

Canyon de Chelly National Monument

Canyon de Chelly National Monument (/dəˈʃeɪ/ *də-SHAY*) was established on April 1, 1931, as a unit of the National Park Service. Located in northeastern Arizona, it is within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation and lies in the Four Corners region. Reflecting one of the longest continuously inhabited landscapes of North America, it preserves ruins of the indigenous tribes that lived in the area, from the Ancestral Puebloans (formerly known as Anasazi) to the Navajo. The monument covers 83,840 acres (131 sq mi; 339 km²) and encompasses the floors and rims of the three major canyons: de Chelly, del Muerto, and Monument. These canyons were cut by streams with headwaters in the Chuska Mountains just to the east of the monument. None of the land is federally owned.^[5] Canyon de Chelly is one of the most visited national monuments in the United States.^[6]

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Etymology

The name *Chelly* (or *Chelley*) is a Spanish borrowing of the Navajo word *Tséyi'*, which means "canyon" (literally "inside the rock" < *tsé* "rock" + *-yi'* "inside of, within"). The Navajo pronunciation is [tséyiʔ]. The Spanish pronunciation of *de Chelly* [deˈtʃeɫi] was adapted into English, apparently modeled on a French-like spelling pronunciation, and is now /dəˈʃeɪ/ *də-SHAY*.

History

Canyon de Chelly long served as a home for Navajo people before it was invaded by forces led by future New Mexico governor Lt. Antonio Narbona in 1805. In 1863, Col. Kit Carson sent troops through the canyon, killing 23 Indians, seizing 200 sheep, and destroying hogans, as well as peach orchards and other crops. The resulting demoralization led to the surrender of the Navajos and their removal to Bosque Redondo, New Mexico.^[7]

Description

Canyon de Chelly National Monument



Canyon de Chelly, 1904, by Edward S. Curtis



Location in the United States

- ☒ Show map of Arizona
- ☐ Show map of the United States
- ☐ Show all

Location	Apache County , Arizona
Nearest city	Chinle
Coordinates	36.155281°N 109.508995°W^[1]
Area	83,840 acres (339.3 km²) ^[2]
Created	April 1, 1931
Visitors	439,306 (in 2018) ^[3]
Governing body	Bureau of Indian

Canyon de Chelly is entirely owned by the Navajo Tribal Trust of the Navajo Nation. It is the only National Park Service unit that is owned and cooperatively managed in this manner.^{[8][9]} About 40 Navajo families live in the park.^[10] Access to the canyon floor is restricted, and visitors are allowed to travel in the canyons only when accompanied by a park ranger or an authorized Navajo guide.^[11] The only exception to this rule is the White House Ruin Trail.



Spider Rock

The park's distinctive geologic feature, Spider Rock, is a sandstone spire that rises 750 feet (229 m) from the canyon floor at the junction of Canyon de Chelly and Monument Canyon. Spider Rock can be seen from South Rim Drive. It has served as the scene of a number of television commercials. According to traditional Navajo beliefs, the taller of the two spires is the home of Spider Grandmother.^[12]

Most park visitors arrive by automobile and view Canyon de Chelly from the rim, following both North Rim Drive and South Rim Drive. Ancient ruins and geologic structures are visible, but in the distance, from turnoffs on each of these routes. Deep within the park is Mummy Cave. It features structures that have been built at various times in history. Private Navajo-owned companies offer tours of the canyon floor by horseback, hiking or four-wheel drive vehicle. The companies can be contacted directly for prices and arrangements. No entrance fee is charged to enter the park, apart from any charges imposed by tour companies.

Accommodations for visitors are located in the vicinity of the canyon, on the road leading to Chinle, which is the nearest town.

The National Monument was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 25, 1970.^[4]

Climate

The data below were compiled starting in 1908 via the WRCC.^[13]

	Affairs
Website	Canyon de Chelly National Monument (http://www.nps.gov/cach/)
	U.S. National Register of Historic Places
NRHP reference No.	70000066 (https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/70000066)
Added to NRHP	August 25, 1970 ^[4]
U.S. National Monument	

