

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR VISITORS TO MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

To get the most out of your visit to MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK, go first to the Far View Visitor Center (open only in the summer from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm daily) or to the Chapin Mesa Museum (open from 8:00 am to 6:30 pm in the summer; and 8:00 am to 5:00 pm the remainder of the year).

The park entrance is mid-way between Cortez, Colorado and Mancos, Colorado on US Highway 160. It is 21 miles (34 km) from the park entrance to the museum and Chapin Mesa ruins area. Depending upon the traffic and weather conditions, allow at least 45 minutes driving time. The narrow mountainous road has sharp curves and steep grades. The average park speed limit is 35 mph (55 km). The Far View Visitor Center is 15 miles (25 km) from the park entrance. The elevation of the park ranges from 6,954 feet to 8,572 feet above sea level.

BACKPACKING AND HIKING: There is no backpacking or cross-country hiking in the park. Hiking is allowed ONLY in developed areas on the five day-use trails.

Chapin Mesa area - Petroglyph Point (2.8 miles) HIKERS ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER AT THE CHIEF PARK RANGER'S OFFICE FOR THESE TWO TRAILS.
Spruce Canyon (2.1 miles)

Morefield Campground - Prater Ridge (7.8 miles)
Knife Edge (1.5 miles)
Point Lookout (2.3 miles)

All trails are closed during winter months. THERE IS NO OVERNIGHT BACKCOUNTRY USE. Maximum group size is ten.

CAMPING: Morefield Campground is open from approximately May 1 to mid-October for tents, trailers and motorhomes, and is located four miles south of the park entrance. Camping is on a first-come, first-served basis - NO RESERVATIONS ARE TAKEN. Campground rarely fills to capacity (477 individual sites); however, we suggest you arrive early in the afternoon for the best site selection. Peak season is July and August. Most campsites will accommodate trailers. Each campsite has a picnic table and fireplace with grill. The campground has modern comfort stations and trailer dumping stations. Utility hook-ups are not available. Concessioner provides gas station and refreshment center approximately Memorial Day through Labor Day; store and gift shop are open mid-May through September; laundry and showers are open May 1 to mid-October. Firewood gathering is not permitted, but charcoal and firewood are available at the store. Camping is limited to 14 days. Fee is \$5.00 daily per site (\$2.50 with Golden Age Passport or Golden Access Passport).

GROUP CAMPING: 17 sites at Morefield Campground. Open approximately mid-May through September 30. RESERVATIONS CANNOT BE MADE. Fees are \$1.00 per person daily (\$10 minimum). Each group site will accommodate up to 25 persons.

ENTRANCE FEES: \$2.00 per vehicle; 50¢ for bus passengers. Golden Age Passports, Golden Access Passports, and Golden Eagle Passports are accepted and available.

LODGING: Motel accommodations are available at Far View Motor Lodge from mid-May to mid-October. Contact ARA Mesa Verde Company for rates and reservations:

ARA Mesa Verde Company
PO Box 277
Mancos, Colorado 81328
303-529-4421 (summer)
303-533-7731 (winter)

NATURE AND HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Mesa Verde Museum Association, Inc. 303-529-4445
PO Box 38
Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado 81330

Sales Outlets: Chapin Mesa Museum - open all year
Far View Visitor Center - open in summer only

PETS: Pets must be on leash or under physical control at all times. Pets are not allowed on trails, in ruins or in buildings. No kennels available.

PICNIC FACILITIES: A picnic area is located in the museum area on Chapin Mesa and is open year-round. Picnic sites with restrooms are on each loop of the Ruins Road. The picnic area at Morefield Campground is open approximately May 1 to mid-October. The picnic area on Wetherill Mesa is open mid-June through Labor Day.

SPECIAL REGULATIONS: Cliff dwellings may be entered only when accompanied by a ranger.

TOURS: National Park Service (for specific questions on tours, call the Museum at 303-529-4475)

Chapin Mesa

Spruce Tree House: Self-guided tours in the summer, approximately May 1 through September 30. In the winter, tours are conducted (weather and trail conditions permitting) three times daily. THIS IS THE ONLY GUIDED TOUR AVAILABLE IN THE WINTER.

