

Visitor Activities

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mesa Verde National Park



March 2, 2008 to April 5, 2008



Early spring is a great time to visit Mesa Verde National Park. Although there are no formal ranger-led tours at this time, there are many things you can do on your own. Visit the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum; walk down to the Spruce Tree House cliff dwelling; participate in our Junior Ranger Program; drive the Mesa Top Loop Road; enjoy cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and hiking. **All activities at this time of year are weather dependent.** Please check with a ranger for trail and road conditions.

You can still view all of the Chapin Mesa cliff dwellings, but you might have to hike or ski to overlooks. Interpretive trail and site guide booklets are on sale at the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum and at various sites on the Mesa Top Loop Road. For additional park information, tune your radio to AM 1610.

There are no overnight accommodations in the park. Far View Lodge and Morefield Campground are closed for the season. Far View Lodge opening and bus tours are scheduled to begin in late April. *For reservations* call ARAMARK, the park concessioner, at 970-564-4300 or toll free at 1-800-449-2288. Roadside camping and overnight parking are **not** permitted. Overnight camping and accommodations are available in nearby communities.

Visit a Cliff Dwelling

SPRUCE TREE HOUSE

Mesa Verde's Best-Preserved Cliff Dwelling

Spruce Tree House, the only cliff dwelling open at this time of year, can be entered on your own. The ½-mile (1km) walk is moderately strenuous and the path could be icy. A visit requires a 100ft (30m) descent and ascent on a winding, paved path. Rangers are onsite to answer your questions.

Open daily 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Facilities and Services

MUSEUM BOOKSTORE

Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The bookstore specializes in books, videos, and other items about Mesa Verde National Park and the Southwest. Proceeds from bookstore sales provide funding for education, interpretation, and research at Mesa Verde National Park.

SPRUCE TREE TERRACE RESTAURANT AND GIFT SHOP

Open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Food and gifts are available at this facility, which is located halfway down the main headquarters parking lot, north of the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum.

POST OFFICE

Open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

A full-service post office, located near the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, is open Monday to Friday.

For information on winter road conditions (major highways) call:

Colorado 1-877-315-7623, New Mexico 1-800-432-4269, Utah 1-800-492-2400, or Arizona 1-888-411-7623.

The Rest of the Park



CHAPIN MESA ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Artifacts of the Ancestral Puebloans Information and exhibits are available in this historic building. A 25-minute video is shown every half hour. Restrooms and picnic area are located nearby. Open daily 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

MESA TOP LOOP ROAD

Auto Tour - 600 Years of Mesa Verde History This 6-mile (10km) driving tour includes short, paved trails to twelve easily-accessible mesa top villages and cliff dwelling overlooks. Highlights include Square Tower House, Sun Point Overlook, and views of Cliff Palace from Sun Point and Sun Temple Overlooks. Maximum speed limit is 35mph. Open 8:00 a.m. to sunset, weather permitting.

CLIFF PALACE LOOP ROAD

Cross-country Skiing, Snowshoeing or Hiking This 6-mile (10km) road is unplowed. Park outside the gate and walk or ski this road to trails and cliff dwelling overlooks. Highlights include Cliff Palace Overlook and Soda Canyon Overlook trail (which provides the only view of Balcony House). Open for hiking 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., weather permitting.

FAR VIEW SITES

Five Mesa Top Villages & Reservoir Four miles (6.4km) north of the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, Far View House and four other villages can be explored on a $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile (1.2km) unpaved trail (muddy this time of year). Road is not plowed after snowfall. Park outside the gate and walk to sites. Open 8:00 a.m. to sunset.

PETROGLYPH POINT TRAIL

Hike to a Petroglyph Panel The 2.4 mile (3.9km) trail to Petroglyph Point begins near the museum and leads to a panel of petroglyphs. In clear weather, the trail can be hiked as a loop. However, due to ice and snow, you might be directed to access and return via the mesa top section of the trail. Registration is required at the museum or the trailhead. Ask the ranger at the museum about trail conditions.

MOREFIELD TRAILS AND PARK POINT

Hike to Spectacular Views Morefield Campground, located at Mile Marker 4, offers three hiking trails to overlooks of valleys and peaks. Park in the store parking lot and walk to trailheads. **Park Point** is the highest point in the park (8427 ft), located at Mile Marker 10 between the Entrance and Far View Visitor Center. Roads are not plowed. To visit Park Point, park your car outside the gate and walk to overlooks of the Four Corners.

For Your Safety

- Consider your physical health BEFORE hiking.
- Hiking in Mesa Verde National Park is restricted and allowed only on designated trails. Hiking is done at your own risk, especially if icy or snowy conditions exist. Please stay on the road or designated trails.
- Carry and DRINK plenty of water during your visit in the park.
- No gasoline is available in the park.
- Please be alert for falling rocks along the park road.
- Pets must be with someone and on a leash at all times. They are not allowed in public buildings or on trails.
- Feeding, capturing, or teasing wildlife is prohibited.

In case of park emergency, call 911.

