Welcome

Mesa Verde preserves an extraordinary record of the Ancestral Pueblo people who made this place their home for more than 750 years. With over 52,000 acres, Mesa Verde protects nearly 5,000 archeological sites, including nearly 600 cliff dwellings to share with you and future generations.

As you explore the park, we hope you connect this place to the descendants of the Ancestral Pueblo people—the 19 Pueblos in New Mexico, the Hopi in Arizona, and Ysleta del Sur in Texas. Understanding this relationship will help you gain an appreciation for the continued diversity and continuity of both the past and present. We hope you enjoy your visit!

Visitor Services and Facilities

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<tr>
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<th>May 25 to September 2</th>
<th>September 3 to 14</th>
<th>September 15 to 28</th>
<th>Sept. 29 to Oct. 19</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center, Tour Tickets</td>
<td>7:30 am to 7:00 pm</td>
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<td>Morefield Campground Ranger Station, Tour Tickets</td>
<td>Opens May 26 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm</td>
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<td>Lodging, Food, and Shopping</td>
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<td>Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum</td>
<td>8:00 am to 6:30 pm</td>
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<td>Chief Ranger’s Office (Chapin Mesa), First Aid</td>
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<td>U.S. Post Office (Chapin Mesa) Monday through Friday Saturday</td>
<td>9:00 am to 3:00 pm 10:00 am to 2:00 pm</td>
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<td>Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk</td>
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<td>Durango Welcome Center, Tour Tickets (802 Main Avenue, Durango)</td>
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*all times subject to change without notice

Park Entrance Fees

The park entry fee is $25.00 per private car, $20.00 per motorcycle, or $12.00 per person on foot or bicycle. For commercial vehicle fees, call 970-529-4465 or visit www.nps.gov/meve. Federal Interagency annual, access, military, senior, and 4th grade passes are available at the park entrance gate. For details, visit go.nps.gov/mvfee.
This partial list of regulations is designed to help you have a safe and enjoyable visit, and to protect Mesa Verde's natural ecosystems and fragile archeological sites. For more on how to respectfully enjoy the park, please visit go.nps.gov/mpolicies or ask a park employee.

Don't Rely on GPS or Cell Phone Coverage
GPS is not reliable in the area and cell service is limited once you drive past the park entrance. Wi-Fi service is available at Morefield Campground Store, Far View Terrace and Lodge, and Spruce Tree Terrace.

Share the Road
Park roads are steep, narrow, and winding. Pullouts are available for slower traffic; to use so may others pass. Trailers and towed vehicles are not allowed beyond Morefield Campground, but trailer parking is available near the park entrance.

Rockfall Alert
The park road is built on unstable soils. As a result, rocks and boulders can break loose and fall on the road, posing a hazard to you and your car. If you see boulders blocking the road, do not attempt to move them. Call 970-529-4461 or contact a park employee.

Rockfall Alert
Visiting cliff dwellings is not recommended. Cut overhangs are dangerous. Keep your food, coolers, cooking equipment, and garbage secured in your vehicle or hard-sided trailer.

Pets need protection too
For your pet’s sake, do not leave them in your vehicle without proper ventilation and water, and only when temperatures are not hazardous to their health. A kennel at Morefield Campground is available through October 16. Leashed pets may join you on paved roads, parking lots, and in the campground. There are some pet-friendly trails on Wetherill Mesa and the Mesa Top Loop, but please clean up after your pet. Service animals are always welcome; therapy animals are subject to pet restrictions.

Be Prepared and Have a Safe Visit
Plan ahead
Before taking any tour or trail, plan ahead and consider your limits. At 7,000 feet (2135 m) elevation, you may feel short of breath, nauseated, or tire easily.

Founded by Mesa Verde National Park
National Park Superintendent Cliff Spencer
P.O. Box 8
Mesa Verde, Colorado 81330

Mesa Verde National Park
Dehydration is a common problem in Mesa Verde. Carry water with you everywhere, and drink it. You can fill reusable water bottles at all park facilities, including Cliff Palace and Wetherill Mesa Kiosk.

Water is vital
Don’t rely on sources of water in the park. If you are feeling thirsty, stop and drink water. You can also find water fountains at all park facilities, including Cliff Palace and Wetherill Mesa Kiosk.

