



Educator's Tips

- It is a two-mile drive from the Visitor Center to the Contact Station, the trailhead for Cliff Dweller Canyon. Plan on hiking a total of one mile to see the Cliff Dwellings (approx. 1.5 hours).
- Please note that there are no trash facilities anywhere in the park. Plan on collecting trash and recyclables during your visit. Properly dispose of these items once back at the school site.
- There are no facilities to purchase food or beverages within the park.

FACILITIES

Visitor Center ADA accessible

The amphitheater located behind the Visitor Center is where all scheduled education visits begin. The museum features a 15-minute video about the Gila Wilderness and the Cliff Dwellings. Exhibits focus on the Mogollon culture and surrounding wilderness. A 360° virtual tour of the Cliff Dwellings is also available for visitors unable to hike up to the Cliff Dwellings.

Western National Parks Association runs the well-stocked bookstore located here. Books, water bottles, and other items intended to extend the Gila experience are available for purchase. *Educators receive a 20% discount on regularly-priced items.*

Services: restrooms, three picnic tables, water fountain, and pay phone

Contact Station ADA accessible

The natural history museum located inside the contact station exhibits an extensive display of the plant and animal life found in Cliff Dweller Canyon.

Services: restrooms, two picnic tables, and drinking water

Upper Scorpion Campground

Services: restrooms and eight picnic tables

Lower Scorpion Campground

Services: restrooms, seven picnic tables, and *Trail to the Past* trailhead

TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS

Before starting any hike, check current weather and river conditions. Be prepared for changing conditions, and always take plenty of water. Please pack out all trash, but leave all artifacts exactly where you find them. Report any discoveries to the National Park Service. In-depth descriptions of each hike are available at the Gila Visitor Center.

Cliff Dweller Canyon

This trail climbs about 200 feet to reach the cliff dwellings. The one-mile, round trip hike takes you through 4 different ecological zones filled with native plants and wildlife: riparian river area, cool canyons, desert-like slopes, and a pine and fir forest.

Middle Fork Trail

The highlight of this trail is Lightfeather Hot Springs located ½ mile from the trailhead (about 30 minutes). You'll cross the river twice before reaching the springs – average river depth at both crossings is about 24 inches. Average water temperature at the springs is 130°F. Bring a towel!
Note: This trail is closed during flood season.

Trail to the Past

This ¼ mile trail leads you to a single, Mogollon dwelling located half way up a small canyon. The structure is an interesting comparison to the multi-room caves located at the top of Cliff Dweller Canyon. This trail also takes you to a large pictograph panel that would have easily been seen from the river. This last section of the trail is wheelchair accessible.

West Fork Trail

This 300-yard trail hugs the valley floor along the west fork of the Gila River. This portion of a much longer trail is flat and an easy walk. Once the trail reaches the river, this spot is an excellent area to discuss river ecologies.



Students ready for a hike up to Cliff Dweller Canyon



A VIP (Volunteer in Park) takes a moment to share a laugh during a tour.



Park Visitor Center
