



An American Tour: 120



Albuquerque's Sandia Peak Tramway

The Sandia Peak Tramway is an aerial tramway located adjacent to Albuquerque, New Mexico. It stretches from the northeast edge of the city to the crestline of the Sandia Mountains and has the world's third longest single span. It is the longest aerial tram in the United States. *[Shudder! I hate heights!]*

Bell Engineering of Lucerne, Switzerland, constructed the tramway. Entering service on May 7, 1966, the tram makes 10,500 trips per year. The tram is a type known as a "double reversible jigback aerial tramway," where "jigback" implies that when one tram car is ascending, the other is descending. Its two cars are capable of carrying 50 passengers each and have numerous safety and backup systems, such as multiple emergency braking systems and a grounding system that ensures the safety of passengers in the event of a lightning strike. New tram cars were installed in 1986, and new track cables in 2009. New tram cars were again installed in May 2016.

The tramway ascends the steep western side of the highest portion of the Sandia Mountains, from a base elevation of 6,559 feet to a top elevation of 10,378 feet. A trip up the mountain takes fifteen minutes to ascend 3,819 ft, and the normal operating speed of the tram is 12 miles per hour. Approximately four "flights" leave every hour from the base and top departure stations. The view from the tram includes all of

Albuquerque and roughly 11,000 square miles of the New Mexico countryside.

At the top of Sandia Peak there are many year-round recreational options. The High Finance Restaurant offers scenic views, but is being remodeled and is closed until the summer of 2018. Many Forest Service trails offer recreational hiking, backpacking and nature hikes. The tram terminal is also located at the top of Sandia Peak Ski Area which is on the opposite side of the mountain from the tramway and the city. During the summer, over 26 miles of mountain biking trails are available. Bikes cannot be brought on tram cars. The tram is only accessible by personal vehicle, taxi, Uber, Lyft, or ABQ Trolley X: TRAMsporter. *[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandia_Peak_Tramway]*

