

# Trail of the Ancients

Explore the long and intriguing occupation of the Four Corners region by Native American peoples. Travel through the archaeological heartland of America while crossing the beautiful and diverse landscapes of the Colorado Plateau. World-renowned Mesa Verde National Park, Monument Valley Tribal Park, and Four Corners Monument are highlights on the trail.

Length: 480 miles / 768.0 km

Time     Nine hours to drive  
to         (including backtracking) or  
Allow:    six days to enjoy the byway



## Local Information

### *Colorado*

#### **Mesa Verde Country**

800-530-2998

### *Utah*

#### **Utah's Canyon Country**

800-574-4386

435-587-3235 ext. 4139

[Send E-mail](#)

### *Trail of the Ancients*

435-678-4000

[Send E-mail](#)

## Visitor Services

### Fees



There is an admission fee to enter some areas, including National Parks.



### **Camping**

There are places to camp along this byway.



### **Food**

Cortez, Dolores, Monticello, Blanding, Bluff, Mexican Hat, and Monument Valley all have fast food and sit-down restaurants. Mesa Verde National Park and Mountain Valley Tribal Park both offer food.



### **Gasoline**

Cortez, Dolores, Monticello, Blanding, Bluff, Mexican Hat, and Monument Valley all have gas stations.



### **Information**

All national and tribal parks and monuments provide visitor information. Visitor centers are located in Cortez and Dolores, Colorado, and Monticello and Blanding, Utah.



### **Lodging**

Cortez, Dolores, Monticello, Blanding, Bluff, Mexican Hat, and Monument Valley all have hotels and/or motels.



### **Phone**

Public phones are available along this byway.



### **Restrooms**

There are toilet facilities along this byway.



### **Retail**

Shopping is available in Cortez, Dolores, Monticello, Blanding, Bluff, Mexican Hat, and Monument Valley.

## **Special Considerations**

The major portion of the byway easily accommodates tour buses. All the National and State Parks offer easy access and adequate parking, as does Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park and Four Corners Monument. Of the smaller sites, the Anasazi Heritage Center, Lowry Pueblo, Butler Wash, and Mule Canyon offer easy access and adequate parking. The community of Bluff is easily accessed by tour buses and multiple parking venues exist.

Special accommodations for non-English speaking visitors are being addressed by several businesses along the Trail. Desert Rose Inn in Bluff, and Gouldings Lodge in Monument Valley have websites that address the needs of non-English-speaking visitors. Several attractions such as Hovenweep and Natural Bridges National Monuments have videos, brochures, and items for sale through the Canyonlands Natural History Association Book Store, located at the sites, in different languages. Other attractions along the byway have

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plans to implement better multilingual resources and services and will address the need as it arises.

CAUTION: The Moki Dugway is gravel with 10% grades and switchbacks for 2.2 miles. Recreational vehicles should consider alternate routes.

### **Seasons**

#### Best Time to Drive

Travel the Trail of the Ancients from early spring through the end of November to enjoy the intriguing culture that is the Four Corners.

#### High Season

The high traffic season on the Trail of The Ancients is from May through mid-October. September through mid-October is especially busy.

# Map and Directions

## Standard Map - Colorado Section



## Standard Map - Utah Section



### Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

### Driving Directions

#### Colorado

Beginning at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado on US-160, travel west 8 miles to the intersection of US-160 and CO-145 where the byway forks and you can go north or south.

#### Northern Section

- Turn north (right) and follow CO-145 for 9 miles to the intersection of CO-145 and CO-184.
- Follow CO-184 west 8 miles to its intersection with US-491 in Colorado.
- Turn right (north) and follow US-491 for 9 miles to its intersection with Montezuma County Road CC.
- Turn left (west) and follow this route for 4 miles to its intersection with CR-CC and Montezuma County Road 10.
- Turn left (south) and follow CR-10 to the Colorado-Utah state line and the beginning of Trail of the Ancients - Utah, approximately 19 miles.

