

# Aztec Ruins

National Monument  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Visit Planner

### Connections

Aztec Ruins National Monument is a place that bridges the past with modern peoples and traditions. For many Southwest Indians, the site is a sacred, ancestral place. Several tribes maintain deep spiritual ties with the area through story, prayer, and ceremony. Their

timeless connections to its landscape, structures, artifacts, and stories are potent reminders of who they are and where they came from. Aztec Ruins offers visitors opportunities to contemplate ancestral connections, and to forge connections of their own.

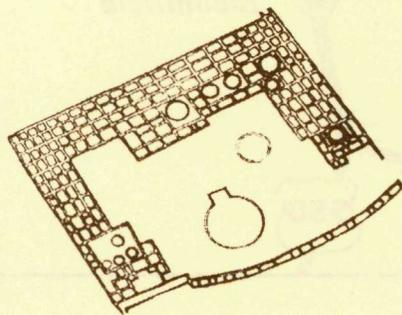
### Ancestral Pueblos



prefer that we call them “Ancestral Pueblo.” Aztec Ruins, built and used over a 200-year period beginning in the late 1000s, is one of the largest Ancestral Pueblo communities in the Animas River valley. Early builders were influenced by Chaco Canyon to the south, where another large Ancestral Pueblo community is located. By the 1200s, the people who used the area showed a strong cultural relationship to the people in the Mesa Verde region to the north. About 1300, people left the area and the entire region. Although tracing specific migrations of the people is difficult, generally they traveled southeast to join existing pueblos along the Rio Grande, south to the Zuni area, or west to join the Hopi villages in Arizona.

Remains left by early inhabitants are widespread in the Four Corners area. Archeologists called these early people “Anasazi” for many years; today their descendants

### Aztec Community



West Ruin

Included in the Aztec community were several multi-story buildings called “great houses,” small residential pueblos, tri-wall kivas, great kivas, road segments, middens, and earthworks—all packed into a strip of land barely two miles long and one mile wide. The West Ruin, the excavated great house that visitors can tour, had at least 400 interconnected rooms built around an open plaza. Its stone walls tower over 30 feet; several rooms contain the original wood materials placed in its roofs by the

builders. These roofed rooms protected large deposits of artifacts that hint at the lives of its users—bone, stone, and wood tools; food remnants; clothing; jewelry; pottery; building materials; and discarded items.

The site—with its links to people today, and its well-preserved artifacts and buildings—offers visitors opportunities to connect with the past and to contemplate an enduring Pueblo heritage.

## Activities

### Take Pride. Be Safe:

Ruin walls are fragile and crumble easily if walked upon. Please stay on the paved trail and off the walls. Artifacts, plants, and animals are to be left undisturbed. No pets are allowed in the buildings or on the trail. Wear sturdy walking shoes. Be aware of low doorways, uneven surfaces, and ice or snow.

Please show respect for this special place.

**Visitor Center:** The visitor center features exhibits and a 25-minute video entitled "Hisatsinom-The Ancient Ones" that is shown several times daily. Books, postcards, slides, posters, and videos are for sale. A trail guide booklet is available to borrow or buy.

**Self-Guiding Trail:** A ¼-mile self-guiding trail winds through the West Ruin, the remains of a multi-story structure of about 400 rooms. The trail passes through several rooms with intact original roofs, as well as the reconstructed Great Kiva, a round semi-subterranean room once important for community activities. Rangers give interpretive talks throughout the summer.

Visitors should allow about 1½ hours to see the exhibits and video, and to walk the 400-yard paved trail. The monument is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. the rest of the year. It is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

**Fees:** There is an entrance fee. Children under 17 enter free. Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access Passports are honored and available at the information desk.

**Services:** A shaded picnic area with tables is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Food, gas, and lodging are available in nearby Aztec, and in Farmington, about 15 miles away. Commercial campgrounds are available nearby; Navajo Lake State Park is 25 miles east.

**Accessibility:** A TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) is available. Callers should give adequate signals and allow sufficient hookup time (505) 334-6174 then dial 30. The visitor center, restrooms, a picnic table, and portions of the trail are accessible to wheelchairs.

**Weather:** Summer temperatures are usually in the 80s and 90s. Afternoon thunderstorms are common during July and August. Fall is usually pleasant, with mild daytime temperatures and crisp nights. Snow usually occurs by Thanksgiving, and periodically falls through the winter. Winter daytime temperatures range from the 20s through 50s, with cold nights. Spring weather is the most variable, with windy days and variable temperatures. Annual precipitation is about 10 inches.

## Location

Aztec Ruins National Monument is located on Ruins Road about ¾ mile north of New Mexico Highway 516, just outside the town of Aztec, New Mexico.

## Information

For complete park information visit our web site at [www.nps.gov/azru](http://www.nps.gov/azru).

Write or phone: Superintendent  
Aztec Ruins National Monument  
PO Box 640  
Aztec, New Mexico 87410  
(505) 334-6174 x 30 (Voice or TDD user)

For additional area information write or phone:  
Farmington Convention and Visitors Bureau  
3041 E. Main  
Farmington, New Mexico 87402  
1-800-448-1240

Aztec Chamber of Commerce  
110 N. Ash  
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