

# Taos Pueblo

Coordinates: 36.43917°N 105.54559°W﻿ / ﻿36.43917°N 105.54559°W﻿ / 36.43917; -105.54559

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**Taos Pueblo** (or **Pueblo de Taos**) is an ancient pueblo belonging to a Taos (Northern Tiwa) speaking Native American tribe of Pueblo people. It is approximately 1000 years old and lies about 1 mile (1.6 km) north of the modern city of Taos, New Mexico, USA. They are considered to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities in the United States.<sup>[3]</sup>

Taos Pueblo is a member of the Eight Northern Pueblos. The Taos community is known for being one of the most private, secretive, and conservative pueblos. A reservation of 95,000 acres (384 km<sup>2</sup>) is attached to the pueblo, and about 4,500 people live in this area.<sup>[4]</sup>

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## Taos Pueblo

*Pueblo de Taos*



<b>Location</b>	Near Taos, Taos County, New Mexico, U.S.
<b>Coordinates</b>	<span><span><span><span><span>36.43917°N</span> <span>105.54559°W</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span>36.43917°N 105.54559°W</span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>36.43917; -105.54559</span></span></span></span></span>
<b>Governing body</b>	Native American tribal government

### UNESCO World Heritage Site

*Official name: Pueblo de Taos*

<b>Type</b>	Cultural
<b>Criteria</b>	iv
<b>Designated</b>	1992 (16th session)
<b>Reference No.</b>	492 ( <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/492">http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/492</a> )
<b>State Party</b>	USA
<b>Region</b>	Europe and North America

### U.S. National Register of Historic Places

<b>Designated</b>	October 15, 1966
<b>Reference No.</b>	66000496[1]

### U.S. National Historic Landmark District

<b>Designated</b>	October 9, 1960[2]
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## Setting

The Rio Pueblo de Taos, also called Rio Pueblo and Red Willow Creek, is a small stream which flows through the middle of the pueblo compound. It comes from headwaters in the nearby Taos Mountains of the Sangre de Cristo Range.

Taos Pueblo's most prominent architectural feature is a multi-storied residential complex of reddish-brown adobe divided into two parts by the Rio Pueblo. The Pueblo's website states it was probably built between 1000 and 1450 CE.<sup>[4]</sup>

The pueblo was designated a National Historic Landmark on October 9, 1960, and in 1992 became a World Heritage Site. As of 2006, about 150 people live in the historic complex full-time.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Name

### Taos language

In the Taos language, the pueblo is referred to as "the village" in either *tâotho* "in the village" (*tâo*- "village" + *-tho* "in") or *tâobo* "to/toward the village" (*tâo*- "village" + *-bo* "to, toward"). The proper name of the pueblo is *ìalopháymuṗ òhâothàolbo* "at red willow canyon mouth" (or *ìalopháybo* "at the red willows" for short);<sup>[5]</sup> however, this name is more commonly used in ceremonial contexts and is less common in everyday speech.

### Spanish language

The name *Taos* in English was borrowed from Spanish *Taos*. Spanish *Taos* is probably a borrowing of Taos *tâo*- "village" which was heard as *tao* to which the plural *-s* was added although in the modern language *Taos* is no longer a plural noun. The idea that Spanish *Taos* is from *tao* "cross of the order of San Juan de los Cabelleros" (from Greek *tau*) is unlikely.<sup>[6]</sup>

## History



Location within New Mexico

## Taos *t'óynemą*

### Total population

4,500 (2010 U.S. Census)

### Regions with significant populations

New Mexico; United States

### Languages

Tiwa, English, Spanish

### Religion

Taos religion (ancient Indian religious rites),  
Christianity

### Related ethnic groups

Other Tanoan peoples

## Pre-Columbian

Most archeologists believe that the Taos Indians along with other Pueblo Indians settled along the Rio Grande migrated from the Four Corners region.<sup>[7]</sup> The dwellings of that region were inhabited by the Ancient Pueblo Peoples (*Anasazi*), and a long drought in the area in the late 13th century may have caused them to move to the Rio Grande where the water supply was more dependable.

