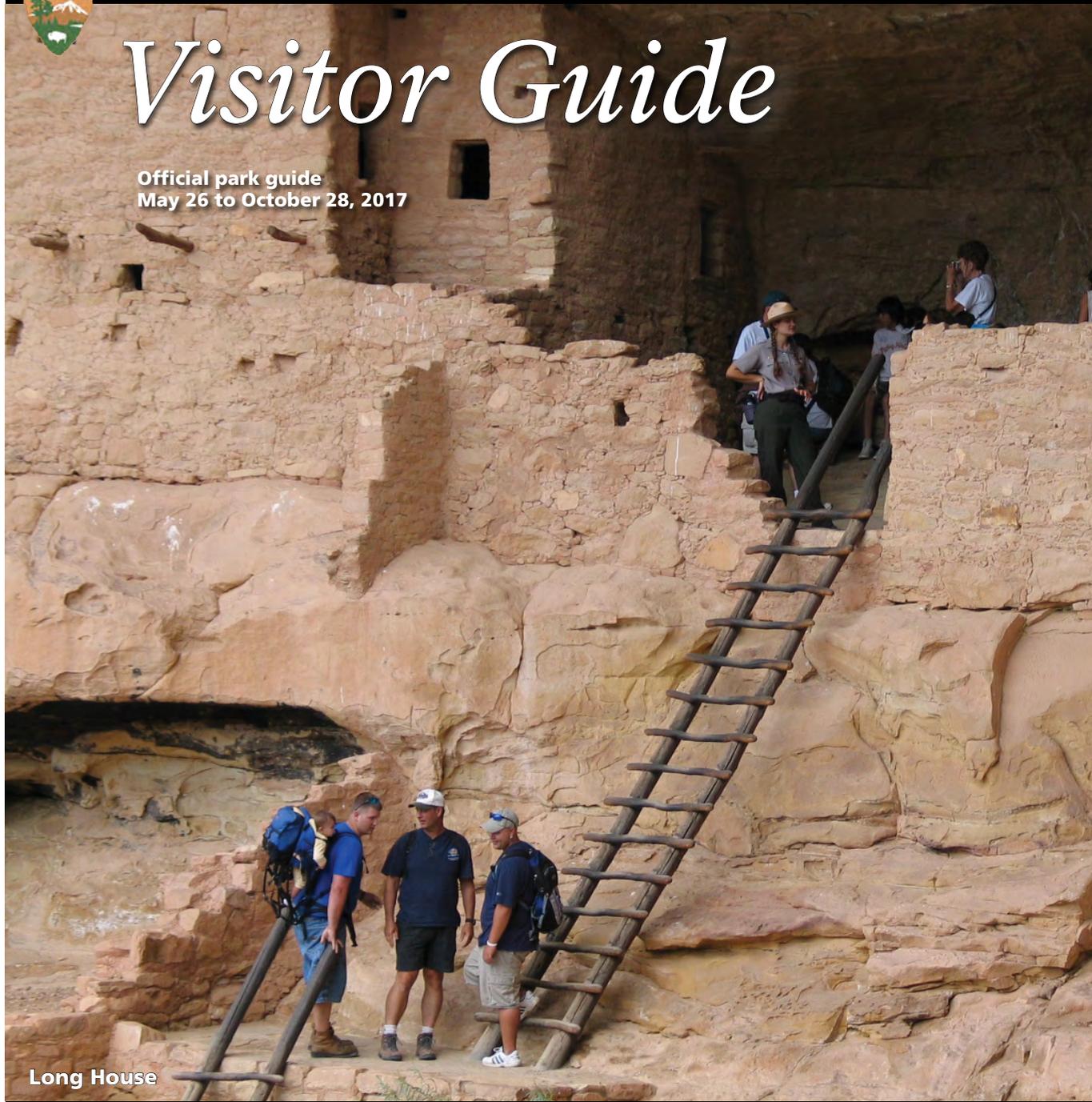




Visitor Guide

Official park guide
May 26 to October 28, 2017



Long House



Purchase a Tour Ticket

what to purchase in the park... **page 12**
what to purchase online... **page 5**



Take a Hike...

page 6



Ideas for Your Visit...

page 3

Visitor Services and Facilities

	May 26 to September 4	September 5 to 16	September 17 to 30	October 1 to 22	October 23 to 28
Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center	7:30 am to 7:00 pm	8:00 am to 5:00 pm			
Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum	8:00 am to 6:30 pm	8:00 am to 6:30 pm	8:00 am to 6:30 pm	8:00 am to 5:00 pm	8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Chief Ranger's Office (First Aid)	8:00 am to 5:00 pm				
Morefield Campground Ranger Station	5:00 pm to 8:30 pm (Opens May 28)	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk	9:00 am to 6:30 pm	9:00 am to 6:30 pm	9:00 am to 4:30 pm	9:00 am to 4:30 pm	Not Staffed
Picnic Areas	8:00 am to sunset				
Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez	8:00 am to 6:00 pm	8:00 am to 5:00 pm			
U.S. Post Office (Chapin Mesa) Monday through Friday Saturday	8:30 am to 3:00 pm 10:00 am to 2:00 pm	8:30 am to 3:00 pm 10:00 am to 2:00 pm	8:30 am to 3:00 pm 10:00 am to 2:00 pm	8:30 am to 3:00 pm 10:00 am to 2:00 pm	8:30 am to 3:00 pm 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Protect the Park, Protect Yourself

This partial list of regulations and laws is designed to help you have a safe and enjoyable visit, and to protect Mesa Verde's ecosystems and fragile archeological sites.

For more information, questions, or additional regulations, please ask a park employee.

How you can protect park resources

Natural and cultural resources at Mesa Verde National Park are protected by federal law. It is illegal to collect artifacts, plants, animals, or natural objects. By leaving them undisturbed, all generations may enjoy and learn from them.

Chasing, capturing, feeding, or teasing wildlife is illegal and dangerous. Keep your food, cooking equipment, and garbage in your vehicle or hard-sided trailer, especially in the campground.

Fire is an important part of Mesa Verde's story. Most fires here were started naturally by lightning. Help us prevent human-caused fires by being very careful with matches, cigarettes, and campfires. Fireworks are prohibited.

Archeological sites are fragile. Please do not sit, stand, climb, or lean on these ancient fragile structures.



Mule deer - enjoy from a distance

Rockfall alert

The park road is built on unstable soils. As a result, rocks and boulders can break loose and fall on the road, posing a hazard to you and your car. If you see boulders blocking the road, do not attempt to move them. Call 970-529-4461 or contact a park employee.

Park Entrance Fees

The park entry fee is \$20.00 per private car, \$15.00 per motorcycle, or \$10.00 per person on a bicycle or on foot. For commercial vehicle fees, call 970-529-4465 or visit www.nps.gov/meve. Federal Interagency annual access, military, senior, and 4th grade passes are available at the park entrance gate. For details, visit <http://go.nps.gov/mvfee>.

Share the road

Park roads are steep, narrow, and winding. There are several overlooks and pullouts available for slower traffic to use so others may pass. Watch for wildlife, pay close attention to your speed around curves, and obey all traffic signs. Do not stop on the roadway. Trailers and towed vehicles are not allowed beyond Morefield Campground. Extra parking is available near the park entrance.

Bicyclists, use caution! The road is steep with few shoulders. Ride single file and stay as far to the right as possible. Bicyclists, like vehicle drivers, must comply with traffic regulations. Although the Wetherill Mesa Road is closed to bicycles, you may transport your bikes and ride its designated trails. In all other areas of the park, bicycles are only allowed on paved roads. Bicycle group size is limited to six on all roads.



Sharing the trails on Wetherill Mesa

Visit a cliff dwelling safely

At 7,000 feet (2135 m) elevation, you may feel short of breath, nauseated, or tire easily. Plan ahead and know your own limits.

