



April 2, 2018

NATIVE AMERICAN PLAINS ROUTE #2

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Day 1 – Arrival, Minneapolis, MN

Today you arrive in Minneapolis, near the famed Mall of America, where you will find 50 restaurants and over 500 stores to keep you entertained this evening. Overnight in Minneapolis.

Day 2 – Fargo, ND

You will have some time in the morning to visit some of the sights of Minneapolis and St. Paul, before heading to Fargo for the evening. Honoring the first people of this region, we suggest a visit to the Hiawatha and Minnehaha Statue and the Minnehaha Falls. The drive will take you through the farmlands, the southern edge of the land of lakes, and across the Red River into North Dakota for the night. Explore the history as you walk the downtown region, or have some fun at Bonanzaville, on the west side of this community. Overnight in Fargo.

Day 3 – Bismarck, ND

Today you will continue west as you pass through the eastern farmlands of North Dakota to the Capitol City of Bismarck. As you travel through Jamestown, you may wish to visit the National Buffalo Museum to see how this animal contributed to those living in the northern plains. From Bismarck, you will travel north to visit Fort Mandan, winter home of the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition as they explored the new territories of the USA for President Jefferson in the early 1800s. This is where the group picked up their famous Native Guide Sacajewea to help them traverse the wild lands that lay ahead of them. You will also find an excellent Interpretive Center with views over the Missouri River nearby. Once back in Bismarck, visit Fort Abraham Lincoln and view the earth homes of the On A Slant Indian Reservation. Overnight in Bismarck.

Day 4 – Medora, ND

The travels west will now take you into more ranchlands than farmlands, this is the dairy region of North Dakota. The drive to Medora will take only a couple of hours, then you will have the rest of the day to explore the southern unit of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, considered the Badlands of North Dakota. Keep an eye out for bison and wild horses as you drive through this park. Tonight, you will stay in the resort community of Medora, where you may wish to sign up for two options—the Pitchfork Fondue (dinner program) and the nightly “historic” musical. Overnight in Medora.

Day 5 – New Town, ND

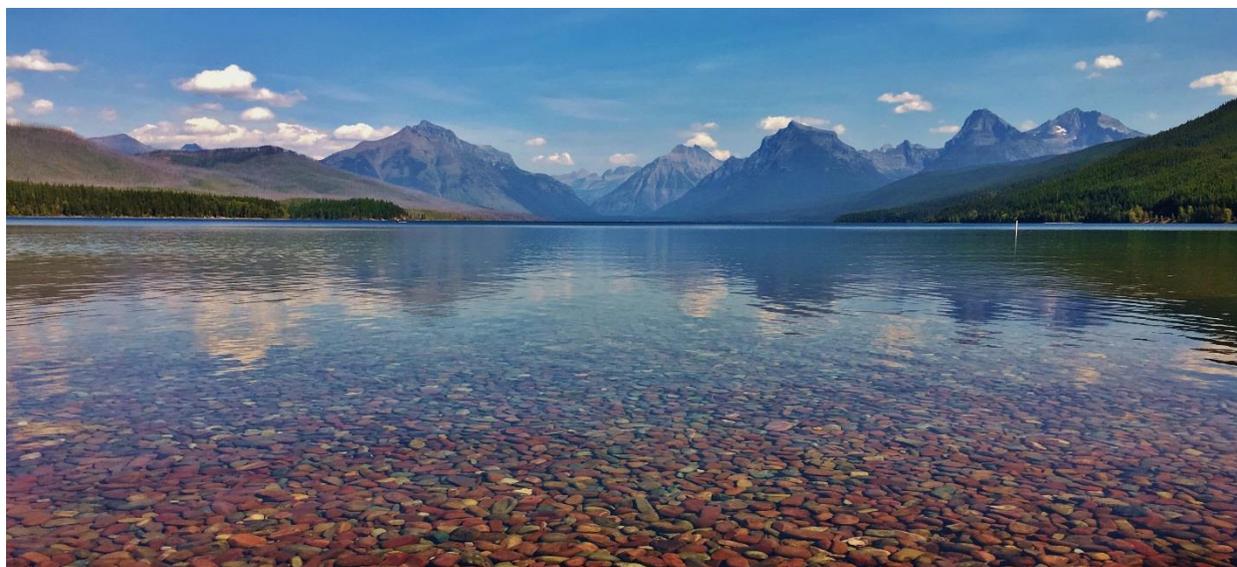
Travel north today, where you will visit the northern unit of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the area some consider to be the more beautiful of the two units. A short distance away is the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, where you can do a local tour that includes a visit to the Earthlodge, the family lodging unit of the MHA Nation (three consolidated tribes). Overnight in New Town.

