

Signature Tour



City Nights and Northern Lights

Travel to one of the most diverse and unspoiled destinations on the North American continent. This heart of the continent is indeed a region of great contrast. The northern lights still appear in the night skies in remote areas, yet the cities offer a wealth of entertainment and shopping temptations. This region celebrates its ethnic diversity with festivals and activities year-round, featuring everything from Native American to European traditions. The scenery ranges from rugged mountains in the Black Hills and Badlands, to peaceful lake and forest covered retreats, to the winter arctic tundra, to majestic spreading plains. Whether you choose to enjoy our scenic wonders, take advantage of our many recreational opportunities, or join in one of our many celebrations, you'll find a warm welcome here!

Avenue leads to the **St. Paul Cathedral** overlooking the **State Capitol**, the **Ordway Center for the Performing Arts**, the **Minnesota Science Museum**, **James J. Hill House** and **Minnesota History Center** (2.5 hrs). **Mall of America**, the USA's largest shopping/entertainment center, beckons shoppers with 500 stores, restaurants, nightclubs, **Camp Snoopy** and **Underwater Adventures** (4.0+ hrs). Enjoy an entertaining evening at a play in the **Hennepin Avenue Theater District**, **Ordway Center for the Performing Arts**, **Chanhassen Dinner Theater** or **Mystic Lake Casino**.

Overnight: Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

Saint Paul Winter Carnival, St. Paul, late January through early February Minnesota State Fair, St. Paul, late August through first weekend in September

Day 2 Minneapolis/St. Paul – Bemidji (230 mi/368 km)

Follow the Great River Road along the Mississippi to Little Falls. Relive Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic with a visit to the **Lindbergh Home and Interpretive Center** (1.0 hr). In Bemidji, a giant statue of Paul Bunyan, mythical giant lumberjack, with his pet blue ox, Babe, stands by Lake Bemidji. Legend says Paul's footsteps formed Minnesota's 15,000 lakes when he and Babe took a walk after a rainstorm (10 min). Nearby in **Itasca State Park**, 1,475-feet above sea level, the Mississippi River trickles out of a spring-fed lake. Visitors can walk across the headwater stones where the Mississippi River begins its 2,552-mile (4,084-km) journey to the Gulf of Mexico. Naturalist-guided excursions aboard the "**Chester Charles**" show park explorers wildlife and spectacular views seen only by boat (1.5 hrs).

Overnight: Bemidji, MN

Day 3 Bemidji – Winnipeg (229 mi/369 km)

From Bemidji, travel north to Winnipeg, Manitoba's capital (pop. 670,000), a cosmopolitan city with an exciting and diverse range of attractions, activities, dining, shopping and people. Discover pieces of Manitoba history with **theatrical walking tours** at **The Forks**, a riverwalk of shops, restaurants and special events. Then admire the architecture and atmosphere of **The Exchange District**, and the old world charm of **St. Boniface** (2.0 hrs). Board the **Nonsuch**, a life-size replica of a ship that sailed from England to Hudson Bay at **The Manitoba Museum** (2.0 hrs). Discover the flying machines of the north at the **Western Canada Aviation Museum** (1.0 hr) or take in the **Winnipeg Art Gallery and Legislative Building** (2.0 hrs). Visit **Fort Whyte Nature Center**, paddle canoes at **Oak Hammock Marsh** (2.0 hrs) or stroll through the **Sculpture and English Gardens** at Assiniboine Park and learn how Winnie the Pooh was named after the city of Winnipeg (1.0 hr). Evening activities include dinner theater, Broadway musicals, gaming or dining in wonderful ethnic neighborhood restaurants.

Overnight: Winnipeg, MB

Day 4 Winnipeg – Riding Mountain National Park (155 mi/248 km)

Follow the Trans-Canada/Yellowhead Highway to **Riding Mountain National Park**, a wildlife mecca, lush forest and lake oasis in the middle of the prairies. Stop at **Fort la Reine Museum**, a fur trading post originally built in 1738 in Portage la Prairie (1.0 hr). Take time to smell the lilies at Neepawa's **Lily Nook** and visit the **Margaret Laurence Museum**, a living memorial to its author (1.5 hrs). Or stop at the **Minnedosa Heritage Village** and nearby bison compound and suspension bridge (1.5 hrs). **Riding Mountain National Park** is wild and wonderful with its cool lakes, rushing

rivers and dense green forests. It is home to elk, deer, black bear and other magnificent wildlife. Bison still roam the range at Lake Audy and there are miles of hiking trails and walking paths. **Wasagaming** or Clear Lake, the resort townsite, offers shops, restaurants, a movie theater, a museum, visitor center, marina, accommodations and a championship golf course.

