



## Backcountry Hiking Trails

Hiking permits are required for these trails. They are free and available at all trailheads and at the Visitor Center. Trails are open from sunrise to sunset. Pets are permitted on leashes. Carry water, snacks, and sun protection.

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### Pueblo Alto Trail

Distance - Entire loop trail – 5.4 mi roundtrip (3-4 hours)  
Pueblo Alto – 3.2 mi roundtrip (2 hours)  
Pueblo Bonito Overlook – 2.0 mi roundtrip (1 hour)

Trailhead – Pueblo del Arroyo parking area  
Elevation Gain – 250 feet

This trail provides spectacular overlook views of Pueblo Bonito, Chetro Ketl, and Kin Kletso, enters Pueblo Alto and New Alto, passes by Chacoan stairways, ramps, and roads, and affords panoramic views of the San Juan Basin. This trail is an excellent introduction into the Chacoan world. Add time to explore the sites.

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### Peñasco Blanco Trail

Distance - Peñasco Blanco roundtrip 7.4 mi (5-7 hours)  
Petroglyph Trail only roundtrip 3.5 mi (2 hours)  
Supernova Pictograph roundtrip 5.8 mi (4-6 hours)

Trailhead – Pueblo del Arroyo parking area  
Elevation Gain – 200 feet

The longest trail - relatively level - includes the Petroglyph Trail to view numerous Pueblo and Navajo petroglyphs and historic inscriptions. The trail continues to the “Supernova” pictograph site and Peñasco Blanco, an unexcavated great house with a unique oval design and a spectacular natural setting. Hot summer sun and soft sand can make this a long and difficult hike. Carry plenty of water, snacks, and sun protection. Add extra time to explore the sites.

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### South Mesa Trail

Distance - Entire loop trail – 4.1 mi roundtrip (3-4 hrs)  
Tsin Kletzin – 3.0 mi roundtrip (2-3 hrs)

Trailhead – Casa Rinconada Trail, Stop 10  
Elevation Gain – 450 feet

This trail leaves from Stop 10 on the Casa Rinconada trail, climbs to a high point on South Mesa, and leads to the great house Tsin Kletzin. Spectacular views of the surrounding landscape are visible at the site. The loop trail descends into South Gap, follows the Chacoan South Roads, and re-enters the canyon near Casa Rinconada. Add extra time to explore the site and enjoy the vistas.

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### Wijiji Trail

Distance - Wijiji roundtrip from parking area – 3.0 mi (2 hrs)  
Wijiji roundtrip from campground – 3.2 mile (2 hrs)

Trailheads – Wijiji parking area and campground  
Elevation Gain – Insignificant

This trail leads to Wijiji, a later-period Chacoan great house built around AD 1100. Wijiji differs from sites like Pueblo Bonito and Chetro Ketl in that it appears to have been built at once rather than several building periods; with exceptional symmetry and the uniform masonry. Wijiji lacks typical Chacoan features such as enclosed plazas and great kivas. Add time to explore the site and visit a short (0.2 mile roundtrip) petroglyph spur trail.

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## Rules For Visiting Chaco Culture N.H.P.

Before visiting the park, review these rules of park etiquette with your group.

We want you to have an enjoyable and safe time visiting the park. And we urge you to care for this special place so that other people can have the same experience that you do. Historical and cultural parks are very special places and require that we take extra care to preserve them. Once a cultural site is harmed, it cannot be repaired, and we all lose an important part of our history.

### 1. **Wherever you go in the park, walk softly on the earth and leave no trace.**

Please walk on the established trails in order to protect the fragile cultural sites, the fragile desert soils, and the desert plants. Getting off the trails can trample the soils and plants, and damage the cultural sites. Please do not short-cut trails. This causes erosion. Please hike the trails in small groups so that everyone has room to keep on the trail, and no one gets lost or separated from the group. Take care of your fellow group members!!

### 2. **Look with your eyes, but not with your fingers.**

Sometimes it is tempting to pick up and remove things. The plants, rocks, animals, and artifacts are protected in all national parks and should stay where you see them. If you disturb an artifact, it will destroy the information we may someday gain. Many American Indians believe that artifacts are an important part of their people's history and belong where they were left centuries before. Why not instead take a photo of the artifact, or sketch the designs?

### 3. **Please respectfully visit this special place.**

These sites are part of the history and traditions of the Hopi, Pueblo peoples of New Mexico, and the Navajo. Who continue to respect and honor them. Please treat these sacred places the way you would if you were entering a church, mosque, or a synagogue.

### 4. **Running, yelling, and horse play are not appropriate in Chaco Culture National Historic Park.**

You share the park with other citizens of the United States and the world. Quiet, respectful visitation is expected in the park. We want you to have fun and enjoy your visit to Chaco, but remember that Chaco is an outdoor museum, not a playground. Never throw rocks from the tops of the canyon. Please do not move rocks around. The Chaco people may have placed them there over 1100 years ago for a very special reason. Never write your name on rocks on canyon walls. Please do not touch, chalk, or add to the petroglyphs.

### 5. **Don't be a rock climber.**

The 1100 year old walls of the Chaco buildings are very fragile! Please help preserve the walls by not climbing on them. Some of the rocks are loose, and you can easily fall off, so take care of your own safety too.

### 6. **Your safety is important to us, and those who come after you.**

Please pay attention to your surroundings, where you walking and what you are doing so that you can prevent injury to yourself and others. Lots of the trails are rough and uneven. Always be careful and watchful for holes, rocks, and drop offs along the trails and paths. Do not climb around on the boulders. Many are loose and unstable, and you can get seriously hurt.

### 7. **Drink plenty of water and eat snacks.**

Do not hike or go on a tour on an empty stomach. Be sure to take plenty of water to drink along the way. Fainting and heat exhaustion are our most common medical problems, and lack of food and water is the main cause.

### 8. **Watch the weather; stay away from cliffs and over looks when there is lighting and thunder.**

When touring the park, be aware of the weather. Thunderstorms at Chaco can be very dangerous, as they are frequently accompanied by lighting. We don't want you to get stuck by lighting at Chaco!! Watch dark clouds and seek shelter when a storm is near. During the rainy season (July to September) carry a raincoat or a poncho so that you do not get soaked, chilled, and sick.