Cimarron

Cimarron once ranked among the rowdiest of Wild West towns; it's name even means 'wild' in Spanish. According to local lore, murder was such an everyday occurrence in the 1870s that peace-and-quiet was newsworthy, one paper going so far as to report: 'Everything is quiet in Cimarron. Nobody has been killed in three days.'

Today, the town is indeed quiet, luring nature-minded travelers who want to enjoy the great outdoors. Driving here to or from Taos, you'll pass through gorgeous **Cimarron Canyon State Park**, a steep-walled canyon with several hiking trails, excellent trout fishing and camping.

Each of the 15 spotless motel rooms at the **Cimarron Inn & RV Park** (☎ 505-376-2268, 800-546-2244; www.cimarroninn.com; Hwy 64; campsites $10, RV sites $30, r $45-110, 6-/12-person cabins $135/240) comes with a Cimarron-related theme, from fishing and hunting to Native American and Will James, a cowboy writer and illustrator. There's a fun rock shower in the ski room. Units range from small singles to cabins that can bunk the extended family. Some have kitchenettes. It's a good budget choice before reaching the more expensive mountain resorts.