

## Nations of the Four Corners Heritage Trails

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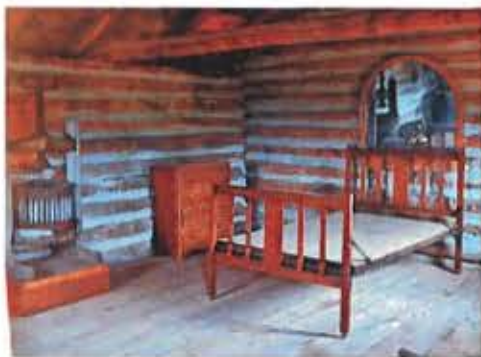
### Pioneer Home Site



American settlers in southeastern Utah were "Mormon" pioneers, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were called as part of their church responsibility to settle here. Many of the early Euro-famous party of pioneers is the "Hole-in-the-rock" group which brought over 1500 head of livestock, 250 people, and 80 wagons down a sheer descent in a rock wall near the Colorado river. Other groups of "Mormons" moved first to colonies in Old Mexico and then moved to this area to escape the Mexican revolution.

Farming proved to be very difficult, and so the economy soon shifted toward sheep and cattle ranching. Expert shearers were often recruited from New Mexico by the larger ranches.

The pioneer cabin, watering trough, wagons, and farm implements you see are all historic artifacts that were brought to this site and then reconstructed to help you imagine life as a pioneer.



### Ute Home Site



The archaeological and ethnographic record of Ute and Paiute entrance into the Four Corners area is vague. Campsites and material remains are difficult to find and differentiate from those left by earlier peoples because of the small amount of pottery, nondescript dwellings, and limited artifacts necessitated by a hunting-and-gathering lifestyle.

The Utes followed the deer in much the same way that the Plains tribes traveled after the buffalo, returning each year to the best croplands and hunting grounds. Their early shelters were brush structures. After the Utes got horses, they were able to travel further and saw the teepees used by the Plains tribes. Utes created a teepee style of their own with four main poles tied together and others laid against them. They used deer and elk hide for their teepee coverings, which a skilled woman could wrap and pin in 15 minutes, standing on horseback. During the winter, an inner skin was also hung around the inside wall so that a dead air space between skins created a layer of insulation. In the summer, the teepee's sides could be rolled up, providing shade while allowing the breeze in. Flaps at the top of the teepee could be adjusted to control the smoke flow. When these skins became hardened by smoke, they were replaced and used for moccasin soles. The brush arbor, or shade house, is still used by both Navajos and Utes as a summer kitchen/dining/family room or as a sleeping area. These arbors are also built to provide shade for large gatherings, including the hand-game tournaments and other activities held during the White Mesa Utes' annual Bear Dance celebration held in September.

### Paiute Home Site



The Paiute people have lived in southern Utah and parts of California, Arizona, and Nevada for a thousand years. Before and during the historic period, the Paiutes often moved frequently to gather and hunt. They lived in coneshaped wikiups (especially in winter) or in the open air. Later some used teepees. They knew plants very well and used at least 96 species of plants. They also used the pinyon pine nut as an important food. They ate big and small animals, birds, reptiles, fish, and insects. They gathered and ate wild seeds, plants, and roots. They grew corn, squash, beans, sunflowers, wheat, and melons. They wore clothing made from skins and plants; or wore little clothing in warm weather. They wove baskets for storage and carrying water; hats; trays for winnowing seeds; and bowls. They also made pottery.

The Paiute people traveled and lived in small family groups of 15-30 and prayed to influence the spirits of nature and to show respect and gratitude. They called the most powerful spirit being "The One Who Made the Earth."

### Prayer Arch



Prayer Arch is located on the trail system north of the flag pole. Visit prayer arch and offer a prayer of gratitude for the beauty that surrounds you. You will feel the calmness and serenity of the canyon and take with you a feeling of peace.

### Observation Tower



You may want to follow Native tradition and get the lay of the land, starting with the east, where you can see Sleeping Ute Mountain, a warrior who rests in his headdress with arms folded across his chest. Legend says that in a time of great trouble for the Ute people, he will arise and help them. Turning in a little to the south, look for what is called Shiprock or, by the Navajos, "Tse bitah. -the rocks wing." Moving your gaze to the southwest, you may be able to spot Eagle Mesa and other mesas in Monument Valley. To the west, atop Elk ridge, you can see the twin peaks called "Bears's Ears. This was a winter camp and farmland for the Utes. To the north, look for Blue Mountain, also know as the Abajo Peaks.

No matter where you look, you will be amazed at the beauty and serenity of the land and the spectacular scenery that lies before you in every direction. You will feel the calming spirit of the land and the voices that call to you from the breeze.



### Mexican Home Site



Although early Spanish explores had their headquarters in New Mexico, groups of mounted horsemen occasionally passed through this area mapping out the land, searching for gold and silver, or making revenge raids against the Navajos. The Navajos saw them coming and going and called them "Naakai, Those-Who-Walk-Around."

The first Mexican-Americans to build homes in this area were shepherders, hired by large ranching outfits. Their adobe construction was adapted from the architecture of Pueblo tribes.

Traditional Mexican homes were made of adobe with red clay tiles for the roof. Materials to make adobe and roof tiles were readily available and suitable to the hot, dry climate of the region. Adobe is a mud product typically made with a clay-based soil, straw and water. Builders mix the adobe and make it into bricks for construction purposes. Walls are built from the bricks, with wet adobe used for mortar. Most homes also have a thin coating of adobe on the outside to create a smooth surface, which is then whitewashed or painted. Adobe homes are common in Mexico and the Southwestern United States, where the technique was introduced by the Spanish who first established settlements in the area. The Hispanic site also has a corral for horses and sheep and a shade house for outdoor relaxation.

### Navajo Home Site



The hogans at this site were constructed in the traditional manner. In the Dineh (Navajo) view of the world, everything is either male or female, including homes. The round, female Hogan is where the family lived and the more cone-shaped male Hogan is for ceremonies. Both have doorways facing east, towards the Holy People. The four main posts of the female Hogan represent the four mountains that are sacred to the Navajo. The logs are laid with the root ends going clockwise. Cedar bark is used to fill in the cracks, and then mud is applied as a protective coating. Hogans are still common throughout the reservation, both for homes and for ceremonies.



The Navajo shade house is a gathering place made of tree trunks for posts and leafy branches for cover. Many homes have these structures, and are a great place to keep cool during the summer months. A shade house can range in size depending on the amount of materials in the area, and the need of the family. A shade house is rarely "finished," because it requires constant care. There can also be more than one per home site. The shade house has a variety of uses. It's a common place for outdoor cooking, weaving or a place for butchering sheep.

### Navajo Home Site



The outdoor oven is rarely seen today. Adapted from Mexican ovens, it is essentially a rock lined fire pit with a roof. A fire was built to heat the rocks, then the ashes were removed, and some type of bread was placed inside to bake. Many of these breads are still popular, including "kneel-down bread," made of fresh corn baked in cornhusks.



The sweat lodge is made much like a small male Hogan. In early days, a person would take four ceremonial sweats, coming out and drying off each time with sand, a very effective way of getting clean without having to haul water. Sweat lodges are still used as a type of health spa.