



## Planning Your Visit



### Inscription Rock

Rising above the valley floor, a massive sandstone bluff was a welcome landmark for weary travelers. A reliable waterhole hidden at its base made El Morro (or Inscription Rock) a popular campsite. For over 300 years Spanish explorers and soldiers, followed by American soldiers, pioneers and others, passed by El Morro. While they rested in its shade and drank from the pool, many carved their signatures, dates, and messages. Perhaps the Spanish carved the first inscriptions after seeing petroglyphs left hundreds of years earlier by Ancestral Puebloans living on top of the bluff. Today, El Morro National Monument protects over 2,000 inscriptions and petroglyphs, many easily viewed as you wander along the base of this majestic rock.

### Hours and Fees

Hours are subject to change, although El Morro National Monument is usually open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You must begin your walk one hour before closing time. Call ahead or check our website to inquire about extended summer hours. Trails may close due to severe weather conditions. El Morro is open every day except December 25 and January 1.

#### Fees

There is a trail fee of \$3.00 per adult, which is good for 7 consecutive days. Children under 16 are free. There is no fee for exploring the Visitor Center.

#### Passes

Interagency Annual, Senior, and Access Passes, as well as El Morro Passes are honored and can be purchased at the Visitor Center. For more information about these passes go to [http://www.nps.gov/fees\\_passes.htm](http://www.nps.gov/fees_passes.htm) or call the monument.

#### Educational Groups

Groups such as elementary, high school, or college classes studying some aspect of El Morro may request an educational fee waiver. Please call at least two weeks in advance to request your fee waiver.

### Visitor Center

Your visit to El Morro National Monument begins here. Park staff is available to answer your questions and orient you to the facilities and self-guided trails. Both trails begin at the Visitor Center.

Exhibits located in the Visitor Center span 700 years of human history in the El Morro area. A fifteen-minute video provides an orientation to the monument, and a computer will take you on a virtual tour.

### Camping and Picnicking

A 9-site primitive campground operates on a first come, first served basis. A fee is charged from roughly May through October. During the winter, water is turned off and camping is free. Fires are permitted in provided grills, except during periods of high fire danger.

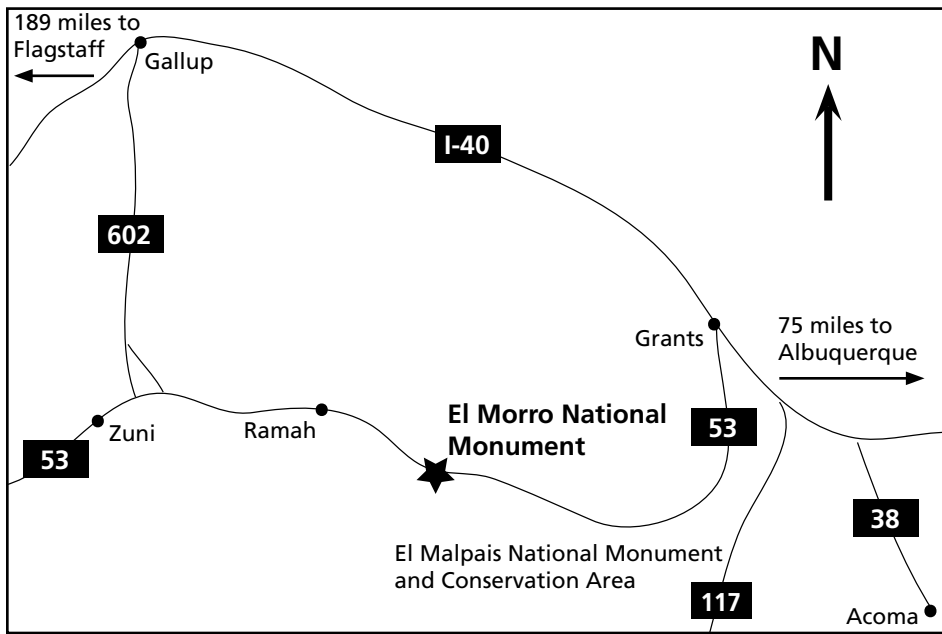
#### Picnicking

Picnic tables, including a group picnic site with grill, are available adjacent to the Visitor Center during business hours. The campground is not intended for day use.

### Preserving our Heritage

During your visit you will probably see many beautiful and interesting things. However, it is illegal to take anything away from here. This includes items such as flowers, feathers, pottery sherds, pine cones, rocks, plants, snakes, and anything else, living or not. Enjoy what you find, but then leave it behind!

