

Central Mesa Verde Site Characteristics

Each site in the Mesa Verde culture shows slightly different timelines within an overall trend, yet specific site characteristics. As we trek through Four Corners Country, we ask,

"What do we generally know about the site?"

"How many people lived there over time?"

"Okay, Joe, you already have pictures there. But what shots are going to please us the most?"

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Mesa Verde</i>		Mesa Verde, Spanish for green table, offers a spectacular look into lives of Ancestral Anasazi people who made it their home for over 700 years, from A.D. 600 to A.D. 1300. Today, the park protects over 4,000 known archeological sites, including 600 cliff dwellings. Today, Mesa Verde National Park hosts a spectacular reminder of this ancient culture. The park contains over 4,000 known archeological sites including cliff dwellings and mesa top sites; pithouses, pueblos, masonry towers, and farming structures.
1250-1268	Cliff Palace	Cliff Palace is the largest cliff dwelling at Mesa Verde National Park. It has 150 rooms, plus 75 open areas. 21 rooms are kivas. 25 to 30 rooms are residential. Total Ancestral Anasazi living here at any one time was 100 to 120.
	Spruce Tree House	<i>SG*</i> - The dwelling contains about 130 rooms and 8 kivas, or ceremonial chambers, built into a natural alcove measuring 216 feet at greatest width and 89 feet at its greatest depth. Total Ancestral Anasazi living here was 60 to 80 people.
900-1300	Far View Site Complex	<i>SG</i> - Far View was one of the most densely populated parts of the mesa from A.D. 900 to about A.D. 1300. Nearly 50 villages occur within a half square mile area; home to hundreds of people. Surface sites include Far View House, Pipe Shrine House, Coyote Village, Far View Reservoir, and Far View Tower. Open 8 a.m. to sunset.
	Cedar Tree Tower	<i>SG</i> - 90% of Mesa Verde's cliff dwellings contain 10 rooms or less. One-third have only one or two rooms. This helps put more famous cliff dwellings of Cliff Palace (150 rooms) and Spruce Tree House (130 rooms) into perspective. Open 8 a.m. to sunset.
	Badger House Trail	<i>SG</i> - A 2.5 mile (4km) trail to Badger House Community surface sites begins at Wetherill Mesa Kiosk. Open 8 a.m. to sunset.
	Mesa Top Loop	<i>SG</i> - 12 accessible sites, surface dwellings, and cliff dwelling overlooks. Highlights include Sun Point Overlook, Square Tower House, and views of Cliff Palace from Sun Point and Sun Temple

		stops. Open 8 a.m. to sunset.
<i>Canyons of the Ancients</i>		Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in southwestern Colorado has a huge number of Anasazi sites (over 6000 recorded, up to 100 per square mile). Occupation ranged from Basketmaker to late Pueblo. Several sites contain many more rooms than any Mesa Verde sites. Few have been restored.
1050-1300	Yellow Jacket	<i>SG</i> - Site covers 100 acres with as many as 1,200 surface rooms, a minimum of 195 kivas (possibly a great kiva), 19 towers, and a possible great house.
1240-1285	Sand Canyon	<i>SG</i> - Est. 420 rooms, 90 kivas, 14 towers, an enclosed plaza, a D-shaped bi-wall building, a great kiva, and other structures.
<i>Hovenweep</i>		About A.D. 900, Anasazi settled at Hovenweep year-round, planting and harvesting crops in rich mesa top soil. By late 1200s, Hovenweep was home to over 2,500 people. The people lived during Pueblo II and III time.
1230-1277	Hovenweep Castle	<i>SG</i> - Large multi-story pueblos and towers, located at canyon heads with seeps and springs, are defining measure of late Pueblo III time. In this climate, rainfall comes as winter snows, spring rains, and isolated summer thunderstorms. Intermittent rains of summer were crucial to crop survival. Anasazi acted by constructing water-control features. In washes on mesa tops, small stone dams were built so sediment could collect and water could soak into the ground, flowing slowly into nearby gardens.
	Hackberry	<i>SG</i> - Hackberry Canyon was one of the largest populations of all Hovenweep units because of constant water seepage in the canyon. As many as 250 to 350 people may have lived here.
<i>Cedar Mesa</i>		Cedar Mesa hosted Basketmaker II through Pueblo III sites, occupying mesa tops and canyons. BM III was short. During P I and early P II, Cedar Mesa was unoccupied. Flood water irrigation on broad, low lying washes made prime farming land. Dry farming at upper rainfall elevations made a new farming niche. Mesa top sites are generally small, with largest common site consisting of a Kiva, a few surface rooms (masonry or jackal), and dense trash area. Most are no larger than mesa top sites. Cliff-dwelling sites are high on remote canyon walls.
1250-1268	Moon House	<i>SG</i> - Est. 10 rooms with square kiva, a granary, a remote site. Tree ring dates occur in 2 clusters; AD 1110-1140 (P II) and 1240-1270 (P III).
	Citadel	<i>SG</i> - Est. 6 rooms, a granary, & defensive entry.
	Bullet Canyon	<i>SG</i> - BM II sites are common; some have as many as 29 rooms.

SG - Self guided (Early March-Early November).*

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