#### Southern Section

- At the intersection of US 160/491 and 145, continue on US 160/491.
- Travel 40 miles southwest to the Four Corners National Monument in Utah and the terminus of the byway.
- Before the Four Corners Monument, the byway also heads northwest, on CO-41, 10 miles to Trail of the Ancients - UT.

#### Utah

- At Monticello, UT, turn south or left onto US-191 and proceed 20.3 miles past Blanding, UT.
- Continue on US-191 south for 5.7 miles to the junction with U-95.
- Turn west or right onto U-95.
- Continue on U-95 to Bridge View Dr. to the Natural Bridges National Monument.
- Return to the junction of U-95 and U-261.
- Drive southwest on U-261 to US 163.
- Continue south on US 163 to the state line of Utah and Arizona.
- Return to the junction of US 163 and U-261.
- Drive northeast on US 163 to US 191/U-162.
- Continue on US 191/U-162 past Bluff, UT to U-262 just east of Montezuma Creek.
- Continue on U-162 to the Utah-Colorado state line.
- Return to junction of US 191 and U-162.
- Drive north on US 191 to junction with U-262.
- Turn right and follow U-262/Hovenweep Rd, which will turn into Reservation Road.
- Turn north onto CR 413 and drive to the Utah-Colorado state line.
- Return to junction of US 191 and U-262.

- Continue north on US 191 through White Mesa joining with rest of byway at junction of US 191 and U-95.

## Getting to the Byway

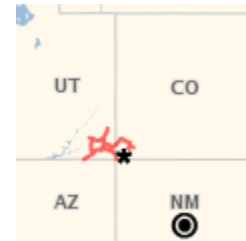


### Nearby cities

**Albuquerque, NM** (251 miles / 403.95 km, 4 hours 10 minutes)

- Start:** ● I-40 westbound, Albuquerque, NM  
N 35.106° W 106.645° [?]
- Take I-40 west out of Albuquerque.
  - Follow until Gallup, turn right onto US-491 north.
  - You will join the byway when US-491 and US-160 intersects.
- Directions:**

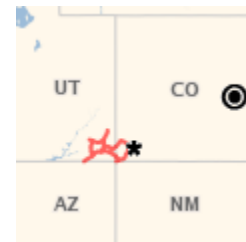
**Junction with byway:** \* Intersection of Trail of the Ancients and Mancos Canyon Rd. Towaoc, CO  
N 37.089° W 108.733° [?]



**Colorado Springs, CO** (348 miles / 560.05 km, 6 hours 30 minutes)

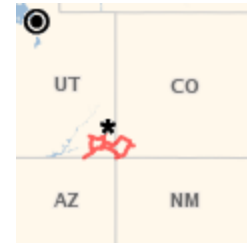
- Start:** ● I-25 southbound, Colorado Springs, CO  
N 38.837° W 104.830° [?]
- Take I-25 south out of Colorado Springs.
  - Turn right onto US-160.
  - The byway begins at the eastern edge of Mesa Verde National Park on US-160.
- Directions:**

**Junction with byway:** \* Intersection of US-10 and US-160, Mesa Verde National Park, CO  
N 37.341° W 108.411° [?]



**Salt Lake City, UT** (287 miles / 461.88 km, 5 hours)

- Start:**           ● I-15 southbound, Salt Lake City, UT  
N 40.758° W 111.905° [?]
- Take I-15 south to Spanish Fork.
  - Get on US-6 and go southeast to Green River.
- Directions:**
- Take I-70 east to Crescent Junction.
  - Get on US-191 and go south to Monticello where the byway begins.



**Junction with byway:**   \* Intersection of Main St and Central St, Monticello, UT  
N 37.873° W 109.343° [?]

## Road Trip: An Archaeological Adventure

**Departure:** Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado

**Destination:** Four Corners Monument, Utah

**Time to allow:** 5 days

Use this itinerary to plan a hands-on tour through this bright, desert region, full of ancient history and intrigue. You'll wander where ancient Native American civilizations developed and thrived and handle remnants of their cultures. You'll walk under a huge, natural stone bridge and stand in four states at once. The list of stops is diverse; it will be an adventure you'll never forget.

