Charleston, South Carolina

Founded in 1670, Charleston, South Carolina, bills itself as “where history lives.” Even cooler: You and the kids can live that history for yourselves at Middleton Place, a former plantation that’s been transformed into a living history museum.

**FUN FACT** Middleton Place is home to North America’s oldest landscaped gardens, and you can also experience the working life of an 18th- and 19th-century Low Country stableyard.

**DON’T MISS** Potter Jeff Neale and other costumed interpreters. Those gigs aren’t easy to get: Before Neale was hired, the Marine vet earned a master’s degree in public history. “I love making a connection with the audience,” he says. “Look for me—I’ll be the dirty one, covered in clay.”

INFO middletonplace.org

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Mesa Verde, Colorado

U.S. history did not begin at Plymouth Rock! Step into the way-back machine—like, way, way back—with a visit to Mesa Verde National Park, a unique site in the Southwest’s famed Four Corners region. Home to the Pueblo people from 600 to 1300, the park preserves a vast array of high-altitude cliff dwellings and thousands more archeological sites.

**FUN FACT** Talk about a tough commute! The Pueblo climbed to and from their homes via hand- and toe-hold trails and wooden ladders and age-old stone steps.

**DON’T MISS** A ride on the nearby Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. The train snakes along the Animas River, offering spectacular scenery on the route it has traveled for 130 years. Go to durangotrain.com for info.

INFO durango.org

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