Overnight: Wasagaming, MB

Festival du Voyageur, Winnipeg, mid-February

Oak Hammock Marsh Waterfowl Celebration, Winnipeg, May and October

Winnipeg Folk Festival, Winnipeg, early July

Folklorama – Canada’s Cultural Celebration, Winnipeg, first two weeks in August

World Lily Festival, Neepawa, mid-July

Day 5 Riding Mountain National Park – Boissevain (115 mi/184 km)

After an early morning wildlife tour along Highway 19 travel south to **Brandon**, Manitoba’s second largest city with a population of 47,000. Its rich agricultural heritage is showcased at the **Daly House Museum** (1.0 hr) and the **Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum** where RCAF pilots trained for World War II (1.0 hr). A warm prairie welcome awaits in **Boissevain**, voted as one of Canada’s most beautiful towns. It features outdoor art murals, the **Moncur Gallery**, the **Wildlife Museum**, **Walkinshaw Place’s** map of Canada fields and **Dueck’s Cedar Chalet** for a homemade meal (4.0 hrs). Boissevain is located just north of the International Peace Garden and is an ideal stopping place.

Overnight: Boissevain, MB

Day 6 Dunseith – Minot (90 mi/144 km)

The **International Peace Garden** (2.0 hrs), just 12 miles (19 km) north of Dunseith, is a symbol of peace between Canada and the United States. The 2,300-acre botanical monument spans the international boundary and honors the longest unfortified border in the world. The International Peace Garden is one of the most spectacular floral gardens on the continent with more than 140,000 annuals planted each year. The **Turtle Mountain Scenic Byway** (30 min) follows 24 miles (39 km) through the tree-covered Turtle Mountains. Here the visitor can enjoy beautiful lakes, lush foliage, wildflowers, and an abundance of wildlife. In Minot, visit the **Scandinavian Heritage Park** (30 min). This heritage park features a typical Norwegian house, stabbur and statues of famous skiers. The **Roosevelt Zoo** (1.0 hr) offers educational displays, zoo tours and over 200 mammals, birds, and reptiles. Home to the Fifth Bomb Wing, the **Minot Air Force Base** (1.0 hr) offers drive-around tours of the facilities and the flight line of aircraft.

Overnight: Minot, ND

Day 7 Minot – Bismarck (110 miles/176 km)

Today’s drive will bring the history of the U.S. alive as you travel across the plains of North Dakota. First, visit the ruins of an ancient Indian village last occupied in 1845 by the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians at **Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site** (1.5 hrs) in Stanton. This site includes ruins of an ancient Indian village, Plains Indian artifacts and a reconstructed earth lodge. In Washburn, the **Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center** (1.5 hrs) is a world-class interpretive site along the route Lewis and Clark traveled on their “voyage of discovery” almost 200 years ago. Nearby is the reconstructed site of **Fort Mandan** (1.0 hr), winter home of Lewis and Clark from 1804-1805. In Bismarck, you can choose from a variety of activities. The **North Dakota Heritage Center** (1.5 hrs) has one of the world’s largest collections of Plains Indian artifacts, second only to the Smithsonian. There are also displays of North Dakota’s varied military and agricultural history. **Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park**, located on the banks of the Missouri River, includes the **On-A-Slant Indian Village** (1.0 hr). Near the village is the **Fort**

Abraham Lincoln Visitor's Museum (30 min), displaying exhibits relating to the life of the Mandan Indians and the military history of the Fort. Before you leave the park, tour the **Custer House** (1.0 hr), the last home and command of General George and Libby Custer. Conclude the day with a relaxing ride on the **Lewis and Clark Riverboat** (1-2 hrs).