Trails into cliff dwellings are uneven and steep, with steps and ladders, cliff edges, tight passages, and strenuous elevation changes. Visiting cliff dwellings is not recommended for anyone with heart or respiratory problems or other physical limitations. You can view many cliff dwellings from roadway overlooks.

Water is vital

Dehydration is a common problem in Mesa Verde. Carry water with you everywhere, and drink it. You can fill reusable water bottles at park facilities, including Cliff Palace and Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk. Food and other beverages are not allowed in archeological sites.

Limited cell phone coverage

Once you drive through the park entrance, cell phone service is limited. A courtesy phone is available near the Morefield Campground Store. Wi-Fi service is available at Morefield Campground, Far View Lodge, Far View Terrace, and Spruce Tree Terrace. In case of emergency, contact a park employee or call 911.

Do you need gas?

Gas is available at Morefield Campground only. You will probably drive at least 50 miles while in the park. Please plan accordingly.

Camping

Morefield Campground is located four miles from the park entrance. It has over 250 camp sites and 15 full hook-up RV sites. There are restrooms with flush toilets, showers, a camp store, coin-operated laundry, gasoline, and an RV dumping station. Camping is not allowed elsewhere in the park. Other campgrounds are located in Cortez and Mancos, Colorado.

Pets need to be protected too

For your pet's sake, do not leave them in your vehicle without proper ventilation and water, and only when temperatures are not hazardous to their health. Leaving pets alone tied to any object is illegal.

Leashed pets may accompany you on paved roads and parking lots, and in the campground. Pets are not allowed on most trails or in buildings, even if leashed. There are some pet-friendly trails on Wetherill Mesa and the Mesa Top Loop. Please, clean up after your pooch. Service animals are always welcome, but therapy animals are subject to pet restrictions.

Other Laws & Policies

Firearms

Possession of firearms must comply with federal and state laws. Hunting and recreational use of firearms is prohibited in Mesa Verde.

Marijuana on Federal Lands

As federal property, federal laws apply in Mesa Verde. Possession or use of any amount of marijuana is prohibited anywhere in the park.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

The use of drones is illegal within the park. Because they impact other visitors' experiences, interfere with emergency operations, and negatively affect wildlife, they should not be used in the park for any reason.

For more information, visit go.nps.gov/mvpolicies.

Make the Most of Your Visit

Top Five Mesa Verde Activities

Take a glimpse into an ancient culture

The Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center and Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum offer glimpses into the culture of Ancestral Pueblo people. In the Museum, look for a knife with a quartzite blade; can you imagine a hunter skinning a deer using that knife? For facility hours, see page [1](#).

Visit a cliff dwelling community

Four cliff dwellings are open to the public. Balcony House, Cliff Palace, and Long House can be entered on ranger-guided tours only. Step House, on Wetherill Mesa, can be explored on your own. Pick up a Wetherill Mesa Visitor Guide for details. Whatever your schedule or interests, details for how to visit a cliff dwelling are on pages [5](#) and [12](#).

Explore from your car

The Mesa Top Loop Road, on Chapin Mesa, is a six-mile drive that offers amazing canyon views and opportunities to learn about the Ancestral Pueblo people's occupation and architecture through time. To help plan your drive, see page [6](#).

Go for a walk, hike, or bike ride

Wander Prater Ridge Trail, try to decipher the art on the Petroglyph Trail, discover the lushness of Spruce Canyon, or ride your bikes on Wetherill Mesa. Whatever you decide, taking a walk, [hike](#), or bike ride will give you a chance to see some of the park's hidden gems. See page [6](#) for information on the trails.

Attend an evening program

Looking for something later in the evening? Join the popular Twilight Tour of Cliff Palace. Purchase tickets online at www.recreation.gov or go to page [5](#) for details. The free Morefield Campground Evening Program offers a variety of topics on both natural and cultural history. See page [4](#) for times.

Planning Your Visit

Whether you have a few hours or a few days, we invite you to enjoy the spectacular scenery and share a rare glimpse into the ancient culture that shaped this region for over 750 years. Here are a few suggestions for making the most of your time in the park.

If you have a half-day:

First, stop by the [Visitor Center](#) at the park entrance where park staff will help plan your visit. While there, enjoy the exhibits and browse through the store for a selection of books and trail guides.

Twenty-one miles (33.8 km) south of the Visitor Center is the [Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum](#). Here, exhibits and dioramas trace the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo people. A museum store and a 25-minute park video (shown every half-hour) are also available.

View [Spruce Tree House](#), the park's third largest and best-preserved cliff dwelling, from overlooks located adjacent to the Museum. Information booklets are available. Rangers are at overlooks to answer your questions.

Or, take a scenic drive on the [Mesa Top Loop Road](#). Stops along the six-mile (10 km), 45-minute drive, with easily accessible, short, paved walking trails, reveal the full range of architecture from early pithouses to the cliff dwellings. Highlights include views of Square Tower House and Cliff Palace.

If you have one full day:

You'll have time to do all half-day activities, plus join a one-hour, ranger-guided tour of either [Balcony House](#) or [Cliff Palace](#). Tickets are required. Tickets can be purchased at several locations. See page [12](#).

You can also visit [Far View Sites](#), four miles (6.4 km) north of the Museum. This self-guided walk includes Far View House and four other villages plus a dry reservoir, all linked by a level, ¾-mile (1.2 km) dirt path. See page [7](#).



Ancestral Puebloan knife



Green Towhee

If you have two full days:

Along with full-day activities, visit Wetherill Mesa. Hike or bicycle the [Badger House Community Trail](#), or the five-mile Long House Loop to overlooks of cliff dwellings. See page [7](#) or pick up a [Wetherill Mesa Visitor Guide](#).

While on Wetherill Mesa, enjoy a two-hour, 2.25 mile (3.6 km) ranger-guided hiking tour of [Long House](#). Tickets are required. Tickets can be purchased at several locations. See page [12](#).

Visit [Step House](#) to view two periods of architecture: early Basketmaker pithouses (AD 550 to 750) and a later cliff dwelling (AD 1150 to 1300). The one-mile (1.6 km) round-trip trail begins at the information kiosk and includes a 100-foot (30 m) descent and ascent on a winding path. Allow 45 to 60 minutes.

If you have more than two full days:

You'll have the opportunity to tour all ticketed cliff dwellings, drive all the park roads, and hike one or more of the park trails. See pages [6](#) and [12](#).

Park Ranger Programs- No Fee

Discover Mesa Verde with these free programs given by park rangers. Stop in at the Visitor Center and Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum for details. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Programs may be cancelled during inclement weather. For information on touring a cliff dwelling, see page [12](#).



Morefield Campground Evening Program

Enjoy a National Park Service evening tradition! Archeologist Jesse Fewkes began the first evening campfire talks in the history of the National Park Service at Mesa Verde National Park in 1907.

Today, that tradition continues. Join a ranger in the Morefield Campground Amphitheater to learn about Mesa Verde's fascinating natural and cultural history. Topics vary by night and can include Ancestral Pueblo history, plants and animals of the park, night skies, regional resources, and more.

There is no fee. Bring a flashlight.

May 27 to July 22	9:00 pm
July 23 to August 19	8:30 pm
August 20 to September 3	8:15 pm

Park Fun For Kids

Junior Ranger Program

Hey, kids! Become a Junior Ranger and have a fun time learning about Mesa Verde National Park. Becoming a Junior Ranger is a great way to explore your national parks and help take care of them for the future.

Activity Booklet

Children from age 4 to 12 can become a Junior Ranger. Just pick up a free activity booklet at the Visitor Center or Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, explore the park, and complete the activities. When done, take the booklet to any park information center for review.



A special Mesa Verde Junior Ranger badge is awarded for a job well done.

Junior Ranger Station

Visit the Mesa Verde Junior Ranger Station at the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum for some extra Junior Ranger fun. Learn more about the Ancestral Pueblo people with kid-friendly exhibits or hands-on activities. This is a great place to be sworn in as a Mesa Verde Junior Ranger and receive your badge.

