

# The Old Spanish Trail - Part 1

## June 4 through June 10, 2023

### Santa Fe NM to Grand Junction, CO

The Old Spanish Trail had several variations. We shall follow the North Branch of the Northern Route as experienced by Fathers Dominguez and Escalante in 1776. The eight trails were used to connect the Old Town of Santa Fe in New Spain to the missions in California. The trail chosen was dependent upon weather, water and other conditions at the time. The western journey took woolen goods made in and around Santa Fe and Taos to exchange for horses and mules in California. There was also trade with native Americans along the way. The journey took about three months going west and about half that coming back. The fathers created the north branch follow existing Native American trails. None of the trails ever developed into wagon roads during the time the land was still part of New Spain or later Mexico. This trade route was responsible for the development of the Santa Fe Trail bringing goods for the east after Mexico became independent and Spanish restrictions ended.

Our tour will take us into Taos where the Pueblo was occupied for over many centuries is still occupied. We will then cross the Rio Grande several times as we journey North through several Tribal territories and Colorado's oldest town of San Luis. We will see Ft. Garland once commanded by Kit Carson near the college town of Alamosa. We then travel by the easy route over Cochetopa Pass to Gunnison with its extensive Pioneer Museum. Then it is on to Montrose and its Museum of the West and the Ute Indian Museum via the black Canyon National Park. On our final leg of this Part One of the Old Spanish Trail, we shall stop at the re-created Ft. Uncompahgre originally established in 1825. We will close out part one with a tour over the Colorado National Monument before our closing banquet in Grand Junction.

The day after our closing, many of us will travel back to Santa Fe to retrieve our trailers and tow vehicles. We will go through Ouray, referred to as the Switzerland of America. and then over Red Mountain Pass to Silverton and on through Durango. Our trouble truck will cover the journey.

We will travel through some beautiful country as well as much of the poverty stricken areas typical of the southwest. We will go from high desert to high mountains and back to high desert.