### Day 1

- **Start: Mesa Verde National Park**



**Suggested time at this stop:**

5 hours

America's premier archaeological wonder, Mesa Verde is one of the fifty "must see" places of a lifetime. America's first World Heritage Site, the park tells the story of a civilization's dynamic growth over 700 years. Hundreds of homes and villages within the park's boundaries are over eight centuries old. Preserved and protected by overhanging cliff ledges, their beauty and complexity speak eloquently of the ancient people who built them.

Walk into Long House or climb ladders into Balcony House and hear the wind whispering through the shadowed rooms. Villages and farming areas once dotted the mesas of the park. Cliff dwellings were built in the canyons long after underground pit houses first appeared on the mesa tops. The mesa's entire human history is captured in these park sites. Beginning the grand tour of the Trail of the Ancients here allows the visitor an overview of the life-way of the entire region. Some sites require strenuous hiking or climbing. Outdoor clothing is recommended. The park can be seen superficially without difficult hikes and in casual clothing. Visitors should plan on spending a full day at the park.

- **Stop 2: Anasazi Heritage Center**



**From previous stop:** 30 minutes / 17 mi (27.2 km)

**Directions:** Leave Mesa Verde National Park via US-160 and travel west to the junction with Colorado Highway 145 (the first traffic light encountered). Turn right or north onto 145 and travel eight miles to the junction with Colorado Highway 184. Turn left or west onto 184 and travel one mile to the center which will be on your right.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 2 hours

The Anasazi Heritage Center is a museum that interprets the history and culture of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the Four Corners region. Mesa Verde is not a traditional National Park in which the visitor is encouraged to see and listen but discouraged from interacting. To the contrary, the Anasazi Heritage Center takes the experience of the Four Corners into the personal realm with interactive exhibits: you can learn about the history and culture of this unique region through hands-on activities. Discover the Ancestral Puebloan history through exhibits, a pithouse replica, films, and interactive experiences. Explore special exhibits which are complemented with lectures, demonstrations, and special events like traditional dances with the Hopi or Zuni people. Grind corn between two stones, weave on a traditional loom, use microscopes, and touch real artifacts in the Discovery Area. Experience virtual archaeology using computer programs designed for all ages. The hands-on Discovery Area, education programs, permanent exhibits, and films explore archaeology, local history, and Pueblo, Ute, and Navajo life-ways. In addition, visit the Escalante and Dominguez Pueblos via a paved trail from the museum. Visitors should plan to stay at this stop for between two hours and half a day.

- **End: Dolores**

**From previous stop:** same location

Lodging is available in Dolores.

### Totals for Day 1

**Total Distance Traveled:** 17 miles / 27.2 km

**Total Travel Time:** 30 minutes

**Total Stopping Time:** 7 hours

## Day 2

- **Stop 1: Lowry Pueblo**

**From previous stop:** 45 minutes / 38 mi (60.8 km)

**Directions:** Leave the Anasazi Heritage Center on Colorado Highway 184 heading west or right from the driveway. Drive seven miles to the junction with US 491. Turn right or north onto 491 and travel 20 miles to Pleasant View, Colorado. Turn left or west onto Montezuma County Road CC. Travel ten miles on Road CC (paved, gravel, native surface) to the pueblo which is signed on the left.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 2 hours

Within the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, Lowry Pueblo is a 1,000-year-old Ancestral Puebloan village. It was built around AD 1060 and people lived there for 165 years. Unlike larger and more formal Mesa Verde, this small village allows the visitor to experience what life may have been like in an outlying village. Dating to AD 1085, the Pueblo contains a Great Kiva, or ceremonial chamber, which is accessible to visitors. Another kiva at the site, the smaller Painted Kiva, dates to AD 1170. The view from the village site and along the access road is of the Great Sage Plain, more than 1,500 square miles of high, dry, rolling plateau deeply scored by canyons. This is the first archaeological site along the trail which allows an uninterrupted view of the land and the distant mountains. This village was built on the ruins of an even older residence area through six periods of construction during about 25 years. Lowry Pueblo is one of the most easily accessible sites in Canyons of the Ancients Monument. It allows the visitor a close-up and personal experience of the Ancestral Puebloan life-way explained at Mesa Verde National Park and the Anasazi Heritage Center.

