



monumental sights

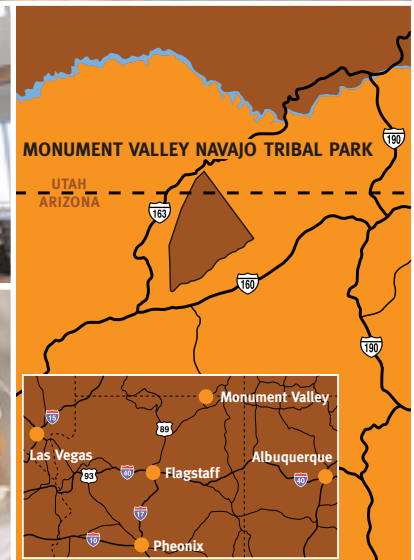
IMMORTALIZED IN EARLY MOVIES, THE RUGGED BEAUTY OF MONUMENT VALLEY CAN BE SEEN UP CLOSE—OR FROM YOUR BALCONY.

John Ford westerns introduced the world to a remote region of wide-open spaces that stretches across the American Southwest. Here, the sun keeps watch over the high, arid valley. Flat-topped mesas and towering spires gradually sculpted by 50 million years of erosion stand guard above the valley floor, each one a canvas of color as the sun sweeps shadow and light across the iconic landscape. Few places on earth are as mesmerizing or as memorable as northeastern Arizona's Monument Valley. It's no wonder the Navajo have revered this place as sacred for generations.

The guardians of this land preserve the pristine desert environment while welcoming visitors with open arms; their hospitality is as legendary as the monuments that give this valley its name. The Navajo Nation, or *Diné* as they refer to themselves, created Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park as a place where visitors can enjoy many outdoor adventures, all surrounded by traditional Navajo culture.

The tribal park's Visitor Center offers an excellent orientation to the area. Many of the roads within the park, such as the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park Scenic Drive, are open to the public to explore unescorted, while access to the more remote reaches of the park requires an authorized native guide. At the Visitor Center, guides are available for a deeper exploration of the park, whether on foot, horseback or vehicle.

WellBella readers can get a **20% discount** on stays at The View Hotel through June 30, 2010. Call (435) 727-5555, and use promotion code: **WellBella.**



- 1) The View Hotel (lower left) blends with the red rock mesa.
- 2) The valley as seen from a balcony at The View Hotel.
- 3) A Navajo guide leads a family on a horseback tour.
- 4) All rooms at The View Hotel feature east-facing balconies.
- 5) The lobby of The View Hotel.
- 6) The Navajo taco at The View Restaurant uses traditional Navajo fry bread.

PHOTOS: 3, TODD BRENNEMAN/ARIZONA OFFICE OF TOURISM; ALL OTHERS COURTESY OF THE VIEW HOTEL

Hey! While in town, check this out ...

For some downtime in this magnificent and peaceful setting, stay a while at The View Hotel, the only hotel within Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park. Not only does the hotel provide comfortable accommodations, it's the perfect place to contemplate some of the park's most spectacular monuments. Located adjacent to the Visitor Center, the three-story hotel was carefully designed to blend into the red rock mesa and was constructed using eco-friendly building materials, including low-flow water devices and energy-efficient windows. Each of the 95 rooms features an east-facing balcony with unimpeded views of the valley floor. According to Armanda Ortega, the sixth-generation Navajo entrepreneur who owns the hotel, guests often break out their yoga mats

to greet the morning, or just meditate on the stunning scenery from their balconies.

Also boasting spectacular scenic views is The View Restaurant, where five-star chef MacNeal Crank serves his unique selection of Navajo and American cuisine. Born in Monument Valley, Crank graduated from the Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago before returning home with his Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Arts degree.

The View is also point of departure for one of the most popular and exhilarating physical activities in the park: hiking among the geological monoliths. The nearly four-mile Wildcat Nature Trail, which begins at the hotel, is the only trail in the tribal park where visitors can hike unaccompanied by a guide. *

For discount coupons at The View Restaurant and Trading Post during your stay at The View Hotel through 6/30/10, see this article at WellBella.com.

BEST TIME TO TRAVEL: Summer months in Monument Valley are the most popular but bring the highest temperatures. Late spring and early fall offer a more temperate, comfortable climate for outdoor adventures.

WHAT TO DO: Hire a Navajo guide for sightseeing, hiking, photography, jeep tours and Navajo cultural tours. Tours can be booked at the Visitor Center or with authorized guides at The View Hotel.

WHAT TO PACK: Hiking boots, sun protection (sunscreen, sunglasses, lightweight long-sleeve shirt and pants, and a hat), a jacket or fleece for cool evenings, a camera and binoculars, and \$5 park admission

CONTACT INFO: MonumentValleyView.com or call (435) 727-5555, (seasonal rates range from \$95.00 to \$195.00; See Page 32 for a discount code.) **FOR MORE:** NavajoNationParks.org **HOW TO GET THERE:** Fly to a nearby city, such as Phoenix, Las Vegas, Flagstaff or Albuquerque, and rent a car for the scenic drive to Monument Valley.