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Sante Fe, New Mexico

Santa Fe is a gem nestled in the high desert mountains at the highest elevation of any city in the USA. It lays claim to being the oldest state capital in the US. Upon arrival in Santa Fe one is captivated by the historic charm of the architecture, the diversity of the people and the beauty of the surroundings.

Living in Santa Fe is akin to living in a fairyland removed from the outside world. There is no city in the rest of the country that is quite like Santa Fe. It feels as if one has stepped into a foreign country.

Santa Fe offers much for the outdoor enthusiast---hiking trails, skiing, white water rafting at Taos (60 miles north), canoeing, and a 30 mile dog park for hikes with your canine friends just on the outskirts of town.

The Santa Fe Opera is world renown and draws capacity crowds to the open-air theater in the summer. There is also a world-class open air Flea Market near the opera that draws visitors from all over the world for its artisans. And of course there are numerous art galleries in town and the surrounding towns and pueblos. You can find PR about Santa Fe in any guidebook. I would like to tell you about the actual living there.

If you are independently wealthy and retired, then Santa Fe is a lovely and charming place to live. There are many lovely places from which to choose. If you are not retired and independently wealthy and retired, please continue to read the remarks.

The unfortunate problems with Santa Fe are that the public schools are sub par and do not appear to be improving as the years go by, nor does there seem to be a concerted effort to improve them. The only statistic that I could find that had improved was the number of New Mexicans in public schools who had received vaccinations. This was the only score that showed any improvement that I could find. If you have children of school age, I would strongly recommend that you interview many parents and study many stats before you consider putting your children in the public schools in Santa Fe. You may want to also look very carefully at the private schools in Santa Fe. Reports from friends who brought their children from private schools in other areas of the country to Santa Fe found the private schools in Santa Fe a little too "laid back" for their taste. In one school the students were allowed to address the teachers by their first names. Perhaps this is the wave of the future, but was a bit too casual for this set of parents.

Living in Santa Fe is so desirable that the cost of housing has become quite dear and many artists who once lived in the area have been forced to leave. Young people are finding it difficult to find affordable housing. The city is aware of the problem and has tried to address the problem, but to date it has not made great progress in this area. If you are independently wealthy you will be able to live in a safe and picturesque area. If not, you may want to reconsider Santa Fe. With the influx of illegals, crime has risen and some neighborhoods are unsafe. Santa Fe is an expensive town in which to live.

If you watch how your government, both local and state, spends your tax dollars you will have many a nervous night and day in New Mexico. The governments out there are as loco as the tumbleweeds that blow off the prairie. The local paper is full of one accused corrupt governmental official after another. Santa Fe attracts a large number of political activists who enjoy marching and carrying signs on the street corners. They are omnipresent.

For singles there is very little nightlife in Santa Fe and limited employment. The available jobs are mostly in the service industry since Santa Fe is considered a resort town. If you are happy with outdoor life during the day and can be content to take in a movie at night and then home with a good book and early to bed, then Santa Fe may be the spot for you. If you would like to hit the hot spots at night then I would hop in the camper and keep on truckin' cause the lights go out early in Santa Fe.

Dorothy C.