Wildlife
Chasing, capturing, feeding, or teasing wild life is illegal and dangerous. Keep your food, coolers, cooking equipment, and garbage secured in your vehicle or hard-sided trailer.

Wear sturdy shoes or boots. Bring and drink plenty of water. Shade is limited throughout much of the park, so bring a hat and sunscreen.

Wear sturdy shoes or boots. Bring and drink plenty of water. Shade is limited throughout much of the park, so bring a hat and sunscreen.

In an emergency, contact a park ranger or call 911
Watch for wildlife, obey all traffic signs, and do not stop on the roadway.

Bicyclists, use caution! The road is steep with few shoulders. Ride single file and stay to the right. Bicyclists must comply with all traffic regulations. Bicycle group size is limited to six on roads.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems
The use of drones within the park is illegal.

For more information, visit go.nps.gov/mpolicies.

If You Have a Half-Day...

• Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center First, stop at the Visitor Center at the park entrance where park staff will help plan your visit. While there, enjoy the exhibits and browse through the store for a selection of books and trail guides. This is also a good place to purchase tour tickets for Cliff Palace, Balcony House, or Long House tours. See page 1 for facility hours. See page 8 for tours.

• Mesa Top Loop Road (6 miles/10 km)
Twenty miles (32.2 km) beyond the Visitor Center is the Mesa Top Loop. This scenic, 45-minute to one-hour drive includes six stops covering 700 years of Ancestral Pueblo history. See page 6 for details.

If You Have One Full Day...

You’ll have time for all half-day activities, plus:

• Ranger-Guided Tour of a Cliff Dwelling Join a one-hour, ranger-guided tour of either Balcony House or Cliff Palace. Tickets are required. See page 8.

• Far View Sites Four miles (6.4 km) north of the Museum, enjoy this self-guided walk through ancient mesa top communities. See page 4.

If You Have More Than Two Full Days...

You’ll have the opportunity to tour all cliff dwellings, drive all the park roads, and:

• Go for a Hike Hike the Prater Ridge Trail at Morefield, try to decipher the art on the Petroglyph Point Trail, or discover the lushness of Spruce Canyon. Ask for a trail guide and take a hike to see some of the park’s hidden gems.

• Attend an evening program The free Morefield Campground Evening Program offers a variety of topics on both natural and cultural history. See page 4 for details and times.

• Plan ahead and know your limits. The park is at 7,000 ft (2135 m) in elevation, so you may feel short of breath.

Accessibility
Due to elevation and the nature of cliff dwellings, many of Mesa Verde’s premier sites are difficult to access. Cliff Palace, Balcony House, and Long House are strenuous and include ladders, uneven steps, and elevation changes. However, many cliff dwellings and mesa top sites are visible from overlooks, short paved trails, and from your vehicle. Ask for an Accessibility Handout.
Exploring on Your Own - No Fee

Mesa Top Loop Road

The Mesa Top Loop Road is a 6-mile (10 km) drive that is a tour through time. Along the road, you’ll find short, easily-accessible paved trails to view 12 archeological sites, including surface sites and overlooks of cliff dwellings — the ancient homes and villages of the Ancient Pueblo people who lived here for more than 700 years. 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.

Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum

Dioramas, artifacts, and exhibits provide insight into Ancestral Pueblo people’s lifeways. A 25-minute orientation film is shown on the hour and half-hour. A museum store, water, restrooms, cafe, gift shop, and post office are located nearby. See page 1 for hours.

Spruce Tree House Museum

Mesa Verde’s best-preserved and third largest cliff dwelling was constructed between 1211 and 1278. Built into a natural alcove, it has 130 rooms, eight kivas, and may have housed 60 to 80 people. Although Spruce Tree House is closed due to recent rockfalls (see page 7), you can observe the cliff dwelling from viewpoints near the museum.

Exploring on Your Own - No Fee

Park Fun for Kids

Junior Ranger Program

Hey, kid! Become a Junior Ranger and have a great time learning about Mesa Verde National Park.

Children ages 4 and up can pick up a Junior Ranger booklet at the Visitor Center, Morefield Ranger Station, or Museum. Explore the park, complete the activities, then take the booklet to a ranger for review. You’ll earn a Junior Ranger badge for a job well done. Exploring parks and learning how to care for them is what Junior Rangers do!

