



## Best of the West

### 21 Days/20 Nights

Seeing the Rocky Mountain West by motorcycle, rental car, or motorhome has become one of the most popular and practical ways to go. Motorhome rental is available at most major hub airports. Visitors can take advantage of the superior camping and recreational vehicle campgrounds throughout the region. This is also one of the most popular pre-planned fly-drive routings offered by tour operators.

**Day 1:** Fly into the Gateway City of **Denver**. Tour **Denver**, with its outstanding collections of museums as well as excellent shopping in **Cherry Creek Shopping Center** and **Larimer Square**, tasty microbreweries, a restored section of Victorian Denver filled with quaint old buildings, gas lamps, courtyards and gardens, and legendary **Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre**. Explore Denver to your hearts content until your flight departure. If you're not ready to return home, spend some extra time taking in all that Denver and the surrounding area has to offer.

#### *Overnight in Denver*

**Day 2:** Start the day by heading north to **Cheyenne**, where the **Terry Bison Ranch** offers a new RV park, chuckwagon dinner and tours of their large buffalo herd. Visit the **Old West Museum** to learn about **Frontier Days**, one of the oldest annual rodeos in the country. Other options include the **Cheyenne Depot and Depot Museum**, the **Wyoming State Capitol**, the **Big Boy Steam Engine** or **Downtown Cheyenne**.

Travel west on Interstate-80 toward **Laramie**, home of the **University of Wyoming**, is another Western town whose heritage runs deep. Nature enthusiasts can explore the nearby **Medicine Bow National Forest**, **Snowy Mountain Range** or **Vedauwoo** while history enthusiasts can visit the **Wyoming Territorial Prison** and **Old West Park** and the **University of Wyoming Geological Museum**.

#### *Overnight in Laramie*

**Day 3:** Depart for **Rawlins** in the morning and visit the **Wyoming Territorial Museum** and **Carbon County Museum** before departing for **Riverton**. Located near the towering **Wind River Range**, **Riverton** is home to the **Wind River Heritage Center** and the **Wind River Casino**. From June through August, visitors can enjoy the **Northern Arapaho Experience**, which takes place just outside the casino.

Continue your journey to **Jackson Hole**, which features wooden sidewalks, elk antler arches and shops that range from the chic to the traditional. Enjoy a **Wildlife Safari** or visit the **National Elk Refuge** to view some majestic Rocky Mountain wildlife; ride a tram to the top of a mountain ridge and view the expansive valley below; hit the **Snake River** on a thrilling whitewater excursion; saddle up at the **Million Dollar Cowboy Bar** or visit the world-famous **Silver Dollar Bar** located in the **Wort Hotel**.

#### *Overnight in Jackson*

**Day 4:** Begin the morning by traveling north toward **Grand Teton National Park**. Located a short distance from Jackson, this spectacular mountain range is one of the most iconic and most photographed mountains in the world. Spend the day exploring Grand Teton National Park. Popular activities and sites within the park include: **Grand Teton National Park Visitors Center**, the **42-mile Scenic Loop Drive**, **Jenny Lake** and outdoor recreation opportunities.

#### *Overnight in Grand Teton National Park*

*\*Note: Accommodations within the park generally fill up quick so be sure to make reservations months in advance.*

**Day 5:** Get an early start in the morning for the nation's first national park, **Yellowstone National Park**. This awe-inspiring landscape covers an expansive 2,000,000 acres and visitors need ample time to explore the park. Drive through the park's south entrance. Popular sites in Yellowstone include **Mammoth Hot Springs**, **Yellowstone Lake**, **Old Faithful**, **Lamar and Hayden Valleys** and the **Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone** with its inspirational view of **Lower Falls**. Spend the day and evening exploring the park and keep an eye out for wildlife!

