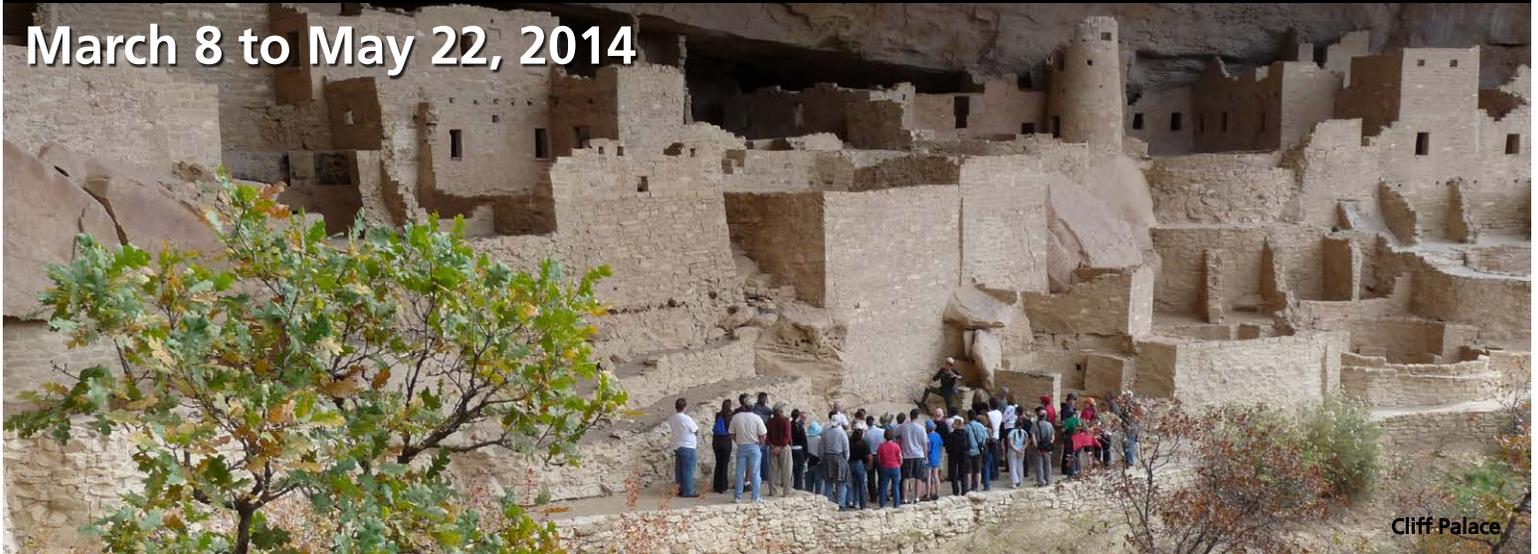


# Visitor Activities

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Mesa Verde National Park



## March 8 to May 22, 2014



Cliff Palace

Welcome to Mesa Verde National Park. Mesa Verde offers a spectacular look into the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo people who made it their home for over 700 years, from A.D. 550 to 1300. Today the park protects nearly 5,000 known archeological sites, including 600 cliff dwellings. These sites are some of the most notable and best preserved in the United States. From the many sites located here and in the surrounding Four Corners area, archeologists have compiled one of the most significant chapters in the story of prehistoric America.

### Visiting the Park

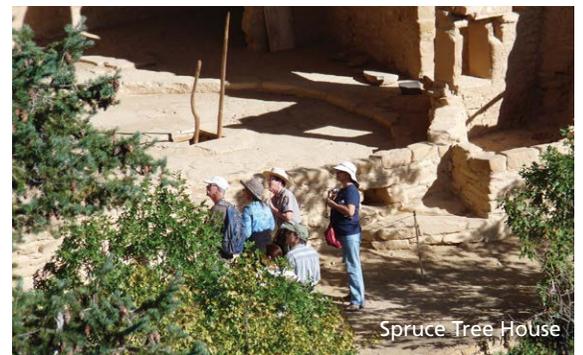
Spring is a magical time to visit. There are multiple activities available to help you experience this mysterious place. **All activities depend on road and weather conditions.** Please check with a ranger before beginning any of the listed activities. Guide booklets are available at the Visitor Center, Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, and at sites along the Mesa Top Loop Road. Stop either at the [Visitor Center](#) or [Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum](#) to plan your visit.