Junior Ranger Station

Visit the Junior Ranger Station, located in the courtyard of the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. Enjoy the kid’s activities, pick up a Junior Ranger booklet or if you’ve finished, get sworn in and receive your Junior Ranger badge.

Junior Ranger Station

Open June 15 to August 17 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm

“Open longer as staffing allows

Kids who present their completed booklet and badge at any Mesa Verde Museum Association store will receive a 10% discount on their entire purchase. (See below for locations.)

Exploring Morefield Campground

Camping offers many opportunities to discover the natural side of Mesa Verde. For a fun, family-oriented way to explore the trails, check out a Discovery Pass from the Morefield Ranger Station (or Junior Ranger station). Use the field guides and other items to learn about plants, rocks, and wildlife. Complete the Junior Naturalist Activity booklet to learn even more!

Morefield Campground Ranger Station

Open May 26 to September 2 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Mesa Verde Museum Association

Providing Memories, Inspiring Stewardship

The Mesa Verde Museum Association (MVMA) is the innovative, educational nonprofit partner that inspires life-long stewardship of Mesa Verde’s cultural and natural heritage. Since 1910, MVMA has supported education and research in the park through publications, a membership program, and retail stores. Proceeds from all programs generate support for the park each year.

Mesa Verde Museum Association

Visit our new Mesa Verde Museum Association store located in the Durango Welcome Center.

Enhance Your Visit at MVMA Stores

You’ll find an outstanding selection of Mesa Verde publications and products at MVMA stores, that will help you further explore and appreciate this park’s incomparable cultural and natural resources. MVMA stores are located in the Visitor Center, Museum, Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk, Durango Welcome Center (902 Main Avenue, Durango), and online at www.mesavere.org. See page 1 for hours.

You Can Make a Difference!

You can help preserve and protect the park for future generations by becoming a MVMA member or supporting the Mesa Verde Foundation (MVF)! Your tax-deductible membership dues and/or donations will support the work of these partners.

MVMA members receive periodic e-newsletters, a discount in MVMA stores and online, and discounts at most cooperating association bookstores in public lands across the country. To learn more, visit www.mesavere.org/membership or call 970-529-4445

MVF is a non-profit, philanthropic partner that works to secure funding for capital improvements, special projects, and educational endeavors that promote an understanding of the park’s cultural and natural resources. For information about the Foundation or to make a gift to support the park, visit www.mesaverefoundation.org.

You can also contact them at info@mesaverefoundation.org or 303-321-3120.

Backcountry Hikes & Special Tours

Each year, Mesa Verde offers unique visitor opportunities to explore the park’s backcountry. Due to the popularity of these tours, they sell out quickly, often months in advance. Before your next visit, go to www.recreation.gov to find out what’s available and reserve online.

Digital Experiences

• Mesa Verde National Park Mobile App

Here is an opportunity to help you plan your next trip or explore the park in a new way. Free from the App Store and Google Play.

• Mesa Verde Voices

A pod series exploring the lives of our Ancestral Pueblo people, connecting the experience of people from the past with people of today. Visit mesaverdevoices.org.

Other Destinations

The Ancestral Pueblo culture covered the entire Four Corners region, not just Mesa Verde. Want to learn more? Here are other pueblo-related destinations to visit:

• Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum - 20 miles
• Aztec Ruins NM - 75 miles
• Canyon de Chelly NM - 152 miles
• Chimney Rock NM - 81 miles
• Casa Diablo HNP - 141 miles
• Horsehoe NM - 46 miles

Mesa Verde Museum Association

Present this coupon at any MVMA store for 10% off your purchase.

Expiring date: 12/31/2019

Coupon is good on all regularly priced items. Not valid with other discounts.

Summer Visitor Guide
Help Us Protect Black Bears

Black bears have a natural curiosity, but are usually wary enough of humans to keep their distance. But over time, a bear’s natural behavior can be altered and increase the chance of a human-bear encounter. Why? Because intentionally or unintentionally, people feeding bears can lead bears to become habituated to people and their food. They may become aggressive as they return looking for more food, threatening humans and property.

What attracts them? Food or drinks, toiletries or other scented items, trash and recycling, and even empty coolers or water containers.

Keep wild things wild. Please don’t be one of the reasons a wildlifeguard must do the last thing in the world they want to do—put down a habituated bear.

