



To experience western Nebraska is to experience the Old West. This is a land filled with history and culture. From the Native American tribes who first settled this wild region, fur traders and trappers looking for fortune, early pioneers searching for a better way of life out west, and farmers and ranchers who carved out an existence in this wild and rough landscape. Hear their exciting stories and tales as we explore and experience western Nebraska.

Day 1

North Platte

Our first stop this morning is **Golden Spike Tower & Visitor Center** where we'll enjoy a catered breakfast while taking in a bird's eye view of the world's largest railroad classification yard from atop the 7th floor open air observation deck or the 8th floor enclosed deck. An impressive gift shop and courtyard displaying flags from the 23 states served by the Union Pacific Railroad also are on-site. Now it's time to experience a truly Nebraskan activity at **Dusty Trails** where we'll float down the North Platte River in a horse watering tank. Chairs and coolers can be placed in the tanks for an even more enjoyable float down this slow moving river. Now we head to **Buffalo Bill State Historical Park**, home of Colonel William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Here we'll meet him and his wife who will give us a tour of their place and talk about their interesting adventures.

We'll hop aboard a wagon that will take us from the park to the **Lincoln County Historical Museum** where we'll enjoy a deliciously prepared Dutch oven lunch and a guided tour of the facility. We'll explore the recreated town and learn more about the story of the famous **North Platte Canteen** during World War II. One thing to watch out for on the ride to the museum from Buffalo Bill's house though is masked robbers who have their eye on the money you'll also be carrying with you on the wagon. Next we learn where our beef comes from on the **"Here's the Beef"** tour at the West Central Research and Extension Office. Extension educators and the chef from Another Round Restaurant will explain the steps that are taken to raise and process beef from pasture to the table. Dinner will be a full meal including five cuts of beef.

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Day 2

North Platte • Ogallala • Sidney

After breakfast we'll head to **Grain Bin Antique Town** where we'll stroll through salvaged and repurposed historic grain bins searching for that perfect antique treasure before heading to **Fort Cody Trading Post**. There we can search for unique gift and souvenir ideas, watch a working miniature replica of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and tour Old West exhibits in the newly-renovated museum. Now it's time to depart North Platte for Ogallala, also known as the town "too tough for Texans." Upon arrival, we'll head straight to **Front Street and Cowboy Museum** for an authentic western style lunch in this recreation of an 1880s Old West main street. The **Crystal Palace Revue**, a rootin' tootin' western shootout complete with cowboys and showgirls takes place from June to mid-August. Next it's time to move on to the **Petrified Wood and Art Gallery** to explore Native American artifacts and delicate works of art and carvings formed from pieces of ancient petrified wood from around the world. We'll also recount the stories of outlaws, gamblers, and desperados who met their final resting place, buried with their boots on, at **Boot Hill Cemetery** before heading to the Victorian-style **Mansion on the Hill** to see how Ogallala's upper class residents lived.

Now we'll trek farther west to explore Sidney and learn about its history of lawlessness during the gold rush in the 1880s. **Camp Lookout** is the oldest building in town and initially was built as housing for soldiers in 1867 to protect railroad workers working on the Union Pacific railroad from attacks by the Sioux and Cheyenne. Re-enactors will entertain us with stories of the building and its many colorful inhabitants over the years before taking us to **Sidney's Boot Hill Cemetery** for an evening grave dousing experience. Dinner tonight will be at **Buffalo Point Steakhouse and Grill**.

Day 3

Potter • Kimball County • Gering

After a substantial breakfast at **Dude's Steakhouse** we depart Sidney for Potter where we'll explore this charming village. We'll tour the historic **Potter Community Theatre** where the **Potter Melodrama** has been entertaining the community and region with a variety of productions for the past 30 years. Next we'll head to **Collective Gathering**, a local business specializing in unique and hard-to-find antiques. Before leaving town we'll take in two unique Potter fun things to do: enjoy a famous Tin Roof Sundae (vanilla ice cream, chocolate syrup, chocolate ice cream, marshmallow cream, and nuts) at **Potter Sundry** and step back in time to the 1920s at **Potter's Historic Duckpin Bowling Alley**. This newly restored alley has three lanes and is one of the best times you'll ever have bowling.

Now it's time to depart Potter and head to **Windbreak Bar & Grill** in Kimball for a delicious lunch before exploring two exceptional outdoor activities around Kimball. First, we head to **EJE Ranch** where we'll learn more about the region's short grass prairie on this 4th generation family cow/calf working ranch that has always strived to work with Mother Nature. **Prairie Adventures at EJE Ranch** gives us the chance to go out into the prairie to learn more about this fragile ecosystem up-close. Afterward, it's time to head north along the **Fossil Freeway to Rocky Hollow Buffalo Company** where we'll visit a working ranch that raises grass fed bison. We'll learn more about this sentinels of the Great Plains and even have the unique opportunity to hand feed buffalo hay biscuits, an experience you can't get in many places. It's now time to head to Gering, a major stop along the Mormon and Oregon Trails where we'll enjoy an **Old West dinner at Five Rocks Amphitheatre**.