### Spruce Tree House

[Spruce Tree House](#) is the park's best-preserved cliff dwelling. Located near the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, the 1/2-mile (1 km) winding, paved trail includes a steep 100-foot (30 m) descent and ascent. The trail is moderately strenuous and may be icy.

The site is open daily for self-guided visits. A ranger is available to answer your questions.

March 8 to April 10 - 9:00 am to 5:00 pm  
April 11 to May 22 - 8:30 am to 6:30 pm



Spruce Tree House

### Cliff Palace

[Cliff Palace](#) is the park's largest cliff dwelling. Ranger-guided tours are one hour in length, with a walking distance of 1/4-mile (400 m). You will climb four, 8- to 10-foot (2.6-3 m) ladders, for a 100-foot (30 m) overall vertical ascent.

**Tickets are required.** Tickets must be purchased at the Visitor Center located at the park entrance.

#### Daily tour schedule:

**April 11 to April 19**  
every hour from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**April 20 to May 3**  
every hour from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

**May 4 to May 22**  
every half hour from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Meet the park ranger at the Cliff Palace Overlook, a 23-mile (37 km), 1-hour drive from the Visitor Center.

### Balcony House

[Balcony House](#) is the most adventurous cliff dwelling tour. This one-hour tour involves climbing a 32-foot (10 m) ladder to enter the site. You will also crawl through a 12-foot (3.6 m) long by 18-inch (4 m x 46 cm) wide tunnel, and climb 60 feet (20 m) up an exposed cliff face, using two 10- to 12 foot (3 m) ladders, and a series of stone steps.

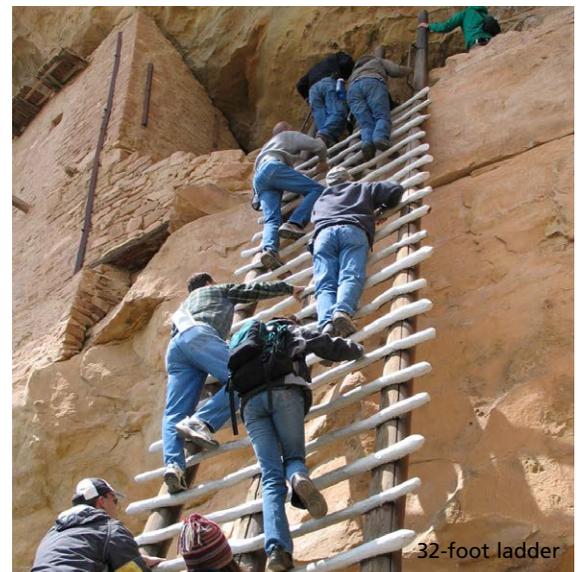
**Tickets are required.** Tickets must be purchased at the Visitor Center located at the park entrance.

**April 20 to May 3**

Tour times: 9:30 am, 12:00 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:30 pm

**May 4 to May 22**

Tours are scheduled every hour from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Tours begin at the north end of the Balcony House parking lot, a 25-mile (40 km), 1-hour drive from the Visitor Center.



32-foot ladder

## Explorer On Your Own

The [Visitor Center](#) and [Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum](#) will both help you gain insights into the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo people.

The visitor center is located just off U.S. Highway 160 near the park entrance. The museum is located 22 miles (35 km) from the Visitor Center, on Chapin Mesa. At the museum a 25-minute video is shown every half hour. See Visitor Services below for visitor center, museum, and store hours.

[Petroglyph Point Trail](#) begins near the museum. The 2.4-mile (3.9 km) trail leads to a large petroglyph panel. If the trail is dry it can be hiked as a loop. However, due to ice and snow, you may be directed to hike via the mesa top section of the trail, or the entire trail may be closed. Check with a ranger at the museum for trail conditions and to register for the hike.

[Cliff Palace Loop Road](#) is open to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, walking if there is no snow. No vehicles are permitted. To explore this 6-mile (10 km) road, park just outside the locked gate, but do not block the gate. Highlights include Cliff Palace and Soda Canyon overlooks (view of Balcony House).

