

Chiricahua

National Monument
Arizona

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Official Map and Guide

Exploring Chiricahua National Monument is exploring a fantasy world of extraordinary rock sculptures, sculptures created not by man's hand but by forces of nature over millions of years. Called the "Land of the Standing-Up Rocks" by the Chiricahua Apaches and later the "Wonderland of Rocks" by pioneers, this northwest corner of the Chiricahua Mountains harbors towering rock spires, massive stone columns, and huge balanced rocks weighing hundreds of tons that perch delicately on small pedestals. Where hundreds of these rocks occur together, such as in the Heart of Rocks (shown at right), the landscape appears as a rugged badlands. The story behind the rocks is not completely understood, but geologists be-

lieve that about 25 million years ago explosive volcanic eruptions from the nearby Turkey Creek caldera, as violent as any ever witnessed by man, spewed forth thick white-hot ash. This ash cooled and fused into an almost 2,000-foot thick layer of dark volcanic rock known as rhyolite. The Chiricahua Mountains formed from the upheaval of this rock, and then the masters of erosion—water, wind, and ice—began sculpting the rock into an odd array of formations. Erosion carved predominantly along weak areas—vertical and horizontal cracks that had formed during the cooling of the volcanic ash and the building of the Chiricahuas. Today the fascinating eroded rock forms are preserved in Chiricahua National Monument.

Cover photo by Chuck Milliken



David Muench

Life in the Mountains



Alligator juniper



Whitetail deer



Paul Berquist, Manley Photography Apache fox squirrel



Hedgehog cactus

Chuck Milliken

The Chiricahua Mountains are a world apart from the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts that surround them, and from the other mountain ranges of the United States. In these cool, moist forested "sky islands," as they are sometimes called, dwell many plants and animals of the Southwest and—what makes these mountains different—a number of Mexican species. Mexico is 50 miles to the south, yet the Chiricahuas' special mix of life is more like that found in the Mexican Sierra Madres than in any highlands in this country. The influence from the south

is strong; many trees, wildflowers, and animals have crossed the border into Chiricahua National Monument. Probably most conspicuous are the birds, such as sulphurbellied flycatchers, Mexican chickadees, and exotic-looking coppery tailed trogons, Mexican species all. Such an abundance of rare birds makes the Chiricahua Mountains a natural mecca for birders. The Mexican influence also includes mammals, such as the Apache fox squirrel, and trees, including the Chihuahuan pine and Apache pine. The Mexican species intermingle with plants and

animals more common to Southwest mountains. The variety of plants is rich, from the cactus of the lowlands, to the stunted oaks and pines, alligator juniper, and Arizona cypress that grow in dense forests in the canyons, to the scrubby manzanita-buckthorn-skunkbush chaparral of ridges, to the forests of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and aspen that cover the highest slopes. A multitude of animals inhabits these varied environments, including whitetail deer, coatimundis, peccaries, lizards, snakes, and other Southwest mountain creatures.

A Place of Refuge

The Chiricahua Mountains were the homeland of the Chiricahua Apaches. From these mountains the Apaches, led by Cochise and Geronimo, launched attacks against the onrushing tide of pioneers for more than 25 years. Their resistance slowed, but did not stop, settlement, and when

Geronimo's band surrendered in 1886 and was removed to a distant reservation, a new way of life took over. Among the first pioneers to settle in the area were Neil and Emma Erickson, a Swedish immigrant couple. Their "little home in the foothills of the Chiricahuas," located in remote Bon-

ita Canyon, included a farm and cattle ranch. The only neighbors were the Stafford family, who lived in a log cabin close by. By the 1920s one of the Ericksons' daughters, Lillian, and her husband, Ed Riggs, had turned the homestead into a prosperous guest ranch. Lillian, the strong-willed "Lady Boss,"

named the ranch Faraway Ranch, because it was so "god-awful far away from everything." Together she and Ed explored the Chiricahua wilderness, with its "wonderful cliff formations." They built trails and took guests on horseback trips to see the "Wonderland of Rocks." In 1922 they



showed photographs of the rock formations at county fairs and chambers of commerce, and promoted the idea of a national park. Two years later, in 1924, Chiricahua National Monument was established to preserve the area's natural wonders.

