



BUFFALO, BONES AND BOOKS: TRAVELING THE FOSSIL FREEWAY SAMPLE TOUR ITINERARY

The Fossil Freeway is an enjoyable and scenic drive between Denver and Colorado's Front Range to South Dakota's Black Hills through western Nebraska. While exploring this one-of-a-kind highway corridor connecting the region's rich fossil history, we hand-feed bison and learn more about these sentinels of the Great Plains, explore a natural shortgrass prairie setting, and take in a stunning view of the Oregon Trail and North Platte River Valley from an elevation of more than 800 feet.

Our trip also takes us to a remote part of the state, the windswept High Plains region and Oglala National Grasslands of northwest Nebraska where we explore one of the world's most significant Miocene Epoch mammal fossil sites and gain a greater understanding of the area's Native American culture and livelihood. And we hear the many stories and tales of early pioneer and settler life in this often-hostile landscape where hearty adventurers, fur trappers, and others carved out a living.

Day 1

Kimball County • Potter

Overnight: Kimball

EJE Ranch

Learn about the High Plains Region's short grass prairie on this working ranch and the unique opportunity of venturing into the prairie to learn more about this fragile ecosystem first hand.

1960 era Atlas E Missile Silo

This 29,500 square foot living space, located on 18 acres southwest of Kimball, is a converted underground missile silo.

Potter Community Theatre

After a tour of the theatre, the Potter Melodrama actors entertains groups with a lively performance during a catered dinner.

Day 2

Kimball County • Bayard • Scotts Bluff County

Overnight: Gering

Rocky Hollow Buffalo Company

This working ranch raises grass fed bison and gives groups the unique opportunity to hand feed them hay biscuits and learn more about how these majestic animals exist and thrive in western Nebraska's High Plains region.

Double L Country Store and Café

Lunch at this quaint restaurant/gift shop where fresh ingredients, mouthwatering pies, and excellent daily specials make this hilltop spot a "must stop at."

Chimney Rock National Historic Site Visitor Center

Chimney Rock was the most recognized landmark along the Oregon Trail and early pioneers saw this towering feature for days on the open horizon. The renovated visitor center highlights the fascinating stories from these pioneers and others as they continued their westward migration.

Oregon Trail Cookout

Dinner tonight is a delicious open-air Old West experience at Five Rocks Amphitheatre.

Day 3

Scotts Bluff County

Overnight: Gering

Scotts Bluff National Monument

This natural formation was a 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 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.

Legacy of the Plains

Lunch is a farm-to-table affair where we also will learn about the lives and stories of the people who explored and settled the High Plains of Nebraska. The museum focuses 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.

Wildcat Hills Nature Center

Learn more about the unique flora and fauna of the beautiful and rugged Wildcat Hills south of town.

Day 4

Northwest Nebraska

Overnight: Chadron

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

This internationally recognized fossil site displays mammal bones from the Miocene Epoch. A modern visitor facility features exhibits highlighting the fossils found on the neighboring Agate Springs Ranch and the impressive collection of Native American artifacts gifted to James Cook by Red Cloud and others. Groups can take a behind-the-scenes peek at valuable artifacts not normally on display.

Fort Robinson State Historic Park

This huge state parks offers groups a wide variety of fun activities, including historic tours, jeep and stagecoach rides, scenic overviews, living history activities, and opportunities to view bison and purebred Texas longhorn herds. The park offers an excellent restaurant for lunch or other dining options are available.

Hudson-Meng Education & Research Center

Located on the Oglala National Grassland, this one-of-a-kind destination houses one of the most important paleo-archeological discoveries in North America, a Paleo-Indian bone bed from the last Ice Age when hundreds of Bison antiquus, an extinct form of the modern bison, died here.

High Plains Homestead

Authentic recreation of an Old West cow town complete with unique lodging experiences, horse corrals, and fossil collecting located on the Nebraska Badlands and near Toadstool Geologic Park. Toadstool Geologic Park is similar to South Dakota's famous Badlands and is worth a stop on any tour itinerary of northwest Nebraska.

The Broken Spur

Excellent dining options and good times in a historic building in downtown Crawford surrounded by the rugged and beautiful Pine Ridge.

Day 5
Northwest Nebraska

Bean Broker Coffee House & Pub

Breakfast is a delicious start to the day in this renovated bank building.

