



Start: Afternoon of Wednesday May 25th

End: Afternoon of Saturday May 28th

Location: Chinle, AZ, Navajo Nation

NOTE: Navajo Nation is on Mountain Daylight Time, an hour LATER than the rest of Arizona.

Maximum: 15 people

Cost per person: Members \$550

Non-members \$615

Register online: <https://www.verdevalleyarchaeology.org/hikes>

Walking in the Beauty Way with the Dine' **Canyon de Chelly & Environs** **May 25, 26, 27, 28**

Walking in Beauty "hozho naasha" is a Dine'/Navajo concept of living in right relationship with the natural order of the world. This involves acknowledging the beauty which exists around and within us, and to live in harmony with it all. As we will be in one of the most beautiful areas of the Southwest, within the Dine'/Navajo Nation, we will be reminded of this everywhere we go.

Day 1 Wednesday May 25th: Hubbell Trading Post & Home, Ganado

We start our visit in the afternoon, meeting at the oldest continuously operated trading post in the American Southwest, the Hubbell Trading Post. We will gather for an orientation by one of the National Park Service rangers, tour the historic Hubbell home and visitor's center before heading to the Trading Post nearby.

Since 1878, this post has been showcasing the artistry of the local tribal peoples, where we will meet one of their expert traders. He will describe the importance of weaving to the Dine' (Navajo) People, and present some of their extensive collection of Navajo rugs and other treasures for sale.

We will then drive about 40 minutes to Chinle, check into our lodgings. Once settled, we gather for dinner (on us!), get to know each other, and enjoy some traditional local foods or standard fare.

After our meal, we will meet with a traditional Dine' storyteller and knowledge keeper, as we hear tales and cultural wisdom to connect us to this beautiful place.

Day 2 Thursday May 26th: Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Chinle

We will meet early, to be transported into this enchanting canyon, where we will spend the day with our Dine' guides for a custom tour of this ancient place.

This 26-mile canyon of 30- to 1,000-foot cliffs is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Ancestral Puebloan people inhabited these peach-colored sandstone canyons for thousands of years, gradually replacing their pit house structures with ones of stone. Like many peoples in the area, the inhabitants left in the mid-1300's A.D. The Hopi continue to have a relationship with this place.

Now part of the Navajo Nation, this canyon, Tseyi ("the place deep in the rock"), forms the backdrop for many of these ancient cliff dwellings, as well as for contemporary residences. Roughly 40 Navajo families make their homes, raise livestock, and farm the lands here. We will visit canyon residents, if available, who still live traditionally within these walls.

We will be returned to our inn to enjoy lunch on our own, explore Chinle for the remains of the day. At sunset, we will drive along the Canyon's south rim, stopping at the overlooks to gaze down on where we had spent our morning, a photographer's heaven. The light is breathtaking. A short drive further will take us to Spider Rock, a stone spire rising over 800 feet from the canyon floor, and the home of Spider Woman, sacred to the People. Dinner is on our own.

Day 3 Friday May 27th: Dine' Arts, Chinle

This morning, we will meet at the Canyon de Chelly Visitor's Center to experience some of the fine arts the Diné are known for, as we chat with up-and-coming young artists. This may include silversmiths, weavers, moccasin makers etc. This is a wonderful opportunity to purchase directly from the source, and understand what goes into making their art pieces.

Afterwards, we will go to the historic Thunderbird Lodge shop to see examples of other arts of the area. Enjoy lunch on our own in the Thunderbird Lodge's charming cafeteria.

After lunch, we will caravan about 15 miles to the Mummy Cave Overlook. From the overlook, we will view a 70-room cliff dwelling, the largest Ancestral Puebloan structure in Canyon de Chelly, nestled 300 feet above the canyon floor, and occupied for 1,000 years. Dinner is on our own. Take this time to buy gas for our trip tomorrow.

Day 4 Saturday May 28th: Betatakin, Navajo Nat'l. Monument, Shonto

We will leave early and caravan about 97 miles to the Navajo National Monument. With our archaeologist guide, we will hike the 3 mile round-trip trail to one of the three very well-preserved Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings within this monument, high on the Shonto plateau.

Known as Betatakin, “house built on a ledge” to the Navajo, or Talastima, “place of the corn tassel” to the Hopi, it was built in an enormous overhang out of sandstone, mortar and wood. Its construction dates from 1267 to 1286, and housed about 125 people. Of the original 120 rooms, 80 rooms and a kiva remain.

We will follow our guide along the East/Tsegi Point Trail, a mildly strenuous hike with switchbacks, and a 600 foot descent to the site. The trail starts at 7,300 feet elevation and will be a good workout, but with rests as needed! We will remain at the site for about an hour, take a break for snacks, while learning about the place and the ancient people who occupied it. After about 3 to 4 hours, we return to our vehicles to head home. Our visit ends here. May you be filled with beauty.

We encourage you to make reservations for lodging as soon as possible in Chinle for the 3 nights of the visit. It is most convenient if we all stay in the same place. I have reserved 12 double queen rooms in the Verde Valley Archaeology Center's name for three nights (May 25, 26, 27) at the Best Western (see below).

Best Western Canyon de Chelly Inn 928-674-5875

100 Main Street
Chinle AZ

Please tell the reservation clerk you are with our group. Rooms are \$119.99 plus tax per night. You can cancel two days prior to arrival without incurring any charges.

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotels-in-chinle/best-western-canyon-de-chelly-inn/propertyCode.03126.html

Covid-19 requirements, per the Navajo Nation's guidelines, will be in place for this trip. Masks are required indoors, and vaccinations are recommended.

A detailed itinerary will be provided after registering for this event.

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