Throughout its early years, Taos Pueblo was a central point of trade between the native populations along the Rio Grande and their neighbors to the northeast, the Plains Tribes. Taos Pueblo hosted a trade fair each fall after the agricultural harvest.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Post-contact

The first Spanish visitors to Taos Pueblo arrived in 1540 as members of the Francisco Vázquez de Coronado expedition, which stopped at many of New Mexico's pueblos in search of the rumored Seven Cities of Gold. Around 1620, the first Catholic Church in the pueblo, San Geronimo de Taos, was constructed. Reports from the period indicate that the native people of Taos resisted the building of the church and the imposition of the Catholic religion. Throughout the 1600s, cultural tensions grew between the native populations of the Southwest and the increasing Spanish presence. Taos Pueblo was no exception, and by 1660, the native people killed the resident priest and destroyed the church. Only several years after its rebuilding, the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 began and the Taos Indians again destroyed San Geronimo and killed two other priests.<sup>[8]</sup>

By the turn of the 18th century, San Geronimo de Taos was under construction for a third time, and Spanish/native relations within the pueblo became amicable for a brief period as both groups found a common enemy in invading Ute and Comanche tribes. Resistance to Catholicism and Spanish culture was still strong. Even so, Spanish religious ideals and agricultural practices subtly worked their way into the Taos community, largely starting during this time of increased cooperation between the two cultural groups.<sup>[8]</sup>

New Mexico formally became a territory of the United States in 1847 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, but a revolt broke out in Taos Pueblo. Mexican Pablo Montoya and Tomasito, a leader at Taos Pueblo, led a force of Mexicans and Indians who did not want to become a part of the United States. They managed to kill Governor Charles Bent and others and marched on Santa Fe, but were finally subdued after taking refuge in the ill-fated San Geronimo Mission Church. The American troops bombarded the church, killing or capturing the insurrectionists and destroying the physical structure. Around 1850, an entirely new mission church was constructed near the west gate of the pueblo wall. The ruins of the original church and its 1850s replacement are both still visible inside the pueblo wall today.<sup>[8]</sup> "The Padre of Isleta", Anton Docher first served as a priest in Taos before his long time spent in Isleta.<sup>[9]</sup>

In 1924-25 their culture was studied by Carl Jung who visited the Pueblo led by Ochwiay Biano.

## Taos Mountain

The Pueblo's 48,000 acres (194 km<sup>2</sup>) of mountain land was taken by President Theodore Roosevelt and designated as the Carson National Forest early in the 20th century. It was finally returned in 1970 by President Nixon.<sup>[10]</sup> An additional 764 acres (3.09 km<sup>2</sup>) south of the ridge between Simpson Peak and Old Mike Peak and west of Blue Lake were transferred back to the Pueblo in 1996.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Blue Lake

Blue Lake, which the people of the Pueblo traditionally consider sacred, was included in this return of Taos land. The Pueblo's web site names the acquisition of the sacred Blue Lake as the most important event in its history due to the spiritual belief that the Taos natives originated from the lake itself.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Architecture

At the time of the Spaniards' initial contact, Hernando de Alvarado described the pueblo as having adobe houses built very close together and stacked five or six stories high. The homes became narrower as they rose, with the roofs of each level providing the floors and terraces for those above.<sup>[8]</sup>

The buildings at Taos originally had few windows and no standard doorways. Instead, access to rooms was through square holes in the roof that the people reached by climbing long, wooden ladders. Cedar logs (or *vigas*) supported roofs that had layers of branches, grass, mud, and plaster covering them. The architecture and the building materials were well suited for the rigors of the environment and the needs of the people in the Taos Valley.<sup>[8]</sup>

The first Spanish-influenced architecture appeared in Taos Pueblo after Fray Francisco de Zamora came there in 1598 to establish a mission, under orders from Spanish Governor, Don Juan de Oñate.<sup>[8]</sup>

