THE GREAT
AMERICAN WEST
IDAHO · NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA · WYOMING

14-Day, 2-State Inspirational Itinerary

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE
IN NORTH DAKOTA & SOUTH DAKOTA

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Explore the rich traditions of the Great American West with a Native American culture-themed journey spanning North Dakota and South Dakota. Make your way from the Spirit Lake Nation in North Dakota to the Turtle Mountains and the MHA Nation's Earth Lodge Village near New Town, where reconstructed earth lodges and cultural demonstrations offer insight into Hidatsa, Mandan and Arikara traditions. Continue to Standing Rock to learn about Lakota and Dakota history through museums, art and storytelling. Traveling south into South Dakota, visit the Crazy Horse Memorial to witness one of the world's largest ongoing mountain carvings and explore its expansive Native cultural center. Round out the journey at Badlands National Park and the Pine Ridge Reservation, where the Oglala Lakota College Historical Center provides meaningful context about Lakota history, resilience and contemporary life. Throughout the trip, you will immerse yourself in traditional arts, historical sites and living cultures that define the Indigenous identity of the Great American West.

Routing Overview

Total Trip*: 10 days/10 overnights | 2,524 km/1,568 miles

Arrival: Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP)

Day 1: North Dakota and Minnesota (Fargo / West Fargo / Moorhead)

Day 2: North Dakota (Spirit Lake / Devils Lake)

Day 3: North Dakota (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa)

Day 4: North Dakota (MHA Nation)

Day 5: North Dakota and South Dakota (Standing Rock / Sitting Bull)

Day 6: South Dakota (Black Hills)

Day 7: South Dakota (Badlands National Park / Pine Ridge Reservation)

Day 8: South Dakota (Chamberlain / Mitchell)

Day 9: South Dakota (Mitchell / Sioux Falls)

Day 10: South Dakota (Sica Hollow State Park / Sisseton / Aberdeen)

Departure: Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP)

Drive times and distances are approximate from overnight location to overnight location and do not include daily excursions. Estimates are meant for inspiration only.

Images provided by: Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, North Dakota Tourism and Travel South Dakota

Day 1: North Dakota & Minnesota (Fargo / West Fargo / Moorhead)

Get your legs under you by staying downtown and enjoying the many locally owned shops, restaurants, and places to grab a nice glass of wine or a beer. If you are feeling up to a bit more driving, please see Day 10 as the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Reservation is right down the road.

Distance: 8-164 km/5-102 miles, 10 minutes-1.5 hours driving time

Overnight: Downtown Fargo

Day 2: North Dakota (Spirit Lake / Devils Lake)

A traveler to Spirit Lake Nation should explore the rich Dakota culture, visiting the Fort Totten State Historic Site and local museums. Attend traditional powwows to experience vibrant dances and music. Enjoy the scenic beauty of Devils Lake, perfect for fishing, boating and birdwatching. Engage with community members to learn about the tribe's heritage and stories at Fort Totten State Historic Site. Respect local customs and support Native-owned businesses to make your visit meaningful and impactful. At Spirit Lake Nation, don't miss the breathtaking Devils Lake – North Dakota's largest natural body of water. Ideal for fishing, boating and photography, the lake offers stunning views and outdoor adventure at White Horse Hill National Game Preserve or SkiJump Adventures.

Distance: 275 km/171 miles, 2.5 hours driving time

Overnight: Spirit Lake Casino & Resort

Day 3: North Dakota (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa)

In the Turtle Mountains of North Dakota, travelers can explore serene forests, rolling hills and crystal-clear lakes ideal for hiking, fishing and wildlife-watching while on the Turtle Mountain Scenic Byway. Visit the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Heritage Center to learn about the tribe's history and vibrant traditions. Attend local powwows to witness colorful regalia and traditional dancing. Discover unique Native crafts and foods from community artisans, or watch a horse race at Chippewa Downs. With their blend of natural beauty and rich culture, the Turtle Mountains offer a meaningful and memorable experience including the International Peace Garden.

Distance: 150 km/93 miles, 1.5 hours driving time

Overnight: Sky Dancer Casino & Resort

Day 4: North Dakota (MHA Nation)

Travelers to the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation can immerse themselves in rich cultural heritage and scenic landscapes. At the MHA Interpretive Center in New Town, visitors can explore exhibits, attend cultural demonstrations and enjoy performances in a 500-seat amphitheater overlooking Lake Sakakawea. Nearby, the Earth Lodge Village offers a glimpse into traditional dwellings and the opportunity to stay overnight in a reconstructed earth lodge. Outdoor enthusiasts can hike the rugged terrain of the new Three Affiliated Tribes National Park, featuring Badlands landscapes and wildlife. The area also boasts powwows, historic sites and the Three Affiliated Tribes Museum, providing a comprehensive experience of the region's history and culture. View the landscape and the lake from Crow Flies High Butte.

Distance: 290 km/180 miles, 3 hours driving time

Overnight: 4 Bears Casino & Lodge

Day 5: North Dakota & South Dakota (Standing Rock / Sitting Bull)

Immerse yourself in a rich tapestry of history, culture and natural beauty. Begin your journey along the Standing Rock National Native American Scenic Byway, which stretches 86 miles through North and South Dakota, offering views of the Missouri River and landmarks such as the Sitting Bull Monument and the Sitting Bull Burial Site. Visit the Sitting Bull Visitor Center in Fort Yates to learn about the Lakota leader's legacy. Engage with local artisans to experience traditional beadwork and quillwork. Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy fishing, boating and hiking, especially near Lake Oahe and the Prairie Knights Marina.