- **Stop 2: Canyons of the Ancients National Monument**



**From previous stop:** same location

**Directions:** The last stop, Lowry Pueblo, is in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. From Cortez, Colorado, drive north on US 491 to Montezuma County Road P. Turn left or west onto Road P to the junction with Country Road N. Follow Road N to Sand Canyon Pueblo. Total distance from US 491 is ten miles. Alternative to #1 is to continue north on US 491 to Yellow Jacket, turn west on County Road X, drive six miles on Road X to the junction with County Road 15, drive two miles to County Road W, turn west and drive two miles to the monument boundary -- or continue past Country Road W two miles on Country Road X to the junction with Road U, turn west and drive one mile to the monument boundary.

Alternative #2 is to continue on US 491 to Pleasant View (17 miles), turn west on County Road CC, drive six miles to the junction with County Road 10, turn south on 10 and drive five miles to the monument boundary. This road leads all the way into Utah where it becomes San Juan County Road 213 and accesses Hovenweep National Monument.

Alternative #3 is to continue on US 491 to Cahone, turn left or west onto Dolores County Road R and follow Road R to the monument boundary.

Alternative #4 is to continue on US 491 to Dove Creek, turn west on Dolores County Road 6 and follow it south to the monument boundary. Continuing on this road leads along the edge of the Cross Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA) on the south side of the road and the Squaw/Papoose Canyon WSA on the north side. It is recommended that visitors check locally for road conditions. The driving time from Lowry Pueblo varies from one to four hours.

Covering almost 164,000 acres of high desert, this area contains more than 5,000 recorded archaeological sites, and thousands more await documentation and study. The area has the highest known archaeological site density in the United States. The visitor may elect to spend between one day and two weeks at this site.

- **Stop 3: Hovenweep National Monument**



**From previous stop:** 1 hour / 43 mi (68.8 km)

**Directions:** From Cortez, Colorado, follow US 491 south four miles to the junction with Montezuma County Road G. Turn west or right onto Road G and follow it 26 miles to the Colorado/Utah state line. From the state line the road becomes San Juan County (SJC) Road 402 and continues three miles to the junction with SJC Road 401. Turn north or right onto SJC Road 401 and follow it 4 1/2 miles to the junction with SJC Road 413. Turn north or right onto SJC Road 413 which in 2.5 miles becomes Road 213, and follow Road 213 three miles to the entrance to Hovenweep National Monument.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 2 hours

Hovenweep National Monument is known for its square, oval, circular, and D-shaped towers. The park invites exploration among the ruins of the culture that thrived here hundreds of years ago. The monument contains six groups of ruins. Square Tower is the best preserved. The others are Cajon, Holly, Hackberry Canyon, Goodman Point, and Cutthroat Castle. Cajon is the ruin of two large pueblos. Holly, Hackberry Canyon, and Cutthroat Castle contain towers and pueblos. Goodman Point is a large, unexcavated surface ruin with numerous small sites close by. A self-guiding trail leads from the ranger station at Square Tower ruin to the tower and its associated structures. Ranger-guided tours are available on a seasonal basis. Unlike the large ruins at Mesa Verde, these are approachable and the visitor can wander among the fallen walls and consider the people who built them. The outlying ruins are reached by auto along graded gravel or native surface roads. Vehicles with high clearance are recommended to reach these outlying ruins. Trails of varying length lead to the ruins from the road. No trail is of extreme difficulty, but visitors are encouraged to wear outdoor clothing and good hiking boots. Often, there are few people at the monument so the experience can be very individual and peaceful. Plan on spending between two hours and up to a full day here.

