

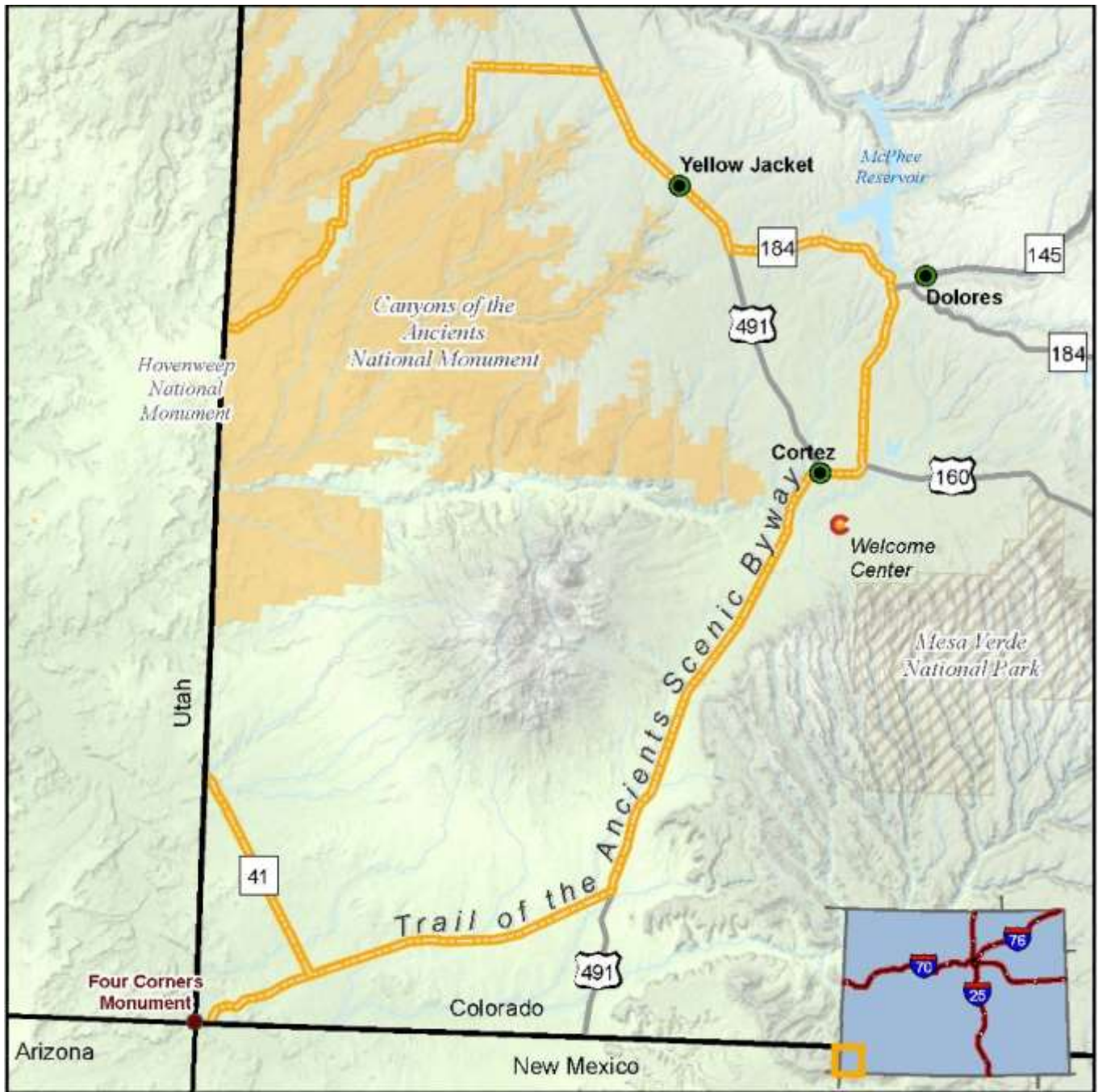


## Trail of the Ancients Scenic and Historic Byway

Imagine standing on a 40-million-year-old geological work of art surrounded on all sides by dwelling places of the “sacred ones.” Listen to the silence in an enchanting landscape filled with mesas, buttes and flying pinnacles. Crouch down to crawl through a small opening that suddenly expands into hundreds of stone recesses where thousands of ancients built their homes more than 500 years before Columbus set foot in the new world. Imagine these dwelling places amidst a stupendous array of geological wonders formed by millions of years wind and water. Welcome to the Trail of the Ancients. More than 1600 years ago, the Ancestral Puebloans or Anasazi left their landmark cliff dwellings on the landscape of Southwestern Colorado in a culture that lasted 600 A.D. to 1300 A.D. The newest structures, which date from 1130 A.D. are sophisticated buildings. It is the only place in the United States completely immersed in the ancient civilization of the Southwest. A selection of these treasures are World Heritage Sites and often termed the “Stonehenge of the Southwest.” Today, more than 700 years of history resides in the sheltered alcoves and elaborate stone villages. To bring this civilization to life, we’ve designed a trip to take you into this fascinating world of the past.

