

# Visitor Activities

May 25 to November 8, 2008

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

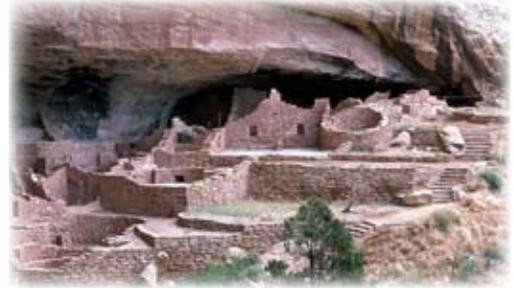
Mesa Verde National Park



CLIFF PALACE



BALCONY HOUSE



LONG HOUSE



Welcome to Mesa Verde National Park. Mesa Verde was the first national park set aside "to preserve the works of man." The park is 52,073 acres, 8,100 of which are designated wilderness. Ancestral Puebloans occupied the Colorado Plateau region for 1,300 years and moved into Mesa Verde by A.D. 550. 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 prehistoric America.

## Tickets are Required

To get the most out of your visit to Mesa Verde, stop first at the Far View Visitor Center (8 am to 5 pm) located 15 miles (25 km) from the park entrance. Park rangers will help you plan your visit.

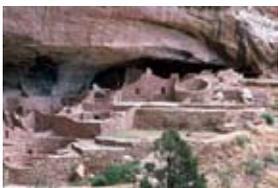
Although you can easily fill your day with [self-guided options](#), please keep in mind that **tour tickets are required** to visit three of the cliff dwellings: Cliff Palace, Balcony House and Long House.

Tour tickets can ONLY be purchased in person once you are in the park, at the Far View Visitor Center from 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. (From Oct. 10 to Nov. 8, tickets are available at the Chapin Mesa Museum.) Tickets can also be purchased at the Morefield Campground Ranger Station from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm through August 9, 2008. The ticket price is \$3.00 per cliff dwelling, per person for all ages.

## Touring a Cliff Dwelling

Click below for schedules:

- May 25 to Sept 1, 2008
- Sept 2 to Sept 27, 2008
- Sept 28 to Oct 18, 2008
- Oct 19 to Nov 8, 2008



### Wetherill Mesa Remains Open Through September

Wetherill Mesa will be open five days a week from September 2 to 27, 2008.

[more....](#)

You must be accompanied by a park ranger to enter Mesa Verde cliff dwellings. At Chapin Mesa, Cliff Palace and Balcony House are ranger-guided. Due to the high demand, choose only one of these tours per day. Long House, on Wetherill Mesa, can be toured on the same day as Cliff Palace or Balcony House.

**Cliff Palace** is the largest cliff dwelling. The tour is one hour in length with a walking distance of a 1/4 mile (400 m) involving five 8-10 foot (2.6 - 3 m) ladders and a 100 foot (30 m) vertical climb. The tour begins at the Cliff Palace Overlook, an 8 mile (13 km), 20 minute drive from the Far View Visitor Center.

**Balcony House** is the most adventurous cliff dwelling tour. This one hour tour involves climbing a 32 foot (10 m) ladder to enter the dwelling. To exit, there is a 12 foot x 18 inch (4 m x 46 cm) wide tunnel to crawl through, followed by a climb of 60 feet (20 m) along an open rock face using two 10 foot (3 m) ladders.

**Long House** is located on Wetherill Mesa. The tour begins at the Wetherill Mesa information kiosk, a 12 mile (19 km), 45 minute drive from Far View Visitor Center. Due to the winding road, vehicles over 25 feet (8 m) are not allowed. The 1-1/2 hour tour involves climbing three 15 foot (4.5 m) ladders. The 3/4 mile (1.2 km) round trip hike has a 130 foot (40 m) elevation gain when exiting.



Balcony House Tour

## Other Ranger-Led Programs

### Evening Programs (updated Sept 30, 2008) Sept 30 to October 18, 2008

•Rangers will lead "Twilight Tours" through Cliff Palace, sponsored by the Mesa Verde Institute. The 90 minute tours, limited to 20 people, will begin at 5:30 pm each evening. Tickets must be purchased at the Far View Visitor Center for \$10.00.

## Half-Day Guided Bus Tours

**Sept 30 to October 22, 2008** (morning tour only)  
Tours depart Far View Lodge at 8:00 am and 1:00 pm. National Park Service rangers partner with the park concessionaire, ARAMARK, to conduct the tours and share current interpretation of the Ancestral Puebloan people. Tours stop at archeological sites along the Mesa Top Loop Road and include a walking tour of Cliff Palace. Tickets are \$49.00 per person. For more information about these tours, visit ARAMARK's website at [www.visitmesaverde.com](http://www.visitmesaverde.com).

**Visit On Your Own  
(No Ticket Required)**

**Far View Visitor Center** should be your first stop for park information. The visitor center offers exhibits of historic Native American jewelry, pottery, and basket displays; a bookstore; restrooms; and sells tickets for the ranger-guided tours of Cliff Palace, Balcony House, and Long House.

**Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum** has exhibits on the Ancestral Puebloan people. It is located 5 miles (8 km) south of the Far View Visitor Center. A 25 minute park video shown every half hour and the museum bookstore are also available.

**Spruce Tree House** is Mesa Verde's best-preserved cliff dwelling. The 1/2 mile, one-way trail begins at the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. Allow one hour for the 100 foot (30 m) descent and ascent on a winding paved path.

**Mesa Top Loop Road** is a 6 mile (10 km) drive with short paved trails to view archeological sites. There are twelve easily-accessible sites, including surface dwellings and cliff dwelling overlooks. Highlights include Square Tower House, Sun Point Overlook, and views of Cliff Palace from Sun Point and Sun Temple stops. Overlooks are also found on the 6 mile (10 km) Cliff Palace Loop Road. Allow 45 to 60 minutes. Open from 8:00 am to sunset.

**Far View Sites Complex** includes Far View House plus four other villages and a dry reservoir. The 3/4 mile (1.2 km) trail is level and unpaved. Located four miles (6.4 km) north of the Chapin Mesa Museum. Allow 45 minutes. Open 8:00 am to sunset.

**Wetherill Mesa** is the quieter side of Mesa Verde. A 12 mile winding road, open 9:00 am to 4:15 pm (9:00 am to 3:00 pm September 2 to 27), ends at a ranger information kiosk where tram service is available to drive you to three self-guided sites:

- **Step House cliff dwelling** - a 100 ft (30m) descent and ascent on a winding path. The 3/4 mile (1.2 km) trail begins near Wetherill Mesa kiosk. Allow 45 to 60 minutes.
- **Badger House Trail** - The 2.5 mile (4 km) trail to Badger House Community surface sites begins at the Wetherill Mesa kiosk. Combination gravel and paved trail. If you prefer, take the tram to or from the Badger House tram stop and shorten the trail to 1.5 miles. Allow 45 to 60 minutes.
- **Nordenskiold 16 Trail** - Moderate, one mile (1.6 km) round-trip gravel path through burned area, gently climbs to an overlook of Nordenskiold #16 cliff dwelling. Allow one hour.

**Hiking Trails** are scattered throughout the park. The most popular are the Petroglyph and Spruce Canyon Trails near the Chapin Mesa Museum. For details on all the park trails, visit with a ranger, or go to the [hiking](#) web page.

**Visitor Services**

**Information**

- **Far View Visitor Center:**  
April 6 to October 18, 2008 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- **Chapin Mesa Museum and bookstore:**  
April 6 to October 18, 2008 8:00 am to 6:30 pm  
October 19 to November 8, 2008 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- **Wetherill Mesa Kiosk:**  
May 25 to September 1, 2008 9:00 am to 4:15 pm  
September 2 to 27, 2008 9:00 am to 4:15 pm  
(Entrance gate to Wetherill Mesa) 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
- **Morefield Ranger Station and bookstore:**  
May 25 to August 9, 2008 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm

**Post Office**

- Monday to Friday: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- Saturday: 10:00 am to 1:45 pm (through Nov. 1, 2008)

**Food, Shopping, and Lodging**

Concessions at Mesa Verde are managed by ARAMARK/Mesa Verde Company, an authorized concessionaire of the National Park Service. For more information, please call 1-800-449-2288.

- **Morefield Campground Area**  
**Morefield Campground:** (CLOSES: October 18)  
Camp Store, Knife Edge Cafe, RV & Tent Camping, Showers, Laundry, and Fuel
- **Far View Area**  
**Far View Lodge:** Lodging, Metate Room Restaurant & La Mano Lounge, and Gift Shop. (CLOSES: October 22)  
**Far View Terrace:** Buffet Restaurant, Mesa Mocha Coffee Bar, and Gift Shop. (CLOSES: October 8)
- **Wetherill Mesa Area**  
**Snack Shop and Information**  
OPEN Memorial Day through Labor Day Weekends
- **Chapin Mesa Museum/Spruce Tree House Area**  
**Spruce Tree Terrace Restaurant and Gift Shop:**  
(OPEN: Year around)

**Know the Rules of the Park**

We want you to have a safe and enjoyable experience. Follow park rules not only to protect yourself, but also to preserve Mesa Verde's fragile archeological sites and natural environment.

- Archeological structures are fragile. Take care to not sit, stand, climb, or lean on walls.
- You are welcome to walk your leashed pet along paved roads, in parking lots, and in the campground.
- Pets are not allowed on trails, in archeological sites, or in buildings. Do not leave your pet unattended.
- Help us keep wildlife wild. Please do not feed, capture, or tease wildlife.



**For Your Safety**

In case of emergency, call 911.

**Road Advisory:**

- If you see rocks rolling toward your car, try to avoid them. Your vehicle offers you little safety.
- Do not approach or attempt to move rocks.
- Gasoline is only available in Morefield Campground. Available through early October, 2008.
- You may encounter road construction delays.
- Mind all traffic signs.

**High Elevation:**

- Mesa Verde ranges from 7,000 feet in elevation to 8,572 feet at Park Point, so the air is thin and very dry. Consider your physical health BEFORE hiking or going on tours.
- Carry and DRINK plenty of water.