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Spirit

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Manby Hot Springs

Soothe along the banks
of the Rio Grande.

Soak up New Mexico—literally. That means a trip to Manby Hot Springs, a cluster of sandy-bottomed pools tucked inside the Rio Grande gorge near Taos. Once you plunge into the 106-degree water bracketed by 300-foot canyon walls, you'll know why Indians and Spaniards made these waters their place for renewal.

To get there, climb into a four-wheel-drive vehicle for the dirt-road drive to the trailhead parking lot. Take the gentle path 500 yards through juniper trees and basalt boulders to reach the gorge bottom. The springs bubble up along the river's edge, near a ruined stone bathhouse built a century ago. Climb into the largest pool, 20 feet in diameter and 3 feet deep. For a cozier dip, try the smaller basins, including a 3-foot-deep circular pool, that line the bank a few feet from the Rio Grande. During spring runoff, generally March to May, the river might submerge those lower pools. But the area's mild temperatures, as warm as 66 degrees in October, allow for comfortable hot-springing well into the fall.

Proof of Manby's ancient attraction appears on a nearby boulder; a petroglyph shows three concentric circles surrounding a dot. Translated from Pueblo, the symbol means "the water of long life." Though Manby is no fountain of youth, a good soak there will keep your vacation going strong. taoschamber.com

Natural Spa
With this view,
who needs
a massage?

