on a quiet street near the Santa Fe River in the historic district. Each room transports guests to the Middle East with its handcrafted furniture and one-of-a-kind works of art. The owners Ira and Sylvia Seret lived in Afghanistan for 10 years and collected furniture and artwork while travelling throughout Central and South Asia. They relocated to Santa Fe and opened a furniture store, Seret & Sons, in the 1970s. The local clientele was unsure how to incorporate the ornate furniture and artwork from Asia and the Middle East into the adobe-style houses of Santa Fe. So, Ira and Sylvia decided to open a hotel as a way to showcase the furnishings in an actual living room or bedroom. It was a huge risk that, ultimately, paid off. Today, guests can enjoy the lush and exotic surroundings while treating themselves to a massage in the High-Mountain Tibetan treatment room or an ancient Indian Ayurvedic-inspired spa treatment.



Another place where business leaders can be inspired is the [Jambo Café](#). It serves a fusion of African and Caribbean cuisine and is located in an unassuming strip mall. The food is exquisite and the story of its owner, Chef Ahmed M. Obo, is truly remarkable. He grew up fishing off the coastal waters of Lamu Island, Kenya. As a teenager, he took tourists fishing and, afterwards, cooked the fish they caught for them. After coming to the United States, he found work as a line cook and sous chef at a couple of restaurants where he honed his culinary skills before venturing out and opening Jambo Café in 2009. Then, in 2013, he launched the [Jambo Kids Foundation](#) as a way to help children in need and honor his roots. The foundation brings much-needed healthcare and education to the citizens of Lamu Island, which is a settlement of nearly 100,000 people that is considered to be one of the oldest Swahili settlements in East Africa. His story demonstrates the impact you can have on the world with hard work, determination and a generous spirit. You never know where you will find a unique business solution or the inspiration to be better. Strike up conversations, ask questions and learn from the business leaders around you.

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Day two: Immerse yourself in tradition.

Santa Fe is a spiritual city. You don't have to have the same belief system to find inspiration, serenity or beauty in the traditions of other cultures. For example, [El Santuario de Chimayo](#) is a small chapel in Chimayo, New Mexico, about 30 miles outside of Santa Fe, that is known as one of the most important Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world. It is believed that dirt from the small chapel has curative powers and can help heal physical or emotional illnesses. The site was a place of worship even before the church was built in 1813. Each year, more than 300,000 people visit the church to pray or take a small amount of "holy dirt." It has been reported that during Holy Week some pilgrims walk from Albuquerque, about 90 miles away. Similarly, [Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs](#) is a location where people have gathered for centuries to reflect and heal their mind and body. For nearly 3,000 years, Northern Pueblo tribal communities have considered the

waters at Ojo Caliente sacred. Take a moment to experience the beauty of a place. Allow your mind to rest and breathe in your surroundings. It's important to turn off your mind, so you can be fully recharged and productive when you get back to work.



El Santuario de Chimayo is a small chapel, about 30 miles outside of Santa Fe, that is known as one of the most important Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world. ALAN BECKER

After connecting with your spirituality, head to [Sazón](#) for a contemporary take on traditional Mexican dishes. Chef Fernando Olea, originally from Mexico City, is challenging the preconceived notion that many Americans have about mole—namely, that mole sauces are all made with hot chilies and rich chocolate. In Mexico, mole recipes are often handed down generation-by-generation and some recipes contain more than thirty ingredients. Turns out not all moles contain chocolate. In order to better educate his clientele, Olea offers customers complimentary toast points served with six different types of mole sauces instead of the traditional bread and butter. It's important to put yourself in your customer's shoes to see how they are viewing the experience. Even though Olea knew that moles are all different, he realized his customer's didn't understand that distinction and didn't order those dishes because of preconceived notions. He found a way to educate his customers. As a result, his patrons are now trying the entrees served with mole. Sometimes in order to change customer behavior, you need to first look at how you can change the experience.



Chef Fernando Olea at Sazón offers guests a contemporary take on traditional Mexican dishes. ALAN BECKER

Day three: Push yourself to evolve.

It is easy to get complacent when your business is successful. However, if you want to stay on the top, you need to keep challenging yourself and your company to grow. A business that has been continually evolving during the past 37 years is [Ten Thousand Waves](#). It is a health and wellness resort in Santa Fe that was inspired by the mountain hot spring resorts in Japan. Every detail embodies the Japanese sense of serenity from the izakaya-style dining experience in its restaurant, Izanami, to the juniper bushes and woodwork throughout the resort to the jujitsu-style massages. In a city that is known for health and wellness resorts, the owners differentiated their business with a Japanese-infusion style of service to create a memorable brand experience. This is an ideal place to reflect and identify opportunities where you can grow.



Take time to reflect at Ten Thousand Waves, a health and wellness resort that was inspired by the mountain hot spring resorts in Japan. ALAN BECKER

Afterwards, you can head over to the [Coyote Café](#), a landmark restaurant in Santa Fe. It has been around for 32 years and is known for its southwestern cuisine. Recently, the restaurant remodeled its interior and revised its menu to incorporate modern twists into its southwest dishes. The remodel was necessary to remain competitive on a national level and showcases the importance of looking ahead. Just because your business is successful today doesn't mean it will remain successful in 10 or 30 years. Leaders should be constantly looking for opportunities to evolve and grow the business.

The cultural diversity and spiritual nature of Santa Fe makes it an ideal destination to rejuvenate your mind and spirit. The health and wellness culture of the region means that there is ample opportunity to explore the environment, eat healthy and relax. Santa Fe is known as “The City Different” and, after three days, you will no doubt be inspired and full of creative ideas to take back to the office.

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