Sallow caves in central Arizona protect masonry dwellings built in the early 14th Century. These and additional sites in the surrounding areas were home to the Salado people. They left no written record of their existence, no chronology of events that shaped their society. The most vivid signs of life are in their pottery, in remnants of fabric, in smoke stains from their cook fires, and in handprints on pueblo walls.

Most of what we know - or think we know - about the Salado has been reconstructed from what remains of their material culture - their personal and community belongings. In addition, plants and animals that made up their natural environment still thrive here. Like pieces of a puzzle, each element contributes to the larger picture of Salado culture. Take a virtual tour of Tonto National Monument to learn more about these people and their environment.

**Features**

Three virtual trails (the Cactus Patch Trail, the Lower Cliff Dwelling Trail, and the Upper Cliff Dwelling Trail) are presented in this module. Each trail provides their own unique stories about the natural and cultural resources of the park.

Select a trail that interests you the most, or take the time to follow all three!

- **Cactus Patch Trail**
  
  Just outside the visitor center, connecting the Lower and Upper Cliff Dwelling trails runs the Cactus Patch Trail. Ever wonder what a cactus is, or how many different cactus there might be? This is the trail for you! Learn about two different plants and how they have adapted to living in such harsh conditions. Keep a careful eye out, however, for not all ten plants are cactus. See if you can figure out which ones are not.

Tonto National Monument, located in central Arizona, was once the home of the Salado culture. Take a stroll along one of the trails to learn about the natural and culture wonders found here. (Tonto National Monument)

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From the valley rising 2000 feet to the mountain tops, spreading through open areas, sheltered among rocks, nestled in canyons, and hidden among washes are different local environments, each with their own community of wildlife.

— Tonto National Monument official Web site

Visit Views of the National Parks online:

www2.nature.nps.gov/views
The Salado lived in Tonto Basin for about 300 years. Sometime after AD 1450 they left. No one knows why, though the Salado were not the only ones to depart their homelands in the southern mountains of the Southwest around this time. The cliff dwellings, less than 150 years old, were abandoned to the sun and wind.

— Tonto National Monument official Web site