



ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA

Albuquerque, New Mexico

If you missed the first one in 1972, when only 13 balloons showed up, you're forgiven. But if you haven't visited the event lately, shame on you. Now well-established as the largest ballooning event on the planet with more than 600 balloons, this event draws the lighter-than-air crowd from around the world. The sight of the mass ascension is nothing short of inspiring, making it the most photographed event on earth.

As amazingly memorable events go, the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is a best-kept secret. Pilots (and most everybody else) pay \$6 at the gate; kids under 12 are free; and parking is \$10. Unlike an airshow where you can be restricted from the flight line and may never get near the action, here you can walk right up to the balloons as they launch, talk to the crews and others agape. The smell of fresh roasting green chiles as the sun rises into the crystal clear desert air . . . Aaaaaah-hhhh, life is great! Oct. 2-10. For more info and advance tickets, log onto BalloonFiesta.com or call 888.422.7277 ext. 303. Airport: Double Eagle (AEG).