

# Norfolk/Knox County: Experience Northeast Nebraska

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## Day 1

### Norfolk

After breakfast, we head north to Norfolk and the Home of Johnny Carson. 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.

Now it is time to see where Johnny lived when he was a child at **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. 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 pay a visit to **Norfolk Arts Center**, which houses a variety of historic and contemporary works of art throughout the facility, where we can also find our own inner artist and enjoy a tasting of Nebraska wines before dinner. *Overnight: Norfolk*

## Day 2

### 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 an 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 care 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 operation 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. As we head back to Norfolk for the night, we stop for a casual and relaxing dinner at **Duster's** in Columbus. While there, try a local ale at **Gottberg Brew Pub**, whose unique design reflects northeast Nebraska's agricultural heritage with its tractor bar stools and grain bin ceiling. *Overnight: Norfolk*

### Day 3

#### **Crofton, Hartington, Fordyce, Niobrara**

After breakfast, we head to Crofton for a visit to the largest public display of farm pulleys in the world at the **Lewis and Clark Pulley Museum**, located in **Crofton's Haymarket**. Now it is time to head to **Nissen Winery** near Hartington where we will enjoy a tasting of Nebraska wines and hear about the early antics of Knox County's infamous outlaws. Lunch Our lunch destination, **CJ's at the Lake**, overlooks **Lewis & Clark Lake**, Nebraska's second-largest lake. After lunch, we will head to the **Lewis & Clark Lake Visitor Center**, where we will explore Lewis and Clark's journey to find a route to the west. Next, we don our cowboy hats for a rip-roarin' good time at **WJ Ranch**, where the Schiferal will entertain us with horse and cowboy demonstrations. That evening, the supper bell will ring for us at **Sportsmen's Bar & Grill** in Niobrara. This old-fashioned saloon-style bar is full of history and nostalgia. Who knows, you may meet the famous outlaw Jesse James there having a drink! *Overnight: Ohiya Casino and Resort*

### Day 4

#### **Santee Sioux Nation, Ponca Nation, Niobrara**

Breakfast will be at **Ohiya Casino and Resort**, where we will also enjoy a **Santee Sioux Nation** cultural exchange. Following breakfast, we will travel to the **Chief Standing Bear Bridge** for a photo opportunity. Our next stop will be at the **Northern Ponca Tribe of Nebraska**, where we will take a tour along the educational trail, visit the Earth Lodge and Chief Standing Bear statue, have lunch and have a cultural exchange presentation. Across the Niobrara River, we will take a covered wagon tour at **Miller Farm**, a five-generation working family farm where we will learn about native grasses on untilled soil, working windmills, livestock production, the history of the outbuildings and a corn shelling opportunity. Last stop will be at **Niobrara State Park** for Outlaws of Knox County entertainment, a catered supper and a late-night astrotourism activity. *Overnight: Ohiya Casino and Resort*

### Day 5

#### **Niobrara, Verdigre, Royal**

We will leave the Ohiya Casino and Resort for breakfast at the **Country Café** in Niobrara, followed by a trip back to **Niobrara State Park** for a birding and nature presentation/activity, along with other park activities. Then, we will travel scenic Highway 14 to the Village of **Verdigre** for a Czech tour and entertainment, a traditional Czech lunch and Amish culture and heritage. Afterward, we round out our tour of northeast Nebraska at **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 ongoing excavation and meet with paleontologists doing the work. *Overnight: Norfolk*

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