*Overnight in YNP*

*\*Note: lodging in Yellowstone National Park fills up fast so be sure to make reservations months in advance.*

**Day 6:** Head north in the morning toward the cattle-driving town of **Bozeman**. **Bozeman, MT**, the home of **Montana State University**, is a relatively large community that has attracted residents from all over the country. The result is an eclectic cultural mix that maintains its Western heritage. Popular sites in Bozeman include the **Museum of the Rockies**, the **Gallatin History Museum** and the numerous local art galleries and shops that line **Main Street**.

After exploring Bozeman, depart for the Old West mining towns of **Virginia City** and **Nevada City** have been restored to reflect the boom days when settlers and miners migrated to Montana in the late 1800s. Spend the afternoon exploring the historic shops, theatres and houses and depart for **Butte**, another Western mining town.

Located on the Continental Divide, **Butte** was once one of the most thriving cities in the west due to the highly prosperous deposits of copper that reside in the surrounding mountains. Explore the historical downtown area which includes the **Copper King Mansion**, the former residence of copper tycoon William Andrews Clark.

*Overnight in Butte*

**Day 7:** Head to **Philipsburg** in the morning where visitors can mine for authentic Montana sapphires! Continue onto the beautiful river community of **Missoula**.

Nestled in the Northern Rockies of Montana, surrounded by seven wilderness areas and at the confluence of three rivers, **Missoula** is an outdoor enthusiast's dream. In addition to the boundless opportunities for outdoor recreation, popular sites in Missoula include the **Smokejumper Visitor Center**, the **Montana Natural History Center**, the shops on **Higgins Avenue** and the nearby **Bitterroot Valley** communities of **Hamilton** and **Stevensville**.

*Overnight in Missoula*

**Day 8:** Depart Missoula in the morning for northern Glacier Country. 90 miles north of Missoula are the crystal clear waters of **Flathead Lake** where visitors can hit the water or relax on the shores. The nearby communities of **Kalispell** and **Whitefish** serve as gateways to the West Entrances to Glacier National Park and feature a wide array of outdoor recreation opportunities as well as a number of unique restaurants, shops and art galleries to peruse.

*Overnight in Kalispell or Whitefish*

**Day 9:** Get an early morning and depart for **Glacier National Park**. The west entrances are near the communities of Kalispell, Whitefish and Columbia Falls. The West Entrance provides access to the **Lake McDonald** area, **Park Headquarters**, the **Apgar Visitor Center** and is the west entry point to the **Going-to-the-Sun-Road**. From Kalispell, take Highway 2 north to West Glacier (approximately 33 miles).

Known as the Crown of the Continent, Glacier National Park is the largest concentration of glaciers in the lower 48 states. Spend the day exploring this expansive area of glacial-scoured valleys and towering peaks.

*Overnight in Glacier National Park*

*\*Note: lodging in Glacier National Park fills up fast so be sure to make reservations months in advance.*

**Day 10:** Start the morning by checking any last-minute sightseeing off the list and travel southeast toward **Great Falls**. Arrive in **Great Falls**, an authentic Western town located in the foothills of Montana's Rocky Mountain Front Range. Popular things in the Great Falls area include active adventure in the nearby **Bob Marshall Wilderness** or **Giant Springs State Park**, the **Charles Russel Museum** or the **Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center**.

*Overnight in Great Falls*

**Day 11:** Depart for **Billings** in the morning. **Billings** is the largest city in Montana and is settled on the banks of the Yellowstone River, which feeds into the larger Missouri River in North Dakota.

Billings also boasts a bustling downtown with a number of delicious eateries and microbreweries all within walking distance. Explore nearby **Pompey's Pillar**, which contains the only physical evidence of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, or check out **Pictograph State Park** which features pre-historic cave drawings. Also located near Billings is **Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument** where visitors can walk along trails that cover the battlefield and learn about the fateful day in June where General George Armstrong Custer and his men met their demise at the hands of the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors.

*Overnight in Billings*

**Day 12:** Take a scenic morning drive on the 68-mile **Beartooth Scenic Highway**, often regarded as the most beautiful drive in America. Continue onto **Red Lodge**, known for its winter ski resorts, **Red Lodge** offers summer activities including golf, horseback riding, hiking, gondola rides, pack trips and mountain biking.

