



ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL  
BALLOON FIESTA

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# MEDIA GUIDE 2024

Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta

Media Guide - V1 March 2024



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### FOLLOW & FRIEND BALLOON FIESTA

THE OFFICIAL HASHTAG IS #BALLOONFIESTA



The Garity Group congratulates Balloon Fiesta for all of the hard work that went into the 2024 event! Our team is humbled and honored to lead the 52nd Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta media relations team.



## 2024 MEDIA GUIDE WELCOME

Welcome to the 52nd launch of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta!

Moving through the air in the gondola of a balloon provides our pilots and guests an opportunity to Embrace the Sky at the 2024 Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta presented by ExxonMobil.

Celebrating the 52nd Balloon Fiesta allows us some permission to embrace the camaraderie of hot air ballooning. The romance, solitude and beauty is something that can both be seen, felt and heard by pilots, passengers and chase crew. It is a special effort to ready and launch a hot air balloon. Add in hundreds upon hundreds of balloon crew and you will see a community form for the purpose of flight to Embrace the Sky.

Traditional and special shape balloons from throughout New Mexico and around the world are gathering to create a kaleidoscope of stories. It is our hope you will be able to capture every one of them! More than 500 pilots and their crews representing many countries, are uniting in Albuquerque for your enjoyment and the camaraderie of the sport.

In addition to the mass ascensions, balloon glows and signature Albuquerque Box, we will also have many other events occurring on the 80 acre launch field. A drone light show, skydivers, music and shopping. And yes, you can sample the food that came into its own as the classic "grab and go" cuisine, the breakfast burrito. So many classic takes on this savory fare, we like all of the breakfast burritos sold along Main Street!

Balloon Fiesta's Board of Directors, staff and thousands of volunteers (Navigators) work year-round to ensure your enjoyment of this spectacular event. Thank you to all of them and to our pilots, balloon crews, sponsors and government partners for their unwavering commitment to the success of this event.

Welcome to Balloon Fiesta! Thank you for joining us to Embrace the Sky!



Judy Nakamura  
President, Board of Directors  
Albuquerque, International Balloon Fiesta, inc.

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Photos courtesy of Alee Noland, Don Henderson and Triston Garcia



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

7:00 a.m. Albuquerque Aloft (at local elementary schools)

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

5:45 a.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort and Casino*  
6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower  
6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol Show, *presented by Route 66 Casino Hotel & RV Resort*  
6:30 a.m. Krispy Kreme Morning Glow  
7:00 a.m. Opening Ceremonies  
7:00 a.m. Mass Ascension  
8:00 a.m. - Chainsaw Carving Exhibition  
12:00 p.m. Chainsaw Carving Auction  
10:00 a.m. America's Challenge Gas Balloon Inflation  
2:00 p.m. Chainsaw Carving Exhibition  
3:00 p.m. -  
6:00 p.m.  
4:00 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving  
6:00 p.m. America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race Launch  
6:00 p.m. Twilight Twinkle Glow™  
7:30 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving  
7:45 p.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort and Casino*  
8:00 p.m.\* AfterGlow™ Fireworks Show

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6

5:45 a.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort and Casino*  
6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower  
6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol Show, *presented by Route 66 Casino Hotel & RV Resort*  
6:30 a.m. Krispy Kreme Morning Glow  
7:00 a.m. Mass Ascension  
7:30a.m.-11:00 a.m. Fiesta de los Globitos - Remote Control Balloons Exhibition  
8:00 a.m. - Chainsaw Carving Exhibition  
12:00 p.m.  
9:00 a.m. Fiesta of Wheels Car Show (located on north end of Launch Field)  
10:00 a.m. Chainsaw Carving Auction  
11:00 a.m. Balloon Fiesta Pin Trading (Group Tour North End of Main Street)

**[CONTINUED]**

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6 (CONTINUED)

- 3:00 p.m. - Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 6:00 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving
- 5:00 p.m. Balloon Glow, *powered by ExxonMobil*
- 6:00 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving
- 7:30 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving
- 7:45 p.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort and Casino*
- 8:00 p.m. AfterGlow™ Fireworks Show

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 7

- 6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower
- 6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol
- 7:00 a.m. Balloon Launch (on and off Balloon Fiesta Park)
- 8:00 a.m. Fly In Competition Launch
- 8:00 a.m. - Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 12:00 p.m.

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8 COCA-COLA DAY

- 6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower
- 6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol
- 7:00 a.m. Balloon Launch (on and off Balloon Fiesta Park)
- 8:00 a.m. Fly In Competition Launch
- 8:00 a.m. - Chainsaw Carving Auction
- 12:00 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9

- 6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower
- 6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol Show, *presented by Route 66 Casino Hotel & RV Resort*
- 6:30 a.m. Krispy Kreme Morning Glow
- 7:00 a.m. Flight of the Nations Mass Ascension
- 7:30 a.m. - Fiesta de los Globitos - Remote Control Balloons Exhibition
- 11:00 a.m. Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 8:30 a.m. -
- 12:00 p.m.

**[CONTINUED]**

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

- 6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower
- 6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol
- 7:00 a.m. Special Shape Rodeo™
- 7:00 a.m. Balloon Launch (on and off Balloon Fiesta Park)
- 8:00 a.m. Fly In Competition Launch
- 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 10:00 a.m. Chainsaw Carving Auction
- 3:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m. Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 5:00 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving
- 6:00 p.m. Special Shape Glowdeo™
- 7:30 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving
- 7:45 p.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort & Casino*
- 8:00 p.m.\* AfterGlow™ Fireworks Show

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, KIDS' DAY PRESENTED BY CHICK-FIL-A

- 4:30 a.m. Kids' Day Goodie Bag Distribution begins (South of Main Street Stage)
- 6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower
- 6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol
- 7:00 a.m. Special Shape Rodeo™
- 7:00 a.m. Balloon Launch (on and off Balloon Fiesta Park)
- 7:30 a.m. Fiesta de los Globitos Remote Control Balloons Exhibition
- 11:00 a.m. Fly in competition
- 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 10:00 a.m. Chainsaw Carving Auction

**[CONTINUED]**

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11,  
KIDS' DAY PRESENTED BY CHICK-FIL-A (CONTINUED)

- 3:00 p.m. - Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 6:00 p.m.
- 5:00 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving
- 6:00 p.m. Special Shapes Glowdeo™
- 7:30 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving
- 7:45 p.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort and Casino*
- 8:00 p.m.\* AfterGlow™ Fireworks Show

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 EXXONMOBIL DAY

- 5:45 a.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort & Casino*
- 6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower
- 6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol Show, *presented by Route 66 Casino Hotel and RV Resort*
- 6:30 a.m. Krispy Kreme Morning Glow
- 7:00 a.m. Mass Ascension, *powered by ExxonMobil*
- 7:30 a.m.- Fiesta de Los Globitos - Remote Control Balloons Exhibition
- 11:00 a.m.
- 8:00 a.m. - Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 12:00 p.m.
- 10:00 a.m. Chainsaw Carving Auction
- 11:00 a.m. Balloon Fiesta Pin Trading (Group Tour Tent North End of Main Street)
- 1:00 p.m.- Music Fiesta™
- 5:00 p.m.
- 3:00 p.m.- Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 6:00 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m. Night Magic™ Glow, *powered by ExxonMobil*
- 7:30 p.m. Team Fastrax™ Skydiving
- 7:45 p.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort & Casino*
- 8:00 p.m.\* AfterGlow™ Fireworks Show

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# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

- 5:45 a.m. Drone Light Show, *sponsored by Sandia Resort and Casino*
- 6:00 a.m. Pilot Briefing, Pilot Briefing Tower
- 6:00 a.m. Dawn Patrol Show, *presented by Route 66 Casino Hotel & RV Resort*
- 6:30 a.m. Krispy Kreme Morning Glow
- 7:00 a.m. Farewell Mass Ascension, *presented by News Radio 770 KKOB*
- 8:00 a.m. - Chainsaw Carving Exhibition
- 11:00 a.m.

**AfterGlow™ times may change due to field/weather conditions**  
**\*\*North end of Launch Field for the pin trading**



# EVENTS INSIDE THE PARK

## PILOT BRIEFING

### **October 5-13 (Every Morning 6:00 a.m.)**

This provides pilots an overview of the day's flying activities, event updates, safety briefing and detailed weather forecast for the session's flying events. The briefing is open to the public and is located on the west side of the park near the intersection of West Wind and Key Grab roads.

## DAWN PATROL SHOW

### **October 5-13 (every morning)**

The Dawn Patrol Show is not only beautiful but practical. The Dawn Patrol began at Balloon Fiesta in 1978. Dawn Patrol pilots take off before sunrise and fly until landing sites become visible, giving other balloonists an idea of wind speeds and direction at different altitudes. On Mass Ascension days, the Dawn Patrol balloons put on a show with a choreographed inflation and launch set to music.

## MORNING GLOW

### **October 5, 6, 9, 12, 13**

A tradition established in 2010, balloonists will participate in a morning balloon glow. Immediately following the launch of the Dawn Patrol Show, a "baker's dozen" balloons will light up the field with a balloon glow. They will then launch with the rest of balloons on the field at sunrise.

## MASS ASCENSIONS

### **October 5, 6, 9, 12, 13**

A breathtaking premier morning event, the Mass Ascensions feature hundreds of colorful hot air balloons launching to the skies in two waves. The dazzling and vibrant show can last up to two hours.

## SPECIAL SHAPE RODEO™, GLOWDEO™

### **October 10, 11**

The most whimsical of all flying events, the Special Shape Rodeo and Glowdeo were started in 1989 and showcase captivating airborne works of art that include a penguin, frog, owl, fish aquarium and much more. Balloons take to the air for the Special Shape Rodeo™ and during the Glowdeo balloons stay grounded and inflate, giving Balloon Fiesta guests an up close and personal view.

