



This itinerary takes us on a journey from the bright lights and big cities of eastern Nebraska to the rich, rolling farmland of Nebraska's Central Flyway where more than 500,000 Sandhill cranes migrate through each spring on their journey back to their breeding and nesting grounds up north. We'll explore how our nation grew and expanded westward, learn about new agricultural techniques and advances that help to feed the world, and explore ways to protect and preserve our planet's natural environment.

DAY 1

Bellevue • Papillion

Our first stop today is a visit to the headquarters of the U. S. Strategic Command, Air Force Weather Agency, and the 55th Wing of the Air Combat Command at **Offutt Air Force Base**. Next we'll visit the **Fontenelle Forest Nature Center**, a 1,400-acre conservation area overlooking the Missouri River and home to Nebraska's only wild raptor recovery program. Dinner tonight takes us to Poland. We'll enjoy a traditional Polish dinner and entertainment at the **Polish Heritage Center** in Papillion.

DAY 2

Omaha

We start the day at the **National Park Service Visitor Center** where Meriwether Lewis will meet us and talk about his journey up the Missouri River with William Clark before we embark on an exciting **guided city tour of Omaha**. Next, we'll explore the history and settlement of Nebraska's largest city at the **Durham Museum**. Located in the former Union Station, this top museum offers us the chance to walk through authentic train cars on display on the downstairs station platform.

Our lunch stop is a traditional Greek meal at **St. John Greek Orthodox Church** followed by lessons in Greek dancing and culture, and for dessert, we'll make a short stop at the **Lithuanian Bakery** for a delicious Lithuanian pastry. We continue to west Omaha and **Father Flanagan's Boys Town** where an experienced guide will give an insider's view of life in the Village and recount the many inspiring stories of Father Flanagan and his vision to help wayward boys. Our final destination for the day is Lincoln, Nebraska's capital city where we'll end with a wonderful meal and entertainment at **Screamers Dining & Cabaret**.

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DAY 3

Lincoln • Grand Island

After breakfast, we start our day touring Lincoln at the impressive **Nebraska State Capitol**. At 15 stories and 400 feet tall, it is the second-tallest statehouse in the country and offers a spectacular view of the city from the observation deck. Afterward, we head to the **Larsen Tractor Test Museum**, the only tractor testing museum and tractor test laboratory in the world. This unique museum displays more than 25 tractors highlighting the advancements in tractor testing technology, which established power and performance standards and solved agricultural problems worldwide. Our next stop is the **International Quilt Study Center**, which houses the world's largest publicly held quilt collection. We'll tour its high-tech storage facility and quilt exhibitions before going "behind the scenes" to view quilts that are hundreds of years old. Our lunch stop is **Runza Restaurant** where we can enjoy a Nebraska tradition. Introduced by German from Russia settlers, the Runza sandwich is a unique combination of ground beef, cabbage and spices baked in a fresh bun.

Before we depart Lincoln, our last stop in town is the **UNL Dairy Store** for a tasty post-lunch ice cream treat. Now we venture westward to central Nebraska and Grand Island where our first stop is the **1937 art-deco Grand Theatre** for an introductory program about the Sandhill cranes given by an experienced guide. Then we'll take in **Raising Nebraska** in Fonner Park to explore this interactive 25,000 sq. ft. museum that connects consumers with farmers who raise their food by explaining the steps from "farm to fork." Experience a virtual combine harvest experience, full-sized pivot irrigation system, grain bin video theater, a 50-foot-long interactive floor map of Nebraska, and an interactive dinner table. For dinner, we dine at **Tommy Gunz Bistro** in Grand Island where we'll enjoy hand-prepared entrees within a prohibition era speakeasy experience.

DAY 4

Grand Island • Kearney • York

Today's highlight is a pre-dawn excursion to the **Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center** for an orientation and guided sunrise crane viewing tour in a blind along the Platte River where we'll be able to view these majestic birds up-close and in their natural habitat. This truly is one of the most impressive and spiritual experiences. Next, we head to **The Archway** in Kearney where we'll explore this impressive interactive museum that commemorates the nation's westward expansion. At a height of 310 feet, the Archway is the only tourist attraction in the country to span a federal interstate highway. Our lunch stop is **Alley Rose** where we'll dine on a variety of delicious lunch offerings within a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere. As we head back to eastern Nebraska, we'll stop at the **Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer**.

Noted as one of the top ten living history museums in the country, the museum complex transports us back to the early pioneer and settlement days of Nebraska. The Fonner Rotunda houses one of the state's finest collections of cowboy and Native American art and artifacts. This evening's dinner spot is at **Chances "R"** in York, one of the city's most popular group tour destinations. We end the day in Nebraska City at the **Lied Lodge & Conference Center**, which is one of the best examples of environmental stewardship in building design and use.

DAY 5

Nebraska City

We'll breakfast this morning at the **Timber Dining Room** before starting our tour of historic Nebraska City, the official Home of Arbor Day. We'll spend time at **Arbor Day Farm**, a working farm orchard and forest. An experienced Nature Interpreter will guide us through this 260-acre National Historic Landmark, which concludes with a visit to the 50-foot-high Tree Adventure treehouse for an amazing view of the farm. All visitors receive a tree seedling at the Lied Greenhouse.

We'll also explore **Arbor Lodge State Historical Park**, the beautiful estate of J. Sterling Morton, Founder of Arbor Day. Built in 1855, this four-room frame house was remodeled over the years to become the magnificent 52-room mansion it is today. Walk through the rooms filled with authentic furnishings and displays that capture the life and times of this visionary. Before our departure, we'll enjoy lunch at a Nebraska original and one-of-a-kind, **Valentino's Grand Italian Buffet**. No trip to Nebraska is complete with having at least one slice of Valentino's pizza, which has been around since 1957.

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

Offutt Air Force Base
Fontenelle Forest Nature Center
Polish Heritage Center (Dinner)

Day 2

Breakfast in Omaha
National Park Service Visitor Center
Guided Driving Tour of Omaha
Durham Museum
St. John Greek Orthodox Church (Lunch)
Lithuanian Bakery
Father Flanagan's Boys Town
Screamers Dining & Cabaret (Dinner)

Day 3

Breakfast in Lincoln
Nebraska State Capitol
Larsen Tractor Test Museum
International Quilt Study Center
Runza Restaurant (Lunch)

UNL Dairy Store
1937 Grand Theatre
Raising Nebraska
Tommy Gunz Bistro (Dinner)

Day 4

Breakfast in Grand Island
Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center
The Archway
Alley Rose (Lunch)
Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer
Chances "R" (Dinner)
Lied Lodge & Conference Center

Day 5

Timber Dining Room (Breakfast)
Arbor Day Farm
Arbor Lodge State Historical Park
Valentino's Grand Italian Buffet (Lunch)



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