

Las Cruces is the second largest city in the state of New Mexico. The population of the city and surrounding areas is approximately 135,000. Considered the gateway to the southwest, Las Cruces is known internationally for its chile peppers. It is a blend of cultures, including Hispanic, Native American and Anglo.

Las Cruces is situated in the Mesilla (Little Table) Valley on the banks of the Rio Grande River. The north and eastern portions of the city are desert terrains, while the south and western sides are filled with rich farmlands and lush pecan orchards. It is bordered on the east by the beautiful Organ Mountains. Since their majestic rocky and jagged peaks resemble the tall pipes found on pipe organs, their name is quite appropriate!

In English, Las Cruces means "The Crosses". It got its name from an interesting historical legend about three early priests who are believed to be buried in the surrounding desert. Their graves are marked by three "crosses". In addition to an interesting history, Las Cruces offers many outstanding area attractions. It is a hiker's paradise, with many trails leading into the Organ Mountains. Aguirre Springs campground and hiking trails are the area's most popular. Those that enjoy shorter hikes will enjoy Dripping Springs and the intriguing historical information found along its trail. New Mexico's largest wilderness area, the Gila National Forest, is only a short distance away.

Las Cruces is only a short drive from many area attractions, including White Sands National Monument (which is one of the Seven Wonders of the World); White Sands Missile Range (which was once the landing site of the Space Shuttle) Caballa Lake State Park; Elephant Butte Lake State Park; Ciudad Juarez, Mexico; and the cooler, pine-covered Sacramento Mountains that house two popular tourist cities: Ruidoso and Cloudcroft. During the winter months and early Spring, snow-skiing is only a couple of hours away!

Locally, The Sun City sports many of its own attractions such as Old Mesilla (which is filled with the early history of Las Cruces). It has the best authentic Mexican food restaurants in the world, and is home to the famous Stahmann Farms (one of the largest pecan growers in the world). The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum is our newest and most informative 'must see' attraction.

Las Cruces is home to the main campus of [New Mexico State University](#), which is New Mexico's major agricultural and engineering university. It employs over 700 faculty members, and has an enrollment of approximately 15,000 undergraduate students. NMSU offers 75 undergraduate programs and more than 70 graduate or postgraduate programs.

Come visit our beautiful city, with its mild year-round climate. You'll be glad you did!