Located Inside Museum Courtyard

June 15 to August 14
3:00 pm to 5:30 pm*
*Open longer when staffing allows

Discovering Morefield Campground

Camping is a wonderful time to discover the natural side of Mesa Verde. For a fun, family-oriented way to explore your natural surroundings, pick up a Junior Naturalist Activity Booklet and check out a Discovery Pack.

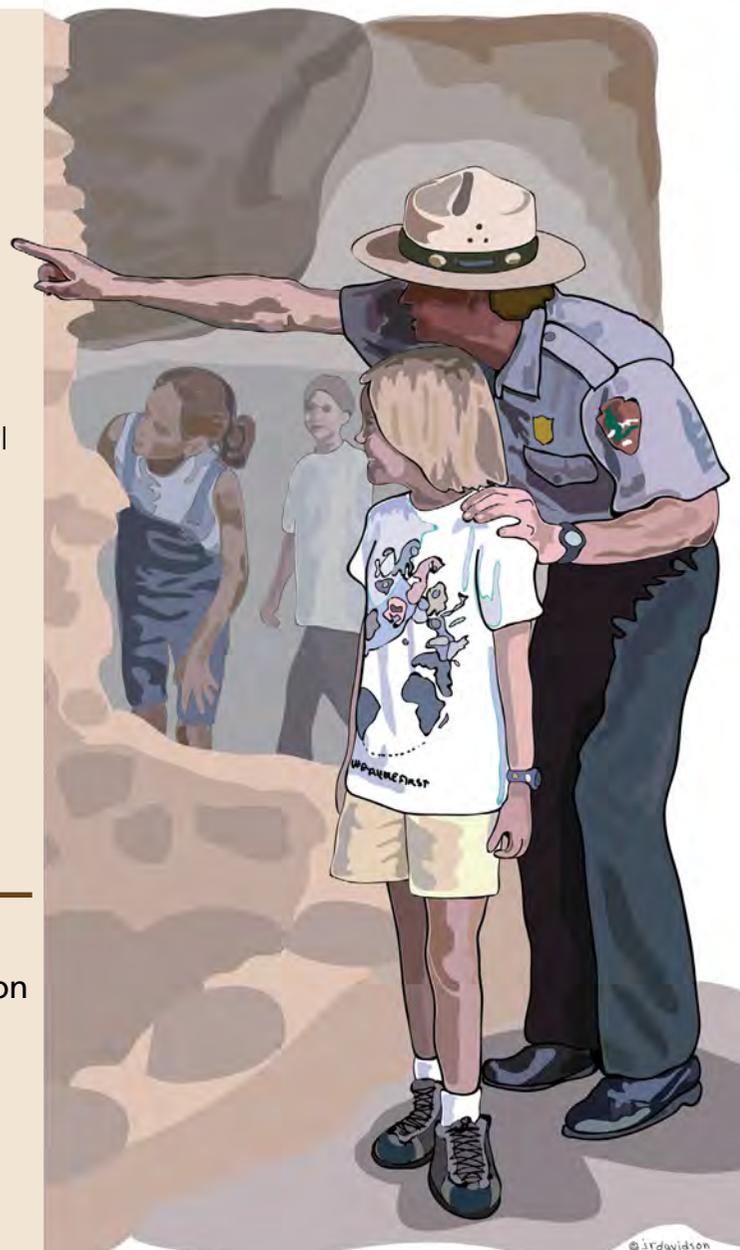


Morefield Campground Ranger Station

May 28 to September 4
5:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Junior Ranger Station (in Museum)

June 15 to August 14
3:00 pm to 5:30 pm



Park Ranger Backcountry Programs- Fee

Mesa Verde offers visitors opportunities to explore the backcountry of the park. Purchase tickets for these special hikes and tours online at www.recreation.gov. Tickets are non-refundable. Additional information is also available online.

For a ranger-guided tour of Balcony House, Cliff Palace, or Long House, see page [12](#).



Mug House



Oak Tree House mealing bins



Wetherill Mesa Bike & Hike Adventure



Yucca House NM

Balcony House Sunrise Tour

Begin your day as the Ancestral Pueblo people did for generations. Climb into Balcony House as the sun rises, and step into the 21st century of our national parks. Tour is 90 minutes. See page [12](#) for trail description.

•Tours are offered:

June 19 5:15 am **September 22** 6:15 am
June 20 5:15 am **September 23** 6:15 am

•Price: \$20.00 per person. Tour limited to 25 people.



Balcony House at sunrise

Mug House

Mug House was built over several decades in the 12th century, and was home to about 80 to 100 people. Along the route, you will view other Ancestral Pueblo sites, including Adobe Cave. This strenuous 2-hour, 3-mile (4.8 km) round-trip hike is along an unpaved, uneven trail that descends 100 feet (30 m) and includes steep drop-offs, switchbacks, and scrambling up and down boulders.

May 30 to October 22

•Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday at 9:30 am

•Price: \$25.00 per person. Tour limited to 10 people.

Oak Tree House

Built on two ledges, it has 60 rooms. Enjoy close up views of this well-preserved site that features plastered walls and varied architectural styles. Also enjoy vistas of Cliff Canyon, Cliff Palace, and Sun Temple. This 2-hour, 1-mile (1.6 km) round-trip hike is moderately strenuous. Expect a narrow, unpaved, uneven trail, with steps carved into sandstone, steep drop-offs, and two ladders up to 15 feet (4.6 m) tall.

May 22 to October 14

•Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 8:00 am

•Price: \$25.00 per person. Tour limited to 10 people.

Wetherill Mesa Bike & Hike Adventure

If you like both hiking and biking, the Wetherill Mesa Bike & Hike Adventure is for you. This ranger-guided, 4.5 hour, 9-mile (14.5 km) trek is for those seeking an in-depth Mesa Verde experience with a ranger. Expansive canyon views, spectacular overlooks of remote cliff dwellings, and a tour of Long House are all part of this adventure.

May 31 to September 3

•Wednesday and Sunday at 9:30 am

•Price: \$15.00 per person. Tour limited to 15 people.

Yucca House

Yucca House National Monument is located eight miles south of Cortez. Experience a sense of discovery by visiting this large, unexcavated Ancestral Pueblo site that has remained largely untouched for the past 800 years! This easy to moderate 2-hour, 1/2 mile (0.8 km) walk is along a mostly level, unpaved path. Total tour time, including carpooling to the site, is 3 hours.

September 16 at 7:30 am

•Price: \$5.00 per person. Tour limited to 15 people.

Know Before You Go

Your safety depends on good judgment, adequate preparation, and constant attention. Wear sturdy shoes or boots, and bring plenty of water. Shade is limited, so bring a hat and sunscreen. Evaluate your physical condition when choosing a hike.

Elevations range between 7,000 and 7,500 feet (2134 m and 2286 m) above sea level. You should plan for all weather possibilities because weather conditions are quite variable. It's possible to begin your hike in full sun and end with a thunderstorm or a snowstorm.

What To Bring

Bring a minimum of ½ gallon (2 liters) of water per person. You will also need a daypack large enough to carry water, sunscreen, hat, rainwear, binoculars, and camera. Wear sturdy hiking shoes. Please do not bring food or drinks other than water into a cliff dwelling.

Restrictions

Due to overhanging branches, uneven terrain, and footing obscured by vegetation, children must be able to keep pace with the group and walk the extent of the trail on their own without difficulty. Children in backpacks are not permitted on these special backcountry tours.

Please understand that once you begin a hike, neither you nor your children may "turn around," as there will be no ranger to escort you back to the trailhead. Carefully consider the distance and difficulty of a hike before purchasing a ticket.

Please Be On Time

Please be at your hike departure location, ready to go, at least 15 minutes early. The park road is narrow and winding, and can take 45 to 60 minutes to drive from the park entrance to departure locations. To be fair to others, the tour may leave without you if you are late. Please plan accordingly.