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## Walking in the Footsteps of the Ancients Experience



### Driving the Byway

Your journey begins in Durango, known for its western flair and hospitality. A visit to the Toh-Atin Gallery introduces you to Native American and Southwestern art. Just outside Durango, you can explore the Southern Ute Cultural Center, to begin learning about the ancient Native Americans who lived in the area. On Day Two, you'll be heading for Cortez, for a further introduction to the ancient cultures at the Cortez Cultural Center, Crow Canyon Archeological Center and Mesa Verde National Park, the largest ancestral pueblo in the world where you can explore the homes and lives of the ancients up close and personal. Grab a bite to eat in Cortez or have lunch in either of the cafes in Mesa Verde. Plan to spend the entire afternoon at the Cliff Dwellings, Mesa Verde Visitor Center, the Far View sites, Chapin Mesa Archaeological Museum and more. Day Three will be spent driving a circle tour of the Colorado portion of the Trail of the Ancients. Leaving Mesa Verde National Park, you'll travel up to Dolores, location of the Anasazi Heritage Center. From there, a visit to the Canyon of the Ancients National Monument will let you explore Lowry Pueblo, built about 1060 A.D. It's smaller than Mesa Verde, but no less impressive. Continuing around the loop, a stop at Hovenweep takes you to a location inhabited for more than 10,000 years. More extensive settlement began around 900 A.D. and the area ultimately became home to over 2,500 residents.

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## Day One



## Durango

Founded in 1880 by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, Durango is the gateway to Colorado's Old West. Today walking in the Victorian charm you'll notice architectural styles which changed during eras of boom and bust. A collection of outstanding historic buildings like the railroad depot, the Wetter Building, several historic hotels, and the "Saloon District" have been carefully preserved. Even though the "jeans and cowboy hat dress code" will be immediately obvious, the town has more award-winning restaurants per capita than San Francisco. In fact, the high quality of life is the main reason that folks leave the big city for a more casual mountain life, with a multitude of scenic walking trails, a thriving arts community, and great historical and cultural offerings.

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## Day One



### **Toh-Atin Gallery**

The Toh-Atin Gallery is one of the most respected sources of Navajo rugs and weavings, Pueblo jewelry, pottery, Hopi Kachinas, Native American baskets and Indian and Southwestern arts in Colorado.

145 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Durango, CO 81301 970-247-8277 Monday-Saturday 9AM-6PM, Sunday 10AM-5PM

### **Southern Ute Cultural Center**



A bit outside of Durango, in the opposite direction from the remainder of your trip, the Southern Ute Cultural Center illustrates exceptional architecture that incorporates cultural symbolism and a connection to the land. Inside, memories and history celebrate the Ute people. You'll first encounter plants important to native subsistence. Once inside, you'll be awed by Ponderosa pines rising 60 feet like a tipi, ending in a Circle of Life glass ceiling. The Permanent Gallery chronicles the story of the Ute people from prehistoric times to today. Photographic panels, audio-visual presentations, interactive electronics and life-size replicas enhance six themes in Ute life.

503 Ouray Drive, Ignacio CO 970-563-9583 7 Days except major holidays, 45 minute tour, Free

### **Optional Dining Experience**

#### **Bar D Old West Music Show and Chuckwagon Supper**

8080 Country Road 250

Durango, CO 81301

970-247-5753



Eat on traditional tin plates, enjoying a choice of entrees, served with potatoes, baked beans, homemade biscuits with hone, applesauce, home baked cake, cowboy coffee or real lemonade.

Starting at \$29 per person, Dinner at 6:30PM

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## Durango Destination Distinctive Accommodations and Dining



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations: General Palmer Hotel** **567 Main Avenue, Durango, CO 81301 970-247-4747**

The prestigious Victorian era General Palmer Hotel has operated continuously since it was built in 1898. Named after Civil War General Palmer, it is the only Historic Four Diamond Hotel in Southwest Colorado. Step back in time and experience the unique nostalgia of the hotel while enjoying all the comforts of modern living.



### **Grassburgers**

726 1/2 Main Avenue  
Durango, CO 81301  
970-247-1081

An award-winning farm to table restaurant featuring 100% grass fed burgers, with gluten free, vegan and allergy friendly options that is completely non-GMO.