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# EVENTS INSIDE THE PARK

## TWILIGHT TWINKLE GLOW™, BALLOON GLOW & NIGHT MAGIC GLOW™

### **October 5, 6, 12**

Highly anticipated events, the Twilight Twinkle Glow™, Balloon Glow and Night Magic Glow™ light up Balloon Fiesta Park. Just before dusk, balloons are inflated and tethered, the Balloonmeister then orders ignition and the burners fill the balloons and the sky with a kaleidoscope of brilliant colors. Guests can walk amongst the balloons and take in the brilliance. The magnificent tradition, started in 1979. The evening concludes with a spectacular firework show.

## AFTERGLOW™ FIREWORKS SHOW

### **October 5, 6, 10, 11, 12**

After the launch field is clear of balloons, on scheduled evenings, the AfterGlow™ Fireworks Show begins. Guests interested in seeing the fireworks show should arrive in time for the evening's balloon event.

## FLIGHT OF THE NATIONS

### **October 9**

This special ballooning event, which started in 1998, highlights the international flair of Balloon Fiesta; Flight of the Nations showcases all of the participating countries during a mid-week flight. Balloon teams representing each country will carry their nation's flag in the flight that precedes the mid-week Mass Ascension.

## FIESTA DE LOS GLOBITOS

### **Mornings: October 6, 9, 11**

### **Evenings: October 12**

Balloon Fiesta's fourth annual remote-control balloon rally will feature dozens of tethered balloons, which are ¾ scale model balloons, about 30 feet tall. The mini mass ascensions will take place at Balloon Fiesta Park, from 7:30-11 a.m. on October 6, 9 and 11 and the glow during the evening session on October 12.

## DRONE LIGHT SHOW

### **Mornings: October 5, 6, 12, 13**

### **Evenings: October 5, 6, 10, 11, 12**

400 drones will light up Balloon Fiesta's sky during the Drone Light Show. The show, first introduced during the 50th event, is back for another year and will showcase a fleet of drones displaying a series of fun designs, choreographed to music. The show is flown by Verge Aero, the recipient of Simon Cowell's Golden Buzzer on America's Got Talent.

**[CONTINUED]**

# EVENTS INSIDE THE PARK

## HOT AIR BALLOON COMPETITIONS

### JUDGE DECLARED GOALS

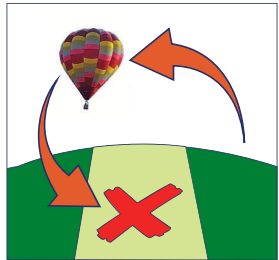
A competition where balloon pilots must fly to designated targets at least one mile away from the launch field. This event tests even the best pilots' skills. Judge Declared Goals may occur during the weekday morning flying events.



**JUDGE DECLARED GOALS**

### FLY-IN TASK

Ranging from drop heights of only inches to 200 feet above the ground, even the most talented balloon pilots are challenged when it comes to fly-in tasks. Pilots must drop a weighted marker on a specified target within Balloon Fiesta Park. Variations of these tasks are demonstrated in competitions like Balloon Fiesta Golf and Minimum Double Drop. Fly-in Tasks may occur during the weekday morning flying events.



**FLY IN TASK**

### KEY (PRIZE) GRAB A.K.A . RING TOSS

Definitely one of the most difficult competitions, the Ring Toss is one of the most popular and exciting to watch and compete in. Balloons launch from at least one mile away and fly to the field. Once there, pilots must navigate to one of five tall poles. Each ring is worth a fabulous prize if the pilot can place it over one of the poles. The Ring Tosses occur during morning flying events on Thursday and Friday.



**[CONTINUED]**

# EVENTS INSIDE THE PARK

## Additional Attractions

### THE GONDOLA CLUB

The Gondola Club is a reserved area with special parking, private seating, delicious food and private bathrooms just for members. The Gondola Club is located at the southwest corner of the launch field. For more information or to purchase tickets contact the Balloon Fiesta office at 505.821.1000 or 888.422.7277.

### THE CHASERS' CLUB

Chasers' Club members receive access to the Chasers' Club Hospitality area including the outdoor "Chase Lounge," both located at the north end of the launch field. Delicious beverages, pastries and hot food are available to Chasers' Club members. Guests can also purchase alcoholic beverages from the Chase Lounge. Guests pay an additional fee for access to the Chasers' Club.

### FIESTA SKY BOX

Fiesta Sky Boxes, a VIP experience for groups of up to 20 guests. The experience includes access to a specially outfitted shipping container that provides an elevated view of Balloon Fiesta, from a prime location on the launch field. Included is admission to the event, private access to the Box's upper deck seating for balloon and fireworks viewing, "Grazing Boxes," a host bar and more.

### MAIN STREET

A thrilling one-third mile of food, merchandise and exhibits await Balloon Fiesta guests on Main Street. A foodie's dream—Main Street has it all; from traditional New Mexican cuisine to festival favorites.

### CONCIERGE PROGRAM

The Concierge Program provides guests with access to a tour-guide via golf cart. It is perfect for first-timers, photographers or guests with mobility issues, as this package enables guests to see all there is to see in one session. Stops can include concessions, chainsaw carvers, the Artisans Tent, Balloon Discovery Center and the Balloon Museum.

### GLAMPING

Glamping at Balloon Fiesta is an experience like no other. Enjoy a picturesque view of Balloon Fiesta's balloons from the Glamping tent village. This village is within walking distance to the Launch Field, making it easy to avoid traffic. In addition to a safari style tent, guests receive access to private restrooms, shower trailers and a hospitality area with grills, games and lounge chairs.

### CAMP 505

Camp 505 offers a new onsite camping option for Balloon Fiesta guests. Located within walking distance to the Launch Field, Camp 505 will offer branded camping equipment that guests can keep when they leave, a hospitality area with a firepit and games, access to a phone charging station and filtered water and more.

# GETTING TO THE PARK AND INTO BALLOON FIESTA PARK

## WEBSITE - [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com)

Get the latest event schedule, information on hotels, balloon rides, maps and tickets at [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com). Photo galleries, news releases and updates are also available.

## OFFICIAL APP

Download the official Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta app for important event and schedule information.

## ADMISSION

General admission tickets for all balloon sessions will be available at the Balloon Fiesta Park entrance gates, online at [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com) and the Balloon Fiesta office for \$15. Children 12 years and younger are FREE when accompanied by an adult.

The Balloon Fiesta offers no refunds for unused tickets. However, rain checks will be issued if an individual flying session must be cancelled due to weather or other safety considerations, and the tickets can be used for any other balloon session at the 2024 Balloon Fiesta.

View maps of the Balloon Fiesta Park for directions, parking information and getting around the Park are also available at [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com).

## PARKING

Parking is \$20 per vehicle per session. There are no in and out privileges. General parking lots are located on the east and south sides of the Park. Each parking lot has been assigned a Looney Tunes Character, and the gates are numbered, so please remember the character and number of the gate through which you entered the field. QR code maps will be available around the field to help navigate you back to your car. The Park opens at 4:30 a.m. for the morning session and 3:00 p.m. for the evening session.

## BIKE VALET

Balloon Fiesta guests who enjoy riding bikes have access to 30,000sf of free parking, an easy access bike trail and safe storage at the south end of the Launch Field next to the Albuquerque International Balloon Museum. Bike Valet is staffed by volunteers from Bike ABQ, NM Touring Society and City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Bike Safety Program. Cyclists can take the Paseo del Bosque Trail that runs along the AMAFCA North Diversion Channel that crosses underneath Paseo del Norte and Alameda, ending just north of the Balloon Museum, in the Bike Valet parking station. Balloon Fiesta Bike Valet hours of operation: Days with dual sessions: 5:00 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.; Days with only morning sessions: 5:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Bike Valet is available all Balloon Fiesta sessions.

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# GETTING TO THE PARK AND INTO BALLOON FIESTA PARK

## PARK & RIDE

There are three convenient locations available for Balloon Fiesta guests to park their car and get a bus ride to Balloon Fiesta Park. These tickets will be available on BalloonFiesta.com starting April 5, 2024. Park & Ride tickets will be sold online only or at the Balloon Fiesta office based on availability. There are no ticket sales at the Park and Ride locations.

- Morning Sessions – Each park and ride location will have two waves of shuttles to Balloon Fiesta Park loading approximately at 4:00 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. for morning sessions. Buses will start return service to the park and ride locations at 8:00 a.m. and will run until approximately 11:30 a.m.
- Afternoon/Evening Sessions – Each park and ride location will have two waves of shuttles to Balloon Fiesta Park loading approximately at 3:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. for afternoon sessions. Buses will start return service to the park and ride locations at 7:00 p.m. and will run until about 10:00 p.m.

Park and Ride tickets include transportation and admission for a specific session. The pricing is: Adults \$25(13-61), Seniors (62 & Older) \$23, Children (6-12) \$10, children 5 and younger are free. Pricing for purchases made after midnight for a session on the day of is: Adults \$28(13-61), Seniors (62 & Older) \$26 Children (6-12) \$13 children 5 and younger are free. Pricing, locations, schedules and tickets are available online at <https://balloonfiesta.com/Park-Ride> . There is no Park & Ride service on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday but traffic is usually lighter those days and there is typically plenty of parking available at Balloon Fiesta Park.

### Fiesta Express Park and Ride Security Notice:

Please keep in mind that if you bring bags and coolers to Balloon Fiesta they will need to be checked by security before you enter Balloon Fiesta Park. Our guests at the Coronado Mall and Hoffmantown Church locations will go through bag checks and metal detectors prior to boarding. Our guests arriving to the park from Cottonwood Mall will go through security checks after arriving at Balloon Fiesta Park. Regardless of where you go through our bag check/security process, we will have express lanes (no bags) and bag-check lanes (bags) available.

For the protection of our guests, the following items are not allowed at Balloon Fiesta Park during our event: Weapons/Firearms/Knives, conceal carry weapons, bicycles, spike jewelry/wallet chains, alcohol/drugs, animals (except service animals) and items deemed by Balloon Fiesta Public Safety as potentially dangerous to other guests or the venue will be allowed inside.

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# GETTING TO THE PARK AND INTO BALLOON FIESTA PARK

## RAINCHECK POLICIES

The Balloon Fiesta offers no refunds for unused tickets. However, rain checks will be issued if an individual flying session must be canceled due to weather or other safety considerations, and the tickets can be used for any other balloon session at the 52nd Balloon Fiesta.

