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.

### Visitor Activities

**April 2 to May 25, 2017**

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#### 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. Viewpoints include the Sun Point View and Sun Temple stops on the Mesa Top Loop Road; and the 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. A geologic assessment completed in late 2015, revealed a significant danger of rockfalls along pathways into and within the site. This year, a geotechnical firm will conduct a detailed evaluation using laser imaging that will provide recommendations for treatment. Until work can be done to reduce the rockfall threat, the site remains closed.

#### Viewpoints

- **Viewpoint**: The Sun Point View and Sun Temple stops on the Mesa Top Loop Road; and the Cliff Palace overlook on the Cliff Palace Loop Road.

### Visiting the Park

- **Preservation and Stabilization Work in Cliff Palace and Spruce Tree House**

- **Spruce Tree House**
  - **Spruce Tree House** is the park’s third largest and best-preserved cliff dwelling. You can observe Spruce Tree House from viewpoints near the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum.
  - A ranger is at the overlook daily to answer questions and share information about Spruce Tree House and the Ancestral Pueblo people who once lived there. Ask a ranger at the museum for hours.

- **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.** Purchase tickets at the Visitor Center near the park entrance, or at the Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez.
  - **April 9 to May 6**
    - Tour times: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm; every hour
  - **May 7 to May 25**
    - 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.

- **Preservation and Stabilization Work in Cliff Palace and Spruce Tree House**

- **April 2 to May 25, 2017**
Explore On Your Own

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. If there is snow or ice, you may be directed to hike via the mesa top section of the trail. Check with a ranger at the museum for trail conditions and to register for the hike.

Mesa Top Loop Road is a 6-mile (10 km) drive with short paved trails to view twelve easily-accessible archeological sites, including surface sites and cliff dwelling overviews. Highlights include Square Tower House overlook, and views of Cliff Palace from Sun Point View and Sun Temple. The Mesa Top Loop Road is open daily, 8:00 am to sunset.

Cliff Palace Loop Road is open daily, 8:00 am to sunset. Highlights include Balcony House (see page 1 for information on tours and tickets), views of Cliff Palace, and the 1.2 mile (1.9 km) Soda Canyon Overlook Trail.

Visitor Services

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Information

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<td>April 2 to April 8, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm</td>
<td>April 9 to May 25, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Chapin Mesa Picnic Area, 8:00 am to sunset</td>
<td>April 2 to May 25, Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, Saturday, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm</td>
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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.

Wetherill Mesa will open April 30 or as soon as weather and road conditions permit. Explore the 5-mile Long House Loop by foot or bicycle, stopping at cliff dwelling overlooks such as Long House, Nordenskiöld #16, and Kodak House. Walk through or bicycle the Badger House Community to see early mesa top sites. Wetherill Mesa is a 45-minute drive from the turn-off near milepost 15. (Bicycles are not allowed on the Wetherill Mesa Road. Vehicles must be less than 25 feet long to drive this road. Vehicles over 8,000 lbs GVW are prohibited.)

Hiking Trails are scattered throughout the park. The most popular are the Petroglyph Point and Spruce Canyon Trails near the museum. For details and trail conditions, ask a ranger.

Far View Sites Complex includes Far View House, four other villages, and a dry reservoir. This 3/4-mile (1.2 km) trail is located four miles (6.4 km) north of the museum. Open from 8:00 am to sunset; wheelchair accessible with help.

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