



MESA VERDE  
NATIONAL PARK  
*Colorado*

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

HAROLD L. ICKES, Secretary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
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NATURALIST ACTIVITIES

In order to give visitors a better understanding of the features of Mesa Verde National Park, an entirely new program of naturalist activities is now offered. Greater freedom is granted to visitors, new activities are presented, and it is hoped that more complete enjoyment and understanding will result.

For the first time in the history of the park the Ruins Roads are open to all visitors. Almost a score of spectacular points have been developed as "VIEW" points. From these some of the most famous ruins in the Southwest can be seen. In a day's time a visitor who is armed with field glasses can see over 60 ruins. They vary in size from small villages of only a few rooms to Cliff Palace, the largest cliff dwelling known. Many hang so precariously to the faces of the cliffs that it seems almost incredible that they could have been built by human beings.

These cliff dwellings now standing in ruins were occupied by Pueblo Indians 700 years ago. For some reason they chose to build their homes in the caves, and one of the most amazing chapters in the story of mankind was written. The life of the Indians was so strange that it is difficult for modern man to understand what happened in those prehistoric days. It is hoped that the new program will enable visitors to gain a more vivid picture of the ancient life of the Mesa Verde.

PROTECTION OF THE RUINS

In spite of the new freedom that is granted to visitors, the ruins must be given absolute protection. They were built by a vanished people, therefore they can never be replaced. Visitors are asked to cooperate with the National Park Service in order that these prehistoric structures may be preserved throughout all time.

In order to give the ultimate protection to the ruins one rigid rule is strictly enforced. No person shall enter a cliff dwelling unless accompanied by a ranger or ranger-naturalist. Roads and ruins are patrolled, and severe penalties will be inflicted for any disregard of this rule.

DON'T TRY TO DO TOO MUCH

Visitors who have one day or less to spend in the park are urged not to try to make all of the climbing trips that are offered. These trips are very strenuous, and strained and aching muscles often result. A full day's program can well consist of the inviting museums, one or two climbing trips into the cliff dwellings, drives around the Ruins Roads with stops at the "VIEW" points, visits to Park Point Fire Lookout and Far View House, the evening sunset trip, and the campfire program.

Headwork, rather than footwork, leads to an understanding of the Mesa Verde.

## WHAT TO DO IN MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

### SCENIC DRIVES

Entrance Highway. On the 20 mile drive from the park entrance to park headquarters unexcelled panoramas of the mountains, mesas, and plains of the Four Corners country are obtained. Mountains to the west are in Utah, those to the southwest are in Arizona, and to the south in New Mexico, Shiprock, spectacular landmark of the Navaho country, is clearly visible.

Park Point Fire Lookout. Ten miles from the park entrance, where the highway reaches its greatest altitude, a side road leads one-half mile to Park Point, the highest elevation in the park. From May until October a Fire Observer is on duty. He is always glad to demonstrate the latest methods of forest fire detection and point out the scenic features. With an elevation of 8,572 feet, Park Point commands an unobstructed view over 14,000 square miles.

Ruins Roads. The Ruins Roads are open to visitors from 8 a. m. to 7 p. m. These roads consist of two 6-mile loops that skirt Navaho, Fewkes, Cliff, and Soda Canyons. Spectacular views and pictures of these canyons and of several dozen cliff dwellings are obtainable at the "VIEW" points. Each point has a trailside exhibit that explains the features.

### MUSEUMS

Archeological Museum. Open from 8 a. m. to 5:30 p. m. Extensive displays and dioramas that illustrate graphically the life, customs, arts, and crafts of the prehistoric Indians. This museum is the most important single aid to an understanding of the ancient people.

Natural History Museum. Display of cut wild flowers. Exhibits of the fauna, flora, and geology of the park. Porch with comfortable chairs overlooks Spruce Tree Ruin. Public rest rooms are in the basement of this building.

### SCHEDULE OF GUIDED TRIPS

June 1 to September 15

Morning. 8:30 a. m. Motor caravan to Earth Lodge, Square Tower House, Little Long House and Sun Temple. Return at 11:30 a. m. Use your own car. Caravan starts from the museum.