**General Admission Tickets:** Retain the ticket for re-admission in the event the session is canceled. Electronic tickets will be automatically reactivated by the ticketing company for raincheck events.

**Gondola Club Tickets:** Once your order has been processed there are no refunds. Your ticket may be used as a raincheck for general admission to an alternative session. The Gondola Club does not close if a flying event has been canceled. The Gondola Club is still open for the buffet and entertainment.

**Park & Ride:** No weather refunds for the transportation part of the ticket. The ticket may be used as a raincheck for general admission for a future 2022 session. "Bus only" tickets will be available online for \$12.00 to ride to the park for another session, based on availability.





# BALLOON FIESTA PUBLIC SAFETY

The Balloon Fiesta Public Safety Team coordinates a multiagency presence at Balloon Fiesta Park that includes more than 20 federal, state and local law enforcement, first responder and government entities to ensure that the annual event is a safe place for its pilots, guests, volunteers and employees.

Since 1991 and keeping in mind the high-profile nature of the event's international stature, Balloon Fiesta Public Safety Officers complement law enforcement and first responders. In 2024, the event will have more than 100 public safety officers working in conjunction with law enforcement officers and other first responders to keep Balloon Fiesta Park the safest place to be in New Mexico. Our public safety team and law enforcement will be visible throughout Balloon Fiesta Park, including all public entrances to our event. This includes the entrances used by credentialed media entering Balloon Fiesta Park. Each of our eight public entrances will have six to eight lanes for bag checks and metal detector screening. Each gate will have marked lanes for those with bags (Bag Check Lanes) and those without bags (Express Lanes).

Information and best practices for guests:

- Conceal Carry, weapons and knives are not allowed into Balloon Fiesta Park during the 52nd event.
- Metal detectors will be used at our public entrances. Each entrance will have six to eight security lanes with marked "Bag Check" lanes and "Express" lanes (without bags)
- All bags and coolers will be checked by Balloon Fiesta Public Safety Officers before being allowed onto Balloon Fiesta Park.
- There will be bag checks, the fewer items you have, the faster you'll get through the security line.
- Guests without bags to check will be able to get through the security process faster than guests with bags, chairs and coolers.
- Limit the number of items you bring to Balloon Fiesta Park.
- When possible, bring personal items in a clear or see-through bag or container.
- Children and their caregivers are often distracted with the balloon-filled sky. Visit the New Mexico State Police's Tag-Your-Tots, station North of the main stage, when you arrive. Have a plan in place if you become separated.
- If you see something that looks unsafe or suspicious, alert a public safety officer, launch director (zebra) or another Balloon Fiesta official.
- For the protection of our guests, the following items are not allowed at Balloon Fiesta Park during our event: Weapons/Firearms/Knives, conceal carry weapons, bicycles, spike jewelry/wallet chains, alcohol/drugs, animals (except service animals) and items deemed by Balloon Fiesta Public Safety as potentially dangerous to other guests or the venue will be allowed inside.

Aviation Note: The airspace within a four-mile radius of Balloon Fiesta Park is covered by a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR). This area, controlled by the Federal Aviation Administration determines which aircraft are allowed to fly into and over Balloon Fiesta's airspace. This includes hot air balloons, gas balloons, helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. **DRONES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE BALLOON FIESTA AIRSPACE AT ANY TIME.** Flying unauthorized aircraft is a federal offense.

## COVID-19

Balloon Fiesta continues to provide the option of cashless systems and has hand sanitizers around Balloon Fiesta Park. There are presently no mask or social distancing requirements.

# VISITOR INFORMATION

## BALLOON RIDES

Taking a balloon ride during the most celebrated ballooning event in the world is truly a once in a lifetime experience. Rainbow Ryders is the official Balloon Fiesta ride company and the only company from whom guests can purchase a balloon ride from Balloon Fiesta Park during Balloon Fiesta. Rainbow Ryders: 800.725.2477, [www.rainbowryders.com](http://www.rainbowryders.com).

## TRAVEL AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS

The Balloon Fiesta website has plenty of travel tips and hotel suggestions on its website. From [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com) click on 'Tickets & Reservations' and then "Lodging" from the top menu for hotel reservations and look under 'This Year's Event' and 'Travel Help' for travel tips.

## RV TRAVEL

RVing is one of the major components of Balloon Fiesta, every year thousands of joyful RVers occupy the Balloon Fiesta Park RV section. Balloon Fiesta Park gladly welcomes RVers, for more information call 888.422.7277 or 505.821.1000. You can also visit [www.balloonfiesta.com/RV-Information](http://www.balloonfiesta.com/RV-Information) for more information.

## VISITOR INFORMATION

Between Balloon Fiesta sessions there is a lot to see and do in Albuquerque. For more information, reach out to Visit Albuquerque and the New Mexico Department of Tourism.

Visit Albuquerque  
800.284.2282 [www.visitalbuquerque.org](http://www.visitalbuquerque.org)  
Facebook: @VisitABQ  
Twitter: @VisitABQ  
Instagram: @visitabq

New Mexico Tourism Department  
505-827-7400 [www.newmexico.org](http://www.newmexico.org)  
Facebook: @NewMexico  
Twitter: @NewMexico  
Instagram: @newmexicotrue

# COOL THINGS TO SEE AND DO

## BALLOON FIESTA PINS

Balloon pins have become an important tradition within Balloon Fiesta. These yearly emblems are the most collected, most traded and most talked about merchandise at the Balloon Fiesta. There are 60,000 pins sold every year, and they come in all shapes and sizes—just like the balloons themselves. There are official event pins, commemorative pins, special event pins, gas balloon race pins and collectible pins from previous Balloon Fiestas.



On the first Sunday and the second Saturday Balloon Fiesta hosts “Trading Only” sessions in the Group Tours Tent near the north end of Main Street with no selling of pins allowed. It gives pin traders a chance to meet with fellow collectors and admirers from all over the world. For the pin traders in training, a brief discussion is presented with an overview of the pin trading phenomenon and an introduction to the hobby.

## HERITAGE PINS

In 2005 the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta Heritage Committee established the Heritage Pin, a limited-edition commemorative pin honoring pioneers in ballooning, and the Balloon Fiesta in particular. The Heritage Pin is awarded every year in recognition of those who have perpetuated the legacy they’ve helped to create.

### Heritage Pin Honorees

**2024** – This year’s honoree will be announced closer to the 2024 event.

**2023** – Chuck Raskob is a Balloon Fiesta Safety Officer, has served as a volunteer official for the America’s Challenge Gas Balloon race for the past 23 years and for the CoupeAéronautique Gordon Bennett in 2005, 2008 and 2023. His many contributions include issuing trackers that monitor the gas balloons’ in-flight positions, hydrogen safety and checking and repair of the field’s grounding grid and assisting with the weigh-off and launch. He has also become an important part of the the Fiesta de los Globitos event.

[CONTINUED]

# COOL THINGS TO SEE AND DO

## Heritage Pin Honorees (continued)

**2022** – Paul Smith is Balloon Fiesta’s Executive Director and has been for the last 25 years. Paul, a lawyer by professional background, assumed leadership of the year after Balloon Fiesta moved to the current Balloon Fiesta Park. Many improvements to the park enjoyed by balloonists and guests today, happened under his watch, including a fully grassed launch field, VIP guest experiences, Bike Valet, expanded RV parking, Music Fiesta, Chainsaw Carving exhibitions, the fireworks and more.

**2021**- Mark Sullivan is a pilot, competitor and event organizer in both hot air and gas ballooning. He earned his commercial hot air balloon license in 1983 and gas rating in 1985, and currently has 3330 hours. In 1995 he founded the America’s Challenge Gas Balloon Race held annually at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.

**2020** – Jim Byrd – also known to many as Jimmy -- began his ballooning career in March 1973 when he joined the Albuquerque Aerostat Ascension Association (AAAA) as a non-flying club member. Jim was Assistant Safety Officer for AIBF in 1984 and 1985 but is best known for his contributions to competition scoring. Jim wrote the first software for scoring balloon races in 1990, which was used by both AAAA and the Balloon Fiesta. He succeeded his father as America’s Challenge chief scoring officer after his father passed away in 2007, a position he still holds.

**2019** – George Hahn earned his private and commercial pilot ratings in 1977 and 1978. In the next decade, George became a leading figure both in the Balloon Fiesta and in the ballooning community, especially well known for promoting continuing education for pilots and safe flying practices. He became the Chief Safety Officer for AIBF in 1984, Assistant Balloonmeister in 1985, and Balloonmeister in 1986 and 1987. George served 22 years on the Balloon Fiesta Board of Directors, including terms as Vice-President in 1989 and 1990 and as President in 1991.

**2018** – Charlotte Kinney first flew in Balloon Fiesta in 1977 and began volunteering soon after. By the early 1980s, she was a member of the Balloon Fiesta’s Board of Directors. In 1981, Charlotte served as Assistant Balloonmeister and second-in-command of the Balloon Fiesta’s flight operations. The next year she assumed the top post of Balloonmeisterin (a feminine form of Balloonmeister), the first female in the Balloon Fiesta’s history to direct and oversee all flying events. She also played a large role in developing a Balloon Fiesta daily newsletter and is an award-winning co-author of the Balloon Fiesta Heritage Committee’s book Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.

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# COOL THINGS TO SEE AND DO

## Heritage Pin Honorees (continued)

**2017** – Matt Guthrie and the Balloon Fiesta literally grew up together. As a youngster growing up in Albuquerque, Matt took his first balloon flight in 1974, just the third year of the Balloon Fiesta’s existence. He was hooked and began spending as much of his time around balloons as he could. Matt joined the Balloon Fiesta Board of Directors in 1996 and this year takes on additional responsibilities as the Board’s Vice-President. He continues to be an inspiration to every starry-eyed youngster who dreams of becoming a balloonist.

**2016** – Jacqueline Hockey was one of the earliest members of the Balloon Fiesta Board of Directors, becoming the event’s treasurer in 1978. She served on the Board for 25 years, during which time she not only oversaw corporate hospitality but many of the Balloon Fiesta’s biggest private parties for sponsors, pilots, and guests. Originally from France, Jacqueline, with her fluent command of French, continues to make pilots and visitors from abroad feel especially welcome in Albuquerque.

