

Navajo Nation

Division of Natural Resources Parks & Recreation



Things to See & Do in Monument Valley:

- ~ Shop at The Trading Post
- ~ Eat at The View Restaurant
- ~ Do the Self-Guided 17 mile loop drive.
- ~ Hike the Wildcat Trail. A 3 mile distance around the West Mitten.
- ~ Take a Tour:
 - Jeep Tours
 - Horseback Ride Tours
 - Hiking Tours
- ~ Experience the Back Country:
 - ~ Sun's Eye
 - ~ Sleeping Dragon
 - ~ Arches and Ruins
 - ~ Mystery Valley
 - ~ Tear Drop Arch
 - ~ Sands Spring Aquifers

Hours of Operation:

VISITOR CENTER & MUSEUM

8:00 AM TO 5:00 PM

TRADING POST GIFT SHOP

8:00 AM TO 8:30 PM

THE VIEW RESTAURANT

BREAKFAST ~ 7:00 AM TO 11:00 AM

LUNCH ~ 11:00 TO 3:00 PM

CLOSED 3:00 PM TO 5:00 PM

(EXPRESS DELI IS OPEN AT THIS TIME)

DINNER ~ 5:00 PM TO 9:00 PM

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Monument Valley Navajo

Tribal Park



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Winter Wonderland ~ When the Animals Sleep



(L to R) Rain God Mesa, Totem Pole and Thunderbird Mesa Navajo folklore tells us that some monuments portray super natural beings that had frozen and turned into sandstone. The Yei-Bi Chei (spiritual grandfathers) are emerging from a Hogan in the midst of a winter morning to greet the Sun Bearer.

Winter time is a fantastic time to visit Monument Valley Tribal Park. The air is crisp and makes the landscape more surpass. The stars become vivid, more distinguished and brighter. This is a time the Navajo people share cultural stories of Emergence. Stories of how we were created from three different worlds, the triumph of our twin heroes who made the people live in peace and harmony once again. These stories are only told in winter when certain animals, serpents and insects are asleep. Elders say we can only tell these stories because they can never know where they came from. This is also a time when Navajo games are reintroduced. Hand-String games are loved by many children. Navajo Shoe Game is also a winter pastime for many men and women. The Yei-Bi Chei ceremony is performed at this time of the year. It is the only Navajo ceremony that lasts nine days and nights of dancing and prayers to heal some major health setbacks for an individual. Elders tell us this is a ceremony that tops all other ceremonies. **November** is the start of Winter. In Navajo, it is described as *Niich' its' ósí*, small wind. **December** is described as *Niich' itsoh*, big wind. **January** is described as *Yasnilt' ees*, the thawing of snow. **February** is *Atsábiyáázh*, birth of Eaglelets. Winter stories is a major part of Navajo oral tradition. Navajos do not have history written in stone, leather