El Morro is a very historically, culturally and geologically sensitive area. For this reason and for your own safety, please stay on the designated trails at all times and obey any trail closures that may be in effect.



**Driving Directions**

From Albuquerque, take Interstate 40 west to Grants. At exit 81, go south on Highway 53 for 42 miles to El Morro National Monument.

From Flagstaff, AZ, or from the west, take Interstate 40 east to Gallup. At exit 20, go south on Highway 602 for about 31 miles. Turn east (left) onto Highway 53. El Morro is 25 more miles.

If you'd like to drive through Zuni from the west, take exit 339 from Interstate 40 in AZ, and go south on Highway 191 for 24 miles. Take Highway 61/53 into Zuni. El Morro is about 36 miles from Zuni.

Caution: Commercial trucks frequent Highway 53. Please exercise caution when turning onto and off of the highway.

**Trails**



**Inscription Trail**

A must-see! If you only have an hour or less, you will definitely want to take the trail to the pool and past hundreds of Spanish and Anglo inscriptions, as well as pre-historic petroglyphs. These inscriptions are the reason El Morro was proclaimed a National Monument in 1906. This ½-mile loop trail is paved and wheelchair accessible *with assistance*.

**Mesa Top Trail**

If you have at least 1 ½ hours and lots of energy, you can also hike to the top of the mesa. There, you will be rewarded with spectacular views of the Zuni Mountains, the volcanoes of the El Malpais area, and the El Morro valley. The Mesa Top Trail is a 2-mile loop which includes Inscription Trail. El Morro's 7,200' elevation, a 200' climb, and the uneven sandstone surface make this a slightly

strenuous hike. *Know your limits!* Sturdy walking shoes and water, particularly in the hot summer months, are necessary. *Portions or all of the Mesa Top Trail are closed for much of the winter* and can close during any season due to severe weather conditions.

**Atsinna**

Another reward for hiking the Mesa Top Trail is the Ancestral Puebloan ruin, Atsinna, or "place of writings on rock". From about 1275 to 1400 AD, up to 1500 people lived in this 875 room pueblo. Atsinna was partially excavated in the 1950s, and archeologists continue to work toward its stabilization.

**Pets**

At El Morro, you may take your pet with you on the trails. *Pets must be on leashes and under control at all times.*

**Area Information**

**Camping**

In addition to the campground at El Morro, the Ancient Way Cafe and Outpost has tent spaces, RV spaces with hook-ups and showers. Tinaja Restaurant (5 miles east) has RV spaces: 505-783-4349. Primitive camping is permitted in Cibola National Forest.

**Restaurants, Gasoline, and Groceries**

Food and gasoline are not available at El Morro. There are restaurants and gas stations within a few miles, as well as in Ramah, Zuni, Gallup, and Grants.

**Accommodations**

- Ancient Way Cafe and Outpost (one mile east of the monument): 505-783-4612, [www.elmorro-nm.com](http://www.elmorro-nm.com).
- Cimarron Rose (12 miles east): 800-856-5776, [www.cimarronrose.com](http://www.cimarronrose.com).
- Inn at Halona (Zuni): 505-782-4118.
- Area Chambers of Commerce—Grants: 800-748-2142, [www.grants.org](http://www.grants.org); Gallup: 505-722-2228, [www.gallupnm.org](http://www.gallupnm.org).

**Reading Ahead**



Want to do a little research before your trip? You can order books by phone or online from Western National Parks Association. WNPA, a nonprofit organization, aids the educational and scientific activities of the National Parks. WNPA suggests:

*El Morro National Monument* by Dan Murphy: 16 pgs, full color, \$4.95. *El Morro: Inscription Rock, New Mexico* by John Slater—the most comprehensive guide to the inscriptions and history of El Morro:

158 pgs, \$12.95. *The Guide to National Parks of the Southwest* by Nicky Leach: 80 pgs, full color, \$9.95. *Those Who Came Before: Southwestern Archeology in the National Park Service* by Robert and Florence Lister: 232 pgs, full color, \$16.95.

For phone orders, call 505-783-4226, Friday-Tuesday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (MST). Or, visit [www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org) to place your order in their secure online bookstore and to browse for other books.

**Contact Us**

For more information, call 505-783-4226, or write to us at El Morro National Monument, HC 61 Box 43, Ramah, NM 87321-9603. Visit our website at [www.nps.gov/elmo](http://www.nps.gov/elmo).

