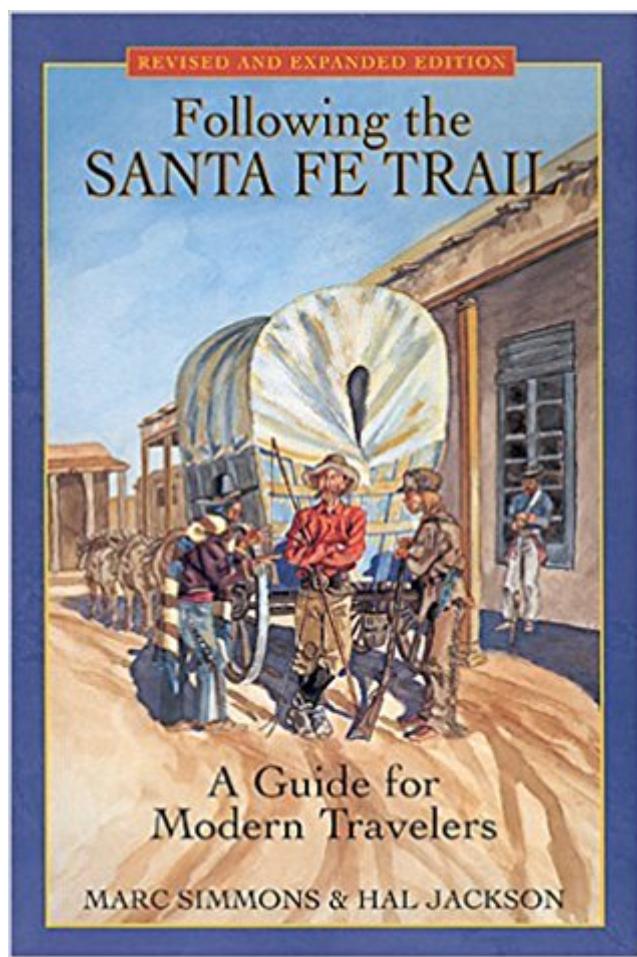


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# Following The Santa Fe Trail: A Guide For Modern Travelers



## **Synopsis**

Historic pioneer trails serve as some of the most fascinating links to our nation's past and retracing them can be an exhilarating and educational experience. Following the Santa Fe Trail is aimed at assisting modern travelers to enlarge their understanding of the trail and increase the enjoyment that comes from following in the wagon tracks of pioneers. Originating in Franklin, Missouri, the Santa Fe Trail was the first and most exotic of America's great trans-Mississippi pathways to the west. Although the era of the trail ceased, its glory-days are still part of the collective imagination of America. Complete with directions, maps, anecdotes, and historical information, Following the Santa Fe Trail takes the traveler on an authentic historic journey. Modern paved highways now parallel much of the old wagon route and with this guide a modern adventurer can retrace large sections of the trail. Since Following the Santa Fe Trail first appeared in 1984, the trail was designated a National Historic Trail under the National Park Service and public interest has mushroomed. This completely revised third edition now updates all directions and clarifies the changes that have taken place in the last 15 years.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"The best historical guidebook I have ever seen."

Marc Simmons is an internationally acclaimed historian and author who has written more than 35 books on the West and Southwest. Hal Jackson is a former geography professor at Humboldt State University.

This is a Good Book and we used it in July of 2012 to find remote spots on the Santa Fe Trail. But remember this book was first written in 1984 and then reprinted in 2001. The places are still there, but access conditions are not always the same as they were 25 years ago. We were traveling the trail from West to East, which also made it a little harder to use the book, but it was still very helpful in finding those obscure locations. Maybe not the only book to take on your trip along the Santa Fe Trail - But one you should have!

Don't count on AAA or Fodor's to guide you to the wagon wheel ruts, remnants of watering wholes, or Indian ambush points along the Santa Fe Trail. On one had I was pleased to see that the noted Santa Fe Trail historian had put together a guide to the location of the remnants of the trail. Unfortunately I found details lacking, particularly when it came to local observances and current road and off-road access to the location. I was particularly disappointed by the lack of detail for the Raton, NM area of the trail.

Used this book extensively as I traveled the Santa Fe Trail

but we intend to use it if and when we travel the Trail. We've been to some of the places, and the book is accurate in those. The book arrived today which was much later than advised.... but is in the hands of another reader as I type, and there are good comments coming forth.

The book is in very poor shape. The binding is brittle, the pages fell out when I turned them.

Two things to note before reading, and subsequently relying upon, Marc Simmons' *Following the Santa Fe Trail: A Guide for Modern Travelers*: (1) The book is pushing 30 years old now and I'm not aware of any revisions since the 1986 edition, and (2) this shouldn't be a hindrance since the Santa Fe Trail hasn't moved for over a hundred years and, for the most part, the modern landmarks Simmons references are still recognizable. I live in the Kansas City area, a prominent jumping off point for U.S. westward expansion during the 19th century, and from my own in-town experience I'm sure a competent map reader would have little trouble following the Santa Fe Trail via Simmons' 1980s instructions. There's also the occasional historical marker pointing the way. With the rural towns, I'm less familiar. Still, a modern guide for the 21st century adventurer would be even better. I'm envisioning a wiki-type phone app with user photos that interfaces with Google Maps. I think I

even remember seeing a website for a geocaching tour. I guess a dusty old wagon trail, nearly wiped clean from the earth, just isn't that popular with the kiddos these days. Here's hoping that interest in the Santa Fe Trail undergoes a renaissance as its 200th anniversary arrives in 2021.

I recently followed the trail from St. Louis to Santa Fe on a trip west. I purchased this book at a museum about half way through the trip in Kansas and found it to be extremely helpful in tracing the trail's route--much better than just relying on maps and random historical markers in towns along the way. It has maps, photos, detailed directions to trail sites, and historical anecdotes. While it isn't perfect (it is now ten years old), you would be hard-pressed to find a better modern guide to the trail. If you want to add an historical theme to your next road trip to the southwest, buy this book and head off on a Santa Fe trail adventure. Wish I had purchased it before leaving!

All those planning on exploring the Santa Fe Trail should have this book with them. It is an excellent guide, filled with detailed maps, very specific driving instructions, and a great deal of background information on the sites referred to. The book begins with a brief introduction, which includes information on general histories, other guidebooks, trail ruts, various markers and the groups that placed them, and a bibliography. Then Simmons gets into the specifics of the trail, beginning at Franklin, MO, proceeding through Kansas, and covering both the Mountain Branch and the Cimarron Cut-Off separately before continuing through New Mexico to Santa Fe (with brief side trips to Taos and Albuquerque included). Simmons is interested in all remnants and markings of the trail and pinpoints even the most forlorn DAR marker. But it's his willingness to expose just about all that can be noted by the modern traveler (even sites on private property, though he is careful about warning against trespassing) that makes this guide book so valuable. This is the Second edition, published in 1986 after a careful note-taking retracing of the trail in 1985; probably a new edition is needed to update further changes made during the last 20 years (if it hasn't been done already). Highly recommended.

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