



## WESTWARD HO! FOLLOW THE OVERLAND TRAILS THROUGH NEBRASKA

### SAMPLE TOUR ITINERARY

In the 1800's, the journey to a new life in the west was a long and arduous one. Fortunately, today we can cover the same territory quickly and easily in a modern motorcoach. On this itinerary, we'll follow the footsteps of early explorers and pioneers as we go on our own journey across this great state following the Mormon, Oregon, and California Trails, and the Pony Express.

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#### Travel Day to Nebraska

Overnight: Omaha

#### DAY 1

##### Omaha

Overnight: Omaha

#### Omaha Guided City Tour

Explore this exciting city on a guided citywide tour of Omaha.

#### Durham Museum

Located in the former Union Station, this top museum offers highlights the history and development of Nebraska's largest city. Make sure to visit the authentic train cars on display on the downstairs station platform.

#### Historic Old Market District

Enjoy a delicious lunch in one of the Old Market's many excellent restaurants before exploring this turn-of-the-century marketplace of brick streets and buildings full of quaint shops and boutiques.

#### Mormon Trail Center at Historic Winter Quarters

Learn more about the great Mormon Migration to the west through a number of interactive exhibits and displays before heading out to the adjacent Mormon Pioneer Cemetery dating from 1846-1848.

#### Father Flanagan's Boys Town

Let an experienced guide 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.

#### DAY 2

##### Lincoln

Overnight: Lincoln

#### Museum of American Speed

This 135,000 sq. ft. museum presents a chronology of automotive racing and speed equipment development while preserving, interpreting, and displaying items significant in racing and automotive history.

#### 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 14<sup>th</sup> floor observation deck.

### **International Quilt Study Center**

Explore this wonderful museums that houses the world's largest publicly held quilt collection. Tour its high-tech storage facility and quilt exhibitions before going "behind the scenes" to view quilts that are hundreds of years old.

### **Larsen Tractor Test and Power Museum**

Visit 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.

### **UNL Dairy Store**

Stop for a tasty post-lunch or afternoon ice cream treat and learn how the on-site plant produces delicious ice creams, cheeses, and meats.

### **Historic Haymarket District**

Be entertained and dine on delicious fare in Lincoln's Historic Haymarket District before exploring this unique district's many eclectic shops and boutiques.

## **DAY 3**

**Beatrice • Wymore • Fairbury • Red Cloud**

Overnight: Hastings

### **Welsh Heritage Center**

This nice interpretive center highlights the stories of the Welsh settlers who called southeast Nebraska home. Groups also can enjoy a traditional Welsh tea or breakfast.

### **Homestead National Monument of America**

Step back to a time when the Homestead Act of 1862 enticed millions of people to move to the frontier and cultivate this often-harsh landscape. Explore the Homestead Heritage Center, hiking trails through virgin prairie grasses, and living history demonstrations.

### **Rock Creek Station State Historical Park**

The Oregon Trail entered Nebraska in southeast Nebraska and this state historical park is one of the best sites to view original wagon ruts of the Oregon and California trails. This also is where "Wild" Bill Hickok gained notoriety for killing his first victims.

### **Willa Cather Childhood Home and Historic Sites**

Tour Pulitzer Prize-winning author Willa Cather's childhood home and seven renovated buildings that were important to her life and books highlighting life and culture of southcentral Nebraska.

### **National Willa Cather Center**

This restored 1885 historic building in downtown Red Cloud houses a bookstore, art gallery, theatre, and Willa Cather memorabilia.

## **DAY 4**

**Hastings • Grand Island • Kearney**

Overnight: North Platte

**Note:** Tour groups that come to Nebraska's Central Flyway in the spring (mid-February to mid-March) can add an early morning or evening Sandhill crane migration viewing, one of the world's most spectacular animal migrations at **Rowe Sanctuary and Iain Nicolson Audubon Center** (Kearney) and **Crane Trust Nature and Visitor Center** (Grand Island) to their itinerary. **Dusty Trails** (North Platte) also offers guided Sandhill crane viewing tours during the day.

### **Hastings Museum**

Home to one of the best natural history collections in the state, the museum's includes the one-of-a-kind *Kool-Aid: Discover the Dream* interactive exhibit that highlights the story of the birth of one of America's favorite soft drinks. Lifelike murals and replicas, a fiber-optic river of Kool-Aid, interactive kiosks and the original Kool-Aid Man costume tell the story. No visit to the museum is complete without taking in an amazing show in the planetarium.

