

Buffett, Birds, and Beef: The Great Platte River Road

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Day 1

Omaha, Bellevue

Breakfast this morning will be at Warren Buffett's favorite McDonald's, followed by a **Warren Buffett Driving Tour**, where an experienced step-on guide will highlight some of his favorite locations throughout Omaha. After lunch, we head south to Bellevue and the **Fontenelle Forest** to learn about the facility's dedication to helping injured birds of prey through their Raptor Rescue Program and the Raptor Woodland Refuge. Here, owls, hawks, falcons and other species that can no longer survive in the wild live within "homes" designed to fit their natural habitats.

It is now back to Omaha to experience flavorful gourmet ice cream at its best at **eCreamery** in Omaha's historic Dundee neighborhood. Featured on the show *Shark Tank*, the mouthwatering ice cream has also been listed as one of Oprah's favorite things. Warren Buffet took Paul McCartney there when the music legend visited Omaha. Try butter brickle, Warren's favorite flavor. Dinner tonight is **Gorat's Steakhouse**, one of Warren Buffett's favorite restaurants that has been an Omaha tradition for more than 70 years and has hosted celebrities and dignitaries from around the world. *Overnight: Omaha*

Day 2

Omaha, Lincoln

Start the day off 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. Next, it is time to explore **Nebraska Furniture Mart**, North America's largest furnishing store, to hear their unique story, followed by some time to shop before heading to lunch at Dairy Queen, another one of Warren Buffett's favorite places to relax and eat. Your last two stops before departing Omaha are **The Rose Theatre** and **Omaha Community Playhouse**. Rose Theatre has been at the heart of Omaha's dramatic and arts scene since 1948, and its purpose is to enrich the lives of children and their families through live theatre and the arts.

Omaha Community Playhouse is the largest community theater in the country, and while there, you will learn all about the process of putting on a large stage production, including set and costume design. Now, it is time to depart Omaha and head to Lincoln for dinner at **The Green Gateau**. This upscale neighborhood restaurant in the heart of downtown Lincoln combines French-influenced American contemporary cuisine in a cozy, European country inn setting. *Overnight: Lincoln*

Day 3

Lincoln, Grand Island

After breakfast, our first stop is **Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center**, an 850-acre tallgrass prairie nature preserve near Denton, southwest of Lincoln. It is home to more than 220 bird species, 30 mammal species, 350 plants, and 50 butterfly species. Afterward, head back to Lincoln and its **Historic Haymarket District** for a delicious lunch at **Lazlo's Brewery & Grill**, Nebraska's first brewpub. Do not forget to save some time for a little shopping before heading west to Grand Island's **1937 Art-Deco Grand Theatre** for an introductory program about the sandhill cranes given by an experienced guide. Once we have become more familiar with these majestic birds, our next stop is an evening sandhill crane viewing adventure along the Platte River **Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center**. *Overnight: Grand Island*

Day 4

Grand Island, Holdrege

Breakfast this morning is at **The Chocolate Bar**, a trendy café with a big city ambiance in downtown Grand Island, before heading to **Studio K Art Gallery** to get in touch with our inner artists to create our own unique sandhill crane painting. 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.

We take a short drive south to Holdrege to tour **Phelps County Feeders**, where we will learn more about what it takes to care for and feed cattle at this family-owned feedlot. Next, we take a tour of **Nebraska Star Beef** to learn how they market, sell, and ship their product from central Nebraska to all over the world. Tonight's dinner is a culinary treat at **The Speakeasy**, where we will feast on some of the most mouthwatering steaks you will ever enjoy. *Overnight: Kearney*

Day 5

Kearney, North Platte

Our day starts before the sun rises for a guided sandhill crane viewing tour on the banks of the Platte River at **Rowe Sanctuary**, where thousands of cranes start their morning routine before heading into the surrounding fields to forage for food. Before departing Kearney, we make a stop at **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 310 feet, this is the only tourist attraction in the country to span a federal interstate highway. Upon arrival in North Platte, our first stop is an Old West shoot-out called "**Ride with the Wild Bunch**." There, we 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 the nearby **Lincoln County Historical Museum** for 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. Dinner is a unique experience called the "**Here's the Beef**" Tour at the West Central Research & Extension Office. Educators and a chef from a local restaurant explain the steps needed to raise and process beef from pasture to the table. Afterward, we can feast on a delicious Nebraska beef lunch prepared onsite. *Overnight: North Platte*

Day 6

North Platte

After breakfast, we venture to the **Golden Spike Tower & Visitor Center** for an amazing 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. Then, we head 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. Afterward, we head out into the fields with **Dusty Trails** for an afternoon sandhill crane viewing tour during the most active time of day for these birds, where we can witness some of their unique courtship behaviors. *Overnight: North Platte*

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