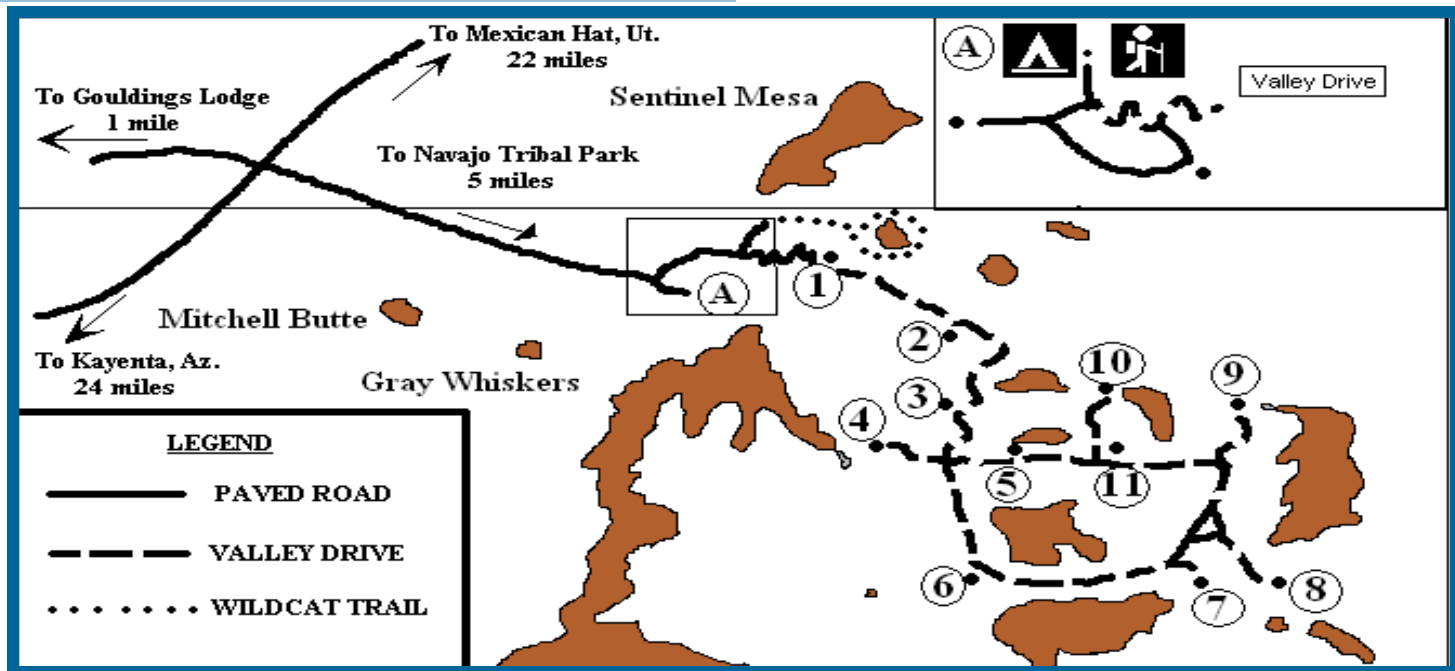
The changing world of elements ~

Navajo elders say that the Holy People pay the Earth People a visit from time to time. They travel with the elements. They visit to restore order, to warn, to replace peace and harmony. Monument Valley portrays all four seasons throughout the year. Mild cold weather conditions start mid November. Snow conditions start around mid December and last until March. Cold temperatures become single digits in January and the end of February. About two decades ago,

Monument Valley, which lies about 5500 ft. above sea level, used to have extreme winter weather that are equivalent to current winter conditions in states like Minnesota and Wisconsin. Throughout the decade, winter weather has become milder. The climate has become more dry. Global warming is indeed playing a big role throughout the world. During the winter Monument Valley will become a white out, where there is only limited visibility, especially

for photo taking. The self guided drive closes to the public when this happens. Temperatures will rise to near 100's (F) in July. The oxidized red rocks retain heat, creating warm summer nights. The skies can be clear one moment and a gust ball of sand the next. Wind gusts, which are typical in late April, can also blanket the valley just like a fog. These winds can reach up to 55 mph, disrupting vendor displays and stepping outside the vehicle.

books or petroglyphs that date back in A.D. eras. History is brought down through many generations by stories and songs. It is not until the 1900's that it was translated into the written word using the English alphabet. Navajo mythology explains the coming of existence for the Diné people. The word Navajo is an adopted name from the Spaniards who once raided with the people. It is a name for a blade. **Diné** is the original name, it means the People of the Earth. Stories of our creation has no scientific evidence, that's why its called our mythology. A favorite among listeners is the Tales of The Coyote. Like many mythical tricksters of other cultures, the Coyote is a symbol of cleverness, mischief, deceive, and fundamental ambiguous. He instilled a lot of significance in why we use common sense in this world. The Coyote is also part of why certain things are what they are today. For instance, a child might ask, why do we have day and night or why is there life and death. Even after all the short comings that others had to overcome because of him, Coyote managed to mark his place in the world of the Holy People, thus, he still went on to the spirit world to be remembered and acknowledged. Take for instance, the placement of the stars. The Holy People were busy carefully placing stars in the sky. Each had a name, a time and place to shine from. Ever making his presence known, the Coyote stopped to observe. Before he caused a disturbance, First people said they were just playing and he should continue on his way. Coyote sat down to watch, this was no play, there was deep discussion about the colorful shells displayed on a beautiful blanket. After awhile, he got restless, he thought this designing was going to take all day. He grabbed the blanket and yanked the contents into the sky. Feeling clever, he thought he had done a good deed. He missed one shell and picked it up. "This star will be named after me, it will display all colors and it shall sit in the east", he placed the shell in the sky and continued on his way. Today, stars are scattered all over, displaying the Milky Way trail where he had swung the blanket of shells. Some of the stars were placed neatly before he came along, these are the major constellations we know today. His star, shines brilliantly in various colors in the morning twilight in the east. The moral of the story also teaches that you should not take short cuts to reach an important goal. If you do, it will be confusing to follow through. Winter is a wonderful time to play string games as well. It is very interesting to learn that this type of pastime is quiet similar in Siberia too. Scientific studies revealed that all Athabaskan tribes migrated through the Bering Strait and settled in North and South America. The Diné is a dialect of languages from the Athabaskan culture.

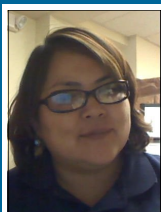


VISITING THE MONUMENTS

The monuments in the park have descriptive names. They are based on ones imagination. These names were created by the early settlers of Monument Valley. Others names portray a certain meaning to the Navajo people. The park consists of mesas, buttes and spire rock structures.

1. **The East** and **West Mitten Buttes** look like hands, yet it signifies spiritual beings watching over. **Merrick Butte** and **Mitchell Mesa** are named after two prospectors who discovered silver inside the park. Stories reveal that a band of The Ute tribe drew the two men out of Indian Country.
2. **Elephant Butte**, imagine a gigantic elephant in the southwest desert.
3. **The Three Sisters** is a formation of Catholic nun facing her two pupils.
4. **John Ford's Point** is named after a Hollywood director who made John Wayne famous. Some of his work include; "The Searchers, Cheyenne Autumn and Stage Coach."

5. **Camel Butte**, this mid-eastern animal faces the west.
6. **The Hub**- symbolizes a hub of a wagon wheel. Navajos see it as a fire place in the center of a gigantic Hogan (a Navajo home). **Rain God Mesa**- marks the geological center of the park. Navajo medicine men pray and give thanks to the Rain God, who stored water for the people. On the south side, you can see dark painted streaks from the natural aquifer that seeps out at the base of the sandstone.
7. **Bird Spring**- overlooks a vast sand dune. At the bottom of the east portion is called **Sand Springs**, a natural aquifer seeps out where the De Chelly and Navajo sandstone formations meet under the sand dune.
8. **Totem Pole**, this spire monument is an example of what erosion does to a butte. A totem pole is a historical or mythical marker created by Northeastern tribes, usually carved out of wood. **The Yei Bi Chei**- (Navajo spiritual gods) located east of the Totem Pole, is a formation of dancers emerging from a Hogan.
9. **Artist's Point** – a place where artists can create landscape and bring them to life on their canvas. **Spearhead Mesa** is attached to spire monument that looks like a spear of an arrow.
10. **North Window**- overlooks the northern view of the lower valley. On the left is **Elephant Butte**. On the right is **Cly Butte** – Cly (Navajo name for Left), is named after a well known Navajo medicine man, he is buried at the foot of the formation.
11. **The Thumb** – is a free standing spire apart from Camel Butte. This formation also looks like a cowboy boot.



~From the Editor~
 Welcome to Monument Valley, where the Earth meets the Sky. Winter is amongst us once again. A time to rejoice in giving thanks to Mother Nature. We are given a replenishment of Life's greatest treasure in its purest form... the breath of "Nitch' itsook" (Big Wind), the month of December into January "Atsabiyaqhi" (nesting of Eaglets). A layer of a new beginnings and the Blessings of a Happy New Year to you and your family.

~ Marie Yazzie-Cly

Questions? Comments?

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