

THE BEST ALBUQUERQUE HAS TO OFFER

BEST of the CITY

HAVING FUN

BEST GUYS' NIGHT OUT:

LOTUS NIGHTCLUB & VIP ULTRA LOUNGE

(211 Gold Ave. SW, 243-0955, lotusabq.com)

Listen up, party people: Lotus' two dance floors, pounding music, sophisticated lighting, and drink specials make it the place to see and be seen in Albuquerque. Friday nights showcase renowned DJs like Toro, Audrey Napoleon, and Code Red. But Saturday—"probably our busiest night," says Brian Craig, owner of Lotus—is when DJ J-Roc kicks out the jams in the front room, so it makes sense that the city's guys head here to hang out.

ALSO IN THE TOP 5:

Effex Night Club (420 Central Ave. SW, 842-8870, effexabq.com)
Ibiza (Hotel Andaluz, 125 Second St. NW, 242-9090)
Imbibe (3101 Central Ave. NE, 255-4200, imbibenobhill.com)
Isotopes Park (1601 Avenida Cesar Chavez SE, 924-2255, milb.com)

BEST PLACE TO SPEND A RAINY DAY:

HOME

We may not get record rainfalls in Albuquerque, but when the

droplets do start their pitter-patter, there's one place from which most of us want to watch them: home. Maybe it's because our wet-weather wardrobes or sorely lacking; maybe it's because monsoons are hard to predict. Whatever the reason, there's nothing like grabbing a blanket, a good book, and curling up on your couch on a rainy day.

ALSO IN THE TOP 5:

Albuquerque Museum of Art and History (2000 Mountain Road NW, 242-4600, cabq.gov)
iExplora! (1701 Mountain Road NW, 224-8300, explora.us)
The Library (abclibrary.org)
New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science (1801 Mountain Road, 842-2800, nmnaturalhistory.org)

BEST LOCAL FESTIVAL:

RIO GRANDE ARTS & CRAFTS FESTIVAL

(5180 Paseo del Norte NE, 292-7457, riograndefestivals.com)

"I think our name has the word 'festival' for a reason," says Ruth Gore, founder and director of the Rio Grande Arts & Crafts Festival. And it's true—every year for the last 25 years, the festival has offered a chance for Albuquerqueans to listen to live music, taste delicious food, talk to artists, buy art, and even watch that art be created.

This year's festival welcome 50 new artists from around the globe, Gore says. *Sunshine Artist* magazine recently ranked the festival sixth in the nation for art shows.

ALSO IN THE TOP 5:

Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (4401 Alameda Blvd. NE, 821-1000, balloonfiesta.com)
Lavender in the Village Festival (Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, lavenderinthetown.com)
Summerfest (cabq.gov)
Weems International Artfest (Expo New Mexico State Fairgrounds, 266-4018, weemsinternationalartfest.org)

BEST BALLOON RIDES: RAINBOW RYDERS

(5601 Eagle Rock Ave. NE, 823-1111, rainbowryders.com)

Rainbow Ryders celebrated their 30th anniversary on Sept. 5, 2013. That same day, Gov. Susana Martinez officially declared Sept. 5 Rainbow Ryders Day. For every year that it's been in business—and, as of this year, that translates to 30—Rainbow Ryders flies 22,000 people in its colorful hot air balloons. It's a regular presence at the International Balloon Fiesta (Scott Appleman, president and CEO of Rainbow Ryders says the company has been there for 14 years) and aims to "bring the experience to life," Appleman says, bringing

clients to heights they've never experienced before. "You can see 70-80 miles in every direction. Those views and those landscapes are just stunning!"

THE ALSO IN THE TOP 5:

Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (4401 Alameda Blvd. NE, 821-1000, balloonfiesta.com)
World Balloon (6390 Coors Blvd. NW, 293-6800, worldballoon.com)

BEST GIRLS' NIGHT OUT: THE DIRTY BOURBON

(9800 Montgomery Blvd. NE, 296-2726, thedirtybourbon.com)

With a 1,300-square foot dance floor for you and all your best friends to dance the night away—and a mechanical bull for when your feet get sore—the Dirty Bourbon ranks as the go-to girls' night. Weekly specials and frequent events and guests shake things up just enough so that every experience is a new one.

ALSO IN THE TOP 5:

Apothecary Lounge (806 Central Ave. SE, 242-0040, hotelparacentral.com),
Lotus Nightclub (211 Gold Ave. SW, 243-0955, lotusabq.com),
Q Bar (800 Rio Grande Blvd. NW, 843-6300, qbarabq.com),
The Stage at Santa Ana Star (54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road, 771-5680, thestageatthestar.com)