

BUFFALO BILL STATE HISTORICAL PARK



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

Start the day off right with a special treat of an ice cream donut sandwich, waffle sundae, or other tasty concoction at **Double Dips Ice Creamery**, located in North Platte's historic Canteen District before heading to **Golden Spike Tower & Visitor Center** for a bird's eye view of the world's largest railroad classification yard from the 7th floor open air observation deck or the 8th floor enclosed deck. Next head to **Dusty Trails** for a truly Nebraskan activity, leisurely floating down the North Platte River in a horse watering tank. Chairs and coolers can be placed in the tanks for an even more enjoyable time.

Now it is time to **"Ride with the Wild Bunch."** We will meet Colonel William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and his wife to hear about their lives and their interesting adventures. Afterward, hop aboard a horse drawn wagon to nearby **Lincoln County Historical Museum** and a deliciously prepared Dutch oven dinner. A tour of the museum, including an authentic recreated Old West town and artifacts highlighting the story of the famous World War II North Platte Canteen round out your day. *Overnight: North Platte*

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Day 2 North Platte, Ogallala, Sidney

After breakfast, step aboard Union Pacific's steam locomotive at **Cody Park Railroad Museum** where you also can see UP's #6922, the largest diesel locomotive ever made, peek inside the historic Hershey Depot, and climb aboard a mail car and caboose to view historic railroad memorabilia. Afterward, take a stroll through salvaged and repurposed historic grain bins to forage out that perfect antique treasure at **Grain Bin Antique Town** before heading to **Fort Cody Trading Post**, one of Nebraska's most eclectic gift and souvenir shops. Do not miss the working 20,000-piece miniature replica of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and tour Old West exhibits in the newly renovated museum.

Next, we depart North Platte and head west to Ogallala, once known as the "town too tough for Texans" where our first stop is **Petrified Wood and Art Gallery**. Here we explore Native American artifacts and delicate works of art and carvings formed from pieces of ancient, petrified wood from around the world. Across the street is **Front Street and Cowboy Museum**, a recreation of an 1880s Old West main street where we will enjoy an authentic western style lunch at the **Crystal Palace Saloon**. From June to mid-August, do not miss the **Crystal Palace Revue**, a rootin' tootin' western shootout, complete with cowboys and showgirls. After lunch we head to **Ogallala's Boot Hill Cemetery** to hear stories of outlaws, gamblers, and desperados who met their final resting place and were buried with their boots on in the cemetery before getting a glimpse into how Ogallala's upper-class residents lived at **Mansion on the Hill**, a fully furnished Victorian-style mansion.



Next stop is **Camp Lookout**, the oldest building in Sidney. Initially built as housing for soldiers in 1867 to protect railroad workers on the Union Pacific railroad from attacks by the Sioux and Cheyenne, today re-enactors entertain you with stories of the building and its many colorful inhabitants over the years. Once the sun goes down, spend a ghostly good time grave dousing at **Sidney's Boot Hill Cemetery**. *Overnight: Sidney*

Day 3 Potter, Kimball, Gering

After breakfast in Sidney, we head to nearby Potter to connect with our inner artist at **Potter Art Loft**, a quaint community art studio. Other destinations in downtown Potter include **Collective Gathering**, a local business specializing in unique and hard-to-find antiques and **Potter's Historic Duckpin Bowling Alley** where you can step back in time to the 1920s in this restored three-lane bowling alley. It is a one-of-a-kind bowling experience. No trip to Potter is complete with a stop at **Potter Sundry** for one of its famous Tin Roof Sundaes (vanilla ice cream, chocolate syrup, chocolate ice cream, marshmallow cream, and nuts).



DUCK PIN BOWLING

After lunch in Kimball, we head to **EJE Ranch** to learn about the High Plain's short grass prairie on a working ranch and the opportunity to

venture out into the prairie to see this fragile ecosystem firsthand. Next, we head north along the Fossil Freeway to **Rocky Hollow Buffalo Company**. This working ranch raises grass fed bison and you will have the unique opportunity to view these majestic animals up-close and learn how they have thrived for thousands of years in western Nebraska's High Plains region. *Overnight: Gering*

Day 4 Gering, Bayard

Start the morning at **Scotts Bluff National Monument**, an imposing natural formation which 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. Afterward, we follow the footsteps of early pioneers at **Robidoux 1851 Trading Post** along the historic Oregon Trail where pioneer graves and eroded trail ruts complete the history. Lunch is a catered affair amidst the unique flora and fauna of the beautiful and rugged Wildcat Hills region at **Wildcat Hills Nature Center**.

Now it is time to head to **Chimney Rock National Historic Site** along the **Western Trails Scenic & Historic Byway**. Chimney Rock was the most recognized landmark along the Overland Trails and today a newly renovated visitor center highlights the fascinating stories of the early westward migrating pioneers and other explorers and inhabitants. We round out the time in Gering with a wagon train dinner at **Legacy of the Plains**. While there we 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. *Overnight: Gering*



Day 5 Harrison, Crawford, Chadron



After breakfast, we venture into the remote landscape of northwest Nebraska to **Agate Fossil Beds National Monument**, an internationally recognized fossil site from the Miocene Epoch. The visitor center also includes an impressive collection of artifacts gifted to James Cook by leaders of great Native American nations like Red Cloud and American Horse. We also can enjoy a behind-the-scenes peek at valuable artifacts that normally are not on display. Next, we head into Nebraska's Pine Ridge to **Fort Robinson State Historic Park**. First used as a fort from the early days of the Old West until after World War II,

today we can enjoy historic tours, jeep and stagecoach rides, and the chance to view bison and purebred Texas longhorn herds.

Now it is time to head out onto the vast High Plains of the Oglala National Grassland to **Hudson-Meng Education & Research Center**. This one-of-a-kind destination houses one of the most important paleo-archeological discoveries in North America where the bones of hundreds of *Bison antiquus* (an extinct form of the modern bison) died after the last Ice Age. Watch as modern archeologists conduct research and uncover these bones for better study. Next stop is Chadron at the one-of-a-kind **Museum of the Fur Trade**, the only museum in the country dedicated to preserving the nation's fur-trading industry. While there, explore the onsite Bordeaux Trading Post (built 1837), which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and view items from the 2015 Academy Award winning movie, *The Revenant* starring Leonardo DiCaprio. *Overnight: Chadron*



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