9 a. m. and 10:30 a. m. Guided trips through Cliff Palace. These trips start at the parking area directly above Cliff Palace. Length of each trip  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours; walking distance  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile.

Afternoon. Guided trips through Cliff Palace and Balcony House. Each trip lasts about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours. These trips start at the parking area above each ruin at the following hours:

<u>Cliff Palace</u>	<u>Balcony House</u>
1:15 p. m.	1:30 p. m.
2:30 p. m.	2:45 p. m.
3:45 p. m.	4:00 p. m.

May 15 to May 31 and September 15 to October 15

9:00 a. m. Motor caravans to the ruins. Daily. Use your own car. Earth Lodge, Square Tower House, Little Long House, and Sun Temple. Return at 11:30 a. m. Driving distance  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Start at museum.

1:30 p. m. Cliff Palace and Balcony House. Start from the museum. Return at 4 p. m. Driving distance 7 miles.

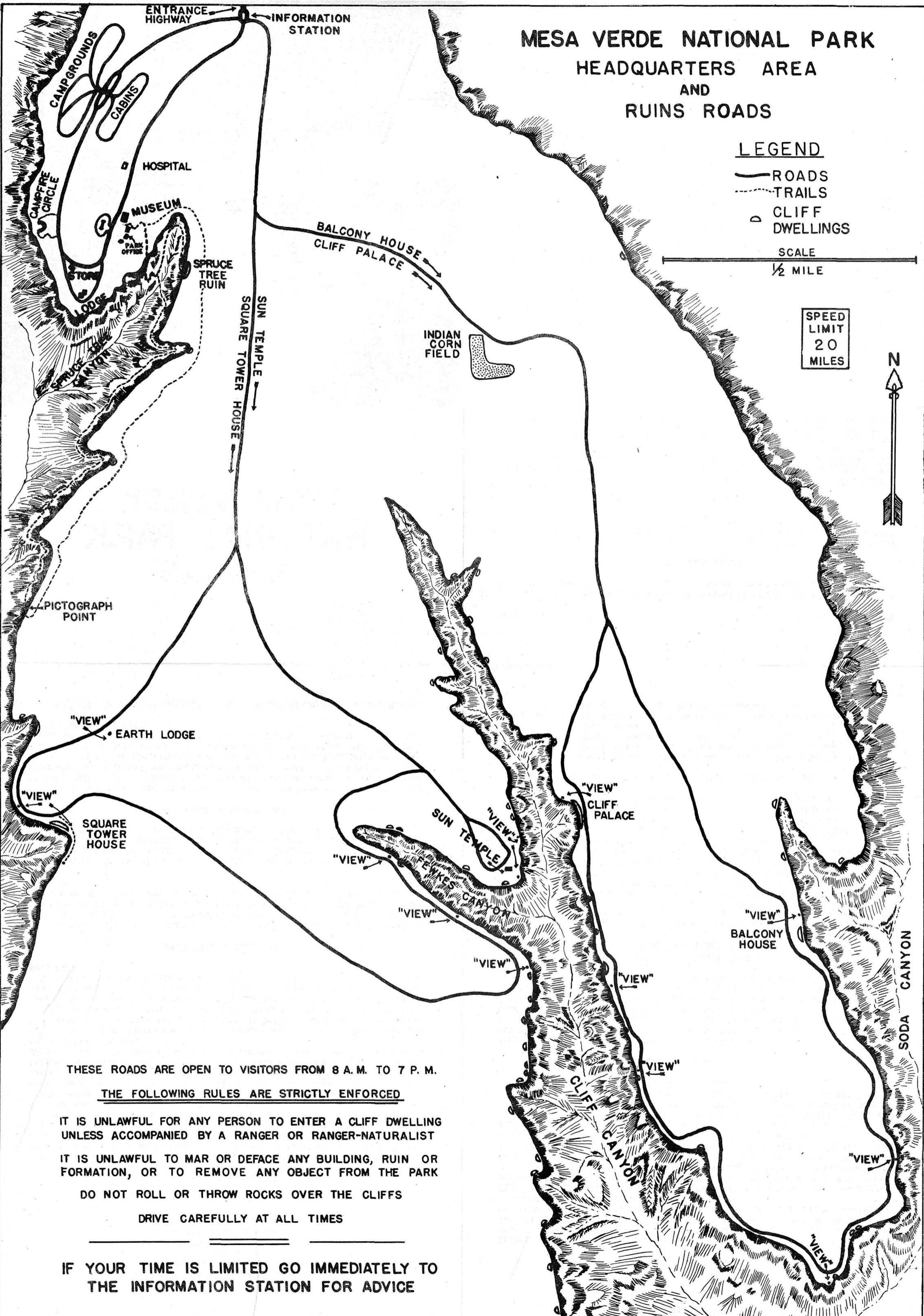
# MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK HEADQUARTERS AREA AND RUINS ROADS