Cliff Palace Twilight Tour

Enjoy an intimate, leisurely encounter with Mesa Verde's largest cliff dwelling. Dramatic sunset lighting will appeal to both amateur and professional photographers as well as those seeking a deeper connection with this extraordinary archeological treasure. The 90-minute tours are offered nightly.

May 26 to July 22 7:15 pm
July 23 to September 9 6:45 pm

•Tour is limited to 12 people

•Price: \$20.00 per person, all ages

Exploring on Your Own

Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum

Dioramas and artifacts provide insight into Ancestral Pueblo people's lifeways. A 25-minute orientation film is shown on the hour and half-hour. A museum store, water, restrooms, cafe, gift shop, and post office are located nearby.



Spruce Tree House

Mesa Verde's best-preserved and third largest cliff dwelling was constructed between AD 1211 and 1278. This prehistoric village, built into a natural alcove, may have housed 60 to 80 people in about 130 rooms and eight kivas.

Although [Spruce Tree House is closed due to recent rockfalls](#) (see page 9), you can observe the cliff dwelling from viewpoints near the Museum.

Rangers are at the overlooks daily to answer questions and share information about Spruce Tree House and the Ancestral Pueblo people who once lived there. Ask a ranger for hours.

Mesa Top Loop Road

The Mesa Top Loop Road is a 6-mile (10 km) drive that is a tour through time. Along the road, you'll find short paved trails to view twelve easily-accessible archeological sites, including surface sites and overlooks of cliff dwellings — the ancient homes and villages of the Ancestral Pueblo people who lived here for more than 700 years.

Highlights include Square Tower House overlook, and views of Cliff Palace from Sun Point View and Sun Temple. The Mesa Top Loop Road is open daily, 8:00 am to sunset.

Chapin Mesa Trails

Farming Terraces

0.5 miles (0.8 km) round-trip

Beginning and ending on the road to Cedar Tree Tower, this ½-mile loop trail leads to a series of prehistoric check dams built to create farming terraces. The check dams improved crop yields by collecting water and soil from natural run-off.

Petroglyph Point & Spruce Canyon Loop Trails

Each trail is a 2.4-mile (3.9 km) loop

Both trails begin from the Spruce Tree House trail. The gate to the trailheads is open 8:30 am to 6:15 pm from May 26 to September 4. (Ask for hours after September 4.) Please plan your hike accordingly.

The **Petroglyph Point Trail** follows an ancient canyon path to the park's largest petroglyph panel, 1.4 miles (2.3 km) from the trailhead. It then climbs to the mesa top with views of Spruce and Navajo Canyons as it returns to the museum. The **Spruce Canyon Trail** follows the bottom of Spruce Canyon, and switchbacks up to the mesa top near the picnic area on the museum loop road.

Soda Canyon Overlook Trail

1.2 miles (1.9 km) round-trip

This easy walk begins ½ mile north of the Balcony House parking area along Cliff Palace Loop Road. The trail leads to canyon edge views of Balcony House and other archeological sites along Soda Canyon.

Morefield Trails

Point Lookout Trail

2.2 miles (3.5 km) round-trip

Follow the switchbacks up Point Lookout and traverse the mesa top. From the top, you will see sweeping views of Montezuma and Mancos Valleys and distant mountains.

Knife Edge Trail

2 miles (3.2 km) round-trip

The trail follows the park's historic entrance road from the northwest corner of Morefield Campground towards the Montezuma Valley overlook. This unpaved trail provides wonderful views of the Montezuma Valley.

Prater Ridge Trail

7.8 miles (12.6 km) to complete north and south loops

Beginning on the west end of Morefield Campground, the north loop trail ascends Prater Ridge and follows the top of the ridge above the Montezuma Valley. The shorter south loop offers views of Prater Canyon.

Wetherill Mesa Trails

Badger House Community Trail

2.25 miles (3.6 km) round-trip

This mixed gravel path and paved trail begins at the information kiosk and winds through four mesa top sites and 600 years of history.



Nordenskiöld Site No. 16 Trail

2 miles (3.2 km) round-trip

Named for Gustaf Nordenskiöld, who explored the area in 1891, this trail offers a leisurely walk through recovering fire-scarred vegetation and leads to an overlook of Nordenskiöld Site No. 16. Please note: there is no shade; bring sun protection and water.

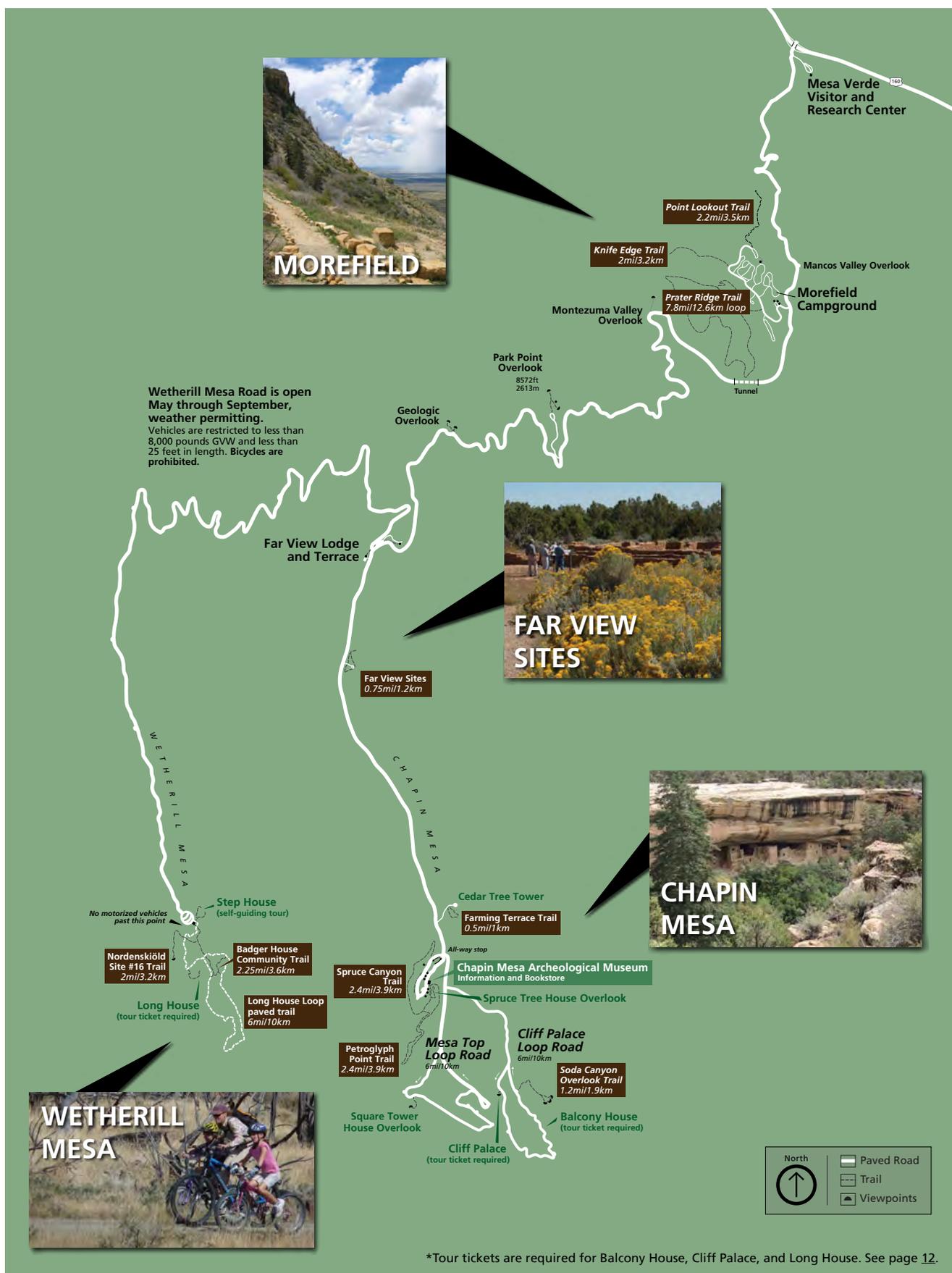
For more information on Wetherill Mesa trails, pick up a [Wetherill Mesa Visitor Guide](#).

