



Heat from New Mexico's famous chiles figures prominently in some treatments at RockResorts Spa (left) and in cheeseburgers at Bobcat Bite, said to be the best in all of Santa Fe.

## Desert Downtime

**Santa Fe offers a spa-filled respite before the first child arrives**

BY KEREN ENGELBERG ■ PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE LARESE

**W**e thought we'd seen it all. Polarity. Chrono reverser facials. Craniosacral therapy. These treatments were on the menus of a few of the spas that my husband, David, and I had researched while planning our trip to Santa Fe. But walking down Palace Avenue in the city's downtown, David did a double-take reading the sign at a massage establishment that we passed. "What the heck is 'Rolfling'?!" he asked with a smile.

High Desert Healthcare & Massage advertised their services thusly: "Relaxation and Pain Relief. Massage, Acupuncture, and Rolfling." It was a little taste of quintessential New Agye

Santa Fe, and we were happy to be experiencing it. We'd come to New Mexico for a long-weekend babymoon. I was four months pregnant, and we wanted one last R&R getaway for just the two of us. Between the beautiful desert scenery, spas galore, and great New Mexican food, Santa Fe seemed the ideal place for a relaxing retreat.

We'd checked in to the boutique Rosewood Inn of the Anasazi the afternoon before and dove right into our itinerary. That night, it would be dinner at Bobcat Bite followed by soaks and spa treatments at the legendary Ten Thousand Waves spa resort.

Bobcat Bite was exactly as elegant as its name sounded, and that was fine

by us. There would be plenty of time for fine dining while we were in town, but our first stop had to be this roadside joint that's said to serve the best green-chile cheeseburgers in all of Santa Fe. Greasy burgers before spa treatments? This pregnant lady couldn't think of a reason why not.

Any doubts David might have had were erased as soon as he bit into his burger. The perfectly seasoned blend of choice ground chuck and sirloin was cooked on an antique cast-iron grill and topped with melty jack cheese and roasted New Mexico chiles that added just the right amount of heat. A buttery bun soaked up enough of the juices to render condiments unnecessary.

### Getting There

>>> American Eagle flies between Los Angeles International Airport and Santa Fe Municipal Airport. From the airport, it's a 20-minute drive to downtown Santa Fe. Several airlines offer direct flights from Southland airports to Albuquerque International Sunport. If you have time, you might enjoy the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway ([turquoisetrail.org](http://turquoisetrail.org)). The drive from ABQ to Santa Fe takes just over an hour. The New Mexico Rail Runner Express ([nmrailrunner.com](http://nmrailrunner.com)) also runs between the two cities.



At Ten Thousand Waves, guests walk through a Japanese garden to access a Kobuta hot tub.

So far, Santa Fe was definitely agreeing with us. Ten Thousand Waves also left us nodding enthusiastically. The Japanese-style retreat offers treatments you'd find at most day spas, plus some exclusives. But a few other things also set it apart, namely its location, its focus on Japanese soaking culture, and the high skill level of its therapists.

We drove to the spa on a winding paved road that led up into the pine-forested hills; it took just 10 minutes from the center of town, and yet we felt far removed. Once there, we donned kimonos for the walk to our hot tub (set to a special lower temperature for me). Positioned into the side of a mountain, the open-air Kobuta tub had a teak deck and wall that shielded us from the rest of the resort. But it was open on the other side to reveal a mountain view of piñon forest. Under the twilight, we breathed in the quiet, pine-scented air.

Our hour-long dip was the perfect prelude to the couples massage that came next. We'd both opted for traditional Swedish massages and agreed afterward that they were as good or better than others we'd experienced. Climbing into our bed that night—a king-size ocean of cool, crisp linens and fluffly down—we felt completely Zen.

More pampering awaited us the next day at RockResorts Spa. Located downtown, just a short walk from our hotel, the spa (part of La Posada de

Santa Fe Resort & Spa) had a decidedly more New Mexican feel than Ten Thousand Waves. My indulgence of choice was the High Desert Facial. As I reclined on a heated bed, the aesthetician treated my face, neck, and hands to moist heated towels and luxurious creams that were the perfect antidote to the dry New Mexico climate.

Meanwhile, David braved the Chocolate Chile Wrap, which was as spicy as it was sweet. During the one-hour treatment, his therapist scrubbed him with a dry loofah, then applied a chocolate-chile lotion to his skin and covered him with a sheet of plastic and a thermal blanket to allow the lotion to penetrate. The lotion smelled like sweet cocoa but also tingled and burned some from the chiles. As David baked in his cocoon, he received a scalp massage. A massage with moisturizing lotion followed a shower.

Afterward, we met back in the spa's quiet room and compared notes. My serene expression said everything, while David appeared peaceful but more alert. He'd liked his treatment, he assured me, even if the wrap felt "almost like a sunburn." A full day still lay before us, and we planned to visit the art galleries along Canyon Road before a tapas dinner at La Boca restaurant.

It was a perfect trip, even if we never did figure out the mysteries of Roling. **W**

**DO** The Japanese onsen-influenced **Ten Thousand Waves** (505-992-5025; tenthousandwaves.com) spa resort is set in the mountains on the outskirts of Santa Fe. Add a soak in a communal tub to your spa treatment for \$18.80 or reserve a private tub starting at \$29 for 55 minutes. The site also offers lodging. At **RockResorts Spa** at La Posada de Santa Fe Resort & Spa (505-986-0000; 866-331-ROCK [7625]; laposada.rockresorts.com), amenities include a steam room, relaxation lounge, rooftop terrace, and outdoor pool and Jacuzzi.

**STAY** The AAA Four Diamond **Rosewood Inn of the Anasazi** (505-988-3030; innotheanasazi.com; rates start at \$265) is located just off the plaza in the heart of downtown Santa Fe. In addition to in-room services, hotel guests can also take advantage of discounted rates at Ten Thousand Waves spa. The recently renovated **Hotel St. Francis** (505-983-5700; hotelstfrancis.com; rates start at \$150; AAA discount offered), also just off the plaza, is one of the oldest hotels in Santa Fe.

**EAT** For the finest green chile cheeseburger in Santa Fe, look no further than **Bobcat Bite** (505-983-5319; bobcatbite.com). The excellent tapas at **La Boca** (505-982-3433; labocasf.com) include the not-to-be-missed *canelones* with lump crab, scallops, and *manchego* cream.

For more information about Santa Fe, call (800) 777-2489 or go to [santafe.org](http://santafe.org).

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