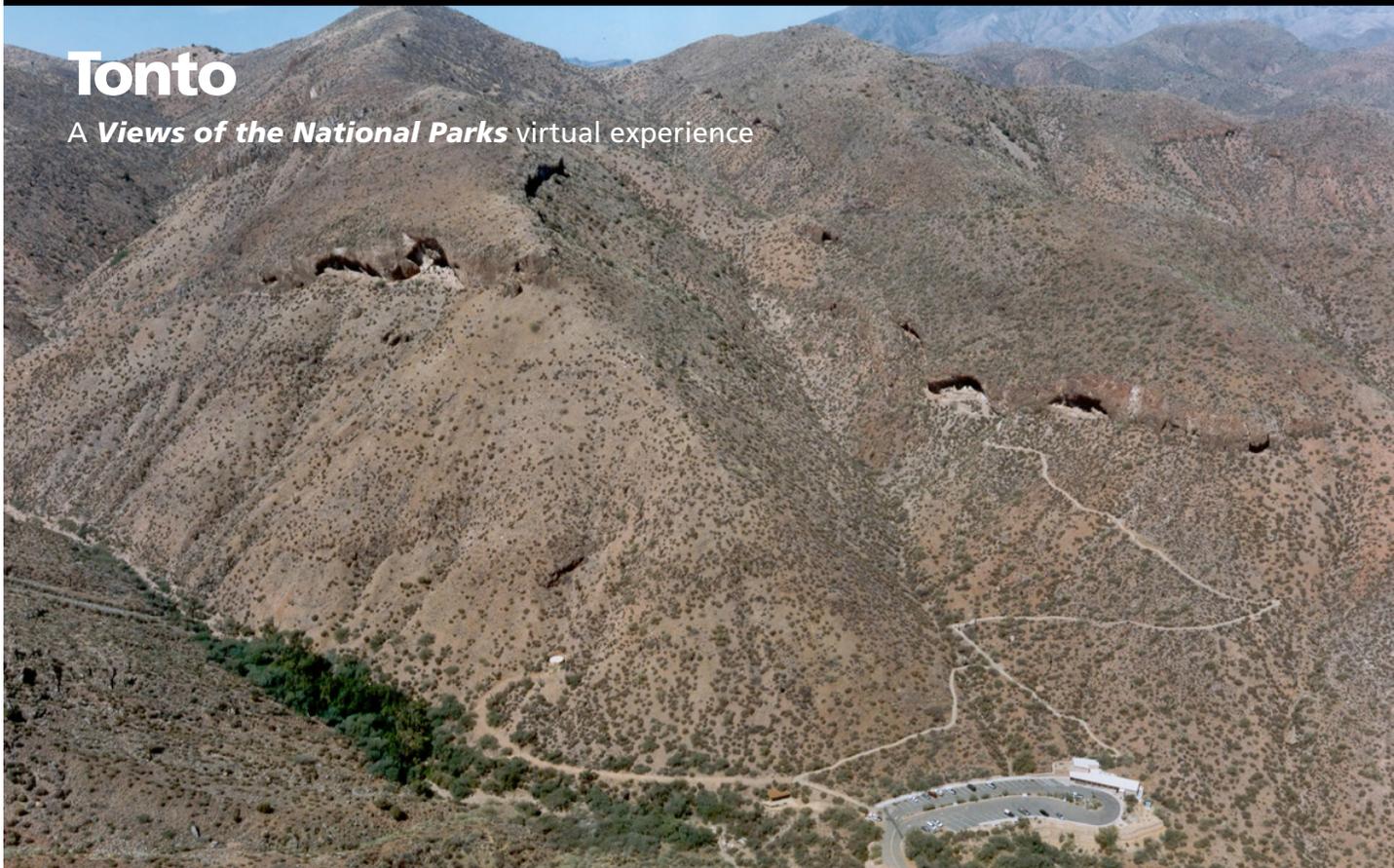




Tonto

A *Views of the National Parks* virtual experience



Shallow caves in central Arizona protect masonry dwellings built in the early 14th Century. These and additional sites in the surrounding areas were home to the Salado people. They left no written record of their existence, no chronology of events that shaped their society. The most vivid signs of life are in their pottery, in remnants of fabric, in smoke stains from their cook fires, and in handprints on pueblo walls.

Most of what we know - or think we know - about the Salado has been reconstructed from what remains of their material culture - their personal and community belongings. In addition, plants and animals that made up their natural environment still thrive here. Like pieces of a puzzle, each element contributes to the larger picture of Salado culture. Take a virtual tour of Tonto National Monument to learn more about these people and their environment.

Features

Three virtual trails (the Cactus Patch Trail, the Lower Cliff Dwelling Trail, and the Upper Cliff Dwelling Trail) are presented in this module. Each trail provides their own unique stories about the natural and cultural resources of the park.

Select a trail that interests you the most, or take the time to follow all three!

- **Cactus Patch Trail**

Just outside the visitor center, connecting the Lower and Upper Cliff Dwelling trails runs the Cactus Patch Trail. Ever wonder what a cactus is, or how many different cactus there might be? This is the trail for you! Learn about two different plants and how they have adapted to living in such harsh conditions. Keep a careful eye out, however, for not all ten plants are cactus. See if you can figure out which ones are not.

Tonto National Monument, located in central Arizona, was once the home of the Salado culture. Take a stroll along one of the trails to learn about the natural and culture wonders found here. (Tonto National Monument)

From the valley rising 2000 feet to the mountain tops, spreading through open areas, sheltered among rocks, nestled in canyons, and hidden among washes are different local environments, each with their own community of wildlife.

— Tonto National Monument
official Web site

While virtually hiking along one of the three major trails of Tonto National Monument, learn about the natural resources and how the Salado used those resources.



• **Lower Cliff Dwelling Trail**

Twenty stops await you along this trail that leads from the visitor center up to the Lower Cliff Dwelling site. Examine many of the plants along the trail (Foothill Palo Verde, Ocotillo, Flat Top Buckwheat, Brittlebush, Wolfberry, Jojoba, Banana Yucca, and Teddy Bear Cholla). Learn about the natural processes acting on the geology of the area (Soil Makers, Natural Cement, Formation of the Cave, and Grasses, Grazing, and Erosion). Discover who the Salado were, how they constructed their dwellings, and possibilities as to why they left.

• **Upper Cliff Dwelling Trail**

This trails follows the riparian corridor of the park on its way up to the Upper Cliff Dwelling site. Explore the importance of water to this area (Water; Springs, Seeps, and Tinajas; Riparian Communities; Cave Canyon Watershed; and River Valley). Learn about two of the key plant species of the area, the towering Saguaro and the hardy mesquite, as well as the colorful wildflowers. See how fire plays a role on the landscape. Take a trip back in time to explore the geology of the area. Explore the Upper Cliff Dwelling and learn why the Salado chose this location, and how the National Park Service works to preserve these natural and cultural resources.

• **Web Site Resource**

Interested in learning more about the Salado or the natural resources they relied upon? Visit the official Web site of Tonto National Monument using the links provided.

Contact us

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The Salado lived in Tonto Basin for about 300 years. Sometime after AD 1450 they left. No one knows why, though the Salado were not the only ones to depart their homelands in the southern mountains of the Southwest around this time. The cliff dwellings, less than 150 years old, were abandoned to the sun and wind.

— Tonto National Monument
 official Web site

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