Cliff Palace: Self-guided tours in the summer. Some ranger-guided tours in late spring and early fall, weather and trail conditions permitting. This is the largest cliff dwelling in the Southwest.

Balcony House: This tour requires climbing a 30-foot ladder, and crawling through an ancient crawlspace. Tours offered in summer only, approximately Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Ruins Road: Two 6-mile self-guiding loops are open from 8:00 a.m. to sunset. Many cliff dwellings can be viewed from canyon rim viewpoints. On the west loop, there are exhibits at five archaeological sites. Road closed from approximately mid-November to mid-April.

Far View Ruins: Booklet available from museum and visitor center for self-guided tour of mesa-top pueblos. Open 8:00 a.m. to sunset, mid-April to mid-November.

Wetherill Mesa

Twelve mile bus ride offers excellent views of surrounding area. The ruin sites are reached by mini-train and trail only. There is a ranger guided tour of Long House and a self-guided tour of Step House. Tours are offered in summer only, approximately mid-June through Labor Day.

WEATHER: Winter -- Daytime 40's and nighttime teens (NOTE: All temperatures are in Fahrenheit.)
Spring -- Daytime 50-70's and nighttime 30-50's
Summer -- Daytime 80's and nighttime 50's
Fall ---- Daytime 50-60's and nighttime 20-30's

FOR INFORMATION ON SURROUNDING AREA, CONTACT:

San Juan National Forest
701 Camino del Rio
Durango, CO 81301
(303) 247-4874

Cortez Chamber of Commerce
Box 968
Cortez, CO 81321
(303) 565-3414

Durango Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 2587
2301 Main Ave.
Durango, CO 81301
(303) 247-0312

Bureau of Land Management
701 Camino del Rio
Durango, CO 81301
(303) 247-4082

TRAIL INFORMATION

HIKING

In Mesa Verde N.P. Is RESTRICTED

Regulations governing the use of Mesa Verde National Park permit hiking only around developed areas and on the following trails listed below. Visitors found hiking away from developed areas or designated trails, or entering cliff dwellings when not accompanied by a uniformed National Park Service employee are subject to penalties* provided for in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (*maximum fine of \$500 and 6 months imprisonment). These regulations are necessary to protect the fragile and irreplaceable ruins and artifacts for which Mesa Verde National Park was established. Hikers are advised to carry water with them on any trail during the summer months as water along the trails is undrinkable. Please stay away from cliff edges. Undercut overhangs can be dangerous.

- A. Trails in the Park Headquarters Area:** Hikers are required to register at the Chief Ranger's Office before attempting these trails. Trail ends at the parking area near museum.
- 1. Petroglyph Point Trail:** 2.8 miles, begins from the Spruce Tree House Trail. The trail follows below the edge of the plateau to the South, then makes a short climb to the rim of the plateau and returns via the rim. Good views of Spruce and Navajo Canyon and a few petroglyphs. Trail ends at the parking area near museum.
 - 2. Spruce Canyon Trail:** 2.1 miles, begins from the Spruce Tree House Trail and follows the bottom of Spruce Tree Canyon; turns up Spruce Canyon and then terminates at the picnic area. This trail provides an opportunity to experience the canyon bottoms.
- B. Trails in the Morefield Area:** (No permit required).
- 1. Prater Ridge Trail:** 7.8 miles, begins and terminates on the west side of the Morefield Campground. This trail ascends the east side of Prater Ridge and follows a loop around the top of the ridge and returns via the same ascent. Changes in elevation and vegetation types - views of surrounding country.
 - 2. Knife Edge Trail:** 1.5 miles, trail follows old road alignment from Northwest corner of Morefield Campground to the Montezuma Valley Overlook, provides good views of Montezuma Valley and is a good place to watch sunsets from.
 - 3. Point Lookout Trail:** 2.3 miles, trail switchbacks up the back side of Point Lookout and follows along the mesa. The trail provides excellent views of both Montezuma and Mancos Valleys as well as the surrounding countryside.