**2015** – Dick Rice is a hot air balloon pilot and longtime Balloon Fiesta supporter; having joined the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta board of directors in 1977. He has served on the board as president and treasurer, currently serving as treasurer. As a retired successful CPA, his knowledge of all things fiscal have made his contributions to the Balloon Fiesta invaluable. Dick flies the “Fiesta” balloon.

**2014** – Wally Book, one of Albuquerque’s earliest balloon pilots and staunchest advocates for flight safety at the Balloon Fiesta. He has volunteered for every Balloon Fiesta in one official duty or another. For more than 30 years Wally has been a Safety Officer or Chief Safety Officer, with a brief hiatus to serve as Assistant Balloonmeister in 1999-2000 and Balloonmeister in 2001-2002. Wally speaks fluent French and has long served as an ambassador to the Balloon Fiesta’s international pilots and guests.

**2013** – Scott Appelman - Every Balloon Fiesta guest who enjoys the Balloon Glows and Special Shape Rodeos™ can thank Scott for the pivotal role he played in creating these signature events. Scott served on the Board of Directors of the Balloon Fiesta for five years and has also served the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau as a board member and as Chairman. As past President, Competition Director and Safety Officer of Top Gun, Albuquerque’s competitive ballooning organization, he has worked hard to promote ballooning safety and healthy competition. Scott is the owner of Rainbow Ryders, the official hot air balloon ride concessionaire of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.

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# COOL THINGS TO SEE AND DO

## Heritage Pin Honorees (continued)

**2012** – Dick Brown - Few have played such a pivotal role in documenting the history of ballooning in New Mexico. For several years Dick edited the Albuquerque Aerostat Ascension Associations (AAAA) Cloudbouncer newsletter and during the period of 1974-1979 he was the Editor of the Balloon Federation of America's (BFA) Ballooning Journal. Dick earned his commercial balloon pilot license in 1973 and flew his balloon Blue Dragon in many of the early Balloon Fiestas. Dick is also a former Navy submariner and played a key role in the commissioning of the USS New Mexico (SSN-779) fast-attack nuclear submarine. He serves as chair of the USS New Mexico Committee of the New Mexico Navy League.

**2011** – Jim Shiver's many contributions to the Balloon Fiesta can be appreciated by every Balloon Fiesta guest. As a longtime Balloon Fiesta board member and three-term past President, Jim Shiver quietly contributed his labors and those of his construction firm, to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars, to building the considerable infrastructure – supporting a temporary “town” with a population of almost 100,000. The 2011 Heritage Pin shows Jim with his first balloon, Four Corners, which he first flew in the Balloon Fiesta in 1979.

**2010** –Tom Rutherford - In 1972, Tom Rutherford was an aspiring young politician with a golden radio voice at the radio station 770 KOB (now KKOB). When the station asked Sid Cutter to organize a balloon race as a part of the radio station's 50th anniversary celebration, Tom was assigned to assist with the “balloon” portion of the event. He fell in love with balloons and ballooning and joined Sid's corporate and events promotion company called World Balloon Championships. For many years Tom flew balloons for corporate clients—most notably Budweiser—at events around the country. As Tom's balloon career took off, his political career did too. He served as a State Senator for 24 years and was Majority Floor Leader at the time of his retirement. He served two terms on the County Commission of Bernalillo County.

**2009** – Kim Vesely has been writing about balloonists and ballooning as a former TV news reporter and freelance writer for more than 30 years. She has covered many of ballooning's great “firsts” including the Double Eagle II trans-Atlantic crossing, Double Eagle V Trans-Pacific crossing, and the Kitty Hawk flight across North America. Since 2002, Kim has served as editor of the Balloon Fiesta program; additionally, her work has appeared in Ballooning, Balloon Life, and other publications. She has written more articles for the AIBF program than any other person, often without byline. She served on the Balloon Fiesta Board in 1988-89 and currently serves on the AIBF Heritage Committee and on the Board of Trustees for the Anderson-Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum.

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# COOL THINGS TO SEE AND DO

## Heritage Pin Honorees (continued)

**2008** – Dr. Tom McConnell is known by most as “Father Time,” and is best known as the pilot of “Zia” (the New Mexico State Flag balloon) which has in itself become a widely recognized symbol of the Land of Enchantment. Tom is one of Albuquerque’s earliest balloon pilots, part of the second “class” of balloon pilots trained through the Albuquerque Aerostat Ascension Association (AAAA) in 1973.

**2007** – Bob and Marge Ruppenthal - This dynamic duo has often been referred to as “long-time” supporters of Balloon Fiesta. They both served as President of the Board of Directors for Balloon Fiesta. Marge was president in 1980 and 1981; Bob was president in 1989 and 1990. Marge took the helm of the organization as Executive Director in 1989 and served in the capacity for eight years until 1996. The Ruppenthals caught the “ballooning bug” in the 70s, bought a balloon, became pilots, and the rest is history.

**2006** – John Davis - John Davis’ longtime involvement with ballooning and Balloon Fiesta is legendary. John is the longest-serving active member of the Balloon Fiesta Board of Directors (1976-present). John has served as Balloonmeister and as President of Balloon Fiesta. He has also served on the board of the Albuquerque Aerostat Ascension Association (AAAA) and as Balloonmeister of several national and international events including the US National Balloon Championships twice – 24 years apart.

**2005** – Sid Cutter - Sid Cutter’s vision put Albuquerque on the map as the hot air balloon capital of the world. Sid had no idea that a little birthday party surprise for his mother would evolve into the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. Thanks to Sid’s sense of adventure and tenacity, the Balloon Fiesta has grown from a modest gathering of 13 balloons in 1972 to the largest gathering of hot air balloons in the world.

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# COOL THINGS TO SEE AND DO

## BALLOON FIESTA HALL OF FAME

Hall of Fame inductees have contributed to the success of Balloon Fiesta through their gifts of time, energy and talent.

Sid Cutter	1983	JW Byrd	2004
Tom Rutherford	1983	Frank Mezzancello	2004
Charles L. Hines	1984	Carol Rymer Davis	2005
Harry Kinney	1984	Steve Yazzie	2006
Ben Abruzzo	1985	Al Tetreault	2007
Maxie Anderson	1985	Harry T. Season	2009
John C. Davis IV	1985	Pat J. Brake	2010
Sheri Moore	1987	Bruce King	2010
Marge Ruppenthal	1988	Sam Baxter	2011
Bob Ruppenthal	1991	Richard Abruzzo	2011
Jacqueline Hockey	1992	Ray Bair	2012
Jim Shiver	1992	Rodney A. May	2012
Al Kinney	1993	Kim Vesely	2012
Thomas McConnell, MD	1994	John R. Sena	2013
Bruce W. Hale	1995	Dick Rice	2016
Jim "Badtoe" Benson	1997	Scott Appelman	2017
Jim Baca	1998	Charlotte Kinney	2018
Betty Perkins	1998	Randy LeFevre	2019
Aubrey Cookman	1998	Jim Byrd	2020
Mark Sullivan	1998	Ken Tuley (Art Lloyd Jr.)	2021
Jodi Baugh	1999	Jewel Cutter	2022
Linda Rutherford	2001	Paul Smith	2022
George Hahn	2002	Nancy Wertz	2023



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# ABOUT BALLOON FIESTA

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is an event internationally recognized as the sport's premier event and is produced by a private, non-profit corporation.



Throughout its previous 51 events, the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta event has brought a sense of fun and adventure to Albuquerque and the world that is unmatched.

It has grown from a quaint launch of 13 balloons in 1972 to the massive nine-day celebration it has become today. 2024 marks the 52nd event for the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta powered by Exxon Mobil.

During Balloon Fiesta, guests can expect to see more than 500 balloons participating in early morning Mass Ascensions, enchanting Special Shape balloons filling the skies, and, in the evening, 200 balloons light up the evening sky with Balloon Glows and spectacular fireworks. All of the balloons launch from Balloon Fiesta Park, an 86-acre grassed launch field – the size of 56 football fields. Pilots participating in the competitive events will launch off site and fly towards Balloon Fiesta Park on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during the event.

## Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta Mission Statement

*To conduct the world's premier ballooning event, while promoting the sport of ballooning, the City of Albuquerque and the State of New Mexico, nationally and internationally.*

## Balloon Fiesta Board of Directors

The Balloon Fiesta is managed throughout the year by a volunteer board of up to 24 directors. In addition to event planning, they address complex policy, administrative, safety and traffic issues. Each year, the board elects officers. The 2024 Officers are President Judy Nakamura, Vice-President Neil Jackson, Secretary Mark Sullivan and Treasurer Richard (Dick) Rice.

Directors include JR Allison, Tania Armenta, Ray Bair, Gary D. Bennett, Peg Billson, Jay Czar, John Davis, Barbara Fricke, Jim Garcia, Matt Guthrie, Steve Komadina, M.D., Jeff Lawrence, Rod May, Tom McConnell, M.D., Doug Schwebach, Harry T. Season, Jr., John Sena, Al Tetrault, Bill Walker and Ty Young.

The Balloon Fiesta Board members work tirelessly behind the scenes; it is a tremendous commitment, requiring more than wearing the official Balloon Fiesta jacket. Our community is fortunate to have such dedicated neighbors who are committed to providing the City, the State, the country and the world the greatest ballooning event year after year.

# STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

## STAFF

A small professional team, work throughout the year to produce each Balloon Fiesta. They serve in one of six primary areas:

**Event Production:** Oversees all ballooning events, social events and pilot registration

**Merchandising:** Poster series, official merchandise, balloon pins

**Marketing:** Advertising, corporate sponsorships, ticketing and membership programs

**Field Maintenance:** Grounds preparation and maintenance during the event

**Communications:** Publicity, media relations and social/digital media

**Administration:** HR, finances, legal

## 2024 AIBF STAFF

Interim Executive Director: Paul Smith

Controller: Martha Gonzales

Field Manager: Damian Duran-Arias

Event Director: Jennifer Garcia

Sponsorship Sales Director: Stephanie Prendergast

Sponsorship Sales Assistant: Jory Slingerland

Merchandise Manager: Lisa Mulder

IS Manager: Mike McKnight

Transportation Manager: Amanda Brady

RV-Manager: Jennifer Schurman

Navigator Manager/Balloon Discovery Center - Tracey Hawkins

Book Keeper: Mary Chando

Concessions/ Artisans/Main Street Entertainment/Music

Fiesta Manager: Erica Hahn

Pilot Coordinator: Miranda Portillo

Assistant Merchandise Manager: Chani Kaibetoney

Balloon Fiesta Live/Video Producer/Photographer:

Ken Tuley

Warehouse Manager: Curt Dahlquist

Receptionist: Cavell Miller

Public Safety Director: Sean Wallace

Director of Media Relations: Tom Garrity

Media Relations: Amanda Molina, The Garrity Group

Media Relations: Makayla Roberts, The Garrity Group

Media Relations: Jenna Simon, The Garrity Group

## VOLUNTEERS

More than 3,000 volunteers including chase crew members are needed to produce the nine-day ballooning event each year. Their work begins months before the first balloon is sighted floating in the October sky and they share a wide variety of skills and talents on the field and in the Balloon Fiesta office. They do everything from managing temporary RV lots, painting gates and ticket booths, installing flags, rolling and mailing event posters, counting pins and being member of chase crews. Most of these balloon-loving folks have been volunteering for a number of years and are very much part of the widespread ballooning community. There are also a number of nonprofit organizations that sell programs, direct traffic and many other roles as a fundraiser for their organization.

## BALLOON FIESTA LIVE!

Balloon Fiesta™ Live! is a live stream of all 14 events of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. It provides multiple and unique camera angles, and expert commentary. In 2023, The 14 shows generated a total of 771,631 views on YouTube and Facebook.

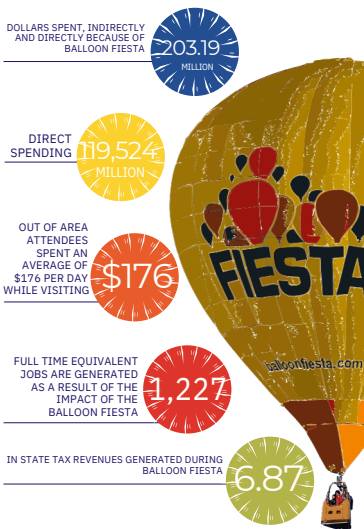
# SPONSORS & ECONOMICS

Many of the magnificent events presented at Balloon Fiesta are due in large part to the local and national businesses that sponsor them. Balloon Fiesta sponsorships demonstrate commitment to the event and community and provide an opportunity for employees to get involved. The cost of sponsoring at Balloon Fiesta varies based upon the visibility and promotion a sponsor receives from its association with the event.

There are currently more than 70 organizations from small local businesses to international corporations that make the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta a worthwhile investment. Representing a significant portion of the Balloon Fiesta's funding, sponsors are vital to the success of the community celebration. For a complete listing of sponsors, visit <https://balloonfiesta.com/Official-Sponsors> or email [sponsors@balloonfiesta.com](mailto:sponsors@balloonfiesta.com).

## ATTENDANCE AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

The 2022 Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta attracted an estimated 828,800 guest visits during the nine-day event. According to the 2022 Economic Impact Report commissioned by the Balloon Fiesta, it is estimated that 76 percent of visitors to Balloon Fiesta were from outside of New Mexico. Balloon Fiesta guests generated an estimated \$203,191,854 of total economic impact for businesses in the Albuquerque metropolitan area, \$119,524,620 of that amount being direct economic impact.



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# SPONSORS & ECONOMICS

## FINANCING BALLOON FIESTA

Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is a non-profit (501-c-3) organization, based in New Mexico. It is a self-sustaining event that reinvests revenue back into the event. It is managed by a volunteer board of directors and a full-time staff of 18 people. The organization receives no direct monetary subsidies from any government taxing authority. The organization raises more than \$7 million each year to produce the nine-day festival. Funding comes from five primary sources.

- Sponsorships
- Admission and Parking
- Concession Fees
- Merchandise Sales
- RV Space Rentals



# MEDIA

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is a regular favorite of local, national, and international media organizations. Over the past five years, more than 36,000 stories have featured the event, our pilots, sponsors, and guests.

The media credential application will be available starting April 1, 2024 via the Balloon Fiesta media page (<https://balloonfiesta.com/Media>). Media registration for the 2024 event will remain open until September 2024. Applications will be reviewed and approved on a rolling basis.

Credentialed media at Balloon Fiesta are provided the opportunity for a hot air balloon ride (based on availability), complimentary parking, event entry, access to a photography tower, wireless internet access, logistical support from our professional media team, entry into the media hospitality tent and invitations to media receptions and dinners.

The media hospitality tent is located near the Southeast corner of the Launch Field, just north of the Pilots' Pavilion (also known as the Sid Cutter Pilots' Pavilion). The media tower is an easily recognized landmark of the media tent.

A Balloon Fiesta media credential allows easy access for coverage of most official Balloon Fiesta events. Applications for credentials are accessible online and must be accompanied by a letter of assignment or an overview of your media project. Media credentials provide access to most of the areas on Balloon Fiesta Park. However, there are a few areas for which additional permission must be granted before entering.

A media credential does not provide access to these areas:

- Corporate Village Tents, Fiesta Tents, Gondola Club, Chasers' Club
  - Rented by and restricted to Balloon Fiesta sponsors, guests or members.
- Officials' Compound, Official Towers
  - These are areas central to Balloon Fiesta flight operations. The Officials' towers include the pilot briefing tower and balloonmeister tower.
- Public Safety Compound
  - This area is restricted to official personnel only due to the multi-agency integration of public safety organizations.
- President's Compound
  - A very attractive area for reporters, photographers and videographers because of its location above the Launch Field as well as the accompanying views. Those views also make the area very attractive to the RV guests who rent the area well in advance of the event each year. Limited escorted access to this area is provided by the media team, as available.
- Field During Competitions
  - During all days of flying competitions, access in the competition area requires an official media escort. Requests need to be made in advance and safety vests must also be worn on the field.

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# MEDIA

## PARKING AND VEHICLE ACCESS

Credentialed media organizations will receive access to Balloon Fiesta parking. Parking passes will be provided when media pick up their credentials. Credentials are needed to access both the Balloon Fiesta Park and Media Tent.

News vehicles may only access the launch field at specific times and must have proper vehicle identification and correct Balloon Fiesta passes (Media parking passes only provide access to media parking areas and will not provide access to the launch field or areas inside the admission gate); crews must have Balloon Fiesta media credentials as well as a station/media identification. Drivers of news vehicles seeking access to drive onto the launch field or inside the admission gate may be required to submit to a background check. All vehicles are subject to searches by the Balloon Fiesta Public Safety Team.

Any access to the launch field or inside the admission gate must be pre-approved by the Director of Media Relations.

Balloon Fiesta media credentials do not allow entry into RESTRICTED AREAS for any purpose. Restricted areas include Public Safety command center, Officials tower, fireworks staging area, propane refueling areas, hydrogen fueling areas, and/or photographs from the top of buildings on the south end of the field.

## BROADCAST GUIDELINES

Television and radio broadcasters using mobile backpacks and live mobile backpacks (i.e. TVU and LiveU) must present the gear for inspection when picking up credentials.

All two-way, marti, microwave and satellite frequencies used to provide live coverage of the Balloon Fiesta must be registered with Balloon Fiesta Media Relations well in advance of Balloon Fiesta.

Broadcasts must not interfere with the Balloon Fiesta public address system, field operations, communications related to the safe operation of hot air or gas filled balloons and broadcasts of official media.

For local radio broadcasters, please be aware that Balloon Fiesta sponsorship agreements restrict “live” radio broadcasts to the Albuquerque market to phone reports no longer than two minutes in length when they are on the Balloon Fiesta field.

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# MEDIA

## MEDIA TENT

### **Location - Hours of Operation - Activities**

The AIBF Media Tent is located on the southeast corner of Balloon Fiesta Park, very close to the launch field. There will be no storage provided for tripods, backpacks, and equipment. The media tent schedule is as follows:

- October 3: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. – Media Registration/Credential Pick up
- October 4: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. – Media Registration/Credential Pick up
- October 4: 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. – Media Welcome Party
- October 5: (Opening Day): 5 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. & 4 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- October 6: 5 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. & 4 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- October 7, 8 & 9 (Monday-Wednesday): 5 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
- October 10: 5 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. & 4 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- October 11: 5 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. & 4 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- October 12: 5 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. & 4 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- October 13: 5 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.



# BALLOON FIESTA WEATHER

Weather is always a factor as it is with any outdoor event. Balloon Fiesta's primary concern is safety when making decisions concerning cancellation or postponement. News organizations will receive any cancellation notices from the Balloon Fiesta media representative immediately after the Pilots' weather briefing at approximately 6:30 each morning.

Electronic event updates are also available via text message and through the event's twitter account.

On-site, event updates are also provided with a Green Yellow Red flagging system that uses a flag pole located mid-field, behind the Main Street Stage. Additional information is located later in this section.

## MORNING MASS ASCENSIONS/ SCHEDULED FLYING COMPETITIONS

Winds faster than 10 knots (approximately 11.5 mph), less than 3 miles visibility, clouds below 1,500 feet and rain will postpone or cancel the launch.

## EVENING BALLOON GLOWS/FIREWORKS

Wind faster than 11.5 mph or rain will cancel or delay static illumination of inflated balloons. Fireworks can still be displayed with wind up to 20 mph.

## DELAY AND CANCELLATION PROCESS

The Balloon Fiesta will make the first announcements about any delays or event cancellations to the balloon pilots. The announcement will be made as part of regular Pilot Briefings. The initial briefing is held before each event at the Pilot Briefing Tower on the west side of Balloon Fiesta Park except the briefings for Glowdeos will be in the Pilots' Pavilion. Morning Pilot Briefings are open for the public to listen in; please keep any conversation and radio communication to a minimum. Information will be announced and posted in the Media Tent as well as via official Balloon Fiesta text message, Twitter and Facebook accounts. Unless the weather creates a dangerous situation, Balloon Fiesta Park will remain open even in the case of a balloon flight cancellation.

