

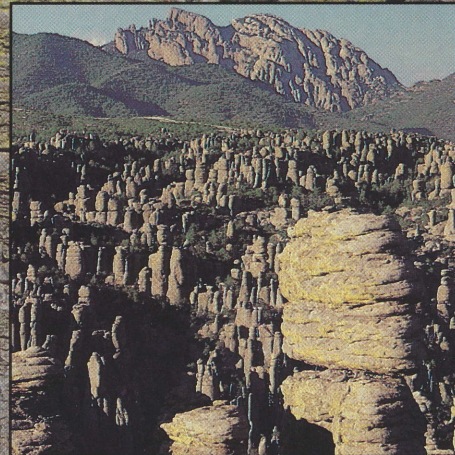
# Chiricahua

National Monument  
Arizona

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Official Map and Guide





David Muench

Cover photo by Chuck Milliken

## Life in the Mountains

Exploring Chiricahua National Monument is exploring a fantasy world of extraordinary rock sculptures that were created by the forces of nature over millions of years. Called the "Land of the Standing-Up Rocks" by Chiricahua Apaches and later the "Wonderland of Rocks" by pioneers, this northwest corner of the Chiricahua Mountains harbors towering rock spires, massive stone columns, and balanced rocks weighing hundreds of tons that perch delicately on small pedestals. Where hundreds of these rocks occur together, such as in the Heart of Rocks (insert above), the landscape appears as a rugged badlands.

The story behind the rocks is not completely understood, but geologists believe that about 27 million years ago violent volcanic eruptions from nearby Turkey Creek caldera spewed forth thick white-hot ash. The ash cooled and fused into an almost 2,000-foot thick layer of dark volcanic rock known as rhyolite. The Chiricahua Mountains formed from this rock upheaval, and then the mas-

ters of erosion—water, wind, and ice—began sculpting the rock into odd formations. Erosion carved along weak vertical and horizontal cracks forming the fascinating rock forms preserved today in Chiricahua National Monument.

The Chiricahua Mountains are a world apart from the surrounding Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts. In these cool, moist forested "sky islands" dwell many plants and animals of the Southwest and—what makes these mountains different—a number of Mexican species. Mexico is 50 miles to the south, yet the Chiricahuas special mix of life is more like that found in the Mexican Sierra Madres than in these highlands. Influence from the south is strong; many trees, wildflowers, and animals have crossed the border into Chiricahua National Monument. Most conspicuous are the unusual birds, such as Hepatic tanager, Red-faced Warbler, and Elegant trogon, which make the area a natural mecca for birders. Mexican influence includes mammals, such as the Chiricahua fox squirrel,

Kent and Donna Danner



Alligator juniper



Chiricahua fox squirrel

coatimundis, and peccaries, and trees, including the Chihuahuan pine and Apache pine. Mexican species intermingle with plants and animals more common to Southwest mountains. The plant variety is rich, from cactus in the lowlands, to oaks, alligator juniper, and Arizona cypress in canyon forests, to manzanita-buckthorn-skunkbush chaparral on ridges, to ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and aspen that cover the highest slopes.

## A Place of Refuge

The Chiricahua Mountains were the homeland of the Chiricahua Apaches. From these mountains the Apaches, led by Cochise and Geronimo, launched attacks against the tide of pioneers for more than 25 years. Their resistance slowed, but did not stop, settlement, and when Geronimo's

band surrendered in 1886 and was removed to a distant reservation, a new way of life took over. Among the first pioneers to settle in the area were Neil and Emma Erickson, a Swedish immigrant couple. Their "little home in the foothills of the Chiricahuas," located in remote Bonita Canyon,

included a farm and cattle ranch. The only neighbors were the Stafford family, who lived in a log cabin close by. By the 1920s one of the Ericksons' daughters, Lillian, and her husband, Ed Riggs, had turned the homestead into a guest ranch. Lillian, the strong-willed "Lady Boss," named the

ranch Faraway Ranch, because it was so "god-awful far away from everything." Together she and Ed explored the Chiricahua wilderness, with its "wonderful cliff formations." They built trails and took guests on horseback trips to see the "Wonderland of Rocks." In 1922 they showed pho-



Ed and Lillian Riggs

tographs of the rock formations at county fairs and chambers of commerce and promoted the idea of a national park. Two years later, in 1924, Chiricahua National Monument was established to preserve the area's natural wonders. The background photo shows the ranch about 1908.

