

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Mesa Verde National Park is located in the high plateau country of southwestern Colorado. The park entrance is midway between Cortez and Mancos, off U.S. 160. It is 21 miles from the entrance to park headquarters and the Chapin Mesa ruins. Morefield Campground is four miles from the entrance; Far View Visitor Center is 15 miles. Allow at least 45 minutes for the drive to Chapin Mesa.

Park roads are scenic drives with sharp curves, steep grades, and reduced speed limits. For your safety, do not park on any roadway.

Mesa Verde is also accessible by common carrier. There are daily scheduled flights to Cortez and Durango; both towns have rental car service. The nearest railroad terminals are Grand Junction, Colorado and Gallup, New Mexico; buses from those points serve Cortez. Buses run from Cortez to the park from mid-May to mid-October.

TO SEE THE PARK

To get the most out of your visit, go first to either the Far View Visitor Center (open only in the summer) or to the Chapin Mesa Museum (open from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in summer and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. the rest of the year). Rangers there will help you plan your visit.

SERVICES

Food, gasoline, and lodging are available only from mid-May to mid-October. No services are available the rest of the year. Full interpretive services begin in mid-June and continue through Labor Day.

Morefield Campground, open early May through mid-October, has single and group campsites. Six campsites (with restroom) are accessible to physically impaired persons. Each campsite has table, benches, and a grill. The gathering of firewood or injuring of trees or shrubs is prohibited. Camps should not be left unattended for more than 24 hours. There are 15 utility hook-ups, but there is a disposal station for dumping trailer tanks. Commercial campgrounds are located near the park entrance. Services at the campground include groceries, carry-out food, gasoline, firewood, showers, and a laundromat. Evening programs are given daily from early June to Labor Day. During the summer non-denominational religious services are held. Three hiking trails originate in the Morefield area.

Park Point offers superb views of the entire Four Corners region. The fire lookout station here is staffed during the fire season. A brochure describes the natural features of the area.

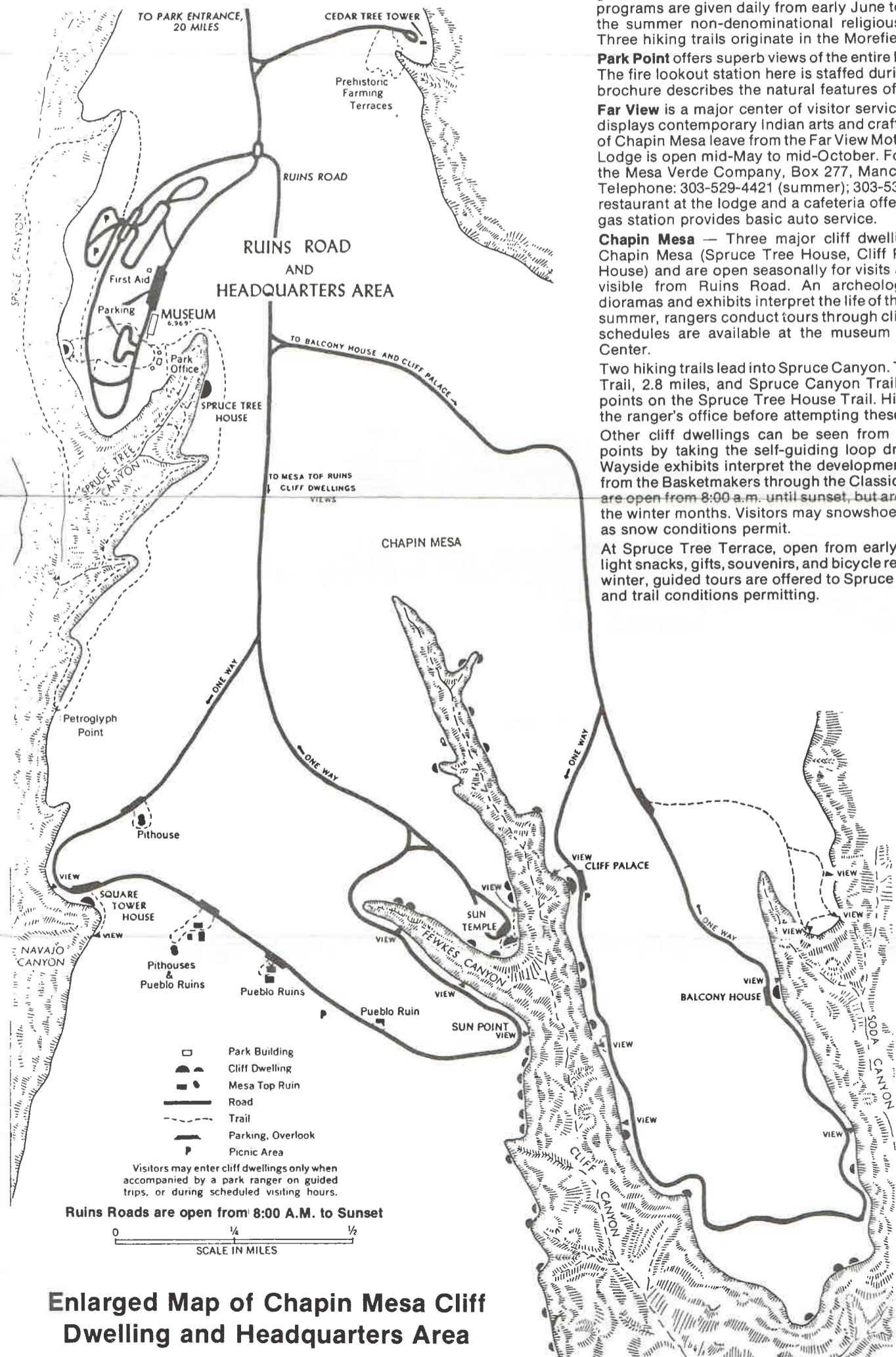
Far View is a major center of visitor service. The visitor center displays contemporary Indian arts and crafts. Commercial tours of Chapin Mesa leave from the Far View Motor Lodge. The Motor Lodge is open mid-May to mid-October. For reservations, write the Mesa Verde Company, Box 277, Mancos, Colorado 81328. Telephone: 303-529-4421 (summer); 303-533-7731 (winter). The restaurant at the lodge and a cafeteria offer food service, and a gas station provides basic auto service.

Chapin Mesa — Three major cliff dwellings are located on Chapin Mesa (Spruce Tree House, Cliff Palace, and Balcony House) and are open seasonally for visits and many others are visible from Ruins Road. An archeological museum with dioramas and exhibits interpret the life of the ancient Anasazi. In summer, rangers conduct tours through cliff dwellings. Current schedules are available at the museum or Far View Visitor Center.

Two hiking trails lead into Spruce Canyon. The Petroglyph Point Trail, 2.8 miles, and Spruce Canyon Trail, 2.1 miles, begin at points on the Spruce Tree House Trail. Hikers must register at the ranger's office before attempting these trails.

Other cliff dwellings can be seen from canyon-rim vantage points by taking the self-guiding loop drives of Ruins Road. Wayside exhibits interpret the development of Anasazi culture from the Basketmakers through the Classic period. These roads are open from 8:00 a.m. until sunset, but are often closed during the winter months. Visitors may snowshoe or cross-country ski as snow conditions permit.

At Spruce Tree Terrace, open from early spring through fall, light snacks, gifts, souvenirs, and bicycle rentals are available. In winter, guided tours are offered to Spruce Tree House, weather and trail conditions permitting.



Enlarged Map of Chapin Mesa Cliff Dwelling and Headquarters Area