Please respect these fragile places by leaving plants, animals, and artifacts undisturbed.

For your safety:

- Hiking is permitted only on designated trails
- Carry and drink plenty of water
- Stay away from cliff edges as undercut overhangs are dangerous
- Trails can be muddy and slippery after summer rains; proper footwear is recommended
- Pets are not allowed on trails (except designated trails on Wetherill Mesa)

Exploring on Your Own



Accessibility

Accessing Mesa Verde's premier sites is physically challenging. Most cliff dwelling trails are steep and uneven, with steps and ladders, cliff edges and tight passages, and include strenuous elevation changes. However, many cliff dwellings and mesa top sites are visible from roadway overlooks, short paved trails, and from your vehicle. For assistance, ask a park employee, or call 970-529-4465 for more information.

Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center

Designated parking, restrooms, exhibits, an ATM, a drinking fountain, and a wheelchair available for loan. Audio description and assistive listening available.

Far View Sites

Designated parking and a portable restroom. An unpaved gravel ¾-mile (1.2 km) level trail to six archeological sites.

Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum

Designated parking, restrooms, exhibits, a drinking fountain, and a ramp. Services include a portable ramp to enter exhibit rooms, a wheelchair available for loan, and a 25-minute orientation film with captions, audio description, and assistive listening.

Spruce Tree House Overlook

You can view Spruce Tree House from an easily accessible balcony behind the Chief Ranger's Office, adjacent to the Museum.

Mesa Top and Cliff Palace Loop Roads

Designated parking, restrooms, and paved trails are located along each six-mile (10 km) loop road. Binoculars are helpful for cross-canyon views of cliff dwellings, including Cliff Palace and Square Tower House.

Wetherill Mesa

Designated parking, restrooms, picnic tables, and information kiosk.

Far View Sites

This mesa top community includes Far View House, four other villages, and a dry reservoir. In ancient times, this community was a place of modest homes interspersed with small farm fields. It was a place filled with people, vibrant life, and constant change.

As you follow the woodland trail among the six sites, read the trailside signs to learn about Ancestral Pueblo life in the surrounding landscape between AD 900 to 1300.

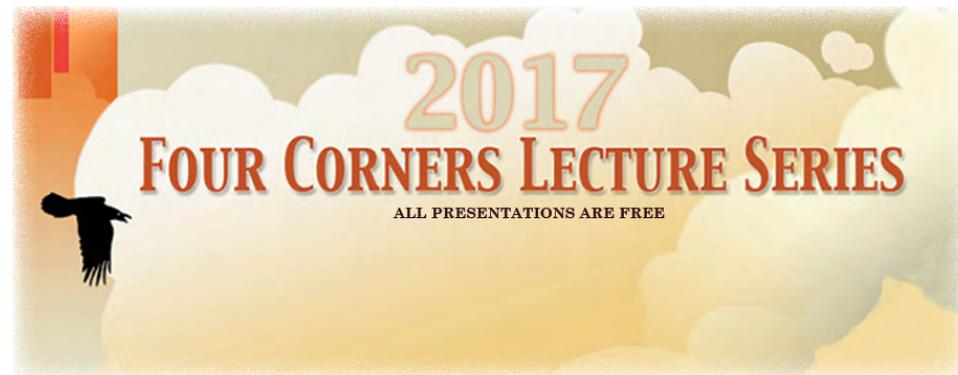
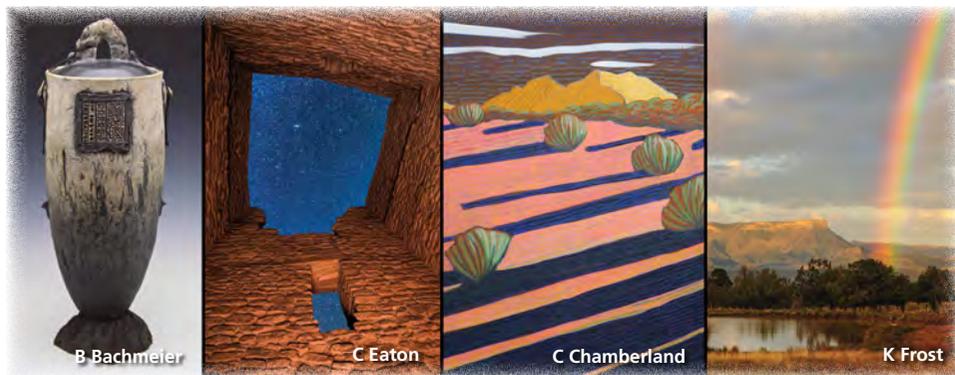
The level, unpaved ¾-mile trail (1.2 km) is open 8:00 am to sunset. Parking is limited to vehicles under 25 feet.

Visiting Wetherill Mesa

Less crowded than Chapin Mesa with only biking and hiking trails, Wetherill Mesa offers a quiet setting to appreciate the archeological sites and scenery. The 27-mile (43.5 km) drive from the Visitor Center follows the northern and western boundary of the park, offering spectacular views of the surrounding valleys. Allow 1¼ hours for this drive. Pick up a [Wetherill Mesa Visitor Guide](#) for details.

The Wetherill Mesa Road is open 8:00 am to 7:00 pm. Starting September 17, it is open 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Wetherill Mesa closes on October 31 or when weather conditions close the road.

Special Events and Other Opportunities



Mesa Verde Artist-in-Residence Program

Mesa Verde National Park's Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program provides professional artists the opportunity to pursue their particular art form while being surrounded by the park's inspiring ancient architecture and natural landscape. Mesa Verde's AIR program is managed by the Mesa Verde Museum Association (MVMA), a nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. The works completed under this program contribute to the public understanding and appreciation of our national parks, create a legacy preserved for future generations, and offer park visitors and the public an opportunity to see our heritage through the eyes and ears of contributing artists.

Each artist will live in the park for two weeks during the spring or fall, pursuing their craft. They will each present a free public demonstration, performance, or talk during the second week of their residency. Ask a park employee, visit <http://go.nps.gov/mvair>, or contact MVMA at 970-529-4445 for specific time and location for these presentations.

May 15 to 26	Brad Bachmeier, Pottery
September 4 to 16	Christopher Eaton, Photography
September 18 to 30	Carol Chamberland, Painting
October 2 to 14	Kit Frost, Photography

Four Corners Lecture Series

The Four Corners Lecture Series is produced by several local organizations who sponsor speakers each year. The series features presentations on the archeology, current Native American cultures, history, and natural resources of Mesa Verde and the Four Corners area. Guest lecturers will share their knowledge, interpretations, and experiences in the Four Corners Region. The following lectures are free and open to the public and will be held at the Visitor Center, located near the park entrance just off U.S. Highway 160. (Visit <http://go.nps.gov/4cls> to see a list of all speakers and subjects for each free presentation.)