Day 6 – Shelby, MT

When you travel through large states like Montana and Wyoming you will find that you have 1 (maybe 2) days with a long drive to “get to the next location for touring”. This is your long day for the program. Start to travel to US-2, the most northern route across the USA as this will take you into Montana. A few suggested stops will be Fort Peck Dam, the largest earth-fill dam in the world, and the Visitor Center for the Belknap Reservation. You will pass through three of Montana’s Indian Reservations this day: Fort Peck Reservation (Assiniboine and Sioux tribes), Fort Belknap Reservations (Nakota) and the Rocky Boy Reservation (Chippewa). Overnight in Shelby.

Day 7 – Glacier National Park, MT

The drive will take you across the Blackfoot Reservation to Browning and East Glacier. Here we can assist you with a tour program to see Glacier National Park with either Sun Tours or Montana Journey, both native-owned touring programs. The program will take you into the Glacier Park along St. Mary’s Lake and to the Logan Visitor Center at the top of the “Going to the Sun” Highway. This evening stay on the East side of the Glacier Park based on available lodging. Overnight in Glacier National Park.



Day 8 – Whitefish, MT

Next, drive around the southern part of Glacier to West Glacier Park, and begin to tour on your own, or with one of the park shuttle busses to see Lake McDonald and the western side of the park. You may want to sign up for one of the special activities found in this area, for example, the rafting program. A visit to the community of Whitefish will end this day, so you can enjoy the view of the valley and lake from the nearby ski resort. Overnight in Whitefish.

Day 9 – Ronan, MT

Start the day with a beautiful drive along the Flathead Lake, the largest freshwater lake between the Great Lakes and the Pacific Ocean. Just to the south end of the lake is the community of Ronan and a program to see the Flathead Reservation with Water People tours. Overnight in Ronan.

Day 10 – Bozeman, MT

You will pass through the community of Missoula, home of the University of Montana, and continue over to Helena, the Capitol of Montana. Here you will find excellent museums on this history of the territory and state of Montana. Then continue to Bozeman in the afternoon and visit the Museum of the Rockies on the campus of Montana State University. Overnight in Bozeman.

Day 11 – Yellowstone National Park, WY

This day you will travel down the Yellowstone River Valley from Livingston to the North Entrance of the Yellowstone National Park. Here you will see Mammoth Hot Springs and you can stop at the Visitor Center to hear about Fort Yellowstone and the native tribes that inhabited this remote and high region of the American West. Some considered this the top of the world and home of spirits, due to the hot springs and the several large rivers that have their origins from the Yellowstone Region, and all flow down from this location to the oceans. Overnight in Yellowstone National Park.

Day 12 – Yellowstone National Park, WY

Today, you can tour the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone to see the Upper and Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River, if you did not already do this the evening prior. It is a certain MUST see while in this park. Then, travel to the thermal western side of the park to see the Norris Thermal Basin. You will follow the Gibbon and Firehole Rivers to the Fountain Paint Pots, then to the Old Faithful Thermal Basin. You can walk the trails here and view as many of the area's geysers as possible this afternoon. Stay overnight at the Old Faithful Area or at the Grant Village Lodge on the shores of Lake Yellowstone. Second night in Yellowstone National Park.

