

Special Travel Section

1 of 4 →

The Coolest Small Cities in America

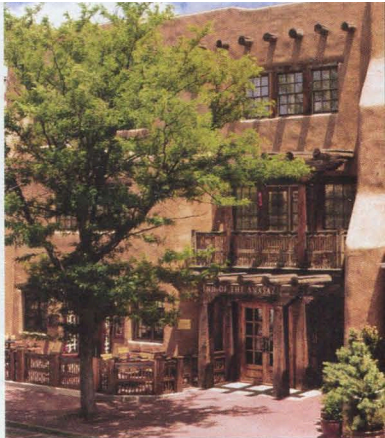
Want a real break? Forget the hassle of getting in and out of America's metropolises—with their \$400 hotel rooms and mobbed tourist attractions. Instead, hit these *miniopolises*, where top-notch food comes straight from the farm and your third round is on the house. Here are nineteen reasons to downsize your next vacation

ILLUSTRATIONS: ZOHAR LAZAR

DESTINATION

SANTA FE, N.M.

THE ONLY REASON TO SPEND TIME INDOORS
HERE IS THE BEST HOTEL IN THE SOUTHWEST
OR THE MEAN GREEN GRUB



2

Easy Riding

The air is thin in the country's highest state capital, but it's always perfect riding weather here. Mount up a dual-suspension Rocky Mountain 29er at **Mellow Velo**, because extra-large wheels carry momentum on swoopy high-desert terrain and city streets alike. It's a fifteen-minute pedal to Cerro Gordo Road, where a left turn after the pavement ends will dump you into the **Dale Ball Trails**, a well-marked thirty-mile network of single-track. If you're just in from sea level, don't feel bad when women jogging with their dogs zip past you.

Your Desert Digs

The Anasazi Indians of New Mexico were cliff dwellers—pioneers of early civilization's precursor to the apartment building. **Rosewood Inn of the Anasazi**, with its sandstone walls, kiva fireplaces, and handwoven carpets, is a boutique tribute to their ingenuity, and the best hotel in town.

Damn Right It's Local

It's not a condiment or a sauce, and it's definitely not that meat-and-bean stew they ladle out in Texas. New Mexico green chile—a thick, spicy roux made with searing chopped peppers—behaves

1. Once a juvenile-detention center, now a stylish hotel.
2. The trails just outside Santa Fe.
3. Cafe Pasqual's green chile has been drawing crowds for years.

like biscuit gravy: It justifies almost anything that lies beneath it. And it's **Cafe Pasqual's** chile that comes closest to perfection. A blend of roasted and diced Hatch-grown chilies stirred with dried marjoram, it elevates the Blue Lady Enchiladas and *huevos motuleños*—not that they need much help. At lunch



fill a brown paper bag with buttery soft shredded-chicken burritos featuring green chile from local fast-food chain **El Parasol**. Yes, you read that right. It's the best burrito in the state. And the answer to that perennial pre-meal question "Red or green?" is "Christmas"—which means both. —GRAYSON SCHAFFER