The Great Houses of Chaco Canyon

The Great Houses of Chaco Canyon are no longer inhabited, but the buildings that remain today can still be visited. If you cannot go to the actual National Historical Park that preserves these remains, you can visit virtually using Google Earth.

Use this map interactive to explore and learn about the places and features of this special place.

As you explore the Great Houses of Chaco Canyon, lived in and built by the Ancestral Puebloan people from approximately 800 to late 1200 CE, look for and identify these features:

1. Room blocks
   Square or rectangle rooms built in straight rows or along curved walls for sleeping, cooking, eating and storage

2. Plazas
   Wide open spaces in front of the room blocks where people would work or trade items or hold ceremonial dances

3. Kivas
   Large circular rooms used for prayer and other ceremonies

Google Earth tour of the Great Houses of Chaco Canyon

- To launch this map interactive, click on the link above.
- Once open, click on “Present” from the menu on the left.
- Scroll in and out and around each site to see details and structures. You can use the shift key and drag the mouse to turn 360° within the site. You can use the shift key and scroll the mouse to pan up and down within the site.
- Click on and scroll through the pictures in the upper right corner to see alternate views of the site and for more information. Click the arrow in the upper left corner to return to the main map.
- Click on and drag Street View (person icon) in the lower right corner to see 360° views of the site if possible. Click on the Street View icon again to return to the main map and your place in the presentation.
- Click the arrow in the “Table of Contents” in the lower left corner to advance to the next site.

Use this map tour to complete the worksheet below.
Great House and Feature Identification

Can you identify which Great House these simple line drawings represent? Use the list at right to label each Great House. Add an arrow next to each illustration to indicate north. Then, color in the room blocks, kivas and plaza in the illustration each in its own color and provide a key.

Chetro Ketl
Kin Kletso (Yellow House)
Peñasco Blanco
Pueblo Alto
Pueblo Bonito
Pueblo Del Arroyo
Answer Key

Room blocks – red
Plazas – yellow
Kivas - blue

All Illustrations: National Park Service

Maxwell Museum Education Division (505) 277-2924
Resources

Official website: Chaco Culture National Historical Park - National Park Service
https://www.nps.gov/chcu/index.htm

The Children’s Hour Chaco Canyon podcast
https://www.childrenshour.org/chaco-canyon/

Chaco Culture National Historical Park facts for kids
https://kids.kiddle.co/Chaco_Culture_National_Historical_Park

The Museum Collections of Chaco Culture National Historical Park
https://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/chcu/index1.html

A Brief History of Chaco Culture National Historical Park – National Park Service

Ancestral Pueblo jars from Chaco Canyon, from the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian
https://americanindian.si.edu/static/exhibitions/infinityofnations/southwest/052109.html

Online Collection from Chaco Culture National Historical Park from Google Arts and Culture
https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/chaco-culture-national-historical-park

Chaco Culture World Heritage Site: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/353/

2:45 minute Video of Chaco Culture from UNESCO/NHK
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNfkBgU2lLs
Lulu loving the idea of living in a house made with stone