### **Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer**

Noted as one of the top ten living history museums in the country, this museum complex transports you 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.

### **Raising Nebraska**

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.

### **Archway**

This impressive, three-story, interactive museum commemorates the nation's westward expansion and is the only tourist attraction in the nation located over a federal interstate highway.

## **DAY 5**

### **North Platte • Ogallala**

Overnight: Ogallala

**Note:** Groups enter the Mountain Time Zone between North Platte and Ogallala (lose one hour).

### **Golden Spike Tower & Visitor Center**

Enjoy a catered breakfast while taking in a bird's eye view of the world's largest railroad classification yard from atop the 7<sup>th</sup> floor open air observation deck or the 8<sup>th</sup> floor enclosed deck.

### **Buffalo Bill State Historical Park**

Tour the home of Colonel William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and his wife and hear more about their lives and their interesting adventures.

### **Lincoln County Historical Museum**

Hop aboard a wagon from the park to the museum for a deliciously prepared Dutch oven lunch and a guided tour of the museum grounds, including an authentic recreated Old West town and learn more about the story of the famous World War II North Platte Canteen.

### **Fort Cody Trading Post**

Explore one of Nebraska's most eclectic gift and souvenir shops, watch a working 20,000-piece miniature replica of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and tour Old West exhibits in the newly-renovated museum.

### **Front Street and Cowboy Museum**

Enjoy an authentic western style lunch in this recreation of a 1880s Old West main street in downtown Ogallala, also known as the town "too tough for Texans. The Crystal Palace Revue is a rootin' tootin' western shootout complete with cowboys and showgirls and takes place from June to mid-August.

### **Petrified Wood and Art Gallery**

Explore Native American artifacts and delicate works of art and carvings formed from pieces of ancient petrified wood from around the world.

**DAY 6**  
**Ogallala • Lewellen • Bayard • Gering**  
Overnight: Gering

**Ash Hollow State Historical Park**

Explore Ash Hollow Cave and learn about the area's history, archaeology, paleontology and Native Americans at the visitor center. Afterward, view original pioneer wagon ruts still visible today.

**The Most Unlikely Place**

Enjoy a delicious lunch prepared with locally produced ingredients while admiring the many gorgeous pastels, watercolors, glass etchings, and wood sculptures that were created by local and regional artists.

**Chimney Rock National Historic Site**

Chimney Rock was the most recognized landmark along the Overland Trails. Today the newly renovated visitor center highlights the fascinating stories of the early westward migrating pioneers and other explorers and inhabitants.

**Scotts Bluff National Monument**

Visit this imposing natural formation that also was a prominent landmark for American Indians, fur traders, and Oregon and Mormon trail pioneers. At 800 feet above the North Platte River, a drive to the summit offers a tremendous view of the entire valley and the wagon ruts still visible at the base.

