



April 2, 2018

NATIVE AMERICAN PLAINS ROUTE #1

Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours, 4223 S. Mason Street, Fort Collins, CO 80525
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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

Take the morning to visit 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 farmlands, southern edge of the land of lakes, and across Red River into North Dakota for the night. Explore the history as you walk the downtown region, or have some fun at Bonanzaville, just west 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, and 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 Reservation (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. 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 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 the 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 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 – Jackson Hole, 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 travel to the South Entrance of the Yellowstone National Park. No sooner when you depart Yellowstone will you then enter the Grand Teton National Park. A stop at the Colter Bay Visitor Center will give you a history of the native tribes (Shoshone/Bannock) that inhabited this region long before Wyoming became a state. Spend the afternoon visiting and hiking in Grand Teton National Park, or take a relaxing float trip along the Snake River for a different view of the mountains and watch for eagles. Overnight in Jackson Hole.

Day 14 – Riverton, WY

You will have more time this morning for touring in the Grand Teton Park, or maybe take in one more optional activity before heading east over the Togwotee Pass, and into the Wind River Indian Reservation. Here you can do a self-drive tour of the Arapahoe and Shoshoni tribal lands, or hire a local guide to show you the sites. One of the sites here is the gravesite of Sacajewea, the guide picked up by Lewis and Clark while they camped in North Dakota (see day 3). Overnight in Riverton.

Day 15 – Casper, WY

This day you will have a leisure time to drive north through the Wind River Canyon. The Wind River will change and become the Big Horn River as you approach the community of Thermopolis. The story of the Chief Washaki giving the land, now known as Hot Springs State Park, to the Territory of Wyoming is found throughout the park area. A short distance north, you will take the route east across the southern Big Horn Mountains and the community of Ten Sleep, to Buffalo, and then down to Casper where you will stay this night. Plan to arrive in the late afternoon so that you can visit the National Historic Trails Museum overlooking the energy city of Casper. Overnight in Casper.

Day 16 – Saratoga, WY

The day begins with a route that will take you along a portion of the Oregon Trail as you proceed west to Independence Rock. If the immigrants were here by the Fourth of July they could celebrate being ahead of (or at least on) schedule to reach the west coast, before any major snow storms. Now travel south to Rawlins and Saratoga where you will find several hot springs. The Hobo Hot Springs were used as local therapy for hundreds of years as nomadic groups pass this way. Saratoga Resort also features several thermal heated pools. Overnight in Saratoga.

Day 17 – Cheyenne, WY

Begin with a drive over the beautiful Snowy Range, one of the forgotten scenic drives of Wyoming. Then travel to Laramie for a visit to the Fort Laramie National Historic Site, an area where many treaties with the native tribes were signed, and later broken by the US Government. Many famous tribal chiefs spent time at this fort negotiating with the US Army during the 1850-1870 period. Continue to Cheyenne where you can visit the Union Pacific Museum located in the heart of the community in the old train depot. Overnight in Cheyenne or nearby in Fort Collins, CO.

Day 18 – Denver, CO

A short drive brings you into the Centennial State of Colorado, with a drive up the Big Thompson Canyon to Estes Park, and Rocky Mountain National Park. Here you will find Trail Ridge Road, at over 12,000 feet above sea level, it is the highest continuous paved roadway in North America and one of the highest in the world. Next, return to Estes Park and drive to Boulder. This will make a short drive to Denver which is the Mile-High City and Capitol of Colorado. Overnight in Denver.



Day 19 – Denver, CO

A full day for touring and shopping as you travel around Denver. Begin with a visit to the State Capitol to view the “mile high marker” and view the city with a backdrop of the Colorado Rockies! You will find many museums to visit while in Denver, but two that are within walking distance of the capitol would be the History Colorado Museum and the Denver Art Museum. The Art Museum has one of the largest collections of Plains Indian antiquities and western art found anywhere. Nearby you will also find the famed Red Rocks Park. It is home of the top concert venues in the USA, and the Lookout Mountain with the grave site of Buffalo Bill Cody, with one of the top views overlooking the entire community of Denver. 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!