### **Eolus**

919 Main Avenue  
Durango, CO 81301  
970-259-2898

Considered the best restaurant in Durango, with exquisite food and excellent service.

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## Day Two



### Cortez

Located on the Old Spanish Trail that connected California, New Mexico, and southern Colorado, Cortez is steeped in the history of the ancient peoples who called this high desert area home. The actual town began in 1886 to house men who completed the elaborate network of tunnel, irrigation ditches and laterals that diverted water from the Dolores River into Montezuma Valley. Ultimately, hundreds of men working on the new system lived here. Durango to Cortez– 45 miles

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## Day Two

### Cortez Cultural Center



The Hawkins Preserve has been home to ancient cultures since 900 A.D. The entire 122 acres was put into protected status to protect the treasured archaeological resources from the Pueblo I and Pueblo II periods. were put into protected status. Hawkins is also home to a gallery featuring local artists and holds Native American dance performances nightly through the summer. An ADA accessible concrete trail traverses the northern reaches of the Preserve, while single track dirt paths lead to archaeological ruins and Dakota sandstone cliffs.

25 North Market Street, Cortez, CO 81321 970-565-1151  
Hours vary, Hawkins Preserve, dawn to dusk

### Crow Canyon Archeological Center



Rather than serving as a museum, Crow Canyon is a research center focusing on the ancestral Pueblo occupation of south-western Colorado, continuously contributing some of the most important new work in Southwestern archaeology at more than 30 ancient sites. A half-mile walking tour takes you on a behind-the-scenes look at an archaeological research center, visiting an archaeology lab where you can see ancient artifacts up close. If your schedule permits, they offer full day tours of archaeological locations filled with in depth information.

23390 County Road K, Cortez, CO 81321 970-565-9875



### La Casita De Cortez

350 Main Street  
Cortez, CO 81321  
970-565-0223

Locals consider that La Casita de Cortez serves the best and most authentic Mexican food in the Southwest, with visitors voting it #1 on Trip Advisor and Yelp.

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## Day Two



### Mesa Verde National Park

As America's premier archaeological wonder, Mesa Verde is one of 50 must see places of a lifetime. The expansive dugout area for 700 years. Tour the Cliff Palace, climb ladders into Balcony House, and walk into the Long House to hear the wind whispering through the shadowed rooms. These locations can only be toured with a guide. You can take a self-guided tour of Spruce Tree House, Step House, Badger House and other sites on Mesa Top and the Far View Sites Complex. Prepare to be awestruck!

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## Day Two

### Cliff Dwellings, Cliff Palace, Balcony House, Long House



Grab your sense of adventure as you go up and down ladders and through the tight spaces of Cliff Palace constructed with sophisticated building techniques to create a culturally cohesive community. The 150 rooms and 23 kivas (ceremonial rooms) and had a population of about 100. Of the nearly 600 cliff dwellings in the park, 75% are made up of 1-5 rooms each. Cliff Palace is an exceptionally large dwelling that housed administrative spaces and ceremonies. Balcony House features with 40 rooms revealing how rooms and passageways were constructed over time. The tunnel, passageways, and modern 32-foot entrance ladder make this the most adventurous cliff dwelling tour in the park.



### Mesa Verde Visitor Center

Exhibits at the Mesa Verde Visitor Center are designed to offer glimpse into the richness of daily life in the Ancestral Pueblo. Learn more about the modern descendants of the Ancestral Pueblo people, along with sculptures and art that reflect the perspectives of today's artists on Mesa Verde, its people and landscape



### Far View Sites

The Far View neighborhood was the earliest settlement in the park, occupied nearly 200 years before the cliff dwellings began. It was home to hundreds of people in nearly 50 villages within a half square mile area, living in modest homes interspersed with small farm fields. Today, the Far View House, Pipe Shrine House, Coyote Village, Far View Reservoir, Megalithic House, and Far View Tower are open for touring. A woodland trail takes you to all six sites.

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## Day Two

### Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum



The 1922 Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum is a historic landmark, which replaced a 1917 log cabin. The museum was constructed using Cliff House Sandstone, the same type of rock used by the Ancestral Pueblo. A series of dioramas illustrate Ancestral Pueblo life with prehistoric artifacts and a chronology of Ancestral Pueblo culture. The 25-minute film provides an excellent overview of the history of Mesa Verde.

### Mesa Top Sites



The Badger House Community has four major sites: Modified Basketmaker Pithouse, Developmental Pueblo Village, Badger House, and Two Raven House in addition to Cedar Tree Tower, built between 1100 AD and 1300 AD likely for ceremonial purposes. The winding 12-mile drive begins at Wetherill Mesa Road and a round trip walk through the sites takes you through 600 years of prehistory, with interpretive signs guiding the way.