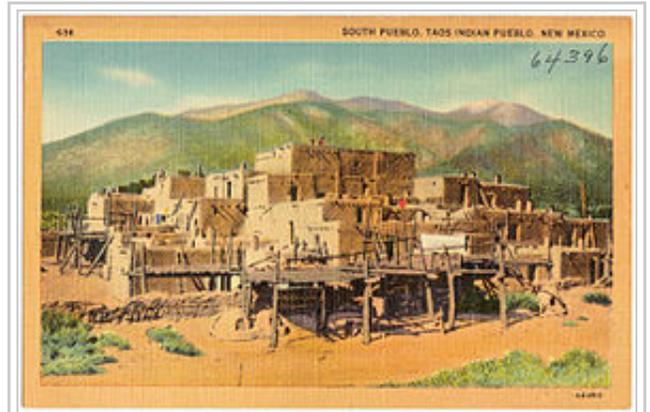
## Wall

The pueblo wall completely encloses the village except at the entrance as a symbol of the village boundaries. Now rather short, the wall used to be much taller for protection against surrounding tribes.

## Main structure

The north-side Pueblo is said to be one of the most photographed and painted buildings in North America.<sup>[13]</sup> It is the largest multistoried Pueblo structure still existing. It is made of adobe walls that are often several feet thick. Its primary purpose was for defense.<sup>[7]</sup> Up to as late as 1900, access to the rooms on lower floors was by ladders on the outside to the roof, and then down an inside ladder. In case of an attack, outside ladders could easily be pulled up.

## Homes



Residential adobe complex, and Taos Mountain.



Church, Pueblo de Taos (Ansel Adams—1941)

The homes in this structure usually consist of two rooms, one of which is for general living and sleeping, and the second of which is for cooking, eating, and storage. Each home is self-contained; there are no passageways between the houses. Taos Indians made little use of furniture in the past, but today they have tables, chairs, and beds. In the pueblo, electricity, running water, and indoor plumbing are prohibited.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Spiritual community

### Religious practices

Two spiritual practices are represented in the Pueblo: the original indigenous spiritual and religious tradition<sup>[4]</sup> and Roman Catholicism. The majority of Taos Indians practice their still-vital, ancient indigenous religion.<sup>[7]</sup> Most (90%) members of the Taos Pueblo community are baptized as Roman Catholics.<sup>[4]</sup> Saint Jerome, or San Geronimo, is the patron saint of the pueblo.<sup>[14]</sup>

### One nest

The deep feeling of belonging to a community, summed up in their phrase, “we are in one nest,” has held the Taos people together. Both men and women are expected to offer their services or “community duties,” when needed. One should be cooperative and never allow one's own desires to be destructive of the community's interest.

### Family

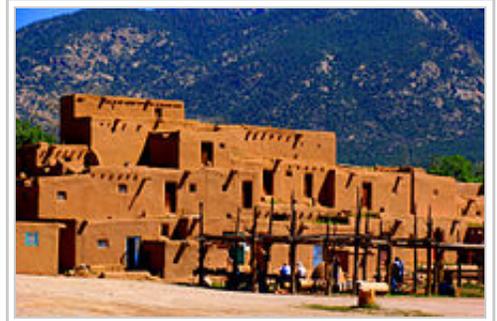
One of Taos's strongest institutions is the family. Descent on both the father and the mother's side of the family is equally recognized. Each primary family lives in a separate dwelling so when a couple gets married, they move to their own home. With relatives so near by, everyone is available to help care for the children. The elderly teach the young the values and traditions that have been handed down, which protects the integrity of the Taos culture.

## See also

- Elk-Foot of the Taos Tribe
- Puebloan peoples
- National Register of Historic Places listings in Taos County, New Mexico

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> ^ "National Register Information System" ([http://nrhp.focus.nps.gov/natreg/docs/All\\_Data.html](http://nrhp.focus.nps.gov/natreg/docs/All_Data.html)). *National Register of Historic Places*. National Park Service. 2006-03-15.