Here’s What You Should Do
•Store all food, trash, toiletries, or other scented items out-of-sight in a hard-sided, locked vehicle, camper, or food locker. Do not store these items in a tent or soft-sided pop-up trailer.
•Help bears maintain a healthy fear of humans. Stay at least 100 yards (91 m) away to watch or photograph them. If you see a bear close, stay still and, as much as much noise as possible, to scare it away but don’t run away or turn your back.
•Secure all trash in a park trash can and ensure the lid is locked.
•Report all bear sightings to the camp store, lodge staff, or park ranger.

Wetherell Mesa

Wetherell Mesa Snack Bar
Located at the Wetherell Mesa Information Kiosk, the snack bar offers items such as water, soda, chips, and crackers.
•May 23 to September 2
10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Spruce Tree Terrace Cafe and Gift Shop
Open Year-Round)
Convenient cafeteria service with indoor and outdoor patio dining, offering American classics and Southwest specialties and a seasonally updated menu filled with fresh, delicious sandwiches, salads, entrees, and desserts.
•May 25 to August 14 9:00 am to 6:30 pm
•August 15 to October 23 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Far View Lounge

The Far View Lounge serves pub fare, appetizers and snacks, plus a wide variety of specialty cocktails, beer, and wine.
•Open May 25 to September 24 10:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Chapin Mesa

Chapin Mesa Spruce Tree Terrace Cafe and Gift Shop
Breakfast Lunch Dinner Espresso Bar
May 25 to May 30
7:00 am to 10:00 am 7:00 am to 3:00 pm 7:00 am to 7:00 pm 7:00 am to 7:30 pm
May 31 to September 2
7:00 am to 10:00 am 7:00 am to 3:00 pm 7:00 am to 7:00 pm 7:00 am to 7:30 pm

Metate Room Restaurant

The Metate Room is an award winner for sustainable cuisine. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are strongly recommended.

Far View Area

Far View Lounge

The Far View Lounge is located at milepost 15 and includes the Metate Room Restaurant and Far View Lounge. The Lodge has 150 rooms in two room types, Kiva and Kiva Deluxe View. Enjoy a peaceful retreat that provides breathtaking views, wildlife watching, and stargazing opportunities.

Why We Are Here: Preserving Your National Park

While visiting the park, you may see people working in archeological sites or out on the park’s landscape. They are members of Mesa Verde’s resource staff, or one of our many cooperating scientists, researchers, or volunteers. The significance of Mesa Verde National Park lies in the number and remarkable state of preservation of its archeological resources, as well as its diverse array of natural resources including its plants and animals. Ensuring these resources are protected for you and future generations to enjoy is why we are here.

Cultural Resources

Mesa Verde is best known for its cliff dwellings, but it also offers evidence of rich cultural traditions extending back many centuries before the Ancestral Pueblo built these magnificent structures. The cultural resource program at Mesa Verde focuses on the preservation of these archeological resources. They identify and document the attributes of each artifact, feature, and site. Then they determine and implement the best preservation treatment needed.

Cultural resource staff perform the preservation stabilization work since 2011 due to extensive cracking and wall deformation in the southern half of the site. Most of the work to restore the trails, retaining walls, and 10 kivas has been completed. The engineering analyses of the slope movement is still ongoing.

These and other cultural resource projects ensure that park resources are maintained for the enjoyment and education of the public and for contemporary Native American peoples who hold these places as sacred.

Natural Resources

Although the park’s archeology is world renowned, less well known are the park’s natural resources. Mesa Verde is a hot spot for rare endemic plant species that grow nowhere else in the world. Many of these rare plants, such as the Chapin Mesa milkvetch, are associated with old-growth pinyon-Juniper woodlands that dominate much of the park’s natural communities. Multiple springs and seeps dot the landscape and provide water to support a diversity of plants and wildlife in an arid environment.

These important natural resources are inventoried, documented, assessed and monitored by natural resource staff. When the condition of these resources deteriorates or natural processes are altered such as from introduction of invasive species or more frequent wildfires associated with climate change, then the park’s natural resource staff work to restore natural conditions and processes.

The park is a slice of the Rocky Mountains when it comes to wildlife species. The park sits on the edge of the Rockies and the high desert Colorado Plateau. Its diverse vegetation communities provide habitat for healthy populations of elk, bighorn sheep, mule deer, mountain lions, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, and other bird species.