## FLAG POLE NOTIFICATIONS

Because mobile phone and wireless access can be hampered with so many people at Balloon Fiesta Park, the Balloon Fiesta created a flagging system to notify guests about the status of flying events based on the color of the flag. The flag pole located adjacent to the Stage in the center of Main Street will fly one of three flags:

- Green = The launch field is open for inflations
- Yellow = Events are temporary delayed or no decision has been made
- Red = The field is closed for inflations (NOTE: the red flag will fly until pilot briefing concludes for respective morning and afternoon sessions)

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# BALLOON FIESTA WEATHER

## IDEAL FLYING CONDITIONS

Since balloons move with the air, information about the weather is imperative when deciding whether to fly. Before launching, pilots will contact one or more weather services to find out about weather and wind conditions in an area. Pilots only fly when the weather is close to ideal—when skies are clear and wind conditions are favorable.

Balloons need stable air to operate effectively, and the atmosphere is most stable during the hours just following sunrise and those hours are also the best for finding calm gentle winds. In some parts of the world this also applies to the hours just before sunset. Additionally, the temperature is usually cooler in the mornings and the balloon flies better in cooler weather since the hot air gets a better "lift".

The only control a pilot has over a balloon is vertical, so they don't want to fly around the middle of the day when different pockets of air are rising and falling.

## THE "ALBUQUERQUE BOX"

The fall weather in Albuquerque is known for its clear days and cool morning temperatures. This weather and what is known as the Albuquerque "box" will help this year's Balloon Fiesta to become another spectacular spectator event. When the "box" is working, guests are able to see hundreds of balloons create a kaleidoscope of color in the Albuquerque sky – there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world.

The "box" is a combination of upper and lower-level winds created by the Rio Grande Valley and enhanced by the Sandia Mountains. The box enables balloonists to back-track their flight pattern and land close to their launch sites conjuring the impression of flying inside a box. Cool air from the north near the surface will take pilots one direction while higher winds blow in the opposite direction. Pilots need only to change elevation to fly back along their original course. Some wind patterns will allow a pilot to dip their gondola in the Rio Grande for a "Splash and Dash" other patterns will move balloons toward the Sandia Mountains.

This unique relationship of mountain formations and wind characteristics has brought many balloonists back to Albuquerque year after year to enjoy beautiful ballooning weather. This "box" allows the hundreds of balloons that lift off from the field during Balloon Fiesta's Mass Ascensions to remain close to the field, creating a colorful visual display found nowhere else in the world.

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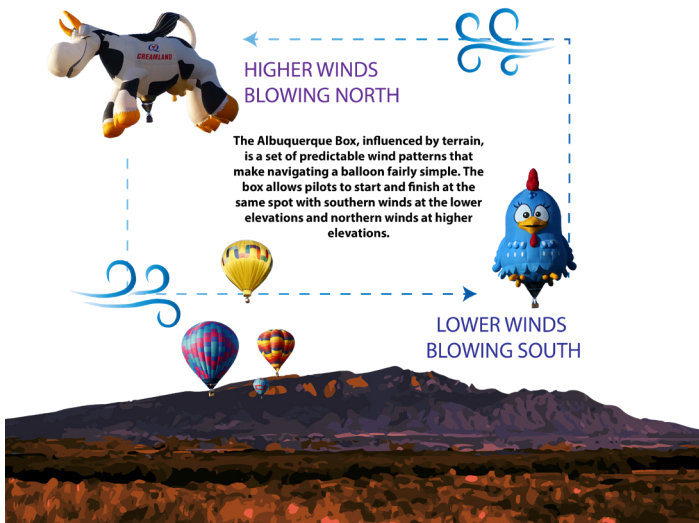
# BALLOON FIESTA WEATHER

## THE SCIENCE OF THE “ALBUQUERQUE BOX”

This wind pattern for which the Albuquerque area is well known and occurs under stable conditions during the fall season when no strong weather systems are affecting the area. On days when the “box” occurs, it dissipates by mid-morning as the sun heats the ground, resulting in thermal turbulence which mixes the separate layers of air and eliminates the low-level inversion.

During the nighttime hours, the air near the ground surface is cooled by the process of radiational cooling. This process is most efficient with clear skies, low humidity, and light wind. Cooler, and therefore denser air flows downslope to lower elevations along arroyos and river valleys. The cool air that flows through the Rio Grande Valley is shallow (generally no more than a few hundred feet in depth). During the early morning hours, this air flows southward down the valley from higher to lower elevation much as any fluid flows downhill. A north wind generally less than 10 mph results in the middle Rio Grande Valley.

The stable “river of air” occurs below a temperature inversion which separates it from warmer, less dense air above the inversion, just as vinegar is separated from oil by differences in density. The wind direction in the air mass above the shallow inversion can be different than that below the inversion. In an “ideal” box pattern, the wind blows in exactly the opposite direction with a north wind at the surface and a south wind above the surface. A skillful pilot can bring a balloon back to near the point of takeoff by changing altitudes to ride wind currents in different directions. Upon takeoff the pilot first heads south towards downtown, then ascends higher where the winds then take the balloon back north towards Balloon Fiesta Park.



# BALLOONING HISTORY

The first gathering to watch a flying machine began in France in 1783, in part to satisfy the curiosity of the Montgolfier brothers, Joseph and Etienne. The two enterprising paper manufacturers entertained the King and Queen of Versailles, along with a crowd of 40,000 people, by sending aloft a smoke-filled balloon carrying as passengers a duck, a rooster and a lamb.

The first human passengers (Pilatre de Rozier and Marquis d'Arlandes) were carried aloft some 3,000 feet in the first manned, untethered balloon flight ever recorded on November 21, 1783. Two weeks later, a Frenchman, J.A.C. Charles and his friend, Monsieur Robert, launched a hydrogen gas balloon near Paris for a two-hour, 27-mile flight.

One year later, the first hot air balloon ascent in the United States occurred when a 13-year-old boy, Edward Warren, ascended over Baltimore in a tethered hot air paper balloon.

All through the 19th century, American ballooning featured two different types of aerostats. For lengthy flights, hydrogen or "mixed gas" was preferred. For rapid, briefer ascents, smoke-filled balloons proved to be more viable. During the Civil War, balloons were used for spotting and 18 reconnaissance and occasionally were used to carry the U.S. mail and aerial photography.

In 1859, John Wise (with three passengers) inflated his gas balloon "Atlantic" in St. Louis and flew eastward in an attempt to cross the Atlantic Ocean. After an 800-mile adventure, a severe storm forced him to land in Henderson, New York.

Two years later in a smaller balloon "Enterprise," Lowe flew from Cincinnati over the Appalachian Mountains, landing in South Carolina where startled officials arrested him for being a Yankee spy.

For the next 100 years, very little progress was seen in the world of ballooning. A few would-be aeronauts performed tethered ascensions at state fairs around the country.

One such ascension occurred in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1882. Saloon keeper P.A. Van Tassel owned and operated a balloon called the "City of Albuquerque." It was highly touted as an attraction for the 4th of July celebration on the Territorial Fairgrounds. After numerous delays to his much talked about "lift-off," Van Tassel's craft finally reached an altitude of 14,207 feet and flew over the Rio Grande River before it came to rest in a cornfield near the Fairgrounds.

**[CONTINUED]**

# BALLOONING HISTORY

There were other similar adventures, but nothing of real historical significance until 1906. At that time, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., publisher, and owner of the New York Herald, organized the Gordon Bennett Cup Race. The first trophy was won by an American aeronaut, Frank P. Lahm, and his co-pilot Henry Hersey, who flew their balloon 395 miles from Paris to Whitby, England.

In 1907, a Chicagoan, Joseph A. Blondin, came to Albuquerque, and attempted to inflate a 25,000 cubic foot balloon envelope of rubberized silk. His “mixed gas” three-hour flight was fraught with problems, as was another attempted ascension by Blondin in 1909.

A mild amount of interest persisted for many years, but it wasn’t until 1960 that a steady interest in ballooning began. Hot air balloon manufacturing firms began “popping up” in the U.S., most of them in the west and southwest. During the next decade, various balloon flight records for altitude, distance and duration aloft were set by several pilots, among them Ed Yost and Don Piccard.

In 1971, Albuquerque’s Sid Cutter celebrated the 42nd anniversary of his family’s flying service company and his mother’s birthday, with a Raven balloon inflated as a centerpiece in the Cutter Flying Service hangar. This family social event has become a part of ballooning history because of its impact on the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta which was first organized as a 13 balloon rally the following year.

In February 1973, the first World Hot Air Balloon Championship was held in Albuquerque and again in 1975 before it was shifted to other sites in Europe and the U.S.

In 1978, well-known Albuquerque balloon adventurers Ben Abruzzo and Maxie Anderson, along with Larry Newman piloted the first balloon ever to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Their helium filled balloon, the Double Eagle II, landed on August 17th in Miserey near Paris, 137 hours and 6 19 minutes after leaving Presque Isle, Maine.

In January of 2015 gas balloon pilots Troy Bradley and Leonid Tiukhtyaev, the “Two Eagles” team completed their 7,000-mile journey across the Pacific from Japan to Mexico, surpassing the previous distance record (5,209 miles) for gas balloons.

Today, the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta has expanded to an over 500 balloon event, with more than 700,000 guest visits over the course of nine days.

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# BALLOON FIESTA HISTORY

## MILESTONES

1972 was the first year of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. Events included the 1st Roadrunner-Coyote Balloon Race, the Balloonist Ball, and tours of the surrounding towns and pueblos.

1973 hosted the First World Championship, crowning of the Balloon Fiesta Queen, the first mass ascension and Balloon Fiesta parade.

1978 marked the first Zoo party, the “Natural Light” Chicken Flying Contest, as well as balloon dances, Mass Ascensions, the KODAK Film Drop and the Blue Angels Flying team from Kirtland Air Force Base.

1979 was the first year of the official Balloon Fiesta poster—and still had all the traditional events like the Mass Ascension, parade and sunrise prayer service.

1980 was the year that the US Navy Leapfrogs joined the festivities, and the Balloon Fiesta started the Key Grab as well as the Best Dressed Balloon Crew Contest. The Kiwanis club also joined and sold VIP parking for \$0.25.