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- **End: Blanding**

**From previous stop:** same location

Lodging is available in Blanding.

**Totals for Day 2**

**Total Distance Traveled:** 81 miles / 129.6 km

**Total Travel Time:** 1 hour 45 minutes

**Total Stopping Time:** 4 hours

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## Day 3

- **Stop 1: Edge of the Cedars State Park & Museum**



**From previous stop:** 1 hour / 45 mi (72.0 km)

**Directions:** Leave Hovenweep on San Juan County (SJC) Road 213. Follow Road 213 three miles to where it becomes Road 413; follow Road 413 two miles to the junction with Road 401. Turn west or right onto SJC Road 401, and follow it nine miles to the junction with SJC Road 414. Turn west or left onto Road 414 and follow it 6.5 miles to the junction with Utah Highway 262. Continue on Highway 262 8.5 miles to the junction with US Highway 191. Turn north or right onto US-191 and follow it 15 miles to Blanding, Utah. At the traffic signal in Blanding turn left onto Center Street and proceed five blocks to 600 West Street. Turn right onto 600 West and follow it to Edge of the Cedars State Park.

Edge of the Cedars State Park and Museum is located at the site of a Puebloan surface village. It is distinct from the larger museums of Indian culture in the Four Corners states in that it offers the visitor an intimate look at the life-way of the Ancient Puebloans. Visitors can walk the paths through the ruin and climb into the kiva via a ladder, just as the original residents did. Exceptionally rare and well-preserved artifacts are at the heart of the exhibits. A feather sash made of macaw feathers from Mexico speaks of a trading network throughout the Americas. An original kiva ladder from southeast Utah shows clearly the construction methods used by the ancient people. Prehistoric knives and wooden plates found in the mountains north of Blanding show exquisite skill and are reminiscent of trenchers used in western European culture. Plan to spend two hours to half a day here.

- **Stop 2: Butler Wash Indian Ruin**



**From previous stop:** 30 minutes / 13 mi (20.8 km)

**Directions:** Leave Edge of the Cedars State Park and Museum on 600 West Street. Drive south to the junction with Center Street. Turn east or left on Center, and drive to the intersection of Center and US Highway 191. Turn south onto US 191, and drive four miles to the junction with Utah Highway 95. Turn west or right onto U 95, and drive 13 miles to the signed entrance to Butler Wash Ruin. The trail leads from the parking area to the ruin overlook.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 1 hour 30 minutes

If the visitor has followed the itinerary through Mesa Verde National Park to Hovenweep and Edge of the Cedars, he or she has moved progressively from archaeology sites of high to low population density. Butler Wash is a good example of the Puebloan "country cousins" residence. The site is a small and pristine cliff dwelling sheltered in a shallow canyon near a water source. The signed parking area, which will accommodate large vehicles including buses, leads to a trail which crosses sandstone to an overlook of the ruin. Interpretive signage is in place at the overlook giving the visitor information about the site and its builders. Standing on the edge of the small canyon allows visitors to imagine life here hundreds of years ago. The area is quiet and the sounds of wind, raven calls, and rustling grasses help to create a good sense of the life in this region without the sounds of cars, people, and modern intrusions.

- **Stop 3: Mule Canyon Ruin**



**From previous stop:** 15 minutes / 10 mi (16.0 km)

**Directions:** Leave Butler Wash Ruin via Utah Highway 95. Travel ten miles west on U 95. Mule Canyon Ruin is signed and is immediately adjacent to the highway.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 45 minutes

Mule Canyon Ruin is an excellent example of a Puebloan tower. It is immediately adjacent to Utah Highway 95 and easily accessed by autos and tour buses. The ruin is also accessible for those with physical challenges. The ruin consists of a residence block, a reconstructed open kiva, and a partially reconstructed tower. A large interpretive panel presents information about the archaeological site, the Puebloan people, and the overall ancient culture of the Four Corners region. The tower may have been part of an ancient communications system between villages. The Puebloans may have used the towers to signal with fire from one village to others. The site offers paved walkways and a handicap accessible pit toilet.