Current and possible future projects to restore native species to Mesa Verde include species such as sharp-tail grouse, beavers, round-tail chub, and bighorn sheep.

Here’s What You Should Do

•Store all food, trash, toiletries, or other scented items out-of-sight in a hard-sided, locked vehicle, camper, or food locker. Do not store these items in a tent or soft-sided pop-up trailer.
•Help bears maintain a healthy fear of humans. Stay at least 100 yards (91 m) away to watch or photograph them. If you see a bear close, stand still and, as much as much noise as possible, to scare it away but don’t run away or turn your back.
•Secure all trash in a park trash can and ensure the lid is locked.
•Report all bear sightings to the camp store, lodge staff, or park ranger.

Tread Lightly!
You can play an important role in the continued preservation of Mesa Verde’s remarkable resources.

•Do not sit, stand, lean, or climb on the walls of the fragile, ancient structures, enter any of the rooms.
•Stay on marked trails to avoid trampling plants or unseen archeological features beneath your feet.
•Leave all natural objects and artifacts as you find them. Please do not create or add to artifact collections.
•Observe wildlife from a distance. For your own safety and theirs, do not follow or approach them.
•Go no mark on archeological or natural stone surfaces. Graffiti is destructive, inappropriate, and illegal in a national park.
•Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
Touring a Cliff Dwelling - Fee

Cliff Palace and Balcony House are popular ranger-guided cliff dwelling tours. A tour of Long House, on Wetherill Mesa, can be taken on the same day as a Cliff Palace or Balcony House tour.

There are no height or age restrictions for tours, but children must be capable of climbing ladders by themselves. If not, they must be carried in a backpack while on a tour.

Tour tickets are $5.00 per tour, per person, regardless of age. (Pass discounts do not apply.)

Purchase tour tickets at:
- Visitor Center
- Morefield Ranger Station
- Durango Welcome Center, 802 Main Avenue, Durango
- Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum (limited hours, see hint below)**

For hours of operation, see Visitor Services section on page 1.

**Hint: You’ll get the best selection of times for ranger-guided tours at the Visitor Center, Morefield Ranger Station, or the Durango Welcome Center. Options may be more limited at the Museum.

Tickets will be sold at the Museum from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm through September 3. (After September 3, ticket sales hours may be reduced. Ask a ranger for times.)

Cliff Palace
Mesa Verde’s Largest Cliff Dwelling
On this one-hour tour you will descend uneven stone steps and climb four ladders, with an elevation change of 100 feet (30 m). Total walking distance is ½ mile (0.4 km). Tour begins near the Cliff Palace overlook, a 23-mile (37 km), one-hour drive from the Visitor Center.

May 25 to September 7
Every half-hour: 9:00 am to 6:00 pm
September 8 to October 19
Every hour: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
October 20: Closed for season

Balcony House
Most Adventurous Cliff Dwelling Tour
On this one-hour, ¼-mile (0.4 km) tour you will climb a 32-foot (9.8 m) ladder, crawl through an 18-inch wide (45 cm) and 12-foot (3.7 m) long tunnel, and climb up a 60-foot (20 m) open cliff face with stone steps and two 10-foot (3 m) ladders to exit. The tour begins at the north end of the Balcony House parking lot, a 25-mile (40.2 km), 1½ hours drive from the Visitor Center.

May 25 to August 17
Every half-hour: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
August 18 to September 21
Every hour: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
September 22: Closed for season

Long House
Most In-Depth Tour
This two-hour tour involves hiking 2.25 miles (3.6 km) round-trip, and climbing two 15-foot (4.5 m) ladders within the site. Elevation gain is about 130 feet (40 m). The tour begins at the Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk, a 27-mile (43.5 km), 1¼ hour drive from the Visitor Center. Vehicles over 25 feet (8 m) long are not allowed on the Wetherill Mesa Road. The tour will end at the Long House trailhead, giving you the option of exploring more of Wetherill Mesa on your own.

May 25 to September 14
9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, and 4:00 pm
September 15 to October 19
9:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 2:00 pm
October 20: Closed for season

Contact the Aramark desk at the Visitor Center or Far View Lodge to learn about escorted bus tours. Call 800-449-2288, 970-529-4422 locally, or visit and book online at visitmesaverde.com.