

A native understanding of North Dakota

From the bluffs of the Missouri River to the sweeping prairies and woodlands near the Canadian border, the legends of North Dakota are anchored by the culture of its first people, the Native American tribes. From Sitting Bull to Sakakawea, the state is rich in Native American history and culture, as well as history of explorers like Lewis and Clark who were intrinsically bound to the Native heritage.

Today, nearly 7 percent of the population of North Dakota is Native American, and the tribes are well represented by attractions like the Earth Lodge Village in New Town, and events such as the United Tribes Powwow held each September in the capital city of Bismarck. Some of the state's most authentic and adventurous activities are rooted in some of its oldest traditions.

Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park is located on the banks of the Missouri River just south of Mandan, Bismarck's sister city. The park's history goes back over 300 years and includes the **On-A-Slant Indian Village**, which was once home to a thriving Mandan Indian population in the mid-1600s who lived in earth lodges along the river. Several rebuilt lodges can be toured.

The **North Dakota Heritage Center** in Bismarck has one of the nation's largest collections of Plains Indian artifacts, second only to the Smithsonian. On the Capital grounds you will also find a statue of Sakakawea, proudly looking to the horizon.

North of Bismarck, visible depressions are all that remain of **Double Ditch State Historic Site**, a large Mandan Indian earth lodge village. Interpretive signs assist visitors in understanding the history of this fascinating people.

Head north along the Missouri River to Stanton and where you can visit **Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site**, which was last occupied in 1845 by the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians. This is also the site of a beautiful state-of-the-art museum dedicated to preserving the culture of the Plains Indians.

Continue on to the shores of **Lake Sakakawea** where you'll enjoy a breathtaking view of North Dakota's largest man-made lake, formed behind the **Garrison Dam** near Riverdale. Traveling northwest just past New Town, you will cross **Four Bears Bridge**, named for 19 tribal chiefs of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Indian tribes. It is the longest bridge in North Dakota, spanning nearly a mile over Lake Sakakawea.

Visit **Four Bears Casino & Resort**, a full Las Vegas-style casino with live entertainment overlooking Lake Sakakawea. Next to the Casino is **Three Tribes Museum**. This museum displays artifacts relating to the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara tribal history and sells traditional American Indian arts, crafts and books. **The Earth Lodge Village** near the museum is one of the newest attractions in the state providing overnight stays to help visitors gain even greater understanding of the history and culture of the Native cultures of the Plains.



North Dakota
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