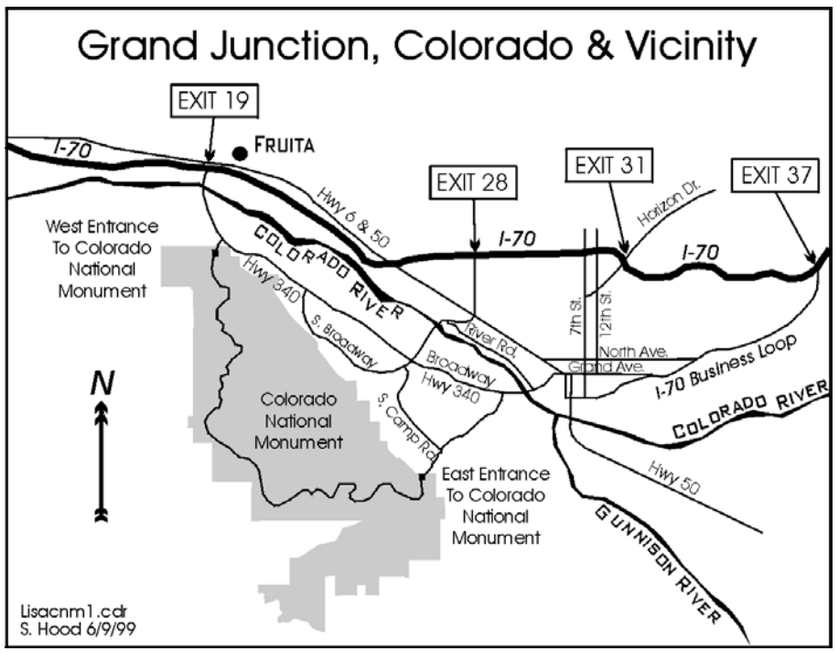
Colorado
National Monument

National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Fruita, CO 81521

Planning Your Visit To Colorado National Monument



Colorado National Monument preserves one of the grandest landscapes of the American West. Located in Mesa County, Colorado between the gateway communities of Fruita and Grand Junction, the monument preserves 32 square miles of canyons and mesas. This is a special place, where you can contemplate glorious views that stretch to distant horizons; where you can discover solitude deep in a remote canyon; and delight in wild country where desert bighorn sheep roam and golden eagles soar.

DIRECTIONS

East Entrance: From I-70, take exit 31 onto Horizon Drive. Travel to 7th Street and turn left (south). Go to Grand Avenue and turn right. Grand Avenue becomes Broadway, HWY 340. Drive to Monument Road, turn left (south) and travel approximately five miles to the east entrance station. West Entrance: From I-70 take exit 19 in Fruita. Turn south and travel approximately two miles until reaching the west entrance station on the right. The visitor center is located four miles up Rim Rock Drive from the west entrance station.

VISITOR CENTER

For maps, books and free handouts that tell the story of the monument, the visitor center is a good place to start your adventure. The visitor center includes an exhibit room, an information desk staffed with knowledgeable volunteers, and two informative short videos. The Colorado National Monument Association bookstore sells a variety of educational and interpretive items to enhance your visit. Allow approximately 45 minutes for this stop. The visitor center is open every day, except December 25, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the winter months and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the summer.

WHAT TO DO

A 23-mile scenic drive will lead you from the visitor center along the rim of a colorful panorama of deep, sheer-sided canyons, and high rock towers. Wayside exhibits at viewpoints along the drive provide information about the natural and cultural history of the park. Numerous pullouts along the drive allow visitors to stop and walk on various trails. (See Official Map & Guide for trail map or go to http://www.nps.gov/colm/planyourvisit/hiking.htm for a comprehensive listing with descriptions.) Allow one hour driving time, plus additional time for walking, photography, or stopping at pullouts. For individuals who would like to explore the monument backcountry on foot, there are a variety of hiking trails that range from short and relatively flat to long and steep. Rock climbing, picnicking, camping, biking on Rim Rock Drive, and photographing the spectacular scenery are also popular pastimes.

CAMPING

Saddlehorn Campground, located near the visitor center, has 80 sites and is open year round. Sites are suitable for tents and recreational vehicles, with some pull-through sites. All sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. A self-registration kiosk is located at the entrance. The campground has restrooms with flush toilets and water available. Each site includes a picnic table, a charcoal-only grill, and a parking area. There are no electric hookups or showers. Wood fires are not permitted anywhere in the monument. Camping fees are in addition to monument entrance fees and are $20.00 per night with a seven person per site limit. Backcountry camping is also permitted. A free backcountry permit is required and may be obtained at the visitor center or at the entrance stations. Water is not available in the monument backcountry so remember to take plenty of water with you. During the summer months, 1 gallon (4 liters) per person is recommended.

WEATHER

With elevations ranging from 4000 feet to over 7000 feet, weather at Colorado National Monument is represented by desert, semi-desert, and upland climates. Annual precipitation averages 11.03 inches, fairly evenly spread throughout the year. August through October is usually the wettest period, but there is often precipitation in March as well. Temperatures are highly variable with summer highs ranging into the low 100's in the valley floor and in some cases can reach more than 110 inside the neighboring canyon country. Winters at the monument are generally mild with lows occasionally dipping into the sub-zero readings.

ENTRANCE FEES AND PASSES

The entrance fee is $10 per non-commercial vehicle and is good for seven days. An annual pass, good only at Colorado National Monument, is available for $25. An annual National Parks & Federal Recreation Lands Pass, which covers entrance fees and standard amenity fees at sites managed by NPS, USFS, USFWS, BLM, and Reclamation is available for $80. Permanent U.S. residents 62 years or older may purchase a $10 Interagency Senior Pass (formally called the Golden Age Passport), which allows free lifetime admission into the federal sites listed above. Permanently disabled U.S. residents may apply for a free Interagency Access Pass.

WE RECYCLE

To help keep this special place beautiful and clean, we ask visitors to pack trash and recyclable material with them to one of the waste and recycle stations located at the visitor center, Saddlehorn Campground, Saddlehorn Picnic Area, and Devils Kitchen Picnic Area.

PETS

Pets are allowed on a leash in the campground and along the roadway. They are not allowed in the backcountry or on any trail.

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Fruita, CO 81521
(970) 858-3617
www.nps.gov/colm

Grand Junction Visitor & Convention Bureau
740 Horizon Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81506
1-800-962-2547
www.grandjunction.net

Bureau of Land Management
2815 Horizon Drive Grand Junction, CO 81506
(970) 244-3000
www.co.blm.gov

Colorado State Parks
361 32 Road Clifton, CO 81520
(970) 434-6862
www.parks.state.co.us

Colorado Welcome Center
340 HWY 340 Fruita, CO 81521
(970) 858-9335
www.fruita.org

US Forest Service
2777 Crossroads Blvd.
Grand Junction, CO 81506
(970) 242-8211
www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug