



## **Suggested Itinerary:** **Minneapolis/St. Paul & the Great Plains**

Minneapolis, one-half of Minnesota's vibrant and bustling Twin Cities, is an exciting launching pad for a Great Plains tour. After your visit to the cities, explore the natural beauty and heritage of North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska.

### **Minneapolis/St. Paul**

*Suggested: 3 - 4 days*

Start by putting on your walking shoes to explore Minneapolis' stunning Chain of Lakes, which includes scenic walking trails around Lake Calhoun, Lake Harriet and others. Rehydrate with a pint at one of the city's many breweries such as Fulton Brewery (one of the area's oldest craft brewers). Enjoy dinner at a downtown Minneapolis restaurant before taking in a performance at the award-winning Guthrie Theater. The next day, stroll past the nearby Minneapolis Sculpture Garden (don't miss the iconic Spoonbridge and Cherry sculpture) and visit the Walker Art Center. Root for the home team at a Minnesota Twins baseball game at Target Field. Save a whole day to tour the Mall of America, the country's largest shopping mall, packed with shops, restaurants and entertainment venues – including an aquarium and amusement park inside. Cross the Mississippi River to Minneapolis' 'twin city', St. Paul, to see Minnesota's capitol building festooned with golden horses or walk Summit Avenue to view the city's historic mansions. While there, save time to explore the well-curated, interactive Science Museum of Minnesota.

### **North Dakota**

*Suggested: 2 days*

Native American tribes are an integral part of North Dakota's history and culture. Learn about their history and traditions by visiting the museum and visitors center at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site in Stanton, a site which Native Americans have called home for more than 11,000 years. About an hour south, near Mandan, is the On-A-Slant Mandan Indian Village where Mandan Indians lived for hundreds of years. Here, visitors can tour five reconstructed earth lodges. In spring

and summer, local tribes host traditional powwows all across North Dakota – this is a can't-miss experience for visitors. Nature lovers will also appreciate North Dakota for its stunning landscapes at places such as rugged Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

## South Dakota

*Suggested: 2 days*

There are few sites more iconic in the U.S. than South Dakota's Mount Rushmore National Memorial. The hand-carved monument, jutting from the granite of the Black Hills of South Dakota, depicts the faces of U.S. presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Visit the monument in the morning, when the rising sun and relative lack of crowds make for the best experience. While there, be sure to stop in the Lincoln Borglum Visitor Center and Museum to learn more about the monument's creation. Next, drive about 90 minutes east to arrive at Badlands National Park, a rugged example of nature's power. The park showcases postcard-worthy rock formations emerging from the prairie. This is a popular area for hiking and sightseeing.

## Nebraska

*Suggested: 3 days*

Nebraska offers a stellar mix of family-friendly activities, historic sites and beautiful landscapes. Start in Omaha with a stroll around the Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium. The zoo, which opened in 1894, is now home to thousands of animals and covers over 130 acres (526,091 sq. meters). From there, it's just a few minutes' drive to the Old Market, Omaha's historic district that bustles with shops, restaurants, pubs and jazz clubs. In spring, be sure to make the three-hour drive west toward Kearney on the Platte River. Every year, more than 80 percent of the world's population of sandhill cranes gathers on the river before heading north to breed. More natural wonders can be seen at the Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park, where 12 million years of fossils are preserved in ash. Drive six hours west of the park to the Fort Robinson State Park to visit the historical museum and view the buffalo and longhorn herds.

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