Travel across state borders back into Wyoming toward **Buffalo Bill's Cody**. Located just 50 miles east of Yellowstone National Park, **Cody** is a town built by the legendary Old West showman Buffalo Bill Cody. Visitors can lose themselves for literally hours in the expansive **Buffalo Bill Center of the West**, which is a complex of five thematic museums. Other options in **Cody** include **Old Trail Town**, the live shootout performances in front of the **Irma Hotel**, which was built by Buffalo Bill Cody himself, the daily **Summer Cody Nite Rodeo** or a vast selection of outdoor recreation opportunities.

*Overnight in Cody*

**Day 13:** Begin the day with a scenic drive toward the communities of **Sheridan** and **Buffalo**. Located near the **Bighorn Mountains**, the communities of **Buffalo** and **Sheridan** offers guests great small town western hospitality. Guests can experience horseback riding, moving cattle, fishing, and other ranch activities. The historic **Occidental Hotel** in Buffalo takes visitors back to the 1880s with its authentic western flair. Spend the day exploring these charming Western towns and the surrounding area.

*Overnight in Buffalo or Sheridan*

**Day 14:** Depart for **Wyoming** in the afternoon. Stop by **Devils Tower National Monument**, the nation's first national monument, before heading to the Old West town of **Deadwood**. If time allows, take US Highway 14A through spectacular **Spearfish Canyon**, which features windy roads, towering limestone cliffs and a number of roaring waterfalls. Famously known for the HBO series, **Deadwood** is a rough and tumbled town where the legends of Wild Bill Hickock and Calamity Jane live on.

Spend the rest of the day walking the downtown area, visiting museums, exploring **Mt. Moriah Cemetery** or trying your luck at one of the town's numerous gaming parlors. Motorcycle enthusiasts can visit the nearby town of **Sturgis**, where the world-famous **Sturgis Motorcycle Rally** takes place every year. Visitors can learn about the history of the Rally at the **Sturgis Motorcycle Museum**.

*Overnight in Deadwood*

**Day 15:** In the morning, take US-Highway 385 toward America's Shrine of Democracy, **Mount Rushmore National Memorial**. This American centerpiece is most famously known for the laborious efforts of the brave workers who painstakingly carved the effigies of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Lincoln into Black Hills granite in the 1920s & 30s.

Located a short distance from Mount Rushmore, another face is emerging from the granite outcroppings of the Black Hills. **Crazy Horse Memorial** is the homage to the great Lakota Sioux warrior who dedicated his life to preserving the culture of his ancestors.

**Wind Cave National Park** contains the world's sixth longest cave with amazing boxwork, frostwork and popcorn formations. **Custer State Park** is the second largest state park in the nation and is home to approximately 1,500 bison and gorgeous granite outcroppings. Nearby **Jewel Cave National Monument** is the world's second longest cave and features dramatically different geological formations than its nearby sibling.

*Overnight in Custer or Custer State Park*

**Day 16:** Spend a relaxing morning in **Custer State Park** before departing for **Rapid City**. **Rapid City** is the largest city in western South Dakota and serves as the gateway to the Black Hills. Rapid City is home to a number of wonderful museums such as the **Journey Museum** and the **Museum of the American Bison** and a newly-revamped downtown scene that is home to a number of wonderful places to eat and drink.

*Overnight in Rapid City*

**Day 17:** Travel east on Interstate-90 toward the small town of **Wall**, the hometown of world-famous **Wall Drug**, a once small, locally owned drug store that got its fame by offering free ice water to Black Hills-bound travelers during the Great Depression.

Spend the morning enjoying their delicious donuts and walk among the shops before heading south toward **Badlands National Park**. **Badlands National Park** offers awe-inspiring views of other-worldly terrain, whose erosive qualities makes the park one of the richest fossil beds in the world.

Continue toward the South Dakota capital city of Pierre. The second-smallest state capital in the United States, Pierre lies on the banks of the Missouri River and features two fascinating museums: the **South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center** and the **Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Museum**.