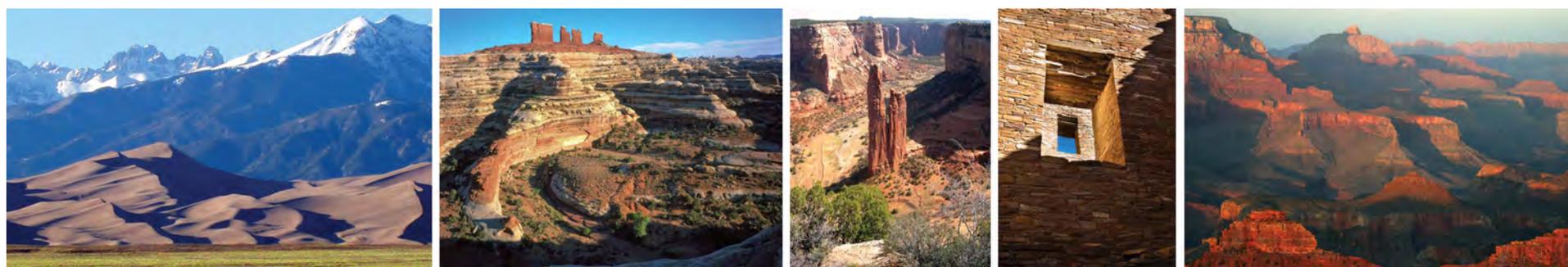
June 2 at 7:00 pm
Tova Spector - *Wild World of Wildflowers*

June 16 at 7:00 pm
Harvey Leake - "We are particular to preserve...." *The Wetherills and their Archaeological Investigations at Mesa Verde and Beyond*

July 1 -2 at 11:00 am, noon, 2:00 pm, and 4:00 pm
Hopi Dancers from Shungopavi Village on Second Mesa

September 1 at 7:00 pm
Paul Morey - *Raptors of Mesa Verde*

Other Destinations



From Left to Right: Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve; Canyonlands National Park; Canyon de Chelly National Monument; Chaco Culture National Historical Park; and Grand Canyon National Park.

Looking for more to see and do after your visit to Mesa Verde? Here are some of the most requested destinations related to or near the park. (All distances are from the park entrance)



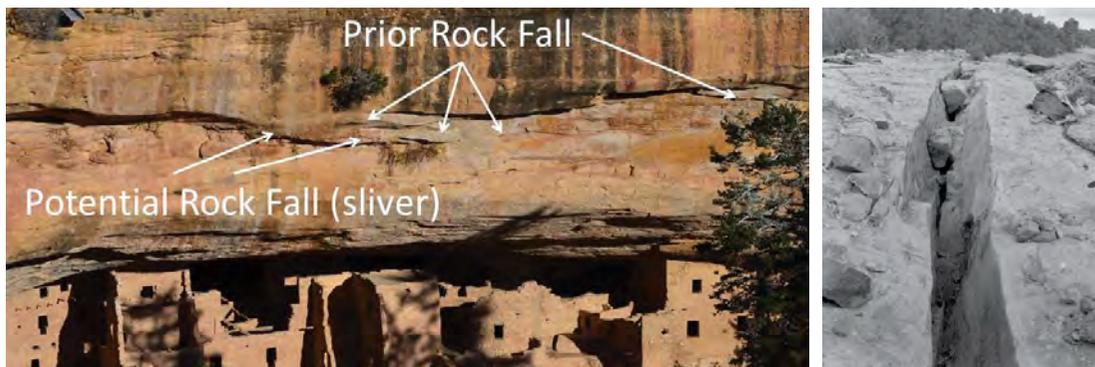
Pueblo-related Destinations

- Anasazi Heritage Center/Canyons of the Ancients NMon - 20 miles
- Aztec Ruins NMon - 75 miles
- Canyon de Chelly NMon - 152 miles
- Chimney Rock NMon - 81 miles
- Chaco Culture NHP - 141 miles
- Hovenweep NMon - 46 miles

Destinations Near Mesa Verde National Park

- Arches NP - 130 miles
- Canyonlands NP Needles District - 100 miles, Island in the Sky District - 157 miles
- Four Corners Tribal Park - 46 miles
- Great Sand Dunes NP&P - 220 miles
- Grand Canyon NP - 255 miles
- Monument Valley Tribal Park - 153 miles

The Spruce Tree House Alcove



Left: Areas of previous and potential rockfalls. Right: 1940 photo of widest section of crack above Spruce Tree House.

The forces of nature that formed the shelters that contain Mesa Verde's cliff dwellings are still active, and the Spruce Tree House alcove has become particularly unstable. Until a full geotechnical assessment is conducted and work is done to reduce the threat of rockfalls along pathways into and within the site, Spruce Tree House is closed.

The primary concern is a large, naturally forming arch located within one of several cracks that exist in the cliff above Spruce Tree House (above right). Attempts to slow the erosional processes forming the arch began in 1940 with the cleaning and covering of the crevice. In 1960, a large rockfall above the south end of Spruce Tree House led to the anchoring of the natural rock arches in 1961 and 1962. Forty-two rock anchor bolts, some 16 feet long, were drilled horizontally into the cliff face to secure the arches. The earlier crevice covering was also removed and the crack was filled with aggregate and cement grout. In the fall of 2015, a number of smaller rockfalls, some of which fell on the public trails, again occurred within the alcove in the area of the large arch. The site was closed in order to conduct an assessment and remove loose rock material from the cliff face and ledges. The scaling operation brought down about 60 cubic feet (cf) of material from the alcove edge. Some of the rock removed had a harder, desiccated outer surface with a substantially softer interior, revealing that sections of the sandstone are weakening due to water leaching the calcium carbonate matrix that binds the sand particles within the sandstone.

Mesa Verde National Park has contracted with a geotechnical firm to conduct a detailed assessment of the alcove through core drilling to determine composition and integrity of the rock. The process will involve Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), sophisticated laser imaging, and a 3-D computer analysis of the data to model alcove stability. The assessment will result in recommendations for treatment that, if necessary, will use modern engineering technology to ensure the alcove is stable and safe for public visitation.

Preserving Cliff Palace



Southern end of Cliff Palace built on unstable soil and rubble.

Cliff Palace has been the focus of ongoing structural stabilization work since 2011, when archeologists began to document and analyze causes for extensive cracking and wall deformation at the southern half of the site. The study found that this part of the site is built on an unstable foundation of loose, unconsolidated soil and rubble which is slowly moving beneath the prehistoric architecture built eight centuries ago.

If you visit Cliff Palace today, you may notice that some of the kivas have a round shape while others appear warped, with leaning and deformed walls that seem on the verge of collapse. Archeologists have been working to repair the damage and design ways to prevent or slow continued slope movement.

As a tangible connection to a people's past and a significant place to millions of people who have walked its ancient pathways, essential preservation work today will make it possible for future generations to continue to be inspired by this magnificent ancient site. Since some of the needed repairs cannot be safely done while visitors are in the site, Cliff Palace will continue to be closed during the fall, closing September 25 this year.

For additional information on the history and current efforts to preserve Cliff Palace, visit the park website at www.nps.gov/meve and look for "[Preserving Cliff Palace](#)."

Burning Questions

Although fire is an important ecological process in many natural ecosystems, fire is a process largely absent in the development of the ancient or "old-growth" Pinyon-Juniper woodlands of Mesa Verde. Pinyon-Juniper woodlands are the iconic ecological communities on the park's mesa tops and many canyon slopes. The woodlands are dominated by two species of short, cone-bearing evergreen trees which evolved to withstand arid and often rocky conditions, the Utah juniper and Colorado pinyon pine. The short stature of the

woodlands conceals their great age as many stands have not burned in over 700 years and some individual junipers have surpassed 1,000 years.

Today as you drive through or walk along the mesa tops, you will see the scorched remnants of a former Pinyon-Juniper ecosystem that has been converted to grasslands by recent wildfires. Charred pinyon pine and juniper snags, with an understory of grasses, have replaced the old-growth woodland. In recent decades, wildfires in Mesa Verde's Pinyon-Juniper stands

have burned catastrophically, killing all the trees and shrubs in these areas. The natural woodland recovery process takes approximately 100 years for the first young trees to re-establish in these burned areas. Invasive exotic plants and climate change may prolong or prevent this succession back to a tree dominated ecosystem. The park is working to control invasive exotic plants to make the park landscape more resilient to a changing climate and to encourage the natural recovery process.