Ed and Lillian Riggs, left Faraway Ranch, ca. 1908, below



Chiricahua

Safety Tips and Regulations

Pace yourself so that the high altitudes and, in summer, warm temperatures, do not leave you exhausted. Carry water on hikes. Summer thunderstorms often are accompanied by intense lightning activity.

During storms stay low, avoid open areas, and if possible, return to your vehicle. When driving, watch for fallen rocks on the road. Do not disturb natural or historical features. Hunting is prohibited,

as is collecting firewood. Pets must be leashed; they are permitted on trails. Watch for rattlesnakes, especially in summer.



Lookout Point, located along the Massai Point Nature Trail, offers close-up views of unusual rock formations. David Muench

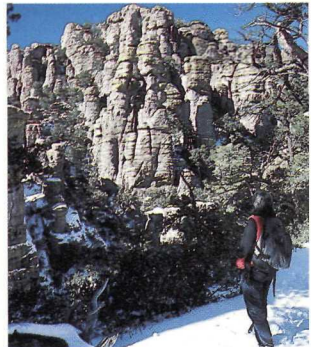


Pinnacle Balanced Rock is one of several spectacular features in the Heart of Rocks. Chuck Milliken



A rock grotto created by wind and water erosion is found along the Echo Canyon Trail. It is just one of a

variety of rock formations that you hike under, over, around, and through on this 3½-mile loop trail. Tom Bean



Echo Canyon Trail is a trail for all seasons, as are all the park's footpaths.

Exploring Chiricahua

Planning Your Visit

The visitor center has brochures, books, maps, exhibits, and a slide show. Park rangers are available to talk over plans and interests with you. Schedules of park programs, such as guided walks and talks, are posted. These programs are offered in spring and summer. The center is open daily. You can also obtain information by writing: Superintendent, Chiricahua National Monument, Dos Cabezas Route, Box 6500, Willcox, AZ 85643; or calling: (602) 824-3560.

Scenic Drive

The winding 8-mile Bonita Canyon Drive climbs gradually through oak-juniper and pine forests to the crest of the Chiricahua Mountains. At the end a commanding view from Massai Point overlooks the park, the desert valleys beyond, and the landmark mountain peaks of Sugarloaf Mountain and Cochise Head. On your drive back, stop at roadside pullouts to see rock formations and other geologic features. Exhibits are located at several pullouts.

Trails

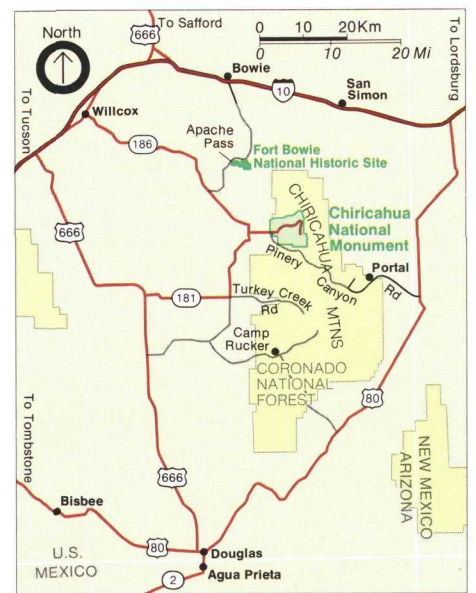
More than 17 miles of trails wind through the park. Many unusual rock formations, including Duck on a Rock, Totem Pole, and Big Balanced Rock, as well as many unnamed features, are located along the trails. Trails also lead to such oddities as a small natural bridge and a ledge of volcanic hailstones—evidence of the ancient eruptions that created the rock of Chiricahua. Hiking also takes you through the park's forests. Trails range from ¼ mile to 9 miles roundtrip. For more information, ask for the park's hiking brochure.

Campground

The park campground is open all year for tent and trailer camping. There are picnic tables, grills, restrooms, and drinking water. Trailers as long as 26 feet can be accommodated. You may also picnic here.

Faraway Ranch and Stafford Cabin

Visitors may walk around the grounds of the ranch and cabin homestead. The Park Service plans to restore the buildings and furnishings and open them to the public by 1988.



©GPO 1985-461-444/20103

