

Cosmopolitan to Cowboys: Omaha to Ogallala

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Day 1

Omaha

Our first activity this morning is an **Omaha Guided City Tour**, where we will visit many of Nebraska's largest city's hot spots and noteworthy locations before heading to the **Durham Museum** in the former Union Station to explore the history and settlement of Omaha. Make sure to head to the platform downstairs for the chance to walk through authentic train cars and other exhibits. Afterward, we make our way to **St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church**, Omaha's only Greek Orthodox Byzantine-style church, for a tour, a traditional Greek lunch and lessons in Greek dancing. *Opa!*

We continue our European foodie tour with eclectic breads and tortes based on "Old Country" recipes at **Lithuanian Bakery & Café** while listening to the story of the family and how they immigrated to Nebraska. Founded in 1917, **Father Flanagan's Boys Town** in west Omaha is an exceptional heartwarming story of how Father Flanagan worked to create a haven for wayward boys and now girls on the outskirts of Omaha. For dinner tonight, we explore Germany and experience the German concept of *Gemütlichkeit* (coziness) at the **German American Society**. Delicious comfort food followed by traditional German entertainment is on the menu. *Willkommen in Deutschland! Overnight: Omaha*

Day 2

Ashland, Greenwood, Lincoln

Today's first stop is at the **Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum**, a 300,000-square-foot museum that features aircraft from various world conflicts, an impressive array of aircraft that helped preserve peace during the Cold War, an onsite restoration hanger, and several spacecraft exhibits highlighting our nation's missions to space. Now, we are off to Nebraska's largest candy outlet. **Baker's Candies** in Greenwood is home to the famous chocolate meltaways, decadent fudge, gourmet confections, and other sweet treats available directly from the factory. Next stop is Lincoln, Nebraska's capital city, which no tour would be complete without a visit to the iconic **Nebraska State Capitol**. At 15 stories and 400 feet tall, this is the second-tallest statehouse in the country and offers a spectacular view of the city from its 14th-floor observation level.

After lunch, we make our way to **Larsen Tractor Test Museum** on the University of Nebraska East Campus to visit the only tractor testing museum and tractor test laboratory in the world. On display are more than 25 tractors highlighting the advancements in tractor testing technology, which established power and performance standards and solved agricultural problems around the world. While on campus, we will make a short stop at the **UNL Dairy Store** for a tour of the cheese-making facility and a tasty afternoon ice cream treat. Our next destination is the **International Quilt Study Center & Museum**, where we will discover the many stories and religious contexts woven into quilts at the world's largest publicly held quilt collection. The behind-the-scenes tour takes visitors face to face with quilts that are hundreds of years old. Tonight's dinner and entertainment is **Screamers Dining & Cabaret**, where we will dine on delicious homemade fare while the restaurant's talented staff entertain us with songs and laughter. *Overnight: Lincoln*

Day 3

Lincoln, York, Henderson

Before departing Lincoln, we visit the **Museum of American Speed**, a 135,000-square-foot museum that highlights the chronology of automotive racing and speed equipment development while preserving, interpreting, and displaying items significant in racing and automotive history. Now we head west to York to step back into the Ancient World at the **Clayton Museum of Ancient History**. This unique museum highlights the ancient world of Mesopotamia, Rome, and other great civilizations where you also can spend a few moments reflecting in front of an accurate reproduction of the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Do not forget to write your prayer and leave it in the wall.

We dine for lunch at **Chances “R” Restaurant and Lounge**, one of York’s most popular group dining destinations, before heading to **Wessels Living History Farm** to learn first-hand how farm life and agriculture have changed from the 1920s to modern-day farming techniques and technologies at this interactive and educational working farm. Our final stop for the day before dinner in Grand Island is the **Mennonite Heritage Park**, where costumed storytellers recount stories about the Henderson Mennonites and explain how this group is connected to the Amish and Old Mennonites in Pennsylvania and why these Germans from Russia immigrated to Nebraska. *Overnight: Grand Island*

Day 4

Grand Island, Kearney

After breakfast, we venture to downtown Grand Island to meet the owners of **Zabuni Coffee** and hear their unique and inspiring story of how they are supporting local coffee growers and producers in Kenya to bring their products to Nebraska. Once we finish downtown, it is time to head to **Raising Nebraska** at Fonner Park. This 25,000-square-foot interactive museum connects consumers with farmers who raise their food by explaining the steps from “farm to fork.” Experience a virtual combine harvest experience, a full-sized pivot irrigation system, a 50-foot-long interactive floor map of Nebraska, and an interactive dinner table.

Now it is time for lunch and to go back into the past at **Stuhr Museum**. Declared one of the top ten living history museums in the country, this amazing museum transports us back to the early pioneer and settlement days of Nebraska. Fonner Rotunda houses one of the state’s finest collections of cowboy and Native American art and artifacts, while the annual “Wings over the Platte” exhibit during the spring sandhill crane migration displays artwork by artists from across the country highlighting the migration and is a “must-see” for any bird lover.

Now, we are off to Kearney to visit **The Archway**, an impressive interactive museum that commemorates the nation’s westward expansion through interactive exhibits and self-guided audio tours. On a side note, at a height of 310 feet, this is the only tourist attraction in the country to span a federal interstate highway. Our next stop in Kearney is the **Classic Car Collection**, where we can wander through more than 200 classic cars that highlight the evolution and art of the automobile and its impact on our lives. Dinner tonight is at **Alley Rose** in downtown Kearney, where we will feast on one of its delicious locally prepared signature dishes. *Overnight: Kearney*

Day 5

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. Afterward, we climb aboard Union Pacific’s steam locomotive at **Cody Park Railroad Museum**, where we 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. 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. We will end our day in North Platte with the **“Wine with the Stars” Tour**, sipping local wines at Feather River Vineyard under the wide-open Nebraska skies. A local astronomer will be on site with telescopes to highlight the celestial bodies you are viewing in the night sky. *Overnight: North Platte*

Day 6

Ogallala, Paxton

We make our way westward after breakfast to Ogallala, once known as the “town too tough for Texans,” where our first stop will be north of town at Lake McConaughy, Nebraska’s largest reservoir at more than 22 miles long. We will visit the state’s first water center, **Lake McConaughy Visitor & Water Interpretive Center**, to learn more about the importance of water to the state’s past, present, and future. A drive across the dam and photo opportunities round out our water experience before heading back to Ogallala for a glimpse into how Ogallala’s upper-class residents lived at **Mansion on the Hill**, a fully furnished Victorian-style mansion.

Next, we head to the **Petrified Wood Gallery** to 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. As we head back to North Platte, we make a lunch stop at **Ole’s Big Game Steakhouse** in Paxton, which has been around for 80 years. More than 200 big game trophies and mementos from Ole’s worldwide safaris decorate this unique restaurant. *Overnight: North Platte*

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