Overnight: Bismarck, ND

Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, Brandon, late March

North Dakota State Fair, Minot, mid to late July

Norsk Høstfest, Minot, early October

American Legacy Exposition, Mandan, last weekend in July

United Tribes International Pow Wow, Bismarck, first weekend in September

Day 8 Bismarck – Medora (128 miles/205 km)

Make a stop in Richardton at the **Assumption Abbey** (1.0 hr), a historic Catholic Church that was built in 1904. The Abbey library, gift shop, wine cellar and shop are open by request. The **Dakota Dinosaur Museum** (30 min) in Dickinson features a life-size Triceratops and Pachycephalosaurus outside the entrance and 10 full-scale dinosaurs in a central display. Medora is the gateway to the South Unit of **Theodore Roosevelt National Park**. This authentic Old West cow town was founded in 1883 by the Marquis de Mores and named for his wife. A musical extravaganza, trail rides, mountain biking, hiking, museums, many gift shops and restaurants are bustling during the summer season. In Medora, tour the **Chateau de Mores State Historic Site** (1.0 hr). The **Museum of the Badlands** (30 min) offers displays of Indian regalia and artifacts, wildlife relics and wax figures of frontier days. Sit back and enjoy **Bully the Play** (1.0 hr), a one-man performance from the Broadway play presenting the life of Theodore Roosevelt as president, father, husband and hunter in the North Dakota Badlands. For dinner, experience the **Pitchfork Fondue**, early June through early September (1.0 hr), a unique western steak meal served at the Tjaden Center on the bluffs, offering a spectacular view of the scenic Badlands and the town of Medora. After the Fondue, sit back and enjoy the **Medora Musical** (2.0 hrs) which is a Broadway-style musical show staged outdoors in the Burning Hills Amphitheatre, carved into a Badlands canyon. Western entertainment and a patriotic salute are part of each show.

Overnight: Medora, ND

Medora Musical, Medora, early June through early September

Day 9 Medora – Deadwood (220 mi/352 km)

Take a morning loop drive through **Theodore Roosevelt National Park** (1.5 hrs). The colorful North Dakota Badlands provide the scenic backdrop to this park. Named for the 26th U.S. President, the park memorializes his contribution to conservation. At the entrance to the South Unit of the Park, tour the **Visitors Center** (30 min) and **Theodore Roosevelt's Cabin from the Maltese Cross Ranch** (30 min). Try horseback riding, mountain biking or hiking along the marked trails in the Badlands on the Maah Daah Hey Trail, or canoe through the Theodore Roosevelt National Park on the Little Missouri River. Depart Medora for historic **Deadwood**, South Dakota, site of the 1876 gold rush. Enjoy a historic tour, learning about the gold rush, the miners and the colorful characters who lived there. Try your luck at the slots or gaming tables. Historic attractions include the **Adams Museum, Saloon #10** and the **'76 Museum**. In summer months, see re-enactments of the "Murder of Wild Bill Hickok" and the "Trial of Jack McCall."

Overnight: Deadwood, SD

Day 10 Deadwood – Rapid City (112 mi/180 km)

Travel on the Black Hills Parkway, U.S. Highway 385, to **Mount Rushmore National Memorial**, America's Shrine of Democracy. This drive offers views of **Pactola Lake**, pine-covered mountains, and lush meadows. Mount Rushmore offers walking trails, a hands-on museum depicting the carving of the presidents, a gift shop and restaurant (1.5 hrs). **Crazy Horse Memorial**, just north of Custer, is a work in progress of a mountain-sized man and his spirited horse. The memorial is a tribute to the American Indian people (1.5 hrs). Hill City offers many area artists' shops on Main Street. Board a historic 1880 train to Keystone (45 min). Keystone's choices of activities include shopping, visiting presidential attractions including a historical center or a wax museum, exploring one of several Black Hills caves, touring a gold mine, or panning for gold (1.0 hr per attraction). For evening entertainment, **Mount Rushmore National Memorial** offers a lighting ceremony each evening.

