



ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® Marks 54th Year

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Albuquerque, NM - The ExxonMobil Balloon Fiesta® will lift off from Balloon Fiesta Park, October 3-11, 2026. The 54th event will feature over 500 hot air balloons, including about 100 special shape balloons. This year's event is themed "The Scenic Route" in commemoration of the famous "Mother Road" Route 66 turning 100 in 2026.

Hundreds of hot air balloons launching in waves is a signature of the annual nine-day flying event. One of the reasons pilots enjoy flying from Balloon Fiesta Park is to hopefully catch the famous Albuquerque Box, a weather phenomenon that creates a unique layered wind pattern that allows hot air balloon pilots the potential of taking off and landing from the same location – a great site from Balloon Fiesta Park.

There is nothing quite like the breathtaking sight of hundreds of hot air balloons against a radiant New Mexico sunrise. From the dawn patrol to the evening glows, the ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® is a bucket-list experience that transforms the Albuquerque skyline into a massive, floating canvas of color and imagination.

Here are several highlights attendees will be able to experience this year:

Balloons Aloft:

Balloons Aloft is the ExxonMobil Balloon Fiesta's "unofficial" start on October 2nd. Hot air balloons launch from schools throughout Albuquerque and neighboring Rio Rancho as 200 hot air balloon teams turn their launch areas into mini-classrooms to share the science of how hot air balloons operate. Some hot air balloons remain tethered, others launch.

Mass Ascensions:

Prepare for a breathtaking spectacle as over 500 hot air balloons saturate the turquoise-colored Albuquerque sky in a vibrant, cheerful display. Experience the magic of the ExxonMobil Balloon Fiesta's signature morning mass ascensions both weekends (October 3–4, 10-11), and mid-week (October 7) for the Flight of Nations Mass Ascension.

Balloon Glows:

Hundreds of hot air balloons will transform Balloon Fiesta Park into a field of giant, luminous ornaments during the Twilight Twinkle Glow™, Balloon Glow and Night Magic Glow™. The highlight of the glows focuses on two words being uttered, "all burn"—a breathtaking, synchronized moment where every pilot ignites their burner at once. The result lights up Balloon Fiesta Park into a light orange glow, a sight to behold. Every glow concludes with the state's most spectacular fireworks display.

Special Shape Balloons:

Cast your eyes upward as nearly 100 uniquely shaped hot air balloons come to life and take flight. Giant hot air balloons, shaped like animals, toy-like objects, and whimsical characters transform the horizon into a floating toybox. The fan favorites take center stage during the Special Shape Rodeo™ and the evening Glowdeo™. Eventgoers can expect to see whimsical animals, superheroes and their foes, fairytale friends as well as notable staples in New Mexico culture, including Zozobra.

**Dawn Patrol & Show:**

Before the sun even breaches the horizon, Dawn Patrol pilots take to the skies, navigating the darkness until the first light reveals their landing sites. These early aviators are more than just a spectacle; fellow balloonists rely on them as wind testers to observe air currents and directions at various altitudes. On mass ascension days, this tradition evolves into the Dawn Patrol Show— a stunning, choreographed launch set to music that has captivated crowds since 1996. Weather permitting, these balloons begin their glow at 5:45 a.m. and lift off into the twilight by 6 a.m.

Fiesta de Los Globitos, sponsored by The City of Las Vegas, NM:

Experience the charm of the remote-control balloon rally, featuring over 80 meticulously crafted scale models. Standing roughly 20 feet tall, these vibrant tethered balloons will take over Balloon Fiesta Park for several mini mass ascensions throughout the nine-day celebration.

More at Balloon Fiesta Park:

Stretching over a third of a mile, the ExxonMobil Balloon Fiesta's Main Street is a vibrant marketplace where you can savor a signature green chile cheeseburger or discover unique handmade keepsakes. A stroll here is essential to the full ExxonMobil Balloon Fiesta experience, enjoying attractions like the Artisans at Balloon Fiesta, Balloon Discovery Center, chainsaw carving, and more!

From all across the field, guests will enjoy unprecedented views of the balloons, drone light show, Team Fastrax Skydiving™, and AfterGlow™ Fireworks Show.

For more information about the 2026 event, visit www.balloonfiesta.com.

About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Inc.

The ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® is an annual festival of hot air balloons that takes place every October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. It is the largest gathering of balloons and balloonists in the world. For details on events, schedule, and entertainment, visit our website, BalloonFiesta.com and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter/X](#), or [TikTok](#).