Canyon de Chelly National Monument

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Canyon de Chelly National Monument
P.O. Box 588
Chinle, Arizona 86503
www.nps.gov/cach

Planning Your Visit

For nearly 5,000 years, people have lived in these canyons – longer than anyone has lived uninterrupted anywhere on the Colorado Plateau. Remains of their homes and images on the canyon walls tell us their stories. Today, the Navajo people or Dine' make their homes, raise their crops, and farm the lands in the canyon.

Canyon de Chelly National Monument was established in 1931 to preserve the natural, archeological, and cultural resources. The park is unique among National Park Service units, as it is comprised entirely of Navajo Tribal Trust Land and embraces nearly 84,000 acres. The National Park Service continues to work in partnership with the Navajo Nation to manage park resources and sustain this living Navajo community.

Important Updates

Currently, the National Park Service and the Navajo Nation are working to develop a cooperative management plan which will require the help of canyon residents, several tribal departments and other agencies. The management plan will help to better manage resources, clearly define agency responsibilities, and involve local people in management decisions.

There is no fee for entering the park; however, the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department (NPRD) is managing the Cottonwood Campground and is now collecting camping fees.

The NPRD may collect fees for backcountry permits in the future and will provide an official news release as changes occur.

For campground rates or questions regarding these changes, please contact the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department at 928-674-2106, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Park Hours and Fees

The Visitor Center is open daily all year from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, but closed December 25th for Christmas. The North and South Rim Drives including the White House Trail remain open all year.

The Visitor Center features a bookstore and orientation video with park staff to assist with your visit. Pets are not allowed in the Visitor Center.

There is no entrance fee; however, donations are appreciated. There is a donation box located inside the visitor center. As a non-fee area, the park does not issue National Park Passes, Golden Age, Eagle or Access Passports.

For more information about the park, call (928)674-5500 or visit www.nps.gov/cach.

Time Change and Climate

The Navajo Nation observes Daylight Savings Time from March through November. During this period, the time is one hour ahead from the rest of Arizona, but is the same time as Colorado, New Mexico and Utah.

Canyon de Chelly is located at 5,500 feet in elevation. The weather and canyon conditions can be unpredictable and extreme, so be prepared for all possibilities.

Spring is typically cool and windy with high temperatures from 50 to 70 degrees and lows averaging 35 degrees. Expect possibilities of dust storms and canyon flooding.

Summer is generally hot and dry. High temperatures range from 85 to 100 degrees with lows averaging 51 degrees. Carry and drink plenty of water when outdoors.

Fall is warm and often wet with high temperatures from 60 to 80 degrees and lows averaging 40 degrees. Expect possibility of lightning, thunderstorms, and flash floods.

Winter is usually cold and breezy. High temperatures range from 40 to 60 degrees with lows averaging 18 degrees. Expect possibility of 1-4 inches of snow and freezing nighttime temperatures.

Backcountry Areas

For the safety of visitors, the protection of park resources, and the privacy of canyon residents, travel into the backcountry of the park is permitted only with a backcountry permit and an authorized guide.

Out of respect for the canyon residents' privacy and property, recreational vehicles such as off-road utility vehicles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and dirt bikes are not permitted in the park. Traveling off-road by vehicle, motorbike, ATV or bicycle is not permitted as there are no established areas within the park.

Canyon tours are generally available all year round; however, the Superintendent may close or restrict visitor access into the canyon due to hazardous conditions or for the protection of resources. Inquire at Visitor Center for updates on canyon closures.

Camping overnight is permitted in the designated campgrounds only (no at-large camping). Camping in the backcountry requires several documents in addition to a backcountry permit and authorized guide (see handout **Canyon Tours**).

The National Park Service assumes no responsibility for vehicle damage, loss or towing expenses within Canyon de Chelly National Monument. Entering the canyon is at your own risk. You are responsible for your own safety as well as that of everyone in your group.

Safety Tips

Canyon de Chelly is a natural area with canyons, cliffs and other hazards. Remain alert and be safety conscious at all times.