Climate data for Canyon de Chelly, AZ													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °F (°C)	68 (20)	72 (22)	82 (28)	90 (32)	101 (38)	105 (41)	105 (41)	102 (39)	99 (37)	90 (32)	79 (26)	67 (19)	105 (41)
Mean maximum °F (°C)	57.2 (14.0)	64.0 (17.8)	72.6 (22.6)	80.8 (27.1)	89.1 (31.7)	97.9 (36.6)	99.1 (37.3)	96.2 (35.7)	91.8 (33.2)	83.0 (28.3)	70.3 (21.3)	59.6 (15.3)	99.9 (37.7)
Average high °F (°C)	44.2 (6.8)	51.0 (10.6)	60.4 (15.8)	69.1 (20.6)	78.6 (25.9)	89.2 (31.8)	92.5 (33.6)	89.4 (31.9)	82.6 (28.1)	70.2 (21.2)	55.8 (13.2)	44.9 (7.2)	69.0 (20.6)
Average low °F (°C)	19.1 (−7.2)	23.6 (−4.7)	29.5 (−1.4)	35.7 (2.1)	43.8 (6.6)	52.0 (11.1)	59.9 (15.5)	58.7 (14.8)	49.6 (9.8)	37.6 (3.1)	27.1 (−2.7)	19.2 (−7.1)	38.0 (3.3)
Mean minimum °F (°C)	−0.6 (−18.1)	7.3 (−13.7)	14.4 (−9.8)	20.9 (−6.2)	29.1 (−1.6)	37.7 (3.2)	49.4 (9.7)	48.6 (9.2)	35.0 (1.7)	23.2 (−4.9)	10.9 (−11.7)	1.9 (−16.7)	−4.2 (−20.1)
Record low °F (°C)	−32 (−36)	−22 (−30)	1 (−17)	9 (−13)	10 (−12)	20 (−7)	38 (3)	38 (3)	23 (−5)	13 (−11)	−3 (−19)	−27 (−33)	−32 (−36)
Average precipitation inches (mm)	0.79 (20)	0.69 (18)	0.67 (17)	0.53 (13)	0.50 (13)	0.28 (7.1)	1.13 (29)	1.25 (32)	0.91 (23)	0.99 (25)	0.71 (18)	0.71 (18)	9.16 (233.1)
Average snowfall inches (cm)	1.6 (4.1)	1.2 (3.0)	0.9 (2.3)	0.1 (0.25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0.1 (0.25)	0.4 (1.0)	1.5 (3.8)	5.8 (14.7)
Source: https://wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliMAIN.pl?az1248													

Gallery



White House Ruin



Antelope House Ruin



First Ruin



White House Ruin, Timothy H. O'Sullivan, 1873



Aerial view



Park map

See also

- [Ancestral Puebloans](#)
- [Battle of Canyon de Chelly](#)
- [Mesa Verde National Park](#)
- [National Register of Historic Places listings in Apache County, Arizona](#)

References

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- Grant, Campbell (1984). *Canyon de Chelly: Its People and Rock Art* (<https://archive.org/details/canyondechellyit0000gran>). Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press. ISBN 978-0816505234. OCLC 1145748744 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1145748744>).

External links

- Official website (<http://www.nps.gov/cach/index.htm>)
- "Canyon de Chelly National Monument" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110613200207/http://www.nature.nps.gov/geology/parks/cach/index.cfm>). *Geology Fieldnotes*. National Park Service. Archived from the original (<http://www2.nature.nps.gov/geology/parks/cach/index.cfm>) on 2011-06-13. Retrieved 2011-06-29.
- Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) No. AZ-157, "Antelope House Ruin, Canyon del Muerto, Chinle vicinity, Apache County, AZ" (<https://loc.gov/pictures/item/az0273/>)
- HABS No. AZ-213, "Bad Trail Ruin, Chinle vicinity, Apache County, AZ" (<https://loc.gov/pictures/item/az0428/>)
- HABS No. AZ-211, "Ledge Ruin, Canyon del Muerto, Chinle vicinity, Apache County, AZ" (<https://loc.gov/pictures/item/az0425/>)
- HABS No. AZ-72, "Mummy Cave, Navajo Indian Reservation, Chinle vicinity, Apache County, AZ" (<https://loc.gov/pictures/item/az0001/>)

- HABS No. AZ-156, "White House Ruin, Navajo Indian Reservation, Chinle vicinity, Apache County, AZ (<https://loc.gov/pictures/item/az0272/>)"
 - HABS No. AZ-212, "Yucca House Ruin, Canyon del Muerto, Chinle vicinity, Apache County, AZ (<https://loc.gov/pictures/item/az0426/>)"
 - *Canyon de Chelly* (<http://www.hanksville.org/voyage/poems/cdc/cdc1.html>) (poem by Simon Ortiz, 1977)
Accessed 2013 January 15
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