

The Sun Country Striders
 Welcomes You to
Chaco Culture N'tl Historic



San Juan County
 AVA Sanctioned Year Round Event

This walk is composed of multiple trail routes in the Chaco Culture National Historic Site. The Chacoan Culture developed in a canyon in the northwest central portion of New Mexico starting in the mid-800s and continued for over 300 years. The people used masonry techniques unique for the time. The canyon contains ruins of more than 7 different great houses. Walkers will have the opportunity to explore these great houses, some located along a flat trail while other ruins will offer the chance to climb mesas to obtain great views of the structures.

Walk Registration:

Please use the Online Start Box (OSB) to register. The directions and stamps will be available during the Las Cruces National Convention Apr 30 thru May 4 and at the group walks May 5-8, 2025 from the POC at selected sites. If wishing to do the walk on the way to the events, use the OSB or contact the POC.

Walk Completion and Walk Credit:

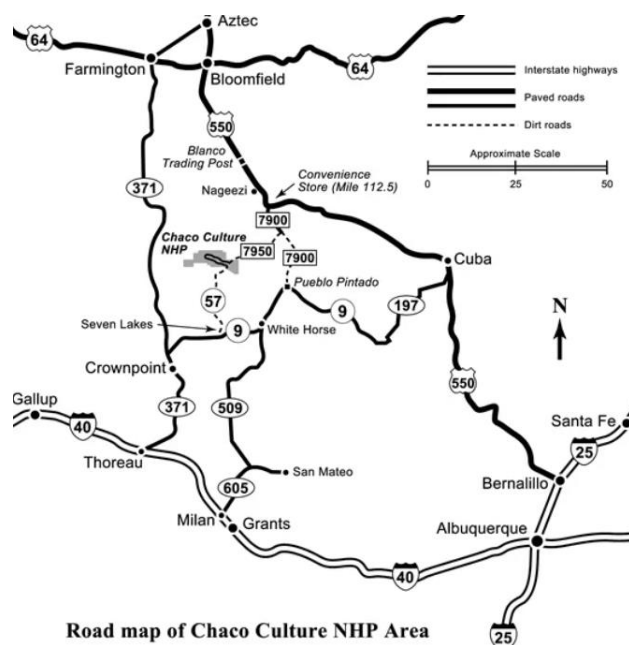
Once you have completed the walk, login to your Online Start Box account click on the "My Start Box" tab, then the "Finish Table" tab, then click on "Go to Finish Table" button for the event you have completed. Submit the date and distance of your walk as well as applicable AVA Special Programs to generate stamped "virtual" insert cards.

Driving Directions to Start Point:

The walk starts at Chaco Culture National Historic Site Visitor Center located in the middle of nowhere (GPS 36.03243, -107.91044). The site may be reached by 2 roads, both of which involve 15 miles of dirt road that may be muddy, wash-boarded, and slow-going. These 15 mile stretches will take 30 minutes or more to travel.

From I-25 west of Albuquerque, take NM-371 north toward Crownpoint, then east/right on Rt-9 to NM-57. North on NM-57 and follow signs to the Visitor Center. From the east on NM-44 just south of Nageezi, take Rt-7900 south to Rt-7950, then west to the park following signs to the park

Restrooms available at the visitor center and at some of stops in the park.



CHACO CULTURE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE – SAN JUAN COUNTY

Choice of the many hiking trails in the park from short walks to explore a ruin or hikes of over 5 miles. Stop at the visitor center to pay your entry fee (free with national park pass), chat with the rangers about trail conditions, and check the mural on the wall showing the various trails. Carry water. Hiking poles for mesa hikes.

These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.

1. Stop at the Visitor Center and ask rangers about current hiking conditions. Then decide on what trail(s) you wish to do. If planning to do the Pueblo Alto trail, ask ranger to point out the location of the cleft between the mesa and the huge rock so that you know what you will be looking for.
 2. **Suggestion:** While driving the park loop, stop at each of the ruins and explore them. Most are just a quick stroll while you might want to take more time at the Pueblo Bonita ruins. I remember from my first trip, one of the signs mentioned how the walls are aligned north/south and east/west. I used my compass, and yes, they were exactly north/south and east/west.
 3. Continue on the park road (one-way) to the northwest end and the parking lot.
 4. Restrooms, picnic tables available. Register for your 'back-country' hike and continue of the level trail.
 5. **OPTIONS from the Pueblo del Arroyo parking lot:**
 - a. Easy 5k or more: Follow the flat trail along the base of the mesa for 1.5 miles to the Petroglyphs. U-TURN back to the parking lot. Or continue as far as you want to more ruins.
 - b. Stop at the Kim Kletso ruins, then follow trail signs for the Pueblo Alto Trail. You will climb up a short way, then veer slightly to the left. Look for a cleft between the mesa and a huge rock for some rocky steps leading to the top of the mesa. Then follow rock cairns around the top looping back to this cleft. Loop is 5.4 miles (9k, elevation gain 250', rated 3C, hiking boots & poles recommended). **Hope you talked to the rangers about the cleft.** Or some shorter options. **Blue Trail**
 6. **Back at the parking lot:** Continue on park road to the Casa Rinconada ruins.
 - a. Stop to explore these ruins (about 1k for the ruins loop). But wait, there's more.
 - b. Toward the far end of the ruins, connect to the South Mesa Trail, 4.1 mile roundtrip, elevation gain 450', 7k, rated 3C. **Purple Trail**
 7. **Back at the parking lot, CONTINUE** on the park road a short distance to the Chocoan Stairway pulloff. From the sign (no unattended vehicles), look up to find the carved stairs in the cliff.
 8. **Continue back to the Visitor Center. END**
- Notes:** I first visited Chaco in 2004 when I was much, much younger. I had no problem following the trail to the Pueblo Also trail, but in a 2023 visit, I could not find the cleft. However on a visit in 2024, the ranger pointed out the cleft and I watched a group of people ascend it.
- In 2023, I explored the Casa Rinconada Trail ruins, but I did not explore the South Mesa Trail. So I don't have first-hand knowledge about it.
- In 2024, I continued past Kin Kletso to the Petroglyphs, an easy 1B (natural surface)
- Event related assistance:
Helen Hull: 972-530-1026**

CHACO CULTURE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

