

# “COWBOY UP” IN NORTH DAKOTA



What better way to experience the authentic Old West than riding the trail? Try the trail rides in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, on the Maah Daah Hey Trail or at a working guest ranch. If you would rather watch from the sidelines, there's a rodeo around every corner in North Dakota, including Roughrider Days in Dickinson; Mandan Rodeo Days; Killdeer Mountain Roundup Rodeo; and the Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Match, just to name a few.

Find the cowboy in you at the ND Cowboy Hall of Fame in Medora. This museum showcases ranching, trail drivers, homesteaders, the sport of rodeo and the impact of the horse on the development of life on the Plains of North Dakota. Or just walk the streets of the cow-town Medora. Medora and the surrounding Badlands are rich in lore and legend. Some inhabitants came to the Badlands out of necessity, as adventurers of the Western movement, while others came to experience frontier life firsthand. Present day adventurers can experience the Medora Musical, an outdoor musical variety show presented in the Burning Hills Amphitheatre in the heart of the North Dakota Badlands. The Medora Musical offers a mix of modern country, western, gospel and patriotic music with live horses on stage.

Theodore Roosevelt National Park offers majestic Badlands scenery, abundant wildlife and potential for all kinds of adventure. The South Unit of the park can be entered through Medora and is home to Teddy Roosevelt's first ranching cabin, the Maltese Cross Ranch. The North Unit is near Watford City, home to the Long X Trading Post Visitors Center, which showcases the ranching and trail driving lifestyle of the 1880s. The Long X Trail was named for the Long X Ranch, which was the end of the trail for the cattle drives from Texas that ended in the area.

Bismarck was the start to the Wild West for many. Fort Abraham Lincoln was the home to General George Custer and the 7th Cavalry. Their mission was to further the advancement of the Northern Pacific Railroad and open the westward expansion of the American frontier. The Cavalry met its demise at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, but visitors today can step back to 1875 at the Custer House. The replica home showcases many items that were a part of the household of the General and Mrs. Custer while in North Dakota.

A display of the frontier expansion, cowboy lifestyle and settling of the West can be found at the North Dakota Heritage Center on the State Capitol grounds in Bismarck. Exhibits sketch the story of life on the Northern Plains from controlling a vast prairie empire to the struggles and successes of the homesteaders and pioneers.

The cowboy legends in North Dakota not only include General Custer but also Louis L'Amour, who grew up in the fading days of the American frontier in Jamestown. Theodore Roosevelt first came to the Badlands in September 1883 and became interested in the cattle business. He invested in the Maltese Cross Ranch and later established the Elkhorn Ranch. He stated several times, "I never would have been President if it had not been for my experiences in North Dakota."

If it's authentic Western dining you are after, enjoy a unique meal nestled in the North Dakota Badlands at the Medora Pitchfork Steak Fondue. Savor your steak while you are serenaded by cast members of the Medora Musical, or try the Outlaws Bar & Grill in Watford City for a gourmet taste of the West.

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# SAMPLE ITINERARY

## Day 1 – Medora

This authentic Old West cow-town was founded in 1883 by the Marquis de Mores and named for his wife. Medora offers a musical extravaganza, trail rides, mountain biking, hiking, museums, many gift shops and restaurants during the summer season.

### Morning

THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK - SOUTH UNIT: Named for the 26th President, it memorializes his contribution to conservation. North Dakota Badlands provide the scenic backdrop to this park. The loop drive provides a view of buffalo, deer, elk, bighorn sheep, wild horses, mule deer and prairie dog towns. Trail ride, mountain bike, or hike through the Badlands on the marked trails or the Maah Daah Hey Trail.

### Afternoon

CHATEAU DE MORES STATE HISTORIC SITE: Built in 1883 the elegant 26-room home of the famous French nobleman who founded Medora.

NORTH DAKOTA COWBOY HALL OF FAME: Interpretive center for the history of Native Americans, ranching, rodeo, and the Western lifestyle of the Plains and Badlands.

BULLY THE PLAY: One-man performance on the life of Teddy Roosevelt.

### Evening

PITCHFORK FONDUE: A unique Western steak meal served at the Tjaden Center on the bluffs overlooking Medora.

MEDORA MUSICAL: Broadway-style variety show at the spectacular Burning Hills Amphitheatre. Western entertainment and a patriotic salute are part of each show.

## Day 2 - Medora to Watford City

### Afternoon

THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK - NORTH UNIT: The Scenic Byway is a 22.5-kilometer loop with spectacular views of the Badlands, Oxbow Overlook, prairie dog towns and the CCC shelter at the River Bend Overlook.

LONG X VISITOR CENTER AND MUSEUM: The Long X Visitor Center and Museum is the central location for information on the area's cultural, geological, historical and geographic attractions.

MCKENZIE COUNTY PIONEER MUSEUM and HERITAGE PARK: This pioneer museum has many artifacts exhibited in the historic classroom. Original trapper's log cabin, homestead shack, one-room school and original 1915 Schafer Law Office. Mammoth fossil bones discovered in the area.

### Evening

Dinner at the OUTLAWS BAR & GRILL: An exquisite dining experience, Outlaws Bar & Grill will tantalize you with a gourmet flavor of the west during your dining experience.

## Day 3

Try your hand on a trail ride, ranch or rodeo.

## Day 4 – Bismarck-Mandan

FORT ABRAHAM LINCOLN STATE PARK: Experience life at the Fort in 1875 at the Custer House. Tour the home of the General and Mrs. George Custer. Walk across the parade grounds to the barracks of the 7th Cavalry, the Commissary Store and visit the horses at the stables.

NORTH DAKOTA STATE CAPITOL and HERITAGE CENTER: The North Dakota Capitol is home to the North Dakota Theodore Roosevelt Rough Riders Hall of Fame. Honorees include author Louis L'Amour, and Harold Schafer, founder of the Medora Foundation. At the Heritage Center, the exhibits focus on North Dakota, covering prehistoric times, American Indian artifacts, and the cowboys and settlement of the state.



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