ROAD TRIP: ABIQUIU TO GHOST RANCH

1. ABIQUIU
2. Forest Service Road 151
3. Photo by Mitch Tillison
4. Georgia O’Keeffe, Roden, 1941. Oil on canvas, 19 x 30 1/4 in.
© Georgia O’Keeffe Museum.

MAP NOT TO SCALE
NOTE: GPS IS NOT RELIABLE NORTH OF ESPAÑOLA
ROAD TRIP: ABIQUIÚ TO GHOST RANCH

New Mexico’s rich diversities of culture and landscape make exploring the state something of a passion for visitors and residents alike. Just driving our highways from point A to point B is a treat, but taking the byways, or stopping to visit villages and talk with artists, shopkeepers, guides, and residents, can create memorable experiences of the culture of the state.

Beginning at the Pueblo de Abiquiu, these highlights can be found on or branching from U.S. Highway 84.

1 PUEBLO DE ABIQUIÚ
County Road 187, directly across from Bode’s General Store, between mile markers 211 and 212
Abiquiu had a rich, compelling history long before Georgia O’Keeffe arrived, in 1946. First an Indian Pueblo for centuries, Abiquiu became the third-largest settlement of the Spanish province of Nuevo Mexico.

- Historic walking tours of Abiquiu plaza are conducted by the Pueblo de Abiquiu Library and Cultural Center, and can be arranged from mid-March through November, weekends only. Special group and time requests can be reserved; ask for details. 505.685.4884 during Library hours. Sunday–Thursday, 1–6 PM.
- O’Keeffe was not the only artist to find inspiration in the area. The second week in October is the Abiquiu Studio Tour, with over 86 artists showing throughout the Chama River Valley. Tour map and participating artists and businesses are at abiquiustudiotour.org.
- Mid-March through late November, tour the Georgia O’Keeffe Home and Studio. Make reservations by contacting 505.685.4539 or okeeffemuseum.org. Please respect Abiquiu residents’ privacy and property: no pets, no photography, and park only in designated areas.

2 THE PEDERNAL
Looming over the landscape of the Chama River Valley is the Cerro Pedernal, made famous by Georgia O’Keeffe’s several paintings of it.

Pedernal means flint in Spanish, and the narrow mesa is the westernmost part of the volcanic Jémez Mountains, formed 1.2 to 1.4 million years ago; its highest point is 9,862 feet. The caprock of Pedernal was the source of the chant used by the prehistoric Gallinas people of the area, and is a current favorite of hikers and rock climbers. Georgia O’Keeffe claimed it as “her mountain”.

3 GHOST RANCH EDUCATION & RETREAT CENTER
1708 U.S. 84, Abiquiu, NM 87501
(at mile marker 225); 505.685.1000; ghostranch.org
This 21,000-acre ranch, owned by the Presbyterian Church, offers many opportunities to delve into the spectacular landscape. Reservations are required for tours, workshops, and lodging; a full catalog of workshops is available on the website. Day visitors need only check in at the Visitor Center.

- Tours: Archaeology, paleontology, a number of Georgia O’Keeffe–related tours, trail rides, and movie tours. (Many films have been shot here, including Cowboys & Aliens, 3:10 to Yuma, City Slickers, and The Magnificent Seven.) By foot, horse, or motorbus, enjoy the spectacular scenery and learn about the area’s history, natural wonders, and culture.
- Workshops: Over 300 courses in a wide range of disciplines are offered year-round.

- Lodging: Seasonal camping or year-round overnight lodging are available.
- Day Hikes: In addition to guided walking tours, there are a number of moderate trails to enjoy.

4 MONASTERY OF CHRIST IN THE DESERT
PO Box 270, Abiquiu, NM 87510; 575.613.4233; christdesert.org
The Monastery is situated in a beautiful canyon at the end of an unpaved 13-mile road that follows the Chama River. Founded in 1964, the original monastery was designed by George Nakashima, the famous Japanese-American woodworker and architect. The monks follow the Benedictine rule of work and prayer, and while they don’t take a vow of silence, they do encourage contemplation and quiet, and support spiritual renewal for people of all faiths. The monastery maintains a guesthouse for private retreats (by reservation only), the church, meditation garden, gift shop, and restrooms located in the lobby of the gift shop are open to the public from 9:15 AM to 5 PM. Access to the monastery is by Forest Service Road 151, 3 miles north of the entrance to Ghost Ranch, between mile markers 227 and 228. The road can be impassable in inclement weather, even for four-wheel-drive vehicles; at the best of times, parts of it are winding, steep, and narrow. If rain or snow are forecast, a visit to the website to check road conditions is a must.

5 ECHO AMPHITHEATER
West side of U.S. 84, 3 miles N. of Ghost Ranch, at mile marker 229
This stunning rock amphitheater is a favorite of rambunctious children, yodelers, and all who want to hear their voices echoed and amplified. The quarter-mile trail from the parking lot to the bowl of the theater is paved and handicapped accessible. There are covered picnic tables and facilities; after early November, the area is subject to closure due to snow. A small fee is charged to use the trails.