Overnight: Rapid City or Keystone, SD

Days of '76, Deadwood, late July

Crazy Horse Volksmarch, Custer, first weekend in June

Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup, Custer, late September/early October

Day 11 Rapid City – Black Hills – Rapid City (147 mi/236 km)

Custer State Park's Wildlife Loop (2.0 hrs) offers opportunities to watch for 1,500 bison as well as pronghorn, deer, prairie dogs, elk, mountain goats and bighorn sheep in this 73,000-acre wildlife preserve. Camera safaris in jeeps are also offered at the **State Game Lodge in Custer State Park** (1.5 hrs). Travel south to **Wind Cave National Park** and enjoy a tour (1.5 hrs) of unique box-work formations in the fifth longest cave in the world, or enjoy the aboveground wildlife preserve. Hot Springs offers choices of **The Mammoth Site** (1.0 hr), a museum featuring an insitu display of Colombian Mammoths, **Hot Springs**, a warm spring-fed pool and water playland, or a tour of the **Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary** (1.0 hr). **The Journey Museum** (1.0 hr) in Rapid City gives a wonderful overview of the **Black Hills** from the Lakota and white man's perspectives. Downtown Rapid City is a mecca for shoppers looking for American Indian art and Black Hills' artists' work. Black Hills Gold jewelry tours are available to see how this unique jewelry is made. Join the cowboys for a chuck wagon dinner tonight, complete with singing and entertainment.

Overnight: Rapid City, SD

Day 12 Rapid City – Mitchell (288 mi/461 km)

Travel east on Interstate 90 to the town of Wall, where a little country drug store became famous for offering free ice water. This little drug store now features one of the largest collections of original western art in the country and **Wall Drug** is a stand-alone attraction. Travel the S.D. Highway 240 Loop through **Badlands National Park** (2.0 hrs) and enjoy the spires and pinnacles of this 244,000-acre wilderness area. There are many scenic pull-offs for photos and short hikes. **Cedar Pass Lodge** offers a restaurant and gift shop. The **Ben Reifel Visitor Center** is also located near Interior on the Badlands loop drive. The **Akta Lakota Museum** (45 min) in Chamberlain offers artifacts as well as modern day American Indian art and is located on the **St. Joseph Indian School** campus. Attraction choices in Mitchell include the **World's Only Corn Palace**, a doll museum, the **Mitchell Prehistoric Indian Village**, and **Middle Border Museum/Oscar Howe Art Center** (45 min per attraction).

Overnight: Mitchell, SD

Day 13 Mitchell – Austin (261 mi/ 418 km)

Drive across the South Dakota plains, featuring scenery filmed in the movie, “Dances with Wolves.” Tour Sioux Falls, South Dakota’s largest city, where options include a tour of **Falls Park**, the **Washington Pavilion**, the **Outdoor Campus**, the **Great Plains Zoo**, and great shopping opportunities (45 min per attraction). Crossing the border into Minnesota, stop at Pipestone. Since 900 A.D., North American Indians have gathered catlinite (soft stone) from the quarry at **Pipestone National Monument** for peace pipes. Visitors can learn the history of Indian culture at an interpretive center, watch Indian craftspeople carve the pipestone, and walk through the quarry (2.0 hrs). Then the drive continues across the rolling farmland of southern Minnesota.

Overnight: Austin, MN

Black Hills Pow Wow, Rapid City, second weekend in October

Corn Palace Festival, Mitchell, last weekend in August

Freedom Fest in the Heartland, Austin, first week in July

Day 14 Austin – Minneapolis/St. Paul (112 mi/180 km)

George A. Hormel began life in a 1861 log cabin, then went on to build a meat-processing empire in Austin. The most famous Hormel product, SPAM, became linked forever with World War II as a staple for Allied troops. The new **SPAM Museum** features displays and activities for visitors of all ages – test your skills on the SPAM production line. Check out the Hormel web site, sit at the Cyber Diner, view a film at the SPAM theater, collect recipes and shop at the SPAM gift store (2.5 hrs). Enroute to Minneapolis, visit **Cabela’s** (it’s not just for sportsmen) in Owatonna. A 35-foot mountain replica is inhabited with 100 trophies of wildlife species. See native and predator fish in a walk-through aquarium, snack on an ostrich or buffalo burger, and visit the art gallery. Depart for Minneapolis to conclude your City Nights and Northern Lights adventure.