Day 4

Scotts Bluff County • Bayard

Breakfast today is at **Barn Anew B&B**, a renovated 100-year-old barn located near Oregon Trail wagon ruts and within the imposing shadow of **Scotts Bluff National Monument**. After breakfast, we'll visit this natural formation that was a

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prominent landmark for American Indians, fur traders, and Oregon and Mormon trail pioneers who used it as a guide westward. At 800 feet above the North Platte River, a drive to the summit gives you a tremendous view of the entire valley and the wagon ruts that are still visible at the base. A gift shop and museum in the visitor center show the historical importance of the trail and the area's colorful history. Lunch will be a catered affair at **Wildcat Hills Nature Center** where we'll dine amidst the unique flora and fauna of the beautiful and rugged Wildcat Hills region. After lunch, we take a short detour to Bayard for an informative visit of **Chimney Rock**, the most recognized landmark along the Oregon Trail. Early pioneers saw this towering feature for days on the open horizon. The newly renovated **Chimney Rock National Historic Site Visitor Center** highlights the fascinating stories from these pioneers and others as they continued their westward migration.

After arriving again in Gering, we'll stop at **Legacy of the Plains** where we'll learn about the lives and stories of the people who explored and settled the High Plains of Nebraska. Located on the Oregon Trail, the museum's exhibits focus on the archeology of Native American and Westward Expansions, the lives of pioneering settlers, the establishment of irrigation, the development of rural communities, the diversity of culture on the High Plains, and the innovative technologies and cultural practices of raising animals and crops in the semi-arid environment. Dinner will be a tasty **farm-to-table experience** inside the museum.

Day 5

Northwest Nebraska

After breakfast we depart Gering and head farther north on the Fossil Freeway to **Agate Fossil Beds National Monument** in remote Sioux County of northwest Nebraska. We'll explore this internationally recognized fossil site where mammal bones from the Miocene Epoch are on display. The adjacent Agate Springs Ranch was home to James H. Cook and his wife who regularly welcomed leaders of great Native American nations like Red Cloud and American Horse. A modern visitor facility features exhibits highlighting the fossils found on the ranch and the impressive collection of **Native American artifacts** gifted to James Cook by Red Cloud and others. While there we'll take a behind-the-scenes peek at valuable artifacts that normally are not on display.

After lunch at **Gate City Hotel and Grill** in Crawford, we head out onto the vast High Plains and the **Oglala National Grassland** to explore a one-of-a-kind destination, **Hudson-Meng Education & Research Center**, which houses one of the most important paleo-archeological discoveries in North America. After the last Ice Age, hundreds of *Bison antiquus* (an extinct form of the modern bison) died here. People have wondered about the origin of this bone bed since its discovery in 1954, and archeologists today continue to research the exact nature of past events and the role that ancient Paleo-Indian people may have played.

Now it's time to head to another unique northwest Nebraska destination, **Toadstool Geologic Park** where we'll explore this Badlands "moonscape" and learn more about this area's fascinating geology. The park is noted for its unusual geological formations, some in the shape of toadstools, and scientifically valuable fossils of animals that passed through this area as far back as 30 million years ago. Our last stop today is a wonderfully prepared Nebraska steak dinner served at **High Plains Homestead**. Located within the **Oglala National Grassland**, this authentic recreation of an Old West cow town comes complete with delicious meals, unique lodging experiences, horse corrals, and fossil collecting. Our overnight lodging will be at **Fort Robinson State Historical Park**.

Day 6

Northwest Nebraska

We wake up this morning with breakfast at **Fort Robinson State Historic Park**, which offers historic tours, jeep and stagecoach rides, and the chance to view bison and purebred Texas longhorn herds. First used as a fort from the early

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days of the Old West until after World War II, the fort was the site of the 1879 Cheyenne Outbreak and the death of famed Sioux Chief Crazy Horse. This afternoon we head to Chadron and our first stop in this small community nestled within the impressive and rugged **Pine Ridge Region**. The **Museum of the Fur Trade** is the only museum in the country dedicated to preserving the nation's fur-trading industry. We can also explore the **Bordeaux Trading Post** (built 1837), which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Items from the 2015 Academy Award winning movie, *The Revenant* starring Leonardo DiCaprio, will be on display.

Next we'll explore the history and culture of the High Plains region and the interesting life and literature of Nebraska author Mari Sandoz, author of "Old Jules" and "Crazy Horse," at the **Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center**.

For more information about this itinerary and other exciting group tour opportunities, contact Micheal Collins, Group Tour Manager, with the Nebraska Tourism Commission at micheal.collins@nebraska.gov or 402-471-3795.

Day 1

Golden Spike Tower & Visitor Center (Breakfast)
Dusty Trails
Buffalo Bill State Historical Park
Lincoln County Historical Museum (Lunch)
"Here's the Beef" Tour (Dinner)

Day 2

Breakfast in North Platte
Grain Bin Antique Town
Fort Cody Trading Post
Front Street and Cowboy Museum (Lunch)
Petrified Wood and Art Gallery
Boot Hill Cemetery
Mansion on the Hill
Camp Lookout
Sidney's Boot Hill Cemetery
Buffalo Point Steakhouse and Grill (Dinner)

Day 3

Dude's Steakhouse (Breakfast)
Potter Community Theatre
Collective Gathering
Potter Sundry
Potter's Historic Duckpin Bowling
Windbreak Bar & Grill (Lunch)
EJE Ranch
Rocky Hollow Buffalo Company
Five Rocks Amphitheatre (Dinner)

Day 4

Barn Anew B&B (Breakfast)
Scotts Bluff National Monument
Wildcat Hills Nature Center (Lunch)
Chimney Rock National Historic Site
Legacy of the Plains (Dinner)

Day 5

Breakfast in Gering
Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Gate City Hotel and Grill (Lunch)
Hudson-Meng Education & Research Center
Toadstool Geologic Park
High Plains Homestead (Dinner)

Day 6

Fort Robinson State Historical Park (Breakfast, Lunch)
Museum of the Fur Trade
Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center
Dinner in Chadron



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