In early April, the gate will be unlocked from 8:00 am to sunset for vehicular traffic.

[Mesa Top Loop Road](#) is a 6-mile (10 km) drive with short paved trails to view twelve easily-accessible archeological sites, including surface sites and cliff dwelling overlooks. Highlights include views of Square Tower House and Cliff Palace from Sun Point and Sun Temple overlooks. Open daily 8:00 am to sunset, weather permitting.

[Far View Sites Complex](#) includes Far View House, four other villages, and a dry reservoir. Four miles (6.4 km) north of the museum, this 3/4-mile (1.2 km) trail is not plowed. Park just outside the gate without blocking access. The area is open from 8:00 am to sunset.



Far View Sites

[Hiking Trails](#) are scattered throughout the park. The most popular are the Petroglyph Point and Spruce Canyon Trails near the museum. For details and trail conditions ask a ranger.

## Visitor Services

### National Park Service

970-529-4465, [www.nps.gov/meve](http://www.nps.gov/meve)

### Mesa Verde Museum Association, Park Partner

970-529-4445, [www.mesaverde.org](http://www.mesaverde.org)

### Information

Visitor Center, Store, and ATM

March 8 to April 10- 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

April 11 to May 22- 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum and Store

March 8 to April 10- 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

April 11 to May 22- 8:00 am to 6:30 pm

Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez

March 8 to March 9- 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

March 10 to May 22- 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

### Picnic Area (not plowed in winter)

Chapin Mesa Picnic Area- 8:00 am to sunset

Cliff Palace Picnic Area- 8:00 am to sunset

### U.S. Postal Service

March 8 to March 31

Monday to Friday- 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

April 1 to May 22

Monday to Friday- 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Saturday - 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

### ARAMARK, Park Partner

800-449-2288, [www.visitmesaverde.com](http://www.visitmesaverde.com)

Spruce Tree Terrace, Café, and Gift Shop

March 8 to March 13 - 11:00 am to 3:30 pm

March 14 to April 16 - 11:00 am to 4:30 pm

April 17 to May 28 - 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Far View Terrace, Café, and Gift Shop

Opens May 5- 7:00 am to 8:00 pm

Breakfast- 7:00 am to 10:00 am

Lunch- 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

Dinner- 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Far View Lodge, Gift Shop, and Restaurant

Lodge and Gift Shop open April 17

Breakfast- April 18 to May 4 - 7:00 am to 10:00 am

Dinner- April 17 - 5:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Morefield Campground and Camp Store

Off-Season Limited Camping - April 14 to May 1

Full campground services and Store opens May 2

**ARAMARK Bus Tours** begin April 18 and depart from Far View Lodge. Beginning May 4 you can be a pick up at Far View Terrace. Tours include short walks to archeological sites on the Mesa Top Loop Road, and a ranger-guided hiking tour of Cliff Palace.

**700 Years Tour:** 4-hour morning or afternoon tour

Tickets can be purchased from ARAMARK at the Visitor Center, Far View Lodge, Far View Terrace, and Morefield Store.

## Know the Rules of the Park

We want you to have a safe and enjoyable visit.

Follow park rules, not only to protect yourself but also to preserve Mesa Verde's archeological sites and natural environment.

- Archeological structures are fragile. Take care not to touch, sit, stand, climb, or lean on walls.
- Pets can be walked along paved roads and in parking lots. Pets are not allowed on trails, in archeological sites, or in buildings. Do not leave pets unattended.
- Help us keep wildlife wild. It is illegal to feed, stalk, capture, or tease wildlife.



Chipmunk

## For Your Safety

In case of emergency, call 911

### Park Road Advisory

- Watch for snowplows working on the road
- Follow all traffic signs
- Beware of rocks in the road
- Gasoline is not available in the park

### High Elevation

- Mesa Verde ranges from 7,000 feet (2,134 m) elevation to 8,572 feet (2,613 m) at Park Point. The air is thin and very dry.
- Consider your physical health BEFORE hiking or going on tours.
- Carry and DRINK plenty of water.