- **Stop 4: Natural Bridges National Monument**



**From previous stop:** 30 minutes / 10 mi (16.0 km)

**Directions:** Natural Bridges National Monument is also along Utah Highway 95, ten miles west of Mule Canyon Ruin. Access to the park is via Utah Highway 275. Turn north onto U 275 and follow it four miles to the visitor center. The monument is 40 miles from Blanding.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 30 minutes

Natural Bridges National Monument was the first such designated park area in Utah. The park harbors three of the world's largest natural stone "bridges." (Bridges differ from "arches" in that they are created primarily by stream action; whereas arches are created primarily by rain and wind.) The bridges in this monument are all easily viewed from overlook areas along Bridge View Drive, a nine-mile, one-way, paved loop road through the park. Interpretive signing is present at each overlook. Each bridge is also accessible via a trail from the Bridge View Drive to the bottom of the canyon. The park also shelters Ancestral Puebloan ruins. Horsecollar Ruin Overlook Trail is mostly level and leads over the mesa to the edge of White Canyon. The small cliff dwelling is unique in that it is still plastered. The doorways to the two granaries are shaped like the horsecollars used in harness equipment. The ruin also contains a kiva.

- **End: Blanding**

**From previous stop:** same location

Lodging is available in Blanding.

### Totals for Day 3

**Total Distance Traveled:** 78 miles / 124.8 km

**Total Travel Time:** 2 hours 15 minutes

**Total Stopping Time:** 2 hours 45 minutes

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## Day 4

- **Stop 1: Grand Gulch Primitive Area**



**From previous stop:** 15 minutes / 6 mi (9.6 km)

**Directions:** Leave Natural Bridges National Monument via Utah Highway 275 to the junction with Utah Highway 95. At Highway 95 turn east or left and drive 1.5 miles to the junction with Utah Highway 261. Turn south or right onto Highway 261 and travel five miles to the Kane Gulch Ranger Station. Grand Gulch is accessible from the station and from other access canyons farther south along Highway 261. The access routes are signed. A good map is required.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 2 hours

Grand Gulch is a canyon system that covers 52 miles from the Ranger Station to the San Juan River. It includes individual canyons and many hikes and native surface roads.

- **Stop 2: Valley of the Gods**

**From previous stop:** 1 hour / 49 mi (78.4 km)

**Directions:** Leave the Grand Gulch vicinity, and travel 18 miles south on Highway 261 to the edge of Cedar Mesa where the road becomes gravel and descends three miles from the mesa to the valley floor. Continue along Highway 261 from the bottom of the gravel portion to the junction with San Juan County Road 242. Turn east or left onto Road 242, and proceed 17 miles through the Valley of the Gods to the junction with US Highway 163 9.5 miles north of the community of Mexican Hat. From this point of exit from Valley of the Gods, turn west or right onto US-163 and drive four miles to the junction with Utah Highway 262. Turn north or right onto Highway 262 and drive one tenth of a mile to the access road to Goosenecks State Park. Turn west or left onto Utah Highway 316, and drive 3.5 miles to the park.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 3 hours

Although Valley of the Gods is not listed as a site on the Trail, it is worth visiting. The 17-mile loop drive on a native surface road leads among sandstone monoliths which have been given fanciful names such as, Seven Sailors, Southern Lady, Rooster Butte, and Battleship Butte. The valley allows a close-up look at towers and mesas of multicolored sandstone and other sedimentary rocks in subtle shades of pink, red, gold, orange, and purple. The route from Cedar Mesa and Grand Gulch is exciting and historic. At the edge of Cedar Mesa an overlook allows a view of the vast expanse below, including a stunning view into Valley of the Gods. The road drops more than 1,000 feet down the Moki Dugway, a three-mile graveled portion of the road. The dugway itself is a historic part of the trail, built during the "uranium boom" to accommodate ore trucks that traveled from the mines on Cedar Mesa to the mill near the Navajo community of Halchita across the San Juan River from Mexican Hat. At the bottom of the dugway the visitor may access Valley of the Gods or continue to Goosenecks State Park situated at the end of Utah Highway 262. Goosenecks State Park is another adventure in geology revealing the skeleton of the earth in the layers revealed in the San Juan River Canyon visible from the park. The Goosenecks of the San Juan River is one of the most striking examples of an "entrenched river meander" in North America. The river twists and turns below the park flowing a distance of over six miles while advancing only 1.5 miles west as it flows toward Lake Powell. Over 300 million years of geologic activity is revealed from Goosenecks State Park. Driving time through the Valley of the Gods is two hours. Driving time to Goosenecks State Park is half an hour.