Pinyon-Juniper woodlands restoration

Mesa Verde Museum Association

Providing Memories, Inspiring Stewardship

Mesa Verde Museum Association (MVMA) is the innovative, educational nonprofit partner that inspires life-long stewardship of Mesa Verde's cultural and natural heritage. Since 1930, MVMA has supported education and research in the park through an active publishing program, membership program, in-depth learning opportunities, and retail stores. Proceeds from all programs generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in park support each year.

You Can Make a Difference!

You can help preserve and protect the park for future generations by becoming a Mesa Verde Museum Association member today!

Your tax-deductible membership dues will support the work of MVMA. Members receive a discount in MVMA stores and online, periodic e-newsletters, a year-end gift, and discounts at most cooperating association bookstores in national parks and other public lands across the country. To ask about membership at MVMA stores, call us at 970-529-4445, or visit our website at www.mesaverde.org/membership.

Enhance Your Visit

You'll find an outstanding selection of Mesa Verde publications and products at MVMA stores, that will help you further explore and appreciate this park's incomparable cultural and natural resources. MVMA stores are located in the Visitor Center, Morefield Ranger Station, Museum, Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk, and Colorado Welcome Center at 928 East Main Street in Cortez, and online at www.mesaverde.org.

Mesa Verde Museum Association

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Present this coupon at the register.

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Coupon is good on all regularly priced items. Not valid with other discounts.

Expiration date: 12/31/2017



Museum Store



Visitor Center Store



Replica pottery

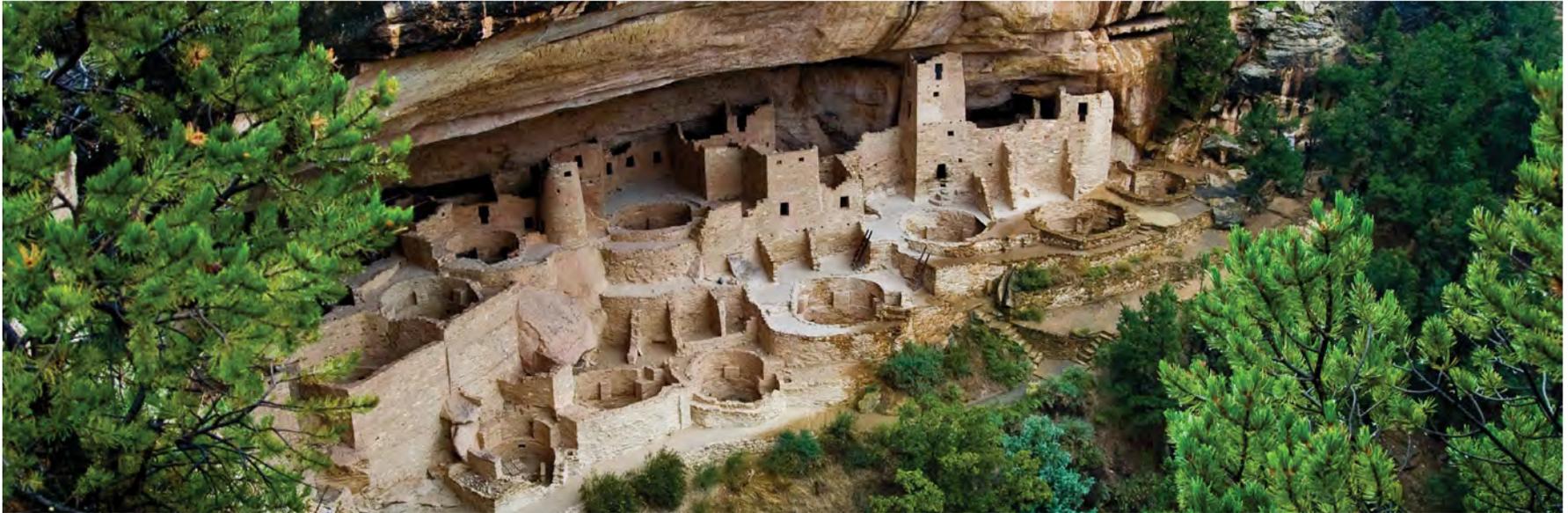
Just for Mesa Verde Junior Rangers!



We've designed a special colorful logo to recognize Mesa Verde Junior Rangers! It features the tower from Square Tower House cliff dwelling (which you can see from the Mesa Top Loop), a brightly-colored collared lizard, an Ancestral Puebloan black-on-white pottery design found in the Mesa Verde region, and the iconic "flat hat" that park rangers wear. We offer a variety of educational products and apparel for every Junior Ranger that features this distinctive logo. Come see our selection today.

Kids who present their completed Mesa Verde Junior Ranger booklet and their badge at any MVMA store will receive a 15% discount on their entire purchase!

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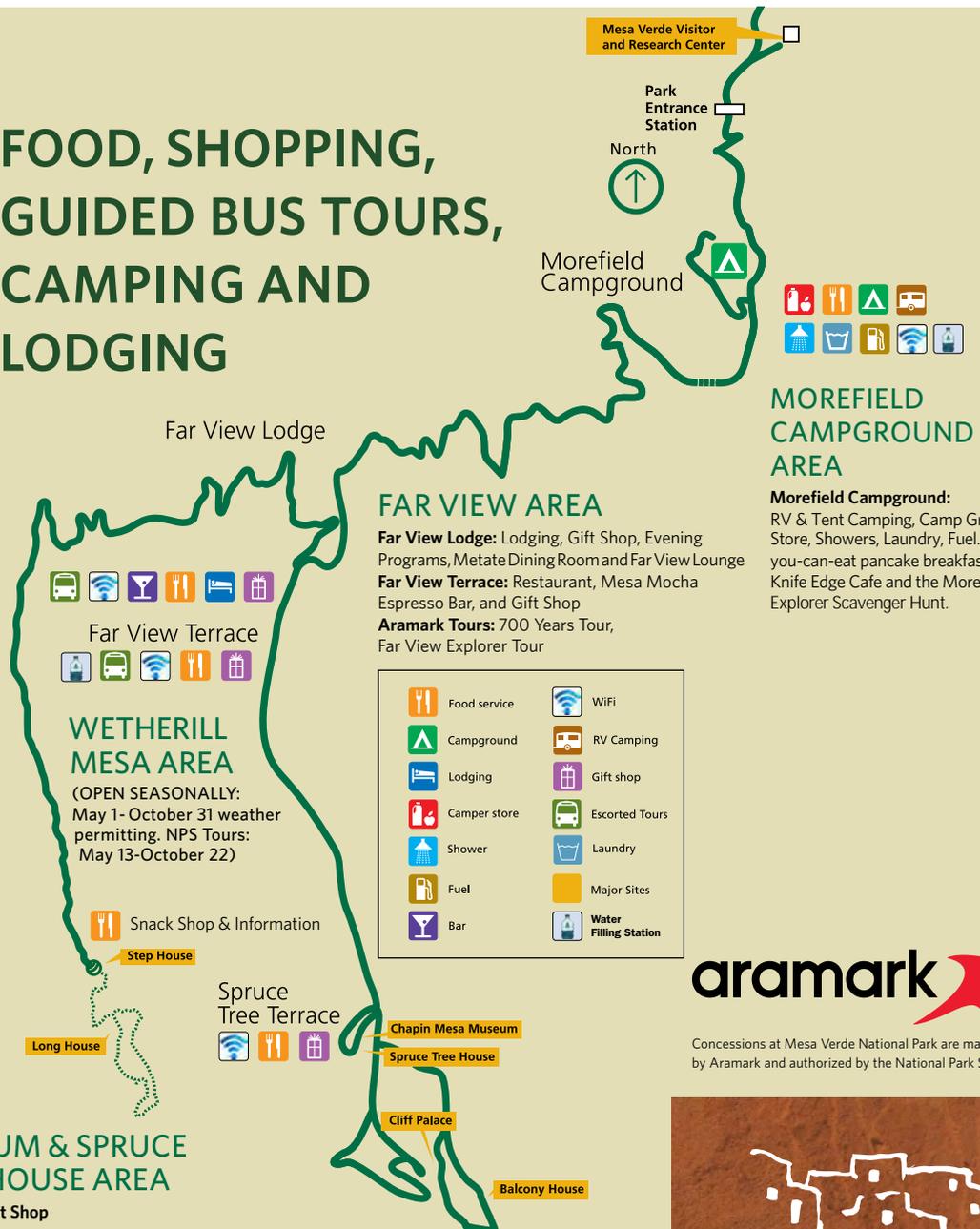


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MESA VERDE
—COLORADO—

(800) 449-2288, (970) 529-4422 locally, or visit and book on-line at visitmesaverde.com

Touring a Cliff Dwelling

Cliff Palace and Balcony House are popular ranger-guided cliff dwelling tours. A tour of Long House, on Wetherill Mesa, can be taken on the same day as a Cliff Palace or Balcony House tours.

