



Backcountry Hiking Trails

Hiking permits are required for these trails. They are free and available at all trailheads and at the Visitor Center. Trails are open from 7am to sunset. Pets are permitted on leashes. Carry water, snacks, and sun protection.

Pueblo Alto Trail

Distance - Entire loop trail – 5.4 mi roundtrip (3-4 hours)

Pueblo Alto - 3.2 mi roundtrip (2 hours)

Pueblo Bonito Overlook – 2.0 mi roundtrip (1 hr)

Trailhead - Pueblo del Arroyo parking area

Elevation Gain - 250 feet

This trail provides spectacular overlook views of Pueblo Bonito, Chetro Ketl, and Kin Kletso, enters Pueblo Alto and New Alto, passes by Chacoan stairways, ramps, and roads, and affords panoramic views of the San Juan Basin. This trail is an excellent introduction into the Chacoan world. Add time to explore the sites.

Peñasco Blanco Trail

Distance - Peñasco Blanco roundtrip 7.4 mi (5-7 hrs)

Petroglyph Trail only roundtrip 3.5 mi (2 hours)

Supernova Pictograph roundtrip 5.8 mi (4-6 hours)

Trailhead - Pueblo del Arroyo parking area

Elevation Gain - 200 feet

The longest trail - relatively level - includes the Petroglyph Trail to view numerous Pueblo and Navajo petroglyphs and historic inscriptions. The trail continues to the “Supernova” pictograph site and Peñasco Blanco, an unexcavated great house with a unique oval design and a spectacular natural setting. Hot summer sun and soft sand can make this a long and difficult hike. Carry plenty of water, snacks, and sun protection. Add extra time to explore the sites.

South Mesa Trail

Distance - Entire loop trail - 4.1 mi roundtrip (3-4 hrs)

Tsin Kletzin - 3.0 mi roundtrip (2-3 hrs)

Trailhead - Casa Rinconada Trail, Stop 10

Elevation Gain - 450 feet

This trail leaves from Stop 10 on the Casa Rinconada trail, climbs to a high point on South Mesa, and leads to the great house Tsin Kletzin. Spectacular views of the surrounding landscape are visible at the site. The loop trail descends into South Gap, follows the Chacoan South Roads, and re-enters the canyon near Casa Rinconada. Add extra time to explore the site and enjoy the vistas.

Wijiji Trail

Distance - Wijiji roundtrip from parking area - 3.0 mi (2 hrs)

Wijiji roundtrip from campground - 3.2 mile (2 hrs)

Trailheads – Wijiji parking area and campground

Elevation Gain - Insignificant

This trail leads to Wijiji, a later-period Chacoan great house built around AD 1100. Wijiji differs from sites like Pueblo Bonito and Chetro Ketl in that it appears to have been built at once rather than several building periods; with exceptional symmetry and the uniform masonry. Wijiji lacks typical Chacoan features such as enclosed plazas and great kivas. Add time to explore the site and visit a short (0.2 mile roundtrip) petroglyph spur trail.
