

Norfolk: Experience Northeast Nebraska



GREAT AMERICAN COMEDY FESTIVAL, NORFOLK

This northeastern itinerary leads you to Norfolk, where you'll venture to Johnny Carson's old stomping grounds, along with Native American heritage sites, arts and nature centers, and more.

Day 1 Norfolk

After breakfast, we head north to Norfolk, and the Home of Johnny Carson where our first stop is the **Elkhorn Valley Museum**. Here we can learn more about Johnny Carson and his impressively long television career. On display are many of his personal items, including videotapes, vintage photographs, and his six Emmy Awards. An interactive home theater also shows selected *Tonight Show* episodes and monologues. Next stop is the **Johnny Carson Mural**. This large series of paintings by artist Karl Reeder in downtown Norfolk highlights the progression of Johnny's career and is a great spot for photographs. Lunch is a **Black Cow Fat Pig**, one of the premier steakhouses in northeast Nebraska, with an emphasis on locally sourced food and a scratch kitchen.

After lunch, we tour **Johnny Carson's childhood home** where owner, Jim McKenzie, will speak about the history of the house and items found along the way while bringing it back to its original condition. Lastly today we pay a visit to **Norfolk Arts Center**, which houses a variety of historic and contemporary works of art throughout the facility where we also can find our own inner artist and enjoy a tasting of Nebraska wines before dinner. *Overnight: Norfolk*



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Day 2
Royal, Verdigre, Niobrara, Ponca Nation, Santee Nation



After breakfast, we head to **Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park** near Royal which contains the fossilized skeletons of mammals that died near a watering hole in eastern Nebraska following a massive volcanic eruption nearly 12 million years ago. Learn more about the site in the visitor center before heading to the Hubbard Rhino Barn to view the on-going excavation and meet with paleontologists doing the work. Our tour continues to **Verdigre**, the **Kolach Capital of the World**, where we take a mid-morning break to enjoy a kolach or two, these tasty pastries brought from Czechoslovakia by the early pioneers and settlers.

Next, we make our way to Niobrara and **Niobrara State Park**, one of the state's most scenic park settings. The **Ponca Nation of Nebraska** will educate us about their culture, history, and way-of-life at the **Ponca Tribal Museum**, educational trail, earth lodge, and other sites. A statue dedicated to Chief Standing Bear also is must-see. Our final stop before returning to Norfolk is the **Ohiya Casino & Resort** on the **Santee Nation** where we can enjoy a delicious dinner and see if Lady Luck is on our side at the machines.

Day 3
Stanton, Creston, Columbus, Monroe, Genoa

After breakfast, we take a short drive east of Norfolk to **Red Road Herbs** near Stanton to reconnect with nature and learn all about herbs and how to use them in our everyday lives. Wander through the more than 100 herbs growing in cultivated gardens in this cozy woodland setting and take part in hands-on learning experiences about herbs. Afterward, we depart for Creston to explore Nebraska's agricultural side at **Larson Dairy Farm** where we learn more about modern, innovative farming technology at this fully automated dairy farm, one of only three robotic dairies in Nebraska.

We now head to Columbus for lunch at **Glur's Tavern** (established 1876), the oldest continually operated tavern west of the Missouri River before spending a few solemn moments at **Andrew Jackson Higgins Memorial** and its full-size steel replica of a LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel), also known as the "Higgins Boat," which helped the Allies win World War II. Bronze statues, sand from D-Day beaches where these boats landed, and a bronze eagle atop steel from the World Trade Center complete the memorial. Afterward, we head west to **Horn T Zoo** in Monroe, which since 2010 has connected visitors with wildlife from around the world. This family-owned and operated zoo takes pride in inspiring caring for nature and advanced conservation through education, recreation, breeding and survival.

Now we head to Genoa to hear the fateful stories of the **Genoa Indian School**. In operator from 1884 to 1934, this was one of the nation's 16 Indian Boarding Schools established by the federal government. While there, we will gain a deeper understanding of what everyday life was like at the school for its students.