Pueblo de Taos — north side structure



Landscape with pueblo through native cottonwood trees (*Populus deltoides*) (Ansel Adams—1941)

2. ^ "Taos Pueblo" (<http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=353&ResourceType=District>). *National Historic Landmark summary listing*. National Park Service. Retrieved June 26, 2008.
3. ^ <http://taos.org/art/historic-landmarks?/item/1/Taos-Pueblo>
4. ^ *a b c d e* "About Taos Pueblo" (<http://www.taospueblo.com/about>). Taos Pueblo. 2012. Retrieved December 10, 2012.
5. ^ Sturtevant, William C. (1978). *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 9: Southwest* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=DryFHpts0K0C&pg=PA267>). Government Printing Office. p. 267. ISBN 9780160045776. Retrieved 10 December 2012.
6. ^ Jones, William. (1960). Origin of the place name Taos. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 2 (3), 2–4; Trager, George L. (1960). The name of Taos, New Mexico. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 2 (3), 5–6.
7. ^ *a b c d* "Pueblo de Taos" (<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/world-heritage/pueblo-de-taos/>). National Geographic Society. Retrieved 2012-12-10.
8. ^ *a b c d e f g* "Taos Pueblo" ([http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/american\\_latino\\_heritage/Taos\\_Pueblo.html](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/american_latino_heritage/Taos_Pueblo.html)). National Park Service. Retrieved 2012-12-10.
9. ^ Leo Crane. *Desert Drums: The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, 1540–1928*. Rio Grande Press, 1972.
10. ^ Julyan, B: *New Mexico's Wilderness Areas: The Complete Guide*, page 73. Big Earth Publishing, 1999
11. ^ "Public Law 104-333" (<http://bulk.resource.org/gpo.gov/laws/104/publ333.104.pdf>) (PDF). Retrieved July 19, 2008.
12. ^ Keegan, Marcia (2010). *Taos Pueblo and Its Sacred Blue Lake: Reflections on the Fortieth Anniversary from Members of Taos Pueblo*. Clear Light Pub. ISBN 9781574160994.
13. ^ Rodríguez, Sylvia (2009-04-10). *The Matachines Dance: A Ritual Dance of the Indian Pueblos and Mexicano/Hispano Communities* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=XogChaZaM0IC&pg=PA17>). Sunstone Press. p. 17. ISBN 9780865346345. Retrieved 10 December 2012.
14. ^ Scott, Sascha T. (2008). *Paintings of Pueblo Indians and the Politics of Preservation in the American Southwest* ([http://books.google.com/books?id=ax6oNu7\\_1d4C&pg=PA25](http://books.google.com/books?id=ax6oNu7_1d4C&pg=PA25)). ProQuest. p. 25. ISBN 9780549890423. Retrieved 10 December 2012.

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## References

- Bodine, John J (1996). *Taos Pueblo: A Walk Through Time*. Tucson: Rio Nuevo Publishers. ISBN 9781887896955.

## Further reading

- Wenger, Tisa Joy (2009). *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom*. University of North Carolina Press. ISBN 9780807832622.

## External links

- Official website (<http://www.taospueblo.com/>)
- Indianpueblo.org—Indian Pueblo Cultural Center: Taos Pueblo (<http://www.indianpueblo.org/19pueblos/taos.html>)
- unesco.org: Taos Pueblo (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/492>) — *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*.
- Taoswebcam.com: Webcam of sacred Taos Mountain (<http://www.taoswebcam.com/>)
- Sacredland.org: Taos Blue Lake (<http://www.sacredland.org/taos-blue-lake/>)
- Princeton.edu: Taos Blue Lake Collection (<http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/zc77sq09n>) — *at the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University*.
- National Park Service—NPS: Taos Pueblo (<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/amsw/sw47.htm>) — on NPS "Discover Our Shared Heritage" website.
- SMU-in-Taos: Research Publications digital collection (<http://digitalcollections.smu.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=/sit>) — SMU-in-Taos (Fort Burgwin) campus; anthropological + archaeological monographs + edited volumes.
  - SMU-in-Taos: Taos archeology (<http://digitalcollections.smu.edu/u?/sit,25>)
  - SMU-in-Taos: Papers on Taos archaeology (<http://digitalcollections.smu.edu/u?/sit,24>)

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Categories: 10th-century architecture | Adobe buildings and structures

| Buildings and structures in Taos County, New Mexico | Historic districts in New Mexico

| History of Taos, New Mexico | National Historic Landmarks in New Mexico

| National Register of Historic Places in New Mexico | Native American tribes in New Mexico

| Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area | Populated places in Taos County, New Mexico

| Pre-historic towns in the United States

| Properties of religious function on the National Register of Historic Places in New Mexico | Pueblo great houses

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