Distance: 320 km/200 miles, 3.5 hours driving time

Overnight: Prairie Knights Casino & Resort

Day 6: South Dakota (Black Hills)

Many holidays to South Dakota start in the Black Hills, and the same goes for travelers looking for more Indigenous experiences. Start your South Dakota itinerary by paying your respects at Bear Butte State Park, a mountain sacred to many Native American tribes that once held religious ceremonies near the geological formation. Continue your journey on to Crazy Horse Memorial and witness absolute greatness in this tribute to the Lakota leader. Once complete, this will be the largest outdoor mountain carving in the world. Finish with the Journey Museum and experience history in the Black Hills region spanning 2.5 billion years covering paleontology, stories of the pioneers and, of course, Native American culture around the Black Hills.

Distance: 435 km/270 miles, 4.5 hours driving time

Overnight: Rapid City

Day 7: South Dakota (Badlands National Park / Pine Ridge Reservation)

Once you have left the Black Hills, you will continue off the beaten path and experience Badlands National Park, immersing yourself in 244,000 acres of otherworldly wonder with rocks, buttes and spires of every shape imaginable. After your trek through the Badlands, make sure to pay your respects to the Wounded Knee Massacre at the Oglala Lakota College Historical Center on the Pine Ridge Reservation. This solitary stone monument symbolizes the mass grave in an active cemetery 80 miles south and is an official National Historic Landmark. As you head to your overnight town of Wall, you can also stop at the Red Cloud Heritage Center for an extensive collection of paintings and sculpture created by contemporary Native American artists.

Distance: 90 km/55 miles, 1 hour driving time

Overnight: Wall

Day 8: South Dakota (Chamberlain / Mitchell)

Today, you will trek across the state into a new time zone and cross the famous Missouri River, to which many of South Dakota's sovereign nations connect. Once across the Missouri River, you will be welcomed by Dignity: Of Earth & Sky, a 50-foot tall statue depicting a Native American woman in a star quilt, honoring South Dakota's culture and the history of the Lakota and Dakota people. While in Chamberlain, make sure you head to the Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center, which is more an experience of Native American way of life, both past and present. Depart for your overnight city of Mitchell.

Distance: 360 km/220 miles, 3 hours driving time

Overnight: Mitchell

Day 9: South Dakota (Mitchell / Sioux Falls)

Besides the World's Only Corn Palace, Mitchell is also home to the Mitchell Prehistoric Indian Village. This village is a 1,000-year-old village and the only archaeological site in South Dakota open to the public. This is the perfect experience for families and history buffs alike as it offers a very hands-on experience. Continue on your trek to South Dakota's largest city, Sioux Falls, and take in the lively arts and world-famous culinary scene, ending at Good Earth State Park at Blood Run. This park is not only gorgeous and full of recreation, it's also one of the oldest sites of long-term human habitation in the United States.

Distance: 120 km/75 miles, 1 hour driving time

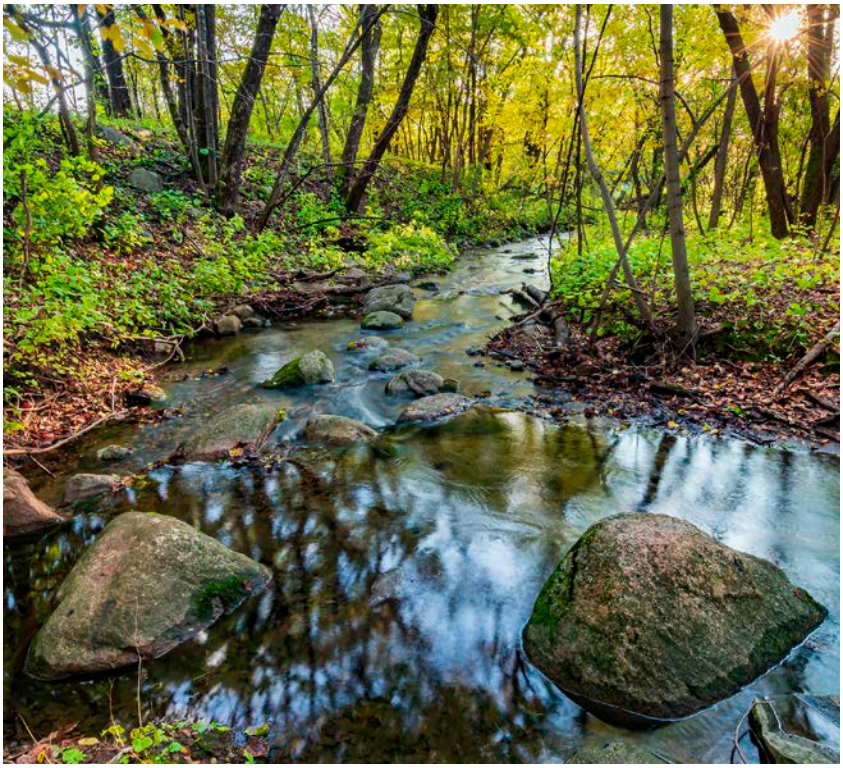
Overnight: Sioux Falls

Day 10: South Dakota (Sica Hollow State Park / Sisseton / Aberdeen)

On your final day, you will enter the Glacial Lakes and Prairies Region of South Dakota. Sica Hollow State Park is located 15 miles northwest of Sisseton in the northeast corner of South Dakota and is filled with rugged beauty and ancient Native American history, mystery and lore. Hiking, backpacking and horseback riding can all be enjoyed here. As you leave the park, make a stop in little Sisseton, home of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Reservation, where you will find a town full of colorful murals and even a bison farm. End your journey in one of the South Dakota's largest and most friendly communities in Aberdeen.

Distance: 320 km/200 miles, 3 hours driving time

Overnight: Aberdeen



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