



# In search of Taos movie locations

Text by Steve Fuhlendorf

## BACKGROUND FOR YOUR TOUR

Over the years the variety of films shot in Taos reflects the range of terrain in the region. An entire tour could be done visiting the locations of scenes from the cult classic “Easy Rider,” which was released in 1969. Dennis Hopper, who directed the movie that made him a star, was so taken with the Taos scenery and lifestyle that he spent another 10 years living in Taos after the film was completed. In the fall of 2002 Taos hosted the independent feature film “Off the Map.” The movie, directed by Campbell Scott (son of George C. Scott) and starring Sam Elliott and Joan Allen, gave Scott just what he was looking for: A forever view. More recently, “Into the West,” a TBS mini-series, the remake of “The Longest Yard” and “The Missing” with Tommy Lee Jones had significant segments filmed in and around Taos. For more information on locations and directions call the Taos County Chamber of Commerce at 800-532-TAOS or the Taos Film Commission at 505-751-3646 or go to [www.taosfilm.org](http://www.taosfilm.org).

### 1. MABEL DODGE LUHAN HOUSE

240 MORADA LANE

It only seems fitting that the home of Mabel Dodge Luhan, who played such an important part in the 20th century history of Taos, should also be the backdrop for at least one movie. That movie was the 1988 hit “Twins,” with Arnold Swarzenegger and Danny de Vito.

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Mabel Dodge Luhan was an heiress, author and art patron from the east. She found Taos to be so intellectually stimulating she wanted to share it with her New York social circle. That circle included such luminaries as D.H. Lawrence, Carl Jung and Aldous Huxley. As you tour the home, which is now a conference center and inn, you can almost feel the creative energy that must have flowed within the walls during long evenings of conversation. Most of the more recent local history of the house surrounds the years when Dennis Hopper owned the property. This was during the height of the counter-culture movement of the late



Rick Romancito

From left, Valentina de Angelis, Sam Elliott and Joan Allen in a scene from “Off the Map,” which was almost entirely shot in the Taos area.

1960’s and early ‘70’s. That era brought a whole new set of stars to Taos, including Timothy Leary, Jack Nicholson and Janis Joplin, who made the Taos scene very hip. Time: One hour

### 2. TAOS PUEBLO

TWO MILES FROM TAOS PLAZA

The historic Taos Pueblo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has been featured in many movies. The most well know may be the anti-establishment film, “Easy Rider,” starring Peter Fonda. It is said that much of the movie was conceived at the New Buffalo Commune in Arroyo Hondo. Lucille Ball spent time at the Pueblo Village during the filming of “Valley of the Sun” in 1942. Other films shot in part at Taos Pueblo include “Hollywood or Bust” in 1956 and the documentary by Taos Pueblo native, Diane Reyna, from 1992 titled “Surviving Columbus.” Time: One hour

### 3. RÍO GRANDE GORGE BRIDGE

12 MILES NORTH OF TAOS PLAZA

The view from atop the Río Grande Gorge Bridge is incomparable. The bridge is 650 feet above the water of the Río Grande. From the vantage point you can see for miles across the high desert sage, with the slash through the landscape that is the gorge always drawing your attention away from everything else. Many films have used this riveting backdrop including the 1988 film “Twins” and Oliver Stone’s “Natural

Born Killers” with Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis. Time: 30 minutes

### 4. TRUCHAS

30 MILES SOUTH OF THE TAOS PLAZA ON HWY 76, ALONG THE HIGH ROAD TO TAOS

In 1988 “The Milagro Beanfield War,” directed by Robert Redford, came to theaters with a funny, yet tender portrayal of small town northern New Mexican culture. Much of the movie was filmed in Truchas, along the scenic High Road to Taos. Much has remained the same about the town nearly 20 years after the film. The novel from which the movie was derived was written by John Nichols, whose socially and environmentally conscious works of fiction and non-fiction have made him an icon on the Taos literary scene. Time: Two hours.