Day 13 – Cody, WY

Enjoy one more thermal basin this morning, as you do an early morning walk around the West Thumb Basin, one of the best ways to enjoy the beauty of Lake Yellowstone. Then, follow the shoreline of the huge alpine lake past the Fishing Bridge location and to the East Entrance gate of Yellowstone National Park. You will then pass into the Shoshone National Forest; the first forest preserve set aside by the US government. This will route you to Cody, which was once called the most Scenic 50 miles in America by President Teddy Roosevelt, when he visited early in the 1900s. In Cody, you will find two noteworthy attractions. The first is the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, a Smithsonian museum. This is five museums under one roof where everyone will find an area to keep them occupied for several hours. One of the five museums is considered the top-rated Plains Indian Museum found anywhere. The second attraction (July-August) in the evenings is the Cody Night Rodeo. It operates every night, except for the dates of the Cody Stampede around the Fourth of July! Overnight in Cody.

Day 14 – Sheridan, WY

This day you will travel over the Big Horn Mountains where you will find the Medicine Wheel State Historic Site. A short walk is needed to get to the religious site. Then, continue over the mountains and travel north into Montana to the Big Horn Battlefield National Historic Site where you can participate in a tour given by native guides from Indian Battlefield Tours LLC. The battlefield is located on the Crow Indian Reservation, one of the largest in Montana. Next, return south to Wyoming for the evening. Nearby are the sites of some of the battles fought during the 1870-80 period known as the "Indian Wars". Overnight in Sheridan.



Day 15 – Rapid City, SD

The morning travels will take you across the open ranchlands of Wyoming to Gillette, one of the richest energy regions of the American West—Oil, Coal, Natural Gas and other minerals are found in this region. Continue on to visit one of the most sacred sites of many of the plains tribes...the Devils Tower National Monument. We highly suggest the just over a mile walk around the base of this beautiful rock formation held sacred by the many nomadic tribes in this region of the American West. Currently, they will discourage climbing during the month of June as many visit the area to honor their ancestors with prayer cloths placed in trees around the monument. Then, continue to the Black Hills of South Dakota for a visit to historic Deadwood, before arriving into Rapid City for the night. The Black Hills were among the last strongholds of the tribes of the plains as this was believed to be a very sacred place. However, when Custer's men discovered gold near Deadwood—even these sacred hills were taken away by force. Overnight in Rapid City.

Day 16 – Rapid City, SD

This is a "tour" day as you will tour with a local company out of Rapid City, you will explore the Badlands National Park and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, which is south of this park. Next, stop at the local visitor center and see where some of the battles were fought during the final days of the US Indian Wars of the 1870-80s. Then, return in the evening to Rapid City. You may want to visit the local museum called The Journey as this will also give you a history of the Native tribes from this region of the USA. Second night in Rapid City.

Day 17 – Cheyenne, WY

As you travel into the Black Hills, you will visit the famed Mt. Rushmore National Memorial and nearby tribute to the native peoples, Crazy Horse Memorial. This memorial has been a work in progress for almost 70 years and will continue for many years to come; before the final sculpture and Native American College is finished. Then travel south to return to Wyoming and visit the Fort Laramie National Historic Site. This is an interesting outpost along the Oregon/California/Mormon Trails, where many native tribes spent many summers and winters negotiating with the local army for treaties, that would soon be broken by the US Government. Now continue to either Cheyenne, the Capitol of the Cowboy State of Wyoming, or just across the border into Fort Collins, CO.

Day 18 – Denver, CO

This morning you will drive up to Estes Park for a short visit into Rocky Mountain National Park, before heading into Denver in the afternoon. Now you can explore downtown with the State Capitol and the Mile-High Marker, or the Denver Art Museum with its top-rated displays of Indian antiquities and western art. Tonight, you may wish to do some final shopping in one of the Denver centers (like Cherry Creek Shopping Center) to prepare for the travel home. Overnight in Denver.

Day 19 – Denver, CO

Today you have the full day to visit the museums, sites and shopping found in Denver, starting with the step on the west side of the State Capitol that tells you that you are one mile above sea level. The Denver Art Museum is a great addition for the theme of this route, as are visits to the Red Rocks Park, and the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave atop Lookout Mountain to the west of Denver. This is also an excellent city for shopping to end your travels to the American West. A second night in Denver

Day 20 – Departure

Now it is time to return the rental vehicle and depart from Denver International Airport. The airport's terminal looks like the mountains of Colorado if viewed from the plains, or like a tepee village on the plains if viewed from the mountains. Safe travels home!