### Mesa Loop Road



Take the 6-mile Mesa Top Loop Road for an auto tour that takes you to 12 short easily-accessible paved trails to view surface sites and overlooks of cliff dwellings, including Square Tower House Overlook, and views of Cliff Palace from Sun Point View and Sun Temple

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## Mesa Verde Destination Distinctive Accommodations and Dining



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations: Far View Lodge Mesa Verde National Park**

For the most spectacular views, choose a Kiva Deluxe View Room in Far View Lodge, which sits on a high shoulder of Mesa Verde near mile marker 15 on the main park road. It's simple here, quiet enough to hear the ravens fly by. No TVs. Nothing fancy except unobstructed panoramic vistas into three states that stretch for hundreds of miles in an absolutely beautiful and peaceful place to linger and appreciate why people lived here for seven centuries



### **Dinner at Mesa Verde**

Far View Terrace Café  
Spruce Tree Terrace Café

Enjoy lunch in either of the cafes at Mesa Verde and dinner at Far View Lodge.

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## Day Four



## Dolores

Dolores is a wonderful small town, with a unique mixture of shops, restaurants, taverns and a brew pub. The Dolores River runs on one side and rock cliffs bound the other. The San Juan National Forest and McPhee Reservoir is a mile away.

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## Day Four

### Canyon of the Ancients National Monument



Encompassing 164,000 acres of high desert, the Canyon of the Ancients National Monument has the highest density of archeological sites in the United States, with more than 6,000 recorded sites and thousands more not yet studied.

9651 Road N, Cortez, CO 81321 970-882-5600

Open dawn to dusk, Free

### Anasazi Heritage Center



The Anasazi Heritage Center features the culture of the Ancient ones who lived in the Canyon of the Ancients National Monument. Here, you can weave cloth, grind corn and use tools of the ancient dwellers, plus tour two 12<sup>th</sup> century pueblos named after the Spanish Franciscan friars who came to Colorado seeking a shortcut to California. The Escalante Pueblo illustrates three major periods of settlements that have taken place in the area.

Located within Canyon of the Ancients National Monument

27501 Highway 184, Dolores, CO 81323 970-882-5600

Tuesday-Sunday 9AM-5PM, Allow 1 hour, \$6 per person

### Lowry Pueblo



Dating from 1060 AD, Lowry Pueblo offers a more close-up experience of the Ancestral Puebloan way of life including 40 rooms with interpretive signs. The Great Kiva ceremonial chamber is complemented with a smaller Painted Kiva dating from 1170 A.D. The expansive landscapes beyond the village deliver uninterrupted views of 1,500 square miles of high, dry, rolling plateaus scoured by deep canyons.

Located in Canyon of the Ancients National Monument

7 Days 8AM-8PM

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## Day Four

### Hovenweep National Monument



Standing for centuries in the Southwestern desert, Hovenweep was once home to over 2,500 people. Six prehistoric Puebloan villages within 20 square miles encompass a variety of buildings, multistory towers, and other constructions balanced on boulders. The attention to detail in these ancient structures will have you marveling at the skill of the builders.

Start at the Hovenweep Visitor Center to begin learning about the human habitation at Hovenweep, that dates back over 10,000 years. Following seasonal weather patterns, these nomadic Paleoindians visited the Cajon Mesa to gather food and hunt game before they began settling to plant crops in the rich soil of the mesa top around 900 A.D.



Featuring the remains of nearly 30 kivas and a variety of other structures, The Square Tower Group is the only site within the monument that is accessible by a paved road. It is also the largest collection of ancestral Puebloan sites in the National Monument. Built on a boulder near a spring, the three-story tower has a check dam above it to increase water storage. It is possible the structures on the slopes of Little Ruin Canyon, perched on the canyon rims, balanced on boulders, and tucked under ledges, ultimately housed 500 people. A moderately strenuous trail follows the canyon rim and offers excellent views of every structure.



The Cutthroat Castle area was documented in 1929 but not added to Hovenweep until 1956. Intended to connect with the world below and the world above, the floor of each kiva is built below ground level to relate to the world below. The entrance to a kiva is typically through the roof to relate to the world above. Access to Cutthroat Castle Kiva is from below the boulder on which the kiva is built. Though it may appear isolated, the ancestral Puebloan population at Cutthroat Castle was quite large with a number of kivas important in the Puebloan religion located downstream.

Reached by County Road 10 through Canyon of the Ancients National Monument

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