- Be aware of your surroundings. Rock falls, strong winds, thunderstorms, and flash floods can occur any time.
- Protect your belongings. Lock your vehicle doors and windows and take valuables with you.
- Be respectful of residents and animals living in the canyon below. Do not throw rocks over canyon edge.
  Avoid trampling cryptobiotic soil crusts. Use established paths or trails.
- Be aware of others using the paths and trail. Walk single file and do not run.
- Know your physical limits and abilities. Prevent heat exhaustion; drink water often and avoid strenuous activities in the heat of the day.
- Stay away from metal railings or high areas during thunderstorms.
- Stay behind retaining walls at overlooks. Strong winds and gusts can be hazardous.

Park Regulations

Canyon de Chelly holds many important clues to the past that need to be protected and preserved for future generations. Help protect yourself and your park by following these rules:

- Pets are not allowed on hiking trails or on canyon tours, even when using your own vehicle. Pets must be leashed at all times in the parking lots or campground. Owners are to pick up after pets.
- Do not wander away from your group, especially in the backcountry. Guides must remain with group.
- Do not touch, collect or remove natural features. Leave rocks, plants, animals, artifacts or rock art undisturbed.
- Do not sit, lean, walk or climb on boulders or on walls. Rocks or walls may collapse or cause damage.
- Do not enter, alter or deface archeological sites.
- Do not enter private property without landowner's permission.
- Do not write, draw or carve on rock walls. Defacing the canyon walls is prohibited.
- Do not hunt, feed or disturb wild or domestic animals. Animals may charge or bite.
- Do not take photographs from the rims or in the canyon of Navajo people, their homes or animals without permission.
- Leave no trace of your visit. Carry out and dispose of trash properly.

Penalties for violations under Section 6 of the Archeological Resources Protection Act include up to $250,000 in fines and/or up to 5 years imprisonment.

Self Guided Activities

There are two paved rim drives with overlooks for viewing the canyon below. Drives are accessible sunrise to sunset in your own vehicle without a guide. Only one public trail is available to hike. No restroom facilities along the trail or rim drives.

North Rim Drive
About 18 miles from the Visitor Center to the last overlook. Allow 2 hours to visit all 3 overlooks to view Canyon del Muerto. Best for morning photos.

South Rim Drive
About 16 miles from the Visitor Center to the last overlook. Pavement ends at Spider Rock Overlook. Allow 2 hours to visit all 7 overlooks to view Canyon de Chelly. Best for afternoon photos.

White House Trail
The trailhead is about 6 miles from the Visitor Center. This moderately strenuous switchback trail descends 600 feet down and is 1 ¼ miles one-way. Take at least 2 liters of drinking water and allow 2 hours to complete the trail. Stay on established trail and do not go beyond the site without an authorized guide.

Wheelchair Accessibility
Available at: Tsegi Overlook, Junction Overlook, White House Overlook, Spider Rock Overlook and Massacre Cave Overlook.

Lodging

There are three motels located within 3 miles of the park. Contact motels directly for prices and availability. Reservations are recommended from March through October. This listing is for information only.

Best Western
- (928)674-5875 or 800-WESTERN
- P.O. Box 295, Chinle, AZ 86503, www.canyondechelly.com
- Gift shop, restaurant, indoor pool, and internet access

Holiday Inn
- (928)674-5000 or 800-HOLIDAY
- P.O. Box 1889, Chinle, AZ 86503, www.holiday-inn.com
- Gift shop, restaurant, outdoor pool and internet access

Thunderbird Lodge
- (928)674-5841 or 800-679-2473
- P.O. Box 548, Chinle, AZ 86503, www.tbirdlodge.com
- Gift shop, cafeteria, and internet access

Camping

Cottonwood Campground

Primitive campsites located ¼ mile of the Visitor Center.

- Call NPRD at (928)674-2106 for current camping rates.
- Camping limit is 5 days per visit; 14 days per year.
- Open all year. Limited facilities in the winter.
- 93 sites with table and grill; 3 restroom facilities.
- No shower or hookups. Dumpstation with water available April thru October.
- No ground fires permitted; wood collection is not permitted.
- Sites cannot accommodate RV's longer than 40 feet.
- Livestock trailers or boarding of livestock are not permitted.
- Reservation required for group campsites.
- RV parks with full hookups located in Gallup, NM; Holbrook, AZ; Monument Valley, UT; or Cortez, CO.

Spider Rock Campground

Privately operated 12 miles on the South Rim Drive.

- Nightly fee. Dry camping. No hookups. Hogans available.
- Dumpstation and water available for guests.
- Contact (928)674-8261 or P.O. Box 2509, Chinle, AZ 86503.