There are no height or age restrictions for tours, but children must be capable of climbing ladders by themselves. If not, they must be carried in a backpack while on a tour.

Tour tickets are \$5.00 per tour, per person, regardless of age. (Pass discounts do not apply.)

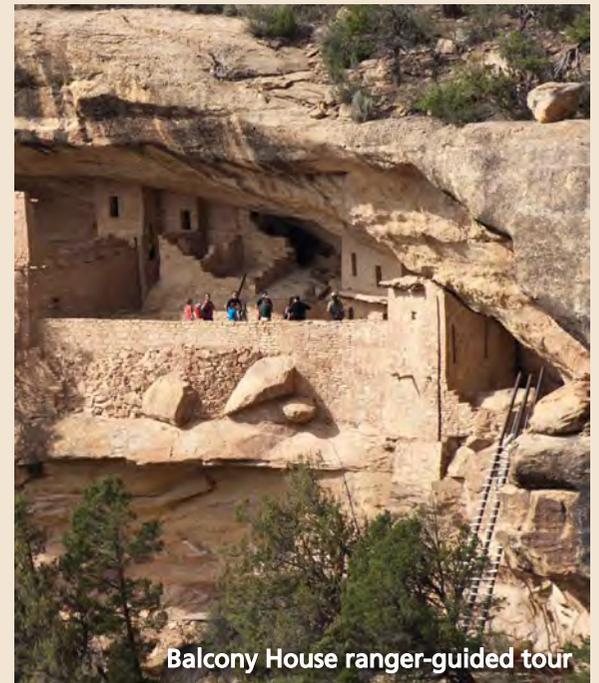
Purchase Tour Tickets at:

- Visitor Center
- Morefield Ranger Station
- Colorado Welcome Center, Cortez
- Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum (limited hours, see hint below)**

For hours of operation, see Visitor Services section on page 1.

**Hint: You'll get the best selection of times for ranger-guided tours at the Visitor Center, Morefield Ranger Station, or the Colorado Welcome Center. Options may be more limited at the Museum.

Tickets will be sold at the Museum from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm through September 4. (After September 4, ticket sales hours will be reduced. Ask a ranger for times.)



Balcony House ranger-guided tour

Cliff Palace

Mesa Verde's Largest Cliff Dwelling

On this one-hour tour you will descend uneven stone steps and climb four ladders, with an elevation change of 100 feet (30 m). Total walking distance is ¼ mile (0.4 km). Tour begins near the Cliff Palace overlook, a 23-mile (37 km), one-hour drive from the Visitor Center.

May 26 to September 9

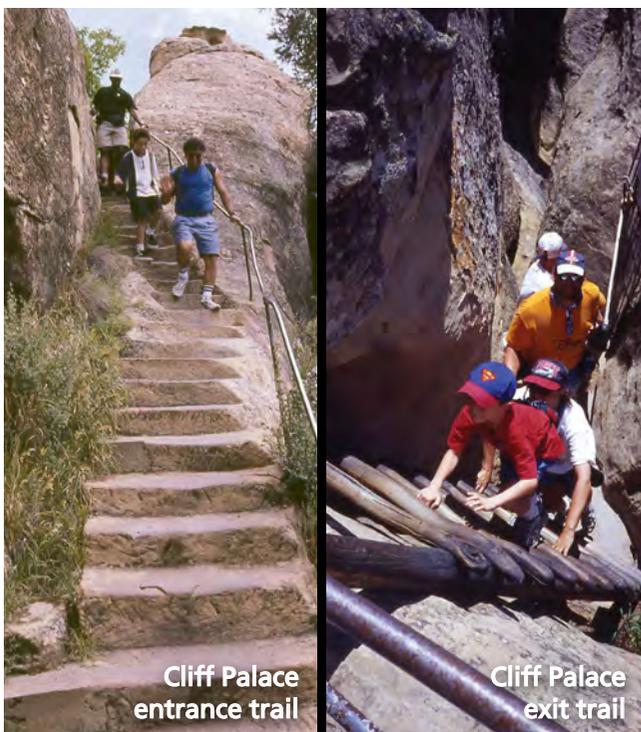
Every half-hour: 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

September 10 to September 24

Every half-hour: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

September 25: Closed for season*

*See page 9 for details on preservation work in Cliff Palace this fall.



Cliff Palace entrance trail

Cliff Palace exit trail

Balcony House

Most Adventurous Cliff Dwelling Tour

On this one-hour, ¼-mile (0.4 km) tour you will climb a 32-foot (9.8 m) ladder, crawl through an 18-inch wide (45 cm) and 12-foot (3.7 m) long tunnel, and climb up a 60-foot (20 m) open cliff face with stone steps and two 10-foot (3 m) ladders to exit. The tour begins at the north end of the Balcony House parking lot, a 25-mile (40.2 km), 1¼ hours drive from the Visitor Center.

May 26 to August 19

Every half-hour: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

August 20 to October 14

Every hour: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, and 9:30 am and 3:30 pm

October 15 to October 28

Every hour: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

October 29: Closed for season



Balcony House entrance ladder

Long House

Most In-Depth Tour

This two-hour tour involves hiking about 2.25 miles (3.6 km) round-trip, and climbing two 15-foot (4.5 m) ladders within the site. Elevation gain is about 130 feet (40 m). The tour begins at the Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk, a 27-mile (43.5 km), 1¼ hour drive from the Visitor Center. Vehicles over 25 feet (8 m) long are not allowed on the Wetherill Mesa Road. The tour will end at the Long House trailhead, giving you the option of exploring more of Wetherill Mesa on your own.

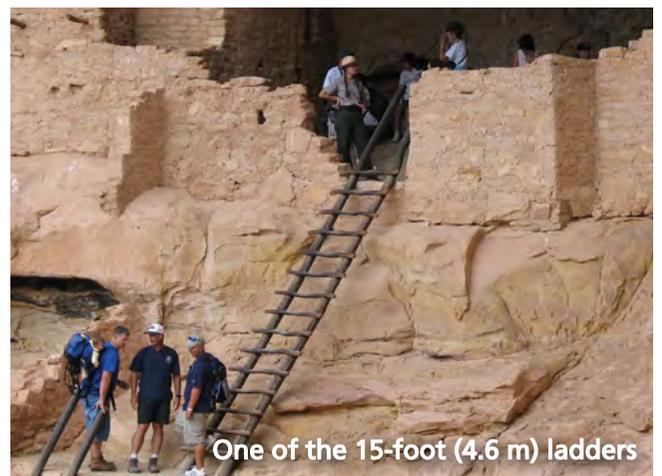
May 26 to September 16

9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, and 4:00 pm

September 17 to October 22

9:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 2:00 pm

October 23: Closed for season



One of the 15-foot (4.6 m) ladders

See page 5 for information on additional ranger-guided hikes and how to purchase tickets for them.