Welcome to Mesa Verde National Park. Mesa Verde is the only national park set aside “to preserve the works of man.” The park is 52,073 acres, 8,100 of which is designated wilderness. The Ancestral Puebloans moved into the Mesa Verde area by AD 550, occupying the Colorado Plateau region until AD 1300. 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 special time to visit the park. However, road conditions can be challenging, and you might have to hike or ski to overlooks to view some of the Chapin Mesa cliff dwellings. Please review all your options carefully. Stop first at the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum or, after April 11, at the Far View Visitor Center. Park rangers will help you plan your visit.

Spruce Tree House

Spruce Tree House is located near the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. The 1/2-mile (.8 km) winding, paved trail includes a steep 100-ft (30 m) descent and ascent. The path is moderately strenuous. It can be icy in the early spring. Dress warmly.

March 7 to April 10
Free one-hour tours are at 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm, and 4:00 pm. Tickets are not required.

April 11 to April 30 - Site is closed for trail paving
May 1 to May 29 - Self-guided 9:00 am to 6:30 pm

Cliff Palace

Cliff Palace is the largest cliff dwelling. Tours begin April 11. The tour is one hour in length, with a walking distance of 1/4-mile (400 m). It involves climbing five, 8- to 10-foot (2.6-3 m) ladders, for a 100-foot (30 m) overall vertical ascent.

Tickets are required. Tickets are $3.00 per person, for all ages, and can only be purchased at the Far View Visitor Center.

Spruce Tree House Overlook Talk
In lieu of a tour of Spruce Tree House, rangers will offer 30-minute talks about the site. Meet the ranger just below the Chief Ranger's Office on the Spruce Tree House Trail.

March 7 to April 10
10:00 am, 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm

April 11 to April 30
11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm

Balcony House

Balcony House is the most adventurous cliff dwelling tour. Tours begin April 11. This one-hour tour involves climbing a 32-foot (10 m) ladder to enter the dwelling. At the exit, you crawl through a 12-foot long by 18-inch (4 m x 46 cm) wide tunnel, followed by a 60-foot (20 m) climb up the open cliff face using two 10-foot (3 m) ladders and a series of stone steps.

Tickets are required. Tickets are $3.00 per person, for all ages, and can only be purchased at the Far View Visitor Center.

April 11 to May 15
Tours are scheduled every hour 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

May 16 to May 29
Tours are scheduled every 1/2 hour 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

The tour begins at the Cliff Palace Overlook, an 8-mile (13 km), 20-minute drive from the Far View Visitor Center.
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