

SALINAS PUEBLO MISSIONS

The Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument includes three large pueblos that were occupied both prior to and during the initial phases of Spanish colonization. The pueblo missions are part of a larger cluster of Puebloan villages located near where the Manzano Mountains and Chupadera Mesa interface with the plains. Of these settlements, three villages—Quari, Abo, and Gran Quivera—are part of the National Monument, which has its main Visitor's Center in the small town Mountainair. This larger area was occupied by Puebloans from approximately least AD 900 to the 1670s, with Spanish colonization of the Salinas Mission Pueblos taking place in the 1620s.

The Salinas Pueblo Missions are remarkable for their large mounds (collapsed living structures) that are oriented around plazas and as well as the later constructed Spanish churches. The Pueblo Missions have an abundance of associated artifacts, including lithic debitage, groundstone, and glaze-painted ceramics. The Salinas pueblos produced pottery, grew food, and engaged in trade. The pueblos are considered "gateway" settlements because their locations facilitated trade between other Pueblos to the west and north and the Plains Indians to the east. Important trade items included bison meat and hides from the Plains Indians and corn, cotton blankets, and pottery from the Puebloans. Spanish Franciscan colonialists constructed missions at Quari, Abo, and Gran Quivera in the 1620s, which significantly altered the communities. By the 1670s, the missions were abandoned, with disease, drought, and raiding considered to be contributing factors that further exacerbated the changes brought from Spanish colonialism.

For more information, see the following link on the Salinas Mission Pueblos, see the following link: <https://www.archaeologysouthwest.org/pdf/arch-sw-v25-no2.pdf>. Mountainair is about an hour and a half from the Albuquerque area and all of the pueblos and missions can be visited in a daytrip from there. Consider taking a day over a weekend to visit these fascinating pueblos and missions.



Aerial overview of room blocks at Gran Quivera, with the mission of San Buenaventura at right. The long rectilinear structure at the center is the earlier church of San Isidro. Note the many kivas at the site.