**Legacy of the Plains**

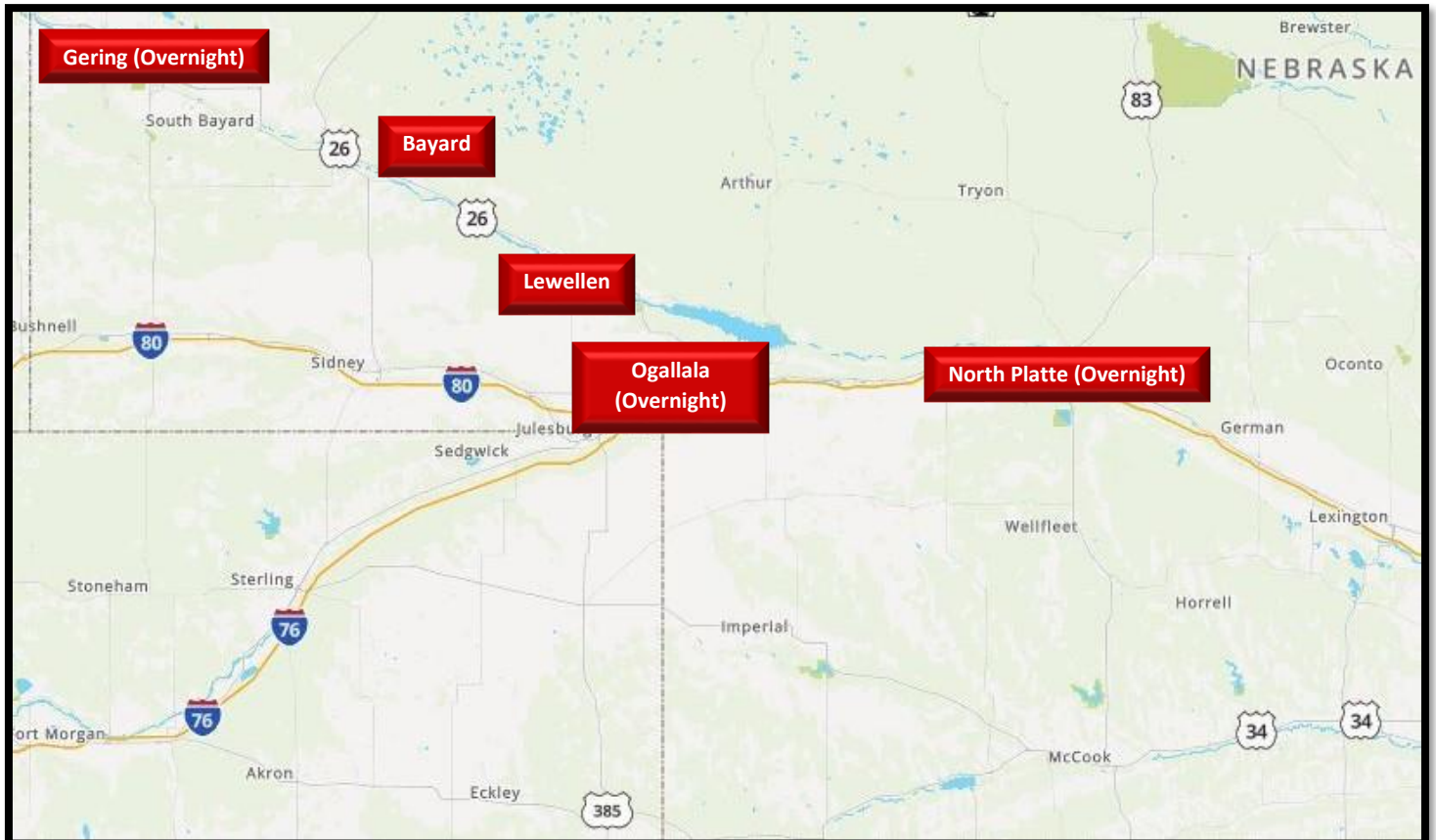
Learn about the lives and stories of the people who explored and settled the High Plains of Nebraska. Exhibits focus on the archeology of Native American and Westward expansions, the lives of pioneering settlers, the establishment of irrigation, the diversity of cultures on the High Plains, and the innovative technologies and cultural practices of raising animals and crops in a semi-arid environment.

**Note:** *The Oregon and Mormon Trails continued into Wyoming, which would be a great add on to this Nebraska sample tour itinerary.*

**Tour Route Map (East/Central)**



**Tour Route Map (West)**



**Driving Times and Mileage**  
**(Drive times are approximate.)**

**Omaha-Lincoln**

Drive time: 1 hr.  
60 miles

**Lincoln-Beatrice**

Drive time: 50 min.  
42 miles

**Beatrice-Wymore**

Drive time: 15 min.  
14 miles

**Wymore-Fairbury**

Drive time: 40 min.  
35 miles

**Fairbury-Red Cloud**

Drive time: 1 hr. 15 min.  
75 miles

**Red Cloud-Hastings**

Drive time: 45 min.  
41 miles

**Hastings-Grand Island**

Drive time: 30 min.  
25 miles

**Grand Island-Kearney**

Drive time: 50 min.  
42 miles

**Kearney-North Platte**

Drive time: 1 hr. 35 min.  
99 miles

**North Platte-Ogallala**

Drive time: 55 min.  
54 miles

**Ogallala-Lewellen**

Drive time: 32 min.  
31 miles

**Lewellen-Bayard**

Drive time: 1 hr. 15 min.  
72 miles

**Bayard-Gering**

Drive time: 25 min.  
22 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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