



Winter and Early Spring, 2020-2021



Point Lookout

Welcome

Late fall, winter, and early spring is a wonderful time to visit Mesa Verde National Park, and there are many activities available to help you experience this special place. Enjoy a variety of cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking opportunities in a quiet winter environment. Step back in time and drive the Mesa Top Loop Road to explore 700 years of Ancestral Pueblo history; gain a [Pueblo perspective](#) of Mesa Verde from a direct descendant of the people who lived here; and view Spruce Tree House surrounded by winter snow or the early blooms of spring. Check the park website at www.nps.gov/meve for more information.

Winter Logistics

All activities depend on road, trail, and weather conditions. Please check with the ranger at the entrance gate for updates before beginning any of the listed activities. We recommend good hiking boots or snow boots, warm layered clothing, a hat, gloves, snacks, sunglasses, and water.

Limited food service is available at the Spruce Tree Terrace, near the Museum. Check *Visitor Services* on the back page for hours. There is no overnight camping or lodging in the park, but accommodations are available in nearby communities.

Virtual Ranger Station

Activities during this time are self-guided, so planning ahead is especially important. Although the cliff dwellings are closed, there is still plenty to see and do, including viewing magnificent cliff dwellings. If you haven't used the [Virtual Ranger Station](#) on the park website to plan your visit, please make sure to stop at the Visitor & Research Center, near the park entrance, where you can download helpful information. There, you can scan codes using your mobile device to learn what self-guided opportunities are available to enjoy while in the park. *(Note that cell service is extremely limited beyond this point.)* Restrooms are also available.

Spruce Tree House Overlook

[Spruce Tree House](#) is the park's third largest and best-preserved cliff dwelling. Constructed between 1211 and 1278, it was built into a natural alcove. It contains 130 rooms, eight kivas, and may have housed 60 to 80 people.

You can observe Spruce Tree House from points near the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. The trail to the lower viewpoint is short but steep, and can be icy.

*It is a 45- to 60-minute drive from the park entrance to Spruce Tree House.



Spruce Tree House from overlook

Mesa Top Loop Drive

[Mesa Top Loop Road](#) is a 6-mile (10 km) drive through 700 years of Ancestral Pueblo history. Along the road, you'll find short, easily-accessible paved trails to archeological sites and views of cliff dwellings such as Cliff Palace from the Sun Temple stop. (During snow storms, the loop may briefly close until the road and walkways are cleared.) Open daily 8:00 am to sunset. *See map on page 2.*

A trail guide is available. You can also download the audio tour, [Mesa Top Loop Drive: A Pueblo Perspective](#) and listen along in your car or on your phone.



Square Tower House from overlook along the Mesa Top Loop Drive

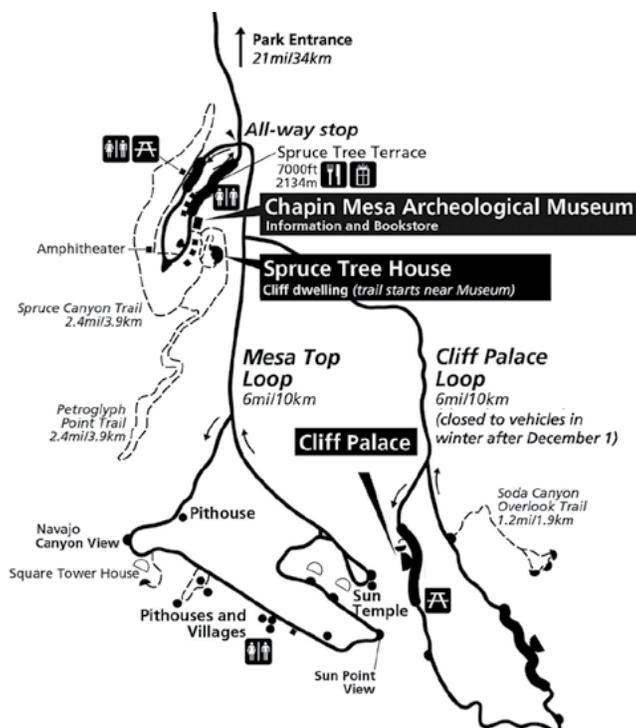
Additional Opportunities to Explore On Your Own

Petroglyph Point Trail is located near the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. The 2.4-mile (3.9 km) trail leads to a panel of petroglyphs. In clear weather, the trail 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.

Far View Sites Complex includes Far View House plus 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, but do not block the gate. Open 8:00 am to sunset.

Cliff Palace Loop Road closes to vehicles on December 1 or with first significant snowfall. The road is then available for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or hiking.

Note: Between February and mid-June, 2021 the Cliff Palace Loop Road will be closed for road construction.



Winter Recreational Opportunities

Winter Recreational Opportunities are available for Nordic skiing and snowshoeing once there is a sufficient amount of snow and the park has begun to groom trails. Information on winter trails and trail conditions is available on the park website at go.nps.gov/wintertrails. You can also find out about conditions and which winter trails are open by calling 970-529-4622 or 970-529-4631.

Snowshoes are available for loan at the park entrance station.



Cross-country skiers on the Morefield Campground trails

Visitor Services

National Park Service
970-529-4465, www.nps.gov/meve

Mesa Verde Museum Association, Park Partner
970-529-4445
Purchase merchandise online at www.mesaverde.org

Information

Virtual Ranger Station* and Restrooms

Located just outside the Visitor & Research Center
9:00 am to 4:00 pm

*Note: You can also visit the [Virtual Ranger Station](http://www.nps.gov/meve) on the park website before you arrive.

Visitor services are closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Aramark, Park Partner
800-449-2288, www.visitmesaverde.com

Please see their [website](http://www.visitmesaverde.com) for operating hours and dining menus.

Spruce Tree Terrace Café
11:00 am - 2:00 pm*

*Extended hours in the spring. Please see their [website](http://www.visitmesaverde.com) for operating hours updates and dining menus.

Aramark facilities are closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day.

Protect the Park

Help Mesa Verde preserve its archeological sites and natural environment for future generations.

- Please do not sit, stand, climb, or lean on fragile archeological structures.
- Pets must be leashed at all times; only service animals are allowed in public buildings or on trails. Please clean up after your pet.
- Do not leave pets unattended.
- Camping and overnight parking is not permitted.



- Help keep wildlife wild. It is illegal to feed, capture, chase, or tease wildlife.

Protect Yourself

In case of emergency, call 911

Road Advisory

- Obey all traffic signs
- Watch for falling rocks
- Since you will drive *at least* 50 miles while in the park, please plan accordingly. Gasoline is available at Morefield Campground.
- Check sign at park entrance for possible chain or snow tire requirements. Watch for snowplows.

High Elevation

- Mesa Verde ranges from 7,000 feet elevation to 8,572 feet at Park Point; the air is thin and very dry.
- Consider your physical health before participating in any activity.
- Carry and drink plenty of water.
- Check the [weather forecast](http://www.weather.gov), but be prepared for colder temperatures at higher park elevations.