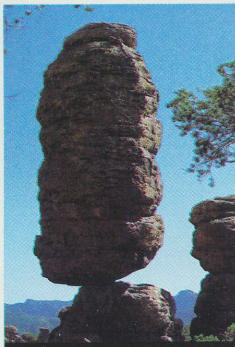


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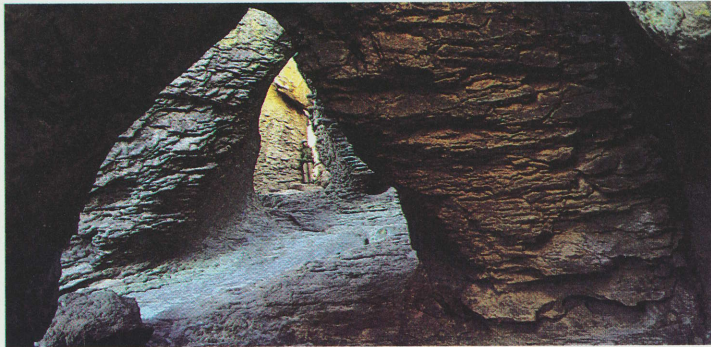
David Muench

**Lookout Point**, located along the Massai Point Nature Trail, offers views of unusual rock formations.



Chuck Milliken

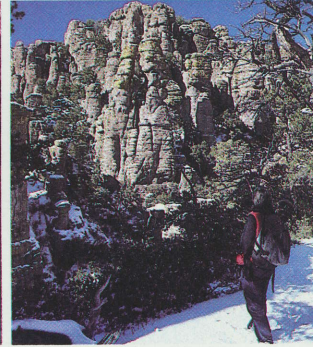
**Pinnacle Balanced Rock** is one of several spectacular features in the Heart of Rocks.



Tom Bean

A rock grotto created by wind and water erosion is found along the Echo Canyon Trail. It is just one of

the rock formations that you hike under, over, around, and through on the 3½-mile loop trail.



**Echo Canyon Trail** is a trail for all seasons, as are all the park's footpaths.

## Exploring Chiricahua

Open daily, the visitor center offers information, exhibits, a slide show, and sales of detailed hiking maps, books, and other publications. Its ranger staff can help you plan your visit. Schedules of the park programs offered in spring and summer—guided walks and talks—are posted. For more information write to: Superintendent, Chiricahua National Monument, Dos Cabezas Route, Box 6500, Willcox, AZ 85643, or call 520-824-3560.

**Scenic Drive** Climbing gradually through oak-juniper and pine forests, Bonita Canyon Drive winds 8 miles to the mountains' crest and Massai Point. The overlook gives commanding views of the park, desert valleys beyond, and the landmark peaks of

Sugarloaf Mountain and Cochise Head. As you drive back, stop at the roadside pullouts to see rock formations, other geologic features, and exhibits.

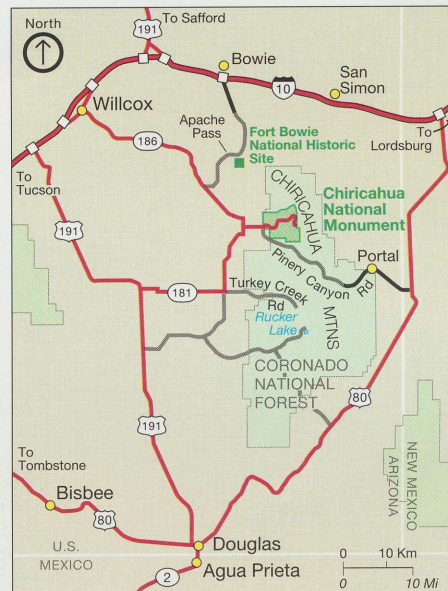
**Trails** More than 20 miles of trails wind through the park. They go past unusual rock formations—Duck on a Rock, Totem Pole, and Big Balanced Rock—and explore park forests. They lead to a small natural bridge and a ledge of volcanic hailstones, evidence of ancient eruptions that created the rock of Chiricahua. Trails range from ¼ mile to 9 miles roundtrip. For more information, ask for a park hiking brochure.

**Campground** Open all year, the park campground provides first-come, first-served camping with tables, grills, restrooms, and water for tents and for trailers up to 26 feet long.

**Faraway Ranch and Stafford Cabin** Grounds of the ranch and cabin homestead are open all year; a trail guide is available. Tours of the main house at Faraway Ranch are conducted daily.

**Safety Tips and Regulations** Pace yourself: high altitudes and warm summer temperatures can cause exhaustion. Carry ample water on hikes. Summer thunderstorms may feature intense lightning. During storms stay low and avoid open areas. Return to your vehicle if

possible. Watch for fallen rocks on roads. All natural and historical features and wildlife in the park are protected by law; do not disturb or feed wildlife. Do not collect firewood. Hunting is prohibited. Pets must be leashed at all times. They are restricted to the trails between the campground, Faraway Ranch, and the visitor center and are prohibited on all others. Mountain bikes are restricted to established paved roads and prohibited on monument trails.



**There are no services—gasoline, food, restaurants—at Chiricahua National Monument.**

 Picnic area

**Distance indicator**

CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST

## CHIRICAHUA

NATIONAL  
MONUMENT

CORONADO  
NATIONAL  
FOREST

Entrance Station

To Willcox and Douglas

ERICKSON

Pinery Canyon Road  
(closed in winter)

North



Private property exists within the national forest. Check with a forest ranger for details.

0 1 Kilometer

To Rustler Park,  
Cave Creek and 

NORTH FORK