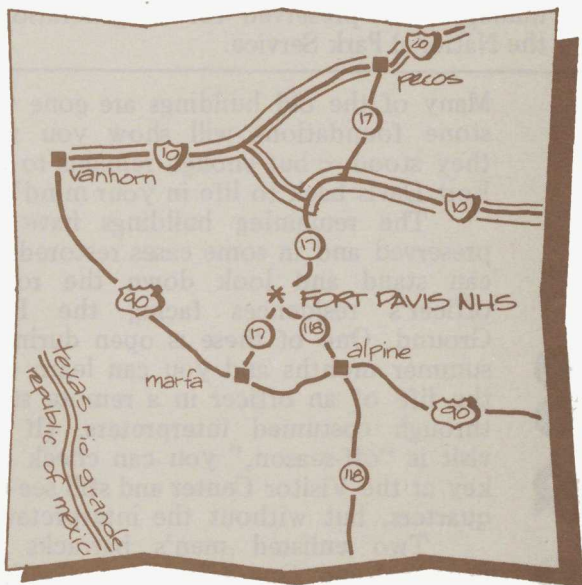


your SUPER 77 visit planner for

# Fort Davis National Historic Site



have a SUPER visit

**Safely  
Use  
Preserve  
Enjoy  
this Resource**



After the 1849 discovery of gold in California, overland routes westward became important. In West Texas the San Antonio-El Paso road passed through the heart of Apache and Comanche raiding country. For protection, the Army built Fort Davis at the mouth of a pleasant box canyon near Limpia Creek in the scenic Davis Mountains.

Fort Davis was active from 1854 to 1891, performing scouting duties, escorting the mail, providing protection for stagecoaches and wagon trains and to the surveyors and construction crews building the Texas and Pacific and the Southern Pacific Railroads. When it was abandoned it consisted of more than 50 adobe or stone buildings.

In 1961 it was determined that the ruins of Fort Davis was the best preserved of all the old forts of the Indian Wars of the Southwest and was made a National Historic Site, to be managed and preserved for all generations by the National Park Service.

Many of the old buildings are gone — the stone foundations will show you where they stood — but enough remains to bring Fort Davis back to life in your mind's eye.

The remaining buildings have been preserved and in some cases restored. You can stand and look down the row of officer's residences facing the Parade Ground. One of these is open during the summer months and you can learn about the life of an officer in a remote station through costumed interpreters. (If your visit is "off-season," you can check out a key at the Visitor Center and still see these quarters, but without the interpretation.)

Two enlisted men's barracks have been restored. One now serves as a Visitor Center. It's the building nearest the parking area, across the small wooden bridge. You should begin your visit here. Thru displays of photographs and a diorama, you'll learn the history of old Fort Davis. And you can examine what is considered to be one of the finest collections of frontier military artifacts anywhere. National Park Service interpreters are on duty to answer your questions.

If you visit, during the summer months, in addition to the living history interpretation of the Officer's Quarters, there are similar interpretations of an Officer's Kitchen and Servant's Quarters and the old Commissary. Off-season you can see but not enter these buildings.

But at any time you visit, the highlight will probably be the haunting sounds of an 1875 Dress Retreat Parade. It will come when you least expect it, interrupting the silence of your own thoughts. You'll hear the noise and the music and, in your mind, old Fort Davis will come alive. You will relive one of the most colorful and dramatic periods in our 200-year history.

If you have lots of time you might enjoy one of the several self-guiding trails located on the grounds of the Fort. Diagonally across the Parade Ground from the Visitor Center is the start of the Tall Grass Nature Trail, and just beside it, the Cemetery Trail. From the Nature Trail the North Ridge Trail leads you to the trail system of Davis Mountains State Park.

The Overland Trail Museum in the town of Fort Davis, only 2 blocks south of the Historic Site, operated by the Fort Davis Historical Society. It contains a fine collection of pioneer and early ranching artifacts. Admission (\$1 per carload or 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children). Open 10 a.m. to noon; 2 to 5 p.m., Thursdays thru Sundays during the summer months.