- **Stop 3: Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park**



**From previous stop:** 30 minutes / 28 mi (44.8 km)

**Directions:** From Valley of the Gods/Goosenecks State Park and the terminus of Utah Highway 262 at the junction with US 163, turn south or right onto US 163, and travel three miles to Mexican Hat where US 163 crosses the historic San Juan River Bridge. From Mexican Hat continue on US 163 21 miles to the junction with San Juan County Road 468, signed Monument Valley. Turn east onto Road 468 and travel four miles to the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park headquarters and visitor center. Or, at the junction with the county road, turn west or right onto County Road 421, and travel 1.5 miles to Gouldings Lodge/Historic Trading Post.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 2 hours

In Monument Valley the visitor can make the leap from the ancient people of the Four Corners to contemporary residents. The Navajo, or 'Dine', are relatively recent inhabitants and while the focus in Monument Valley is on the Navajo culture, evidence of the ancient ones is found here, too. Small granaries and dwellings are hidden in the stunning landscape of Monument Valley. Today the valley is home to Navajo families and offers a peek at the contemporary Navajo culture. Resident guides lead groups to the ancient dwellings and discuss the current life-way of the valley. Weavers create masterworks on the traditional log and rope loom. Most homes have a hogan (ho' gone) nearby that speaks of Navajo history. Early Anglo culture is also in evidence in the valley, at Gouldings Lodge. The Gouldings arrived in the valley early in the 20th century and established a trading post. The original trading post is now a museum which includes exhibits of the films made in Monument Valley over the years. Monument Valley is truly a destination known worldwide.

- **End: Bluff**

**From previous stop:** same location

Lodging is available in Bluff.

## Totals for Day 4

**Total Distance Traveled:** 83 miles / 132.8 km

**Total Travel Time:** 1 hour 45 minutes

**Total Stopping Time:** 7 hours

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## Day 5

- **Stop 1: The Historic Community of Bluff, Utah**



**From previous stop:** 45 minutes / 41 mi (65.6 km)

**Directions:** From Monument Valley drive 41 miles east on US Highway 163 to Bluff. The route travels the northern portion of Monument Valley, through the historic community of Mexican Hat, and traverses the "cut," which is Comb Ridge, before approaching Bluff.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 3 hours

Bluff, a historic community with turn-of-the-20th-century "Victorian" homes of sandstone block, nestles beneath the sandstone bluffs which give the community its name. The first Anglo settlement in southeastern Utah, Bluff was founded by the Mormon pioneers who traveled the historic Hole In The Rock Trail from the southwestern side of Utah. The eastern end of the Hole In The Rock Trail is in Bluff. The village today sports homes built by the pioneers from the native sandstone in the style of Victorian homes throughout the country. The difference is the sandstone. The homes, while being Victorian in design, look significantly different than those built in other communities of clapboard or granite. A Historic Walking Tour brochure is available in local businesses. This small community is home to the Utah Navajo Fair in the fall and the annual Bluff International Balloon Festival in January. Well-stocked "trading posts" operate in Bluff, and it is a starting point for river trips on the San Juan River. Four miles west of town along US 191, is Sand Island Recreation Area where the river trips start and where the visitor will find a large petroglyph panel with many images of the mythological Kokopelli, the hump-backed flute player of southwestern legend. Many other images of sheep, deer, birds, other animals, large humanlike forms with elaborate headresses, and geometric designs are evident on the panel as well. Some images are historic, having been made during the 19th century. Bluff is a good base for exploration into the western portion of the Trail of the Ancients. Lodging, food, and other amenities are available.

