Welcome to Mesa Verde National Park! Mesa Verde offers a spectacular look into the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo people who made it their home for over 700 years, from AD 550 to 1300. Today, the park protects nearly 5,000 known archeological sites, including 600 cliff dwellings. These sites are some of the most notable and best preserved in the United States. 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 ancient America.

Visiting the Park
Spring is a lovely time to visit. Many opportunities are available to help you experience this fascinating place, but most activities depend on weather and road conditions. So please check with a ranger before beginning any of the described activities. Guide booklets are available at the Mesa Verde Visitor Center, Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, and at sites along the Mesa Top Loop Road. Stop at the Visitor Center or Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum to plan your visit.

Preserving Cliff Palace
Cliff Palace, the park’s most famous cliff dwelling, is continuing to receive essential preservation work this spring. There are a number of overlooks from which to observe this remarkable cliff dwelling as well as witness the work being done by archeologists and stabilization crews. These include Sun Point View and Sun Temple stops on the Mesa Top Loop Road; and Cliff Palace overlook on the Cliff Palace Loop Road.

Maintaining the Spruce Tree House Alcove
Although alcoves naturally and continually form through erosion, the alcove surrounding Spruce Tree House has become particularly unstable. Due to a series of rockfalls, a geologic assessment was conducted last fall to ensure the safety of visitors and staff entering the site. The results reveal the significant danger of future rockfalls, especially along pathways into and within the site. Until work can be done to reduce this threat, Spruce Tree House remains closed.

Visitor Activities
March 6 to May 26, 2016
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Mesa Verde National Park

Visitor Activities

Preservation and Stabilization Work in Cliff Palace and Spruce Tree House

Balcony House
Balcony House is the most adventurous cliff dwelling tour. This one-hour tour involves climbing a 32-foot (10 m) ladder to enter the site. You will also crawl through a 12-foot (3.7 m) long by 18-inch (46 cm) wide tunnel, and climb 60 feet (20 m) up an exposed cliff face, using two 10- to 12-foot (3.0 - 3.7 m) ladders, and a series of stone steps.

Tickets are required. Tickets must be purchased at the Visitor Center located at the park entrance.
April 10 to May 7
Tour times: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm; every hour
May 8 to May 26
Tour times: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; every hour and 9:30 am and 3:30 pm
Tours begin at the north end of the Balcony House parking lot, a 25-mile (40 km), 1-hour drive from the Visitor Center.

Spruce Tree House
Spruce Tree House is the park’s best-preserved cliff dwelling. You can observe Spruce Tree House from viewpoints near the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum.
Rangers will be available at the overlooks daily, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (with extended hours in late spring) to answer questions and share information about Spruce Tree House and the Ancestral Pueblo people who once lived there.
The Visitor Center and Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum will both help you gain insights into the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo people.

The visitor center is located just off U.S. Highway 160 near the park entrance. The museum is located 22 miles (35 km) from the Visitor Center, on Chapin Mesa. A 25-minute video is shown at the museum every half hour. See Visitor Services below for visitor center, museum, and store hours.

Petroglyph Point Trail begins near the museum. The 2.4-mile (3.9 km) trail leads to a large petroglyph panel. If the trail is dry, it 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. Check with a ranger at the museum for trail conditions and to register for the hike.

Cliff Palace Loop Road is closed to vehicular traffic until early April. During this time, it is open to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, or walking if there is no snow. No vehicles are permitted. To explore this 6-mile (10 km) road, park just outside the locked gate, but do not block the gate. Highlights include Cliff Palace and Soda Canyon overlooks (view of Balcony House).

In early April, the gate will be open daily for vehicular traffic from 8:00 am to sunset.

Knowledge of the Park

We want you to have a safe and enjoyable visit. Follow park rules, not only to protect yourself but also to preserve Mesa Verde’s archeological sites and natural environment.

- Archeological structures are fragile. Take care not to touch, sit, stand, climb, or lean on walls.
- Leashed pets can be walked along paved roads and in parking lots. Pets are not allowed on trails, in archeological sites, or in buildings. Do not leave pets unattended.
- Help us keep wildlife wild. It is illegal to feed, stalk, capture, or tease wildlife.

For Your Safety

In case of emergency, call 911

Park Road Advisory
- Watch for snowplows working on the road
- Follow all traffic signs
- Beware of rocks in the road
- Gasoline is not available in the park

High Elevation
- Mesa Verde ranges from 7,000 feet (2,134 km) elevation to 8,572 feet (2,613 km) at Park Point. The air is thin and very dry. Stay hydrated!
- Consider your physical health BEFORE hiking or going on tours.
- Carry and DRINK plenty of water.

Visitor Services

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

Mesa Verde Museum Association, Park Partner
970-529-4445, www.mesaverde.org

Information
Visitor Center, Store, and ATM
March 6 to April 9 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
April 10 to May 26 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum and Store
March 6 to April 9 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
April 10 to May 26 8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez
March 6 to May 26 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Picnic Area (not plowed in winter)
Chapin Mesa Picnic Area 8:00 am to sunset
Cliff Palace Picnic Area 8:00 am to sunset

U.S. Postal Service
March 6 to March 31
Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 3:00 pm
April 1 to May 26
Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 3:00 pm
Saturday 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

April 10 to May 26 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

March 6 to March 16 11:00 am to 3:30 pm
March 17 to April 13 11:00 am to 4:30 pm
April 14 to May 26 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Far View Terrace, Café, and Gift Shop
Opens April 14
Breakfast 7:00 am to 10:00 am
Lunch 11:00 am to 3:00 pm
Dinner (starting May 16) 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Far View Lodge, Gift Shop, and Restaurant
Opens April 14
Breakfast 7:00 am to 9:30 am
Dinner 5:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Morefield Campground and Camp Store
Off Season Camping, Limited Services
April 14 to April 27
Full campground services opens April 28

Aramark Bus Tours begin April 14. The 4-hour 700 Years Tour is offered in the morning and afternoon, and includes short walks to archeological sites on the Mesa Top Loop Road. Tickets can be purchased from Aramark at the Visitor Center, Far View Lodge, Far View Terrace, and Morefield Camp Store.

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

Spruce Tree Terrace, Café, and Gift Shop
March 6 to March 16 11:00 am to 3:30 pm
March 17 to April 13 11:00 am to 4:30 pm
April 14 to May 26 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Breakfast 7:00 am to 10:00 am
Lunch 11:00 am to 3:00 pm
Dinner (starting May 16) 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

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