If your time permits, drive the 74-mile Scenic Loop around and thru some of the most spectacular parts of the Davis Mountains. From Fort Davis, the Loop follows State Route 118 north for 29 miles. Turn left on State Route 166 and continue to State Route 17. Turn left again, which brings you back to your starting place at Fort Davis. Along this route you'll see the *Davis Mountains State Park*, *Harvard University's Radio and Astronomy Observatory*, the *Univ-*

*ersity of Texas' McDonald Observatory*, *Madera Canyon Roadside Park*, *Mount Livermore*, *Blue Mountain and Rockpile Roadside Park*.

The McDonald Observatory atop the summit of Mount Lockhouses, the third largest telescope in America. It is open daily for your enjoyment.

Fort Davis National Historic Site is located in southwest Texas less than 40 miles south of east-west Interstate 10. State Routes 17 and 118 intersect with I-10 and lead directly to Fort Davis. The Historic Site is on the north edge of the town, on a short section where the two State Routes come together.

Motel accommodations are available in the town of Fort Davis, adjoining the Historic Site, and in the towns of Alpine, 25 miles southeast on State Route 118, and Marfa, 21 miles southwest on State Route 17.

The Indian Lodge, a pueblo-style lodge and restaurant, is operated in Davis Mountains State Park, adjacent to the Historic Site.

Campsites are available in Davis Mountains State Park (81 tent sites and 27 trailer sites with hook-ups) and at Balmorhea State Park, 32 miles north on State Route 17.

No refreshments are available at the Historic Site but, for your convenience, we offer the Corral Grove Picnic Area. It's on your left as you enter the Fort.

Food service is conveniently located in the town of Fort Davis, less than a quarter of a mile away.

An elevation of 4,900 feet and relatively low humidity gives Fort Davis a delightful year-round climate. The average annual temperature is 63 degrees.

Summer temperatures run from overnight lows in the 60's to daytime highs in the high 80's.

Winter nights can be quite cold but by afternoon the temperatures are often

see % do  
near by  
weather  
food  
overnight  
directions



in the 50's and 60's. Snow is infrequent and usually scant.

Light to moderate winds may prevail during the spring and fall.

Avoiding heavy visitation is not a reason for off-season visits to Fort Davis. In off-seasons visits, you'll miss the living history demonstrations but spring and fall in the Davis Mountains help make the visit worthwhile.

*Stay on Established Trails.* Falls are a major cause of serious injury or death in the National Parks. Most are caused by not staying on the trails. Do not take shortcuts or climb cliffs.

*Do Not Climb on Walls of Ruins or In Old Trees.* Walls can collapse and limbs can give way. Climbing on the ruins seriously damages them.

*Please Watch Your Children.* Keep them with you; don't let your vacation end in tragedy. It only takes a moment for a child to be injured. . . help us make your visit a memorable experience and not a tragic memory.

*Do Not Eat Fruits or Berries.* Several plants in the area have fruits that are colorful and attractive to small children. Some are very poisonous.

*Be Careful Around Horses.* The horses used at Fort Davis weigh about 1,200 pounds. They are gentle — but can be startled by unexpected movements. Avoid being stepped on — don't approach unattended animals.

*Avoid Dangerous Animals.* There are four kinds of poisonous snakes and two kinds of dangerous spiders in the rocks around the Fort. Remember that mammals (furred animals) can carry rabies or plague. Do not touch them.

*Weapons and Tools Are Dangerous.* The knives, guns, wood stoves and other equipment used in our living history demonstrations can be dangerous. Do not touch or handle them without permission.

*Do Not Over-Exert.* You will be at an elevation of almost 5,000 feet. The

altitude, often combined with high temperatures, can add to the danger of heat exhaustion, heat stroke or heart problems. Take your time and see more!

### PARKS AND FORESTS

When you are enjoying yourself, what difference does it make if you are in a National Park or a National Forest? Both offer outstanding recreational opportunities and special facilities and services to enhance your visit.

Differences are in concept — which determines the way they are managed. National Forests are managed as renewable natural resources — timber, forage, water, wildlife. National Parks are set aside to be preserved, as they are, in perpetuity.

National Forests are managed for your benefit by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The National Park Service is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Included in the National Park System are great natural areas, as Parks, Monuments, Seashores, Lakeshores, Rivers and Riverways. The System also includes prehistoric and historic areas, as Monuments, Memorials, Memorial Parks, Historic Sites, Historical Parks, Battlefields and Battlefield Sites. "National" is generally part of their title.

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

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