

MESA VERDE

A spectacular window into the past.

Mesa Verde (Spanish for green table) was established to preserve archaeological sites built by the Ancestral Puebloans who inhabited Mesa Verde for more than 700 years (550 A.D. to 1300 A.D.). Currently Mesa Verde has over 4,700 archaeological sites including 600 cliff dwellings.

There is no better history lesson than having a spectacular first hand look at the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo people who made Mesa Verde their home for over 700 years. The park is magical in the winter! It's only a short drive from Cortez and Durango and a beautiful place to hike, learn about history and see Southwest Colorado. Fair View Lodge and Morefield Campground are within the park but are only open seasonally, so we stayed at Starry Nights Ranch and Bed & Breakfast.



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OUR FAVORITE THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Top 10 tips

During winter weather, restrictions may be in place and snow tires required.

Download the free audio tour of the Mesa Top Loop. It's like having a ranger in your pocket!

Visit with respect. You will be visiting a landscape sacred to many, respect closures and stay on the trail

Plan for any kind of weather. It may be gloriously sunny or it may sleet and snow. Both can be great if you dress warmly in layers. Traction devices on footwear can be very helpful when trails are slippery.

Stop by the Visitor and Research Center - Chat with a ranger, pick up a Jr Ranger book, stamp your passport and browse the bookstore.

It is a 45-minute drive from the entrance to the Mesa Top Loop and the headquarters district. Plan sufficient time for your visit to enjoy the scenery along the way.

Use your binoculars at the canyon-side overlooks along the 6-mile Mesa Top Loop. The more you look, the more you'll see!

Catch the golden afternoon sun on Spruce Tree House and learn all about it by reading the informative guidebook printed by Mesa Verde Museum Association. These guides are available for a small donation and can be found at the overlook.

Savor a sunset from an overlook

Cliff Dwelling Tours - only offered during the summer months.

Lauren
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