



Preparing Your Field Trip



El Malpais National Monument preserves over 114,000 acres of volcanic landscape consisting of lava flows, cinder cones, lava tubes and wilderness. This landscape is the perfect outdoor classroom to compliment earth science, volcanism, geology, and ecology studies.

Ranger-guided Field Trips

You will need to schedule your program **at least four weeks in advance**. April and May are the busiest months. Programs are usually booked by the end of February. Because of the rugged nature of the terrain at El Malpais, we can only accomodate a group of 40 students. A teacher or school representative is required to be with the class for the duration

of the field trip, along with 2 chaperones per 10 students, for a max of 50 people. **Any educational group exploring a cave requires a cave permit.** For more information and to set up a field trip, please email ELMA_cavepermits@nps.gov or call 505-285-4641 ext. 18.

Get Ready!

Preparation is the key to a successful field trip. Many of the trails at El Malpais are rugged and not suitable for every age group. However, we are happy to help you choose a field trip that best suits your group. El Malpais is a rugged lava landscape. Please make sure students are dressed appropriately

for the weather. They should wear sturdy shoes (no flip flops), long pants, and a jacket. Caving requires a helmet and a headlamp with extra batteries. Kneepads and gloves are recommended. The park ranger guiding the group has the authority to stop the program if discipline standards are not being met.

Field Trip Options

El Calderon Hike

4th-12th grades - 30 students per ranger
1.5 miles on varied terrain
2 hours program time
Explore the youngest lava flow while learning in El Malpais National Monument basic volcanology. A school group can choose to continue hiking to the El Calderon cinder cone after the ranger program. Hiking requires a student to wear sturdy shoes, and carry and consume water and snacks.

Junction Cave

4th-12th grades - 20 students per ranger
.25 mile long rugged lava tube
1.5 hour program time
Explore the mysteries of an underground lava tube on this caving adventure. Learn why caves are important to many organisms survival, including bats. Caving is a dangerous activity, and requires a student to wear a helmet with a headlamp, and carry extra batteries.

Happy Birthday National Park Service!

4th-College grades - 40 students per ranger
1 hour program time at the El Malpais Visitor Center.
Celebrate the 2016 NPS Centennial by discovering the history of the National Park Service.

Lava Falls

4th-College grades - 30 students per ranger
1 mile loop on lava terrain
2 hour program time
Hike on the youngest lava flow at El Malpais as you discover the volcanology of the area. Hiking requires a student to wear sturdy shoes, and carry and consume water and snacks.



White-Nose Syndrome

White-Nose Syndrome

To help prevent the spread of White-Nose Syndrome and in order to obtain a cave permit, you will be asked if your entire groups' gear has been decontaminated. If anyone has been caving outside of El Malpais National Monument, their gear can be used if it has been decontaminated as long as it has not been used in a state with White Nose Syndrome. You can determine if the state is affected at <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/about/where-is-it-now>.

Before your arrival: please decontaminate any individuals who have been caving by following instructions on this website:

<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/topics/decontamination>.

Visit on Your Own

The safety of your students and the protection of the resources within El Malpais is the top priority of your visit. A school group may visit El Malpais on their own, but you **must** remember and follow these rules:

- **All caving requires a mandatory cave permit. Please call 505-876-2783 to schedule your caving field trip. If you do not call *one month* prior to your arrival, we cannot guarantee availability without advance notification of your trip.**
- **The teacher is responsible for the discipline of the group.**
- **Food is not allowed inside the caves.** A student may carry water with them.
- **Do not disturb wildlife.** Do not shine a light on or disturb bats in a cave. Do not chase, pick up, or disturb any wildlife outside of the cave.
- **Leave No Trace.** Do not leave anything behind, including food, and pick up all litter you find.
- **Respect other visitors.** You and your students are visiting a wilderness and are responsible to allow others to experience El Malpais in a peaceful manner.

On-Your-Own Field Trips

El Calderon Hike

1-4 miles on varied terrain

1-3 hours

Explore the youngest lava flow at El Malpais National Monument with a hike to a cinder cone. Hiking requires a student to wear sturdy shoes, and carry and consume water and snacks. Weather and trail conditions may vary - speak with a park ranger before your hike.

Lava Falls Hike

1 mile loop on lava terrain

Hike on the youngest lava flow at El Malpais as you discover the volcanology of the area. Hiking requires a student to wear sturdy shoes, and carry and consume water and snacks. Weather conditions may vary - speak with a park ranger before your hike.

Go Caving

4th-12th grades - **2 adult chaperones for every eight students. We recommend a maximum group size of 20 people in the cave at any one time for safety and to minimize resource damage.**

1-2 hours

There are five lava tubes in the park that are open to the public. Speak with a ranger to help determine which of these would be most appropriate for your group. ***Caving is a dangerous activity. It requires a cave permit and for students to wear a helmet with headlamp, and carry extra batteries.***

Contact Us

For information about field trips and programs:

El Malpais National Monument
attn: Chief of Interpretation
1900 E. Santa Fe Ave.
Grants, NM 87020

505-285-4641 ext. 18

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