*Overnight in Pierre*

**Day 18:** Depart for the twin cities of **Bismarck-Mandan, North Dakota** in the morning. Bismarck is the capital city of North Dakota and lies on the banks of the Missouri River that divides the city into Bismarck-Mandan. Go back in time at the newly renovated **North Dakota Heritage Center**, visit the **Native American Earth Lodges** in Mandan and walk in General George Armstrong Custer's footsteps at **Fort Abraham Lincoln** before departing for **Medora**.

Located 130 miles from Bismarck-Mandan, **Medora** is a small community that lies just south of **Theodore Roosevelt National Park**. Medora features the nightly **Medora Musical** in the summer that features the dynamic landscape of the park in the background as well as a unique **Pitchfork Fondue** dinner!

*Overnight in Medora*

**Day 19:** Spend the morning exploring pristine **Theodore Roosevelt National Park**. These sprawling badlands are fittingly named after Theodore Roosevelt, the US President notorious for his conservation efforts.

Travel back toward Bismarck on Interstate 94 to **Fargo**. If you'd like to avoid backtracking, head south of **Gladstone** for a little Americana on the **Enchanted Highway**, a 32-mile stretch of paved county highway that features giant concrete and metal sculptures.

Stop in **Jamestown** for a brief stop before continuing to **Fargo**. Points of interest include the **Frontier Village & World's Largest Buffalo**, an authentic pioneer town that features a 60-ton concrete buffalo statue. The

neighboring **National Buffalo Museum** is dedicated to the history of the American Bison and houses a number of valuable artifacts, many original art works and has an observation point for the live buffalo herd, which includes “White Cloud,” a rare albino buffalo.

Continue on Interstate-94 to Fargo-Moorhead. Located on the North Dakota-Minnesota border, Fargo-Moorhead is North Dakota’s largest City and is home to a number of premier attractions such as the **Red River Zoo** and the **Fargo Air Museum**. Fargo is proud of its Nordic heritage which is preserved at the **Heritage-Hjemkomst Center** and also their hometown heroes, with the **Roger Maris Museum** showcasing the life and legacy of the Fargo baseball legend.

#### *Overnight in Fargo*

**Day 20:** Return to South Dakota via Interstate-25 toward **Watertown**, where visitors can view original works of art by world-renowned wildlife artist Terry Redlin at the **Terry Redlin Art Center**.

Continue onto **De Smet** and visit the **Laura Ingalls Wilder Homestead**, which served as the inspiration for Wilder’s “Little House on the Prairie” series. A short distance from De Smet is the town of **Mitchell** where visitors can experience some “a-maze-ing earchitecture” at the **World’s Only Corn Palace**, an homage to South Dakota’s agricultural heritage. Each year, the exterior of the Corn Palace is redesigned with a thematic layout completely designed with corn!

Depart Mitchell for **Sioux Falls**, South Dakota’s largest city. Sioux Falls is a thriving community in southeastern South Dakota and features a bustling downtown with a number of unique shops and restaurants and the roaring falls of the Big Sioux River at **Falls Park**, which serves as the namesake for the city.

#### *Overnight in Sioux Falls*

**Day 21:** The last day of your Great American West experience has arrived! Depart Sioux Falls in the morning for the metropolitan Gateway Cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul & Bloomington.

This Gateway comprises three cities with unique amenities and experiences. **Minneapolis** boasts the nation’s #1-rated park system. Go canoeing, kayaking, or take a scenic river cruise on the mighty Mississippi River. Enjoy the city’s cultural offerings, including the **Guthrie Theater** and the world-renowned Minnesota Orchestra. Then hop on the Green Line light rail system to **Saint Paul** and explore the city’s gangster past and flourishing craft beer scene. **Bloomington** - home of **Mall of America**, provides serious shoppers with 520 stores, more than 50 restaurants and endless entertainment options - and there’s no sales tax on clothing or shoes in Minnesota!

*Depart Minneapolis, St. Paul & Bloomington in the evening or overnight*