1981 was the tenth Balloon Fiesta and featured the first video briefing, the first air show, road run, gas race and Jim Franklin’s Wild Waco air show. The Thunderbirds preformed at Kirtland Air Force Base, and the US Navy Leapfrogs also joined the celebration.

1984 included MusicFest, a kite flying demo, the first Park and Rides, the US Army "Golden Knights" Parachute Team and a picnic in addition to all of the traditional events.

1986 presented a tremendous weather surprise—it snowed on the last day. That didn’t stop the festivities though—there was a picnic at Spanish Village on the state fairgrounds, and the Otto the Airshow Helicopter performance.

1987 started an event which is now one of the biggest events at the Balloon Fiesta—the Balloon Glow, which was started to commemorate 75 years of statehood. The Balloon Glow was joined by the Misty Blues All Female Sky Divers, the Leapfrogs, picnics, Mass Ascensions and parades.

1988 was the last year of the Balloon Fiesta gas race. The Balloon Fiesta also brought in the Oktoberfest at Civic Plaza and the dance and BBQ at the Sundance Saloon. It was also the first year that featured a commemorative coin.

1989 started another tradition—the Special Shape Rodeo. The Air Show, the International Mariachi Fiesta, and the first Dawn Patrol were also celebrated that year.

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# BALLOON FIESTA HISTORY

## MILESTONES

1990 had pop stars Three Dog Night perform, a special shapes event as well as including the US Navy parachute team and the Enchantment Sky Divers.

1991 was the 20th Balloon Fiesta and included all of the established traditions—sky diving, bands, dawn patrol, a parade, and the Special Shape Rodeo.

1992 saw the first special shape balloon based on the “Simpson” characters and included large-scale fireworks.

1998 was the year that special shape balloons had grown to be so popular that they were the only balloons to launch for the field on Thursday and Friday mornings and glow on the same evenings.

2000 set the balloon launch record, with the largest number of balloons attending in the history of the Balloon Fiesta. Helicopters from the TV stations helped out by drying the field so the Special Shape Glowdeo could happen.

2001 opened the Balloon Discovery Center, the Balloon Fiesta was limited to 750 balloons, the blackjack race was started, and grass was added to the rest of the launch field.

2002 raised the cost of admission and parking to \$5.

2003 was the year that the Balloon Fiesta created the Gondola Club and started the Fiesta del Vino.

2010 was the first year for the popular Bike Valet was made available for Balloon Fiesta guests.

2011 was dedicated to the “Father of Fiesta” Sid Cutter and was the year that the Balloon Fiesta received a Guinness World Record for the Greatest Mass Hot Air Balloon Ascent.

2012 was New Mexico’s centennial and the first year that hydrogen was used exclusively to provide lift to the teams participating in the America’s Challenge Balloon Race.

2013 was the first Music Fiesta™, featuring country music superstar Darius Rucker.

2015 the world famous Parabatix Sky Racers flew at Balloon Fiesta Park. A daily laser show was also featured for the first time and this year also introduced the 12,000-square-foot Sid Cutter Pilots’ Pavilion and a bronze statue of Sid welcoming pilots, crews and guests.

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# BALLOON FIESTA HISTORY MILESTONES

2017 was the year Balloon Fiesta introduced the Candlestick show to the opening ceremonies.

2018 marked the year that Balloon Fiesta introduced two new guest programs to the event: Glamping and the Concierge Program.

2019 was the first year Balloon Fiesta introduced a second Park and Ride loading and unloading location at Balloon Fiesta Park.

2020 was the first year Balloon Fiesta did not hold an event since its inception; the 49th event was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021 brought Balloon Fiesta its first Remote Control Balloon Exhibition, featuring 50 remote-controlled balloons that are a fraction of the size of traditional hot air balloons.

2022 is the 50th event, a milestone celebration for Balloon Fiesta.

2023 was the year that Balloon Fiesta hosted the 66th Gordon Bennett Gas Balloon Race and staged a special Balloon Glow as a part of the Annular Solar Eclipse viewable from Balloon Fiesta Park.



# FACTS AND FIGURES

## 2024 THEME

### 52nd Balloon Fiesta Theme: Embrace the Sky—the 52nd Balloon Fiesta

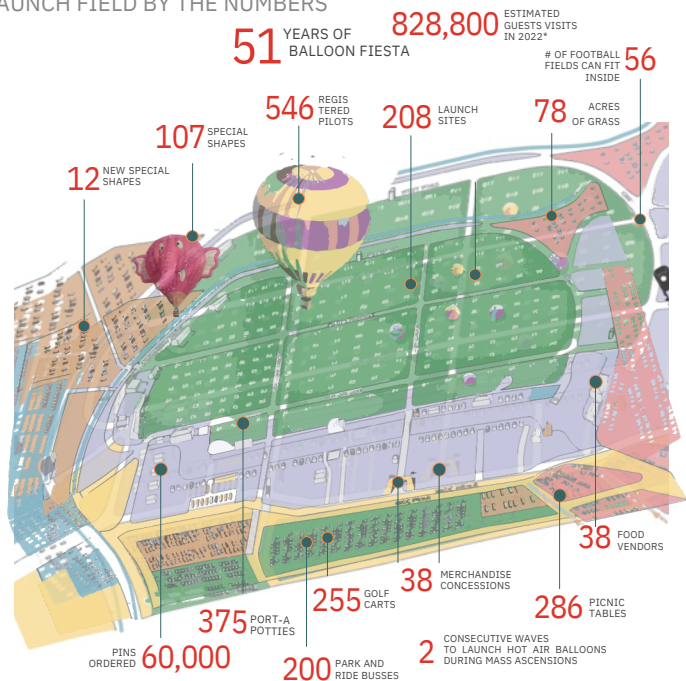
This year's theme is Embrace the Sky. It includes more than 500 hot air balloon pilots who will be invited to fly during the nine-day event. There is a new theme to Balloon Fiesta every year; the theme is reflected in merchandise, printed and digital artwork. The 2024 Balloon Fiesta theme is Embrace the Sky.

## COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

There will be many countries represented at the 2024 Balloon Fiesta; the list will be announced closer to this year's event. Previous participating countries include Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Mexico, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the United States.

International balloons will enjoy their moment in the spotlight on Wednesday, October 9, during Flight of the Nations, an event that honors all the countries represented at Balloon Fiesta. Up to two balloons from each country will launch while carrying their country's flag to begin the Mass Ascension.

## LAUNCH FIELD BY THE NUMBERS



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# FACTS AND FIGURES

## MAIN STREET BY THE NUMBERS

- **38** Food Concessions – everything from famous New Mexican breakfast burritos to funnel cakes
- **38** Merchandise Concessions – official Balloon Fiesta merchandise, pins, art and crafts, and more.

## 2024 FOOD CONCESSIONS

With over one-third of a mile of concession space on Balloon Fiesta's Main Street, there is sure to be something that will delight guests of all ages. From breakfast burritos to green chile cheeseburgers and Balloon Fiesta souvenirs to handmade arts and crafts, be sure to take a stroll down Main Street and experience all that Balloon Fiesta has to offer.

The application for merchandise and commercial food concessions will open on February 1, 2024. The 2024 concessions will be announced publicly starting in August, 2024.

## OFFICIAL BALLOON FIESTA PINS

- 60,000 pins ordered

## BALLOON FIESTA VOLUNTEERS

More than 1,000 wonderful and dedicated volunteers make Balloon Fiesta happen year after year. Additionally, more than 2,000 chase crew volunteers will help get the balloons into the air!



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT HOT AIR AND GAS BALLOONS

## WHAT ARE HOT AIR BALLOONS MADE OF?

The bag – or envelope, as it's more properly called – is made of a reinforced fabric called rip-stop nylon. Polyester and other fabrics are sometimes used. The materials are very lightweight and very strong. The fabric is coated on the inside to prevent leaks. The fabric used at the lower portion of the balloon is a fire-resistant material like Nomex, which is what firemen and race car drivers wear.

## HOW IS A HOT AIR BALLOON INFLATED?

During the inflation process, ballooning becomes a group sport. Since a balloon is quite unwieldy on the ground, it can take about four people to get a balloon inflated. Of course, the more people there are the more fun you can have. To start off, the envelope is stretched out on the ground and attached to the basket, which is lying on its side. A small gasoline-powered fan blows air into the balloon envelope. Then the burner is turned on, and the air in the balloon is heated. The hot air rises, lifting the balloon upright.

## WHAT ARE THE BASKETS MADE OF?

The baskets are usually woven out of wicker since it is strong, lightweight and flexible. Wicker is also very easy to maintain and holds up well under the stress of repeated landings.

## HOW BIG ARE HOT AIR BALLOONS?

The typical sport balloon ranges in size from 65,000 to 105,000 cubic feet in volume, and when inflated stands around 70 feet tall (or equivalent in height to a building with seven floors).

## HOW DO BALLOONS FLY?

Hot air balloons fly because hot air rises. When the pilot heats the air inside the envelope, it becomes lighter than the air around the envelope and floats up into the sky. The pilot can control the balloon's altitude by adjusting the temperature of the air inside the envelope. To make the balloon come down, the air inside the balloon is allowed to cool. To climb, more heat from the propane burner is added, increasing lift.

## HOW DO YOU STEER THE THING?

Strictly speaking, you don't. The balloon goes where the wind takes it. However, the winds at varying altitudes may blow in different directions and at different speeds, so the trick is to climb or descend to an altitude where the wind is blowing the direction you want to go.

## HOW FAST DOES A BALLOON GO?

As fast, or as slow, as the wind. Since the balloon has no forward propulsion system, its speed is determined entirely by the speed of the wind. That's why balloon races are events of accuracy, not speed.

**[CONTINUED]**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO FLY A HOT AIR BALLOON?

Conditions are usually the best just after sunrise and one or two hours before sunset. This is the time of day when winds are calmest and the air most stable.

## HOW HIGH DO HOT AIR BALLOONS FLY?

Most balloon flights occur between 500 and 2,000 feet above the ground. But balloons can fly at treetop level or go much higher. The world record for altitude in a hot air balloon is 65,000 feet.

