

# The Chaco Phenomenon

September 24–30, 2017



## ITINERARY

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Arrive in Durango, Colorado, by 4 p.m. Meet the group for dinner and program orientation. Our scholar, Erin Baxter, Ph.D., provides an overview of the movements of Chaco culture, as well as the latest research. Overnight, Durango. **D**

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Drive south to Chaco Culture National Historical Park, in the high desert of what is now northern New Mexico. From about A.D. 900 to 1150, Chaco Canyon was the center of a vast regional system that integrated much of the Pueblo world. Our exploration begins with the great houses of "downtown" Chaco. At Chetro Keti and Pueblo Bonito, we examine the architectural features that define great houses and discuss current theories about their function in the community. With the transformation of Pueblo Bonito into the largest of all great houses, some believe Chaco Canyon became the center of the ancestral Pueblo world. We meander along the cliffs on the north side of the canyon, searching for rock art. Overnight, camping under the stars, Chaco Canyon. **B L D**

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

This morning we explore the great houses, great kivas, and small house sites of Tsin Kletsin in Chaco Canyon (2.5 mile round-trip hike, 450-foot elevation change). We also visit Casa Rinconada and associated small house sites. Though small house sites are contemporaneous with great houses, the architecture differs markedly, and we discuss the meaning of these differences. After some time at the visitor center, we take the short hike to Una Vida and nearby rock art. Tonight, enjoy the magical night skies and stories around the campfire. Overnight, camping, Chaco Canyon. **B L D**

### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Hike from camp to Wijiji, a great house built later, around A.D. 1100 (3 mile round-trip hike, insignificant elevation change). Wijiji is considered unique in that it was built all at once, unlike most



*Chaco Canyon*



*Chetro Keti*



*Exploring Chaco with Crow Canyon*

Chaco Canyon sites. Pack up camp and drive to the easternmost Chaco site, Pueblo Pintado, 16 miles to the east. We also stop at the Kutz Canyon overlook, where the Great North Road is thought to terminate. This impressive overlook gives us expansive views of the badlands, valleys, and La Plata Mountains. Overnight, Farmington. **B L**

### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

Today we explore Aztec Ruins National Monument, where Erin has done extensive research using archival resources, primarily photos, assembled almost a century ago during Earl Morris's excavations here. As power in Chaco Canyon began to wane in the late 1000s, activity at Aztec gained momentum. By the late 1100s, Aztec became the center of the Chaco world. Its role as a major community center was short-lived. Prolonged drought and social and political upheaval may have contributed to the fragmentation of the Chaco regional system. We then venture into the canyons near Aztec to visit outliers that tell a fuller story of the Aztec complex. Overnight, Farmington. **B L**

### **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**

This morning we explore Point Pueblo, a Chaco outlier on the San Juan River within the Farmington city limits. Guest scholar Linda Wheelbarger details her research at this beautifully situated site. Later we explore a nearby canyon with rock art that dates from Basketmaker to historic times. This afternoon in Cortez, CO, we enjoy special access to the Haynie site, on private land north of Mesa Verde. Crow Canyon's new project, the Northern Chaco Outliers Project, is an investigation of this village with two Pueblo II (A.D. 950–1150) great houses. Crow Canyon archaeologists join us and help bring the Haynie site to life. Return to Durango for a farewell dinner. Overnight, Durango. **B L D**

### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

Depart from Durango anytime. **B**



*Aztec Ruins National Monument*



*Stonework detail, Aztec Ruins*



*A Chaco outlier in Colorado*

**B** = breakfast, **L** = lunch, **D** = dinner  
Itinerary subject to change

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