## LEGEND

- ROADS
- - - TRAILS
- CLIFF DWELLINGS

SCALE  
1/2 MILE

SPEED LIMIT  
20  
MILES



THESE ROADS ARE OPEN TO VISITORS FROM 8 A. M. TO 7 P. M.

THE FOLLOWING RULES ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED

IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR ANY PERSON TO ENTER A CLIFF DWELLING UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A RANGER OR RANGER-NATURALIST

IT IS UNLAWFUL TO MAR OR DEFACE ANY BUILDING, RUIN OR FORMATION, OR TO REMOVE ANY OBJECT FROM THE PARK

DO NOT ROLL OR THROW ROCKS OVER THE CLIFFS

DRIVE CAREFULLY AT ALL TIMES

IF YOUR TIME IS LIMITED GO IMMEDIATELY TO THE INFORMATION STATION FOR ADVICE



### SUNSET CARAVAN TO PARK POINT

Daily, June 1 to August 31. Use your own car

6:30 or 7 p. m. Time is announced each day in order to arrive at Park Point for the colorful sunset. Total distance 21 miles.

### CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

Daily, June 1 to September 20

8:00 p. m. Talks on the ancient and present-day Indians of Mesa Verde and the Southwest, followed by dances by the Navaho Indians.

### SPRUCE TREE RUIN

This ruin is across the canyon from the museum. It may be visited between the hours of 8 a. m. and 6 p. m. Ranger on duty for information. Children must not enter the ruin unless accompanied by parents or teachers.

### RUINS ON THE MESA TOPS

Far View House. On entrance highway 5 miles north of the museum. Far View House and Pipe Shrine House, two excavated mesa-top pueblos, are open to visitors at all times. Near them are a dozen large unexcavated pueblos, each completely covered with a mound of earth.

Cedar Tree Tower. One mile north of the museum a side road leads one-half mile to this small pueblo ruin, consisting of a kiva with a connected tower.

Sun Temple. Two miles from the Information Station on the Ruins Roads. An ancient ceremonial building that stands on the point between Fewkes and Cliff Canyons. This point gives the finest views and pictures of Cliff Palace.

Earth Lodge. One and one-half miles from the Information Station on the Ruins Roads. A Modified Basket Maker ruin with an explanatory trailside exhibit.

### TRAILS FOR HIKERS

Pictograph Point. Trail starts at the museum; round-trip distance 3 miles. Follows base of cliff along east side of Spruce Tree and Navaho Canyons to Pictograph Point which contains an excellent group of Cliff Dweller pictographs. Return trail crosses the mesa top. Features of this cool, shady trail are two small cliff dwellings, unusual canyon views, interesting geological formations, and a wide variety of flowers, shrubs, and trees.

Cliff Dweller Dams. Trail starts on the Cedar Tree Tower road, 1 mile north of the museum. This trail passes 76 low stone dams that were formerly Cliff Dweller farming terraces. Total walking distance one-half mile.

### HORSEBACK TRIPS

Splendid trails lead in all directions. Features of these trips are magnificent canyons and large, unexcavated ruins in primitive areas that are seldom visited. Rates are reasonable.

### INDIAN CORN FIELD

One mile from Information Station on the Ruins Road. An experimental field of Indian corn, grown by Navaho Indians who use ancient methods.