

NORTHERN EXPOSURE



Explore the bustling urban centers of Lincoln and Omaha and their many top-quality dining, shopping and lodging possibilities. Venture deeper into northeast Nebraska and experience small-town charm and down-home hospitality. This tour winds through some of this region's best tourism opportunities where you can enjoy award winning wines, scenic vistas and overlooks, working farms, exciting outdoor activities, and colorful Native American culture and history.

DAY 1

Omaha

MORNING

Start your morning off right with a backstage experience at **Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium** (allow 1.5 hours) or explore its many other exciting activities, including the world's largest indoor rainforest and the Desert Dome. The 100-acre **Lauritzen Gardens and Kenefick Park** (allow 1 hour) includes an arboretum, bird sanctuary, spring flower walk and a variety of gorgeous gardens, while the 5,000 sq. ft. visitor center features year-round floral displays. Get your art fix at the **Joslyn Art Museum** (allow 1.5 hours), a world-class museum featuring exquisite works of art from antiquity to the present. Depart for downtown Omaha and the **Durham Museum** (allow 1 hour), a restored Art Deco train station that showcases the history of Omaha and the Union Pacific Railroad.

AFTERNOON

Enjoy an amazing lunch at one of the historic **Old Market's** exceptional restaurants and cafes. Afterward, spend some time browsing this eclectic district's many specialty stores and boutiques (allow 2 hours). Become your own artist at **Hot Shops Art Center** (allow 1 hour) or explore the center's art studios, galleries and exhibition spaces. Explore the important contribution the Hispanic population has had on Omaha's history, culture and development at **El Museo Latino** (allow 1 hour).

Take a short drive to west Omaha and the world-famous **Father Flanagan's Boys Town** (allow 1.5 hours). Afterward, enjoy dinner in one of west Omaha's many amazing restaurants before checking into your hotel.

DAY 2

Fremont • Blair • Winnebago • Blair • Ponca State Park • Wynot • Hartington Crofton

MORNING

Fremont has a great selection of antique shops in its historic downtown district. But if outdoor adventure is more to your liking, feel the wind blowing through your hair as you speed down the Platte River on an airboat with **Bryson's Airboat Tours** (allow 2 hours). Next stop is Blair and a visit to the **DeSoto Chute National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center** (allow 1.5 hours) where you can take an up-close, behind the scenes tour of more than 200,000 well preserved artifacts from the Steamboat Bertrand, which sunk in the Missouri River in 1865.

Head north on the Lewis & Clark Scenic Byway to the Winnebago Indian Reservation where you can enjoy an art demonstration or shop for hand-crafted American Indian products at **Woodland Trails Art & Learning Center** (allow 1 hour). Named in honor of the first Winnebago woman to attend college, the **Angel DeCora Museum and Research Center** (allow 1 hour) displays Winnebago artifacts, paintings, traditional clothing and other historical items. Before departing Winnebago, take a quick view of the Tribes' bison herd.

AFTERNOON

Stop in South Sioux City for a relaxing lunch in one of this gateway city's many fine restaurants. After lunch, continue west on the Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway to **Ponca State Park**, the eastern gateway to the Missouri National Recreational River. Enjoy fall hayrack and haunted hayrack rides in October and buffalo burgers, Lewis and Clark stew, and fish fries in the summer and fall.

The **Missouri National Recreational River Resource and Education Center** (allow 1 hour) highlights the area's rich Native American culture, the steamboat era, river ecology and

natural history. The park's tri-state overlook gives a breathtaking view of the Missouri River and the surrounding countryside.

Stop for an afternoon break and shopping at **St. James Marketplace** (allow 1 hour), a wonderful local farmer's market, craft fair and tearoom in Wynot. Enjoy a glass of Nebraska wine produced from hand-harvested vineyards at **Nissen Winery and Outlaw Trail Center** (allow 1 hour) near Hartington. Step back in time at the Historic Argo Hotel in Crofton, your dining and lodging location for the night.

DAY 3

Niobara • Royal • Neligh • Norfolk • Columbus

MORNING

After a great breakfast, head to **Kreycik Riverview Elk Ranch** (allow 2 hours) to encounter wildlife close up. Ride in a covered wagon to hand feed buffalo as they clamor to you for corn! The gift shop sells a variety of buffalo-related products, clothing and food. **Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park** (allow 1 hour) near Royal is one of the richest fossil finds in the northern hemisphere. Watch scientists in the Rhino Barn diligently uncover whole skeletons of prehistoric mammals covered by volcanic ash millions of years ago.

Home to one of the few remaining water-powered mills in the state, **Neligh Mills State Historic Site** (allow 45 minutes) in Neligh takes you back to a time when the mill was the center of commerce for many towns.

AFTERNOON

Enjoy lunch at one of Norfolk's many great restaurants before heading to your next tour stop. The Johnny Carson exhibit at the **Elkhorn Valley Museum and Research Center** (allow 1 hour) in Norfolk includes an impressive collection of his personal items, including videotapes, vintage photographs

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

and his six Emmy Awards. An interactive home theater shows selected Tonight Show episodes and monologues.

Depart Norfolk for Columbus where you'll start off your tour with a visit to the **Andrew Jackson Higgins Memorial** (allow 30 minutes). The memorial features a life-size replica of the Higgins landing craft, which helped the Allies win the Second World War. A bronze eagle statue sits atop a steel structure made from material salvaged from the 2001 World Trade Center disaster.

Columbus is an industrial city and a visit to **Behlen Manufacturing Company** (allow 1 hour) proves that. The company produces steel buildings, grain bins, grain dryers and livestock equipment, including fences, tanks and feeders that are sold all