

Chaco

Chaco Culture
National Historical Park
National Park Service

Dear Visitor,

At the same time medieval Europe was emerging from the Dark Ages, a New World civilization was flourishing under the desert sun in the San Juan Basin of New Mexico. These bygone people, the Anasazi, built their impressive civilization across a vast homeland, stretching far beyond the confines of Chaco Canyon. Here, nearly 1000 years later, the protected sites at Chaco Culture National Historical Park mutely attest to the spectacular civilization and its human spirit.

As you plan your trip to Chaco keep in mind the following information:

ROADS: All roads leading to Chaco are dirt. If you are driving on State Highway 44 two routes are availabe into the park.

1. From Nageezi Trading Post follow San Juan County road 7800 eleven miles to State Highway 57. Turn left and follow Highway 57 to the visitor center 15 miles ahead. This is the best route to take from Highway 44, expecially during wet weather. It is 26 miles from Nageezi to the park visitor center.
2. Turn south on State Highway 57 at Blanco Trading Post. This route can be extremely slick during wet weather. It is 29 miles to the visitor center using this route.

From the south only one route is available, State Highway 57. From Interstate 40 exit at Thoreau, follow Highway 371 three miles past Crownpoint, turn right where Highway 57 begins. Follow the paved road for 13 miles until the marked turn off for Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The last twenty miles of road is unpaved.

NOTE: In general, the roads are maintained and should not discourage you from visiting Chaco. If the weather is wet, however, the roads can become impassable. Check road conditions first if the weather looks bad. You can call the park at (505) 988-6716 or 988-6727. Drive slow and enjoy the trip. Besides, how many National Park areas do you know where just getting there is an adventure?

SERVICES: There are NO food, gas, lodging, telephone or other services at Chaco. Please come prepared! To the north, the nearest food and gas services are at Nageezi and Blanco Trading Posts and Thriftway convenience store, 3 miles south of Nageezi on State Highway 44. The nearest public telephone is at Blanco and Nageezi Trading Post. 40 miles to the south, Crownpoint has stores, gas, and other limited services.

LODGING: The closest lodging is in Bloomfield, Farmington, Gallup, Grants, and Cuba. There is a Bed & Breakfast Inn at Nageezi Trading Post with limited rooms. Please call (505) 632 3646 for more information.

FEES: There is a \$3.00 entrance fee per vehicle into Chaco. For commercial tour groups the fee is \$1.00 per person. Authorized educational groups may obtain a fee waiver. Golden Age, Golden Eagle, and Golden Access passes are available and honored at Chaco.

CAMPING: The Gallo campground is 1 mile east of the visitor center. There are 46 sites, each with picnic table and fire grate. Please bring your own wood or charcoal as wood gathering is prohibited in the park. There are restrooms in the campground, but no showers. Drinking water is only available at the visitor center. Groups of 15 or more may reserve space in advance for the group campground. Group reservations are not accepted for summer holiday weekends. During the summer the campground can fill up by 3:00 P.M. on Fridays. Campsites are available on a first-come first-serve basis. A camping fee of \$5.00 per night and a minimum fee of \$15.00 for individual groups will be in effect January 01, 1990. The Gallo campgrounds are open all year.

REGULATIONS: Please leave all antiquities, including pieces of pottery where they lie. Once removed, information offered by such articles are forever lost to researchers and their removal denies those visitors that come after you the same opportunity for discovery and enjoyment. All resources in a National Park are protected and removal of natural and cultural features is prohibited. Climbing on walls of all archeological buildings are also prohibited. Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 is enforced.

PETS: Pets must remain under physical restraint at all times. (Maximum leash length is 6 feet). The ruins on the canyon floor are closed to pets. However, pets are permitted on the backcountry hiking trails if under physical restraint. Since plague is endemic to New Mexico, it is of concern at the park. Fleas are the carrier of the plague bacilli, so keep pets carefully controlled and dust them with flea powder to be safe.

PROGRAMS: The visitor center is the best place to begin your visit. There is an excellent museum, maps, information and audio-visual programs. Summer hours are 8 A.M. - 6 P.M. Memorial Day through Labor Day and the rest of the year 8 A.M. - 5 P.M. During the summer season daily tours and nightly campfire programs are conducted by park rangers, as staffing permits.

TRAILS: Five self-guided trails lead through the major ruins on the canyon floor. Four backcountry trails lead out of the main canyon to more remote sites. Self Registration is required to travel on these trails, which is done at each of the Backcountry trailheads. Camping, fires and bicycles are not permitted in the backcountry. Wijiji trail is the only designated bicycle trail. All trails and ruins are closed from sunset to sunrise.

ENVIRONMENT: At 6200 feet elevation, Chaco is a high desert with cold winter nights (sub-freezing) and pleasant summer temperature (daytime 80-95, nighttime 50-65). Vegetation is low shrub and grass with wildflowers in the spring and fall. Chaco has its share of wildlife in the form of small mammals, predators, and birds. With the arrival of warmer temperatures reptilian creatures, particularly rattlesnakes, other endemic snakes and lizards emerge onto the natural scene.

CAUTIONS: Trail conditions are often uneven and steep. Wearing proper footwear is recommended for trail usage. Be sure to wear appropriate clothing and carry ample water to prevent heat exposure. In cold weather be aware of hypothermia.

Please make yourself familiar with the information given so that you and those with you will have a safe and enjoyable visit.

Should you need further information to plan your visit to Chaco, please feel free to write or call:

Superintendent
Chaco Culture National Historical Park
Star Route 4, Box 6500
Bloomfield, New Mexico 87413

(505) 988-6716 or 988-6727

Sincerely,



Park Staff

Rev 12/87