Museum of the Fur Trade

The only museum in the nation dedicated to preserving our fur-trading industry where groups can explore the Bordeaux Trading Post (built 1837) and items from the 2015 Academy Award winning movie, *The Revenant* starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

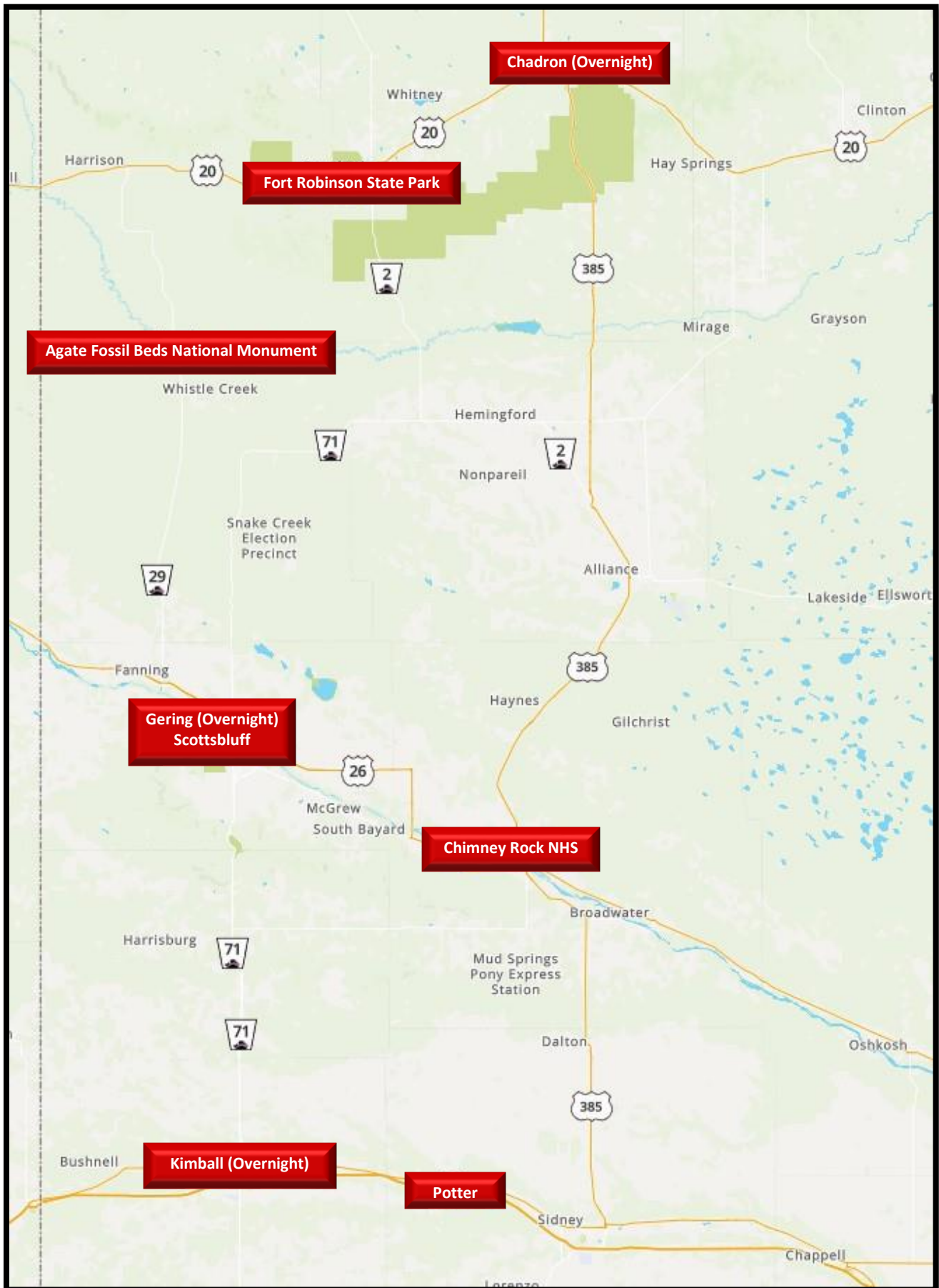
Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center

Explore history and culture of the High Plains region and the interesting life and literature of Nebraska author Mari Sandoz, author of “Old Jules” “Cheyenne Autumn,” and “Crazy Horse.”

Eleanor Barbour Cook Museum of Geology

Located on the Chadron State College campus, rocks, minerals, and fossils from Nebraska, the surrounding region, and around the world are in displays, including the Ohme collection highlighting agates, jade, and petrified wood. Note: Close for renovations until January 2022.)

Tour Route Map



Driving Times and Mileage
(Drive times are approximate.)

Kimball-Gering

Drive time: 45 min.
42 miles

Gering-Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Drive time: 55 min.
49 miles

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument-Chadron

Drive time: 1 hr. 15 min.
73 miles

Let us help you plan your next exciting Nebraska group tour itinerary. We can assist you with general information about tour destinations, group rates at attractions, restaurants, and accommodations, as well as give you personalized service and attention to make planning your tour easy and fun.

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