- **Stop 2: Three Kiva Pueblo**



**From previous stop:** 1 hour 30 minutes / 45 mi (72.0 km)

**Directions:** Drive north through the community of Bluff to the junction with US 163 at the Cow Canyon Trading Post. Turn east or right onto US 163, and drive 14.5 miles to Montezuma Creek and the junction with Utah Highway 262. Turn north or left onto U 262, and follow it to the junction with San Juan County Road 414; turn east or right onto SJC Road 414, and follow it to the junction with SJC Road 446. Turn north or left onto Road 446, and follow it to the boundary of the Navajo Nation where the road number becomes SJC Road 146. Follow Road 146 to Three Kiva Ruin which is on SJC Road 146.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 1 hour

Three Kiva Pueblo is a small residence situated in the broad valley of Montezuma Creek. It is a good example of the outlying communities which are found throughout the Four Corners region. This ruin offers the added bonus of isolation and a reconstructed kiva which is entered in the traditional manner (by a ladder). Because it is off the beaten track, it lends itself to contemplation and sparks the imagination.

- **End: Four Corners Monument**



**From previous stop:** 1 hour 30 minutes / 50 mi (80.0 km)

**Directions:** You may have stopped at one of three sites on the trail as the previous stop: Monument Valley, Bluff, or Three Kiva Pueblo. Driving directions are given for each of the three.

1) If Monument Valley was your last stop: Leave the Navajo Tribal Park, and return to US 163. Turn north on US 163, and drive 41 miles to the community of Bluff, Utah. Just at the northern edge of Bluff, turn east or right onto US 163 and travel 14.5 miles to Montezuma Creek. At Montezuma Creek you cross the intersection with Utah Highway 262. Highway 262 continues east. Follow Utah Highway 262 east 27 miles to the junction with US 160. At US 160, turn south or right onto US 160, and travel 5.5 miles to the Four Corners Monument which is on the right -- a total of 88 miles.

1a) Alternate route from Monument Valley: turn south on US 163 and drive 24 miles to Kayenta and the junction with US 160. Turn east or left onto US 160 and drive 72 miles to Teec Nos Pos where US 160 joins with US 63. US 160 continues north six miles to the Four Corners Monuemnt -- a total of 102 miles.

2) If Bluff was your last stop: Drive north of Bluff, and turn east or right onto US 163, and travel 14.5 miles to Montezuma Creek. At Montezuma Creek you cross the intersection with Utah Highway 262. Highway 262 continues east. Follow Utah Highway 262 east 27 miles to the junction with US 160. At US 160, turn south or right onto US 160, and travel 5.5 miles to the Four Corners Monument which is on the right -- a total of 47 miles.

3) If Three Kiva Pueblo was your last stop: Return to Utah Highway 262 and turn east or left onto 262; drive 27 miles to the junction with US 160. At US 160, turn south or right onto US 160, and travel 5.5 miles to the Four Corners Monument which is on the right -- a total of 55 miles.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 1 hour

The last stop on the Trail of the Ancients is the Four Corners Monument found at the only spot in the US where four states share a common geographic point. The

original marker was erected in 1912 as a simple cement pad. Today the rebuilt monument is made of granite with a bronze central disk and colored concrete designating each of the four states. Metal plates depicting the seals of each state are embedded in the concrete. The monument stands on a tiny corner of each state. Surveying began for the common point in Colorado in 1868. In 1878, surveying was commenced in Utah and New Mexico. The final survey was completed in Arizona in 1901. The monument is a Navajo Tribal Park and offers a visitor center, picnic tables, and pit toilets.

### **Totals for Day 5**

**Total Distance Traveled:** 136 miles / 217.6 km

**Total Travel Time:** 3 hours 45 minutes

**Total Stopping Time:** 5 hours