## HOW LONG CAN A HOT AIR BALLOON STAY UP?

It depends. Normally, the balloon carries enough fuel to remain aloft for two hours, but factors like outside air temperature, weight being carried in the basket, and weather determine the duration of the flight.

## WHAT KIND OF FUEL IS USED FOR A HOT AIR BALLOON?

Propane is the most common fuel, but butane is sometimes used in remote areas where propane is not available. The fuel is carried in aluminum or stainless-steel tanks that range from 10 – 25 gallons in size. The average fuel consumption for a sport size balloon is about 15 gallons an hour.

## HOW DO YOU GET THE BALLOON BACK?

With the help of friends who drive a van or pickup truck. This chase crew is usually in contact with the pilot by means of two-way radios and follows the flight of the balloon (as well as the existing roads allow) and should be on hand to make the recovery when the balloon touches down.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GAS BALLOON AND A HOT AIR BALLOON?

A gas balloon is completely enclosed and is filled with helium or hydrogen gas. A hot air balloon gets its lift from heating the air within. Hot air balloon flights usually last about an hour, while gas balloon flights can last for days. Gas balloon flights require much more preparation for cold weather, high altitudes, and flying at night. Gas balloonists also pack enough food and water for several days.

## HOW DO YOU ARRANGE FOR A RIDE IN A HOT AIR BALLOON?

Reservations for a hot air balloon ride can be made with Rainbow Ryders Inc., the official ride concessionaire for the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. The Rainbow Ryders tent is located near the North end of the field and near Gate 9. For reservations, call: 1-800-725-2477.

# 2024 NEWS RELEASE SUMMARIES

## ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA® CELEBRATES 52ND EVENT

### *“Embrace the Sky” to Launch October 5-13, 2024*

**Albuquerque, NM** - The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, powered by ExxonMobil will launch from Balloon Fiesta Park, October 5-13, 2024. The 52nd event, will feature more than 500 hot air balloons, of which at least 100 will be special shape balloons. The organization looks forward to welcoming pilots, their crews and guests from all over the world to help celebrate the international event.

The Balloon Fiesta is known for its signature mass ascensions, largest gathering of special shape hot air balloons and epic Balloon Glows in the shadows of the Sandia mountains. Balloon Fiesta staff, board of directors and volunteers are in the midst of finalizing details for the nine-day event. Here are the popular and confirmed events for this year’s event:

**ABQ Aloft:** For locals and early visitors, Balloon Fiesta will kick off from local schools with Albuquerque Aloft on October 4, 2024. During Albuquerque Aloft, students, teachers and parents gather on their school grounds to meet pilots and crew and experience the excitement of watching and learning how balloons fly.

**Mass Ascensions:** More than 500 hot air balloons launch to the skies in multiple waves with hopes of catching the infamous Albuquerque Box. The Balloon Fiesta’s five signature morning mass ascensions launch both weekends (October 5-6, 12-13) and mid-week (October 9).

**Balloon Glows:** Balloon Fiesta Park lights up on five special nights for the signature Balloon Glows (October 5-6, 10-12). Imagine walking among 200-300 hot air balloons in static display as they flicker under the Albuquerque skies. One of the most popular places for selfies are in the midst of an “all-burn burner blast.”

**Special Shape Balloons:** The largest collection of hot air balloons will fill the skies during the nine days of Balloon Fiesta. More than a hundred special shape balloons are anticipated for the 52nd event., many of which will be featured during the Special Shape Rodeo and Glowdeo. A flying frog, cow and pigs will join a host of other shapes as they resemble items of a child’s toybox floating overhead.

**Dawn Patrol & Show:** Each morning includes a colorful display of hot air balloons launching to the skies in pre-dawn hours. Pilots will fly until it’s light enough to see landing sites. In addition to providing a visual treat, they provide a valuable service to other balloonists by giving them an idea of wind speeds and directions at different altitudes.

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# 2024 NEWS RELEASE SUMMARIES

**Flight of the Nations:** In observance of all the visiting international pilots, this mid-week mass ascension will take place on October 9, 2024. Wednesday's opening ceremony will begin with international pilots flying their countries' flags from their balloons.

**Fiesta de Los Globitos:** Balloon Fiesta's third annual remote-control balloon rally will feature at least 57 tethered balloons, which are scale model balloons, about 20 feet tall. The mini mass ascensions will take place at Balloon Fiesta Park, from 7:30-11 a.m. on October 6, 9 and 11, as well as a mini glow on the evening of October 12.

**Entertainment:** Music Fiesta will be held on Saturday, October 12, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Guests who attend Music Fiesta can stay and enjoy that evening's Night Magic Glow, Drone Show sponsored by Sandia Resort and Casino, Team Fastrax Skydiving team and AfterGlow fireworks.

**More at Balloon Fiesta Park:** Guests will also be able to visit more than 40 food concessionaires and 40 different merchandise vendors, as well as enjoy returning attractions like the Artisans at Balloon Fiesta, a sand sculpture artist and Balloon Discovery Center. Guest options including Chasers' Club, Gondola Club, Glamping, Camp 505 and the Concierge Program will be available this year.

## **About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta**

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, powered by ExxonMobil is a festival of hot air balloons that takes place in October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. It is the largest gathering of balloons and balloonists in the world. The 2022 event generated \$203.19 Million into the Albuquerque and the State of New Mexico economies. For details on events, schedule, entertainment and photographs visit our website [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com) and follow us on Twitter/X [@BalloonFiesta](https://twitter.com/BalloonFiesta) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BalloonFiesta).

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# 2024 NEWS RELEASE SUMMARIES

## 2024 BALLOON FIESTA TICKETS GO ON SALE APRIL 5

**Albuquerque, NM** – Tickets for the 2024 Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, powered by ExxonMobil will be available for purchase online, Friday, April 5, 9 a.m. MDT. Guests planning to attend the international 52nd event will be able to purchase tickets for general admission, Park & Ride, and Balloon Fiesta hospitality programs. Available tickets include:

- **General Admission:** One session (morning or evening) will sell for \$15 this year and are available to guests 12 and older (12 and younger are free).
- **Park & Ride:** One, session ticket includes a round-trip to Balloon Fiesta Park from a remote location and admission. Adults \$25 (13-61), Seniors (62 & Older) \$23, Children (6-12) \$10 and children 5 and younger are free. Locations for Park & Ride include Coronado Center, Hoffmantown Church, Cottonwood Mall and Intel.
- **Gondola Club:** A private area, with a picturesque view of the field, the Gondola Club offers guests delicious food, local entertainment, premium parking, courtesy shuttles, and outdoor seating. Tickets are \$130 per adult, per session and \$70 per child (ages 4-12) per session.
- **Chasers' Club:** Access to Chasers' Club includes admission, private patio seating, private restroom access, a catered meal and access to a bar. Tickets are \$65 per person, per session and children 6 and younger are free.
- **Glamming:** The glamorous camping experience includes a three-night stay in a safari tent, admission to the event for all sessions during the stay, premium parking, linens, heater and refrigerator, access to power, restrooms and shower trailers and more. The cost for the three-night experience starts at \$1,600.
- **Concierge Program:** With a personal concierge and golf cart transportation for the duration of one session, guests will be treated to a behind-the-scenes look at Balloon Fiesta Park. The package includes one premium parking pass, general admission tickets and a welcome gift. The cost for the package starts at \$350 for two guests.
- **Fiesta Sky Box:** A VIP experience for groups of up to 20 guests, Fiesta Sky Box includes access to a specially outfitted shipping container with an elevated view of Balloon Fiesta. The package includes admission for 20 guests, private access to the Box's upper deck seating, food, drinks and more. The cost is \$5,000 per session.

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# 2024 NEWS RELEASE SUMMARIES

- **Camp 505:** A camping option for Balloon Fiesta guests, located within walking distance to Balloon Fiesta’s Launch Field. Participating guests will stay in Balloon Fiesta-branded tents and have the option to take home, the tent and other Balloon Fiesta-branded camping equipment when they leave. Guests will have access to a hospitality area with a fire pit and games, a phone charging station, filtered water and more. The cost for the three-night experience is \$800.

For more information on all tickets and to purchase visit the [Balloon Fiesta Ticket Page](#).

## **About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta**

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, powered by ExxonMobil is a festival of hot air balloons that takes place in October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. It is the largest gathering of balloons and balloonists in the world. The 2022 event generated \$203.19 Million into the Albuquerque and the State of New Mexico economies. For details on events, schedule, entertainment and photographs visit our website [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com) and follow us on Twitter/X @BalloonFiesta and Facebook.

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# STORY IDEAS

## BALLOON FIESTA STORY IDEAS

- First-year rookie pilot
- Albuquerque Aloft – over 100 balloons launch from select Albuquerque and Rio Rancho schools prior to the start of Balloon Fiesta.
- Balloon Competitions
- Best wedding proposals at the Balloon Fiesta
- Balloon Fiesta Hall of Fame
- Cost to buy and operate a balloon
- Craziest memories/events from the Balloon Fiesta
- Camp 505
- Favorite special shapes
- Fiesta de los Globitos (Remote Control RC Balloons)
- Fireworks shows and the people behind them
- Flying Competitions
- History of ballooning in Albuquerque
- Gas Ballooning and the America’s Challenge
- How special shapes balloons are manufactured
- How a balloon is built
- Why Albuquerque for the Balloons? -Weather
- How ground crews get the field in shape and ready
- 78-acre field – size equal to 56 football fields
- Meteorologists – meet the Balloon Fiesta weather team
- Montgolfier Diplome – the most distinguished ballooning award
- New/foreign pilots
- Official photographers
- Oldest/newest sponsors
- Oldest/newest food concessionaire
- Oldest/youngest pilot
- Oldest/youngest volunteer
- Prizes and competitions
- RV cities on and near Balloon Fiesta Park during Balloon Fiesta
- Safety – what it takes to make a safe Balloon Fiesta on the ground and in the air
- Smallest/largest balloon
- World records set at Balloon Fiesta
- X Marks the Spot landing spaces
- Zebras – personalities and responsibilities

For additional facts and tips, visit our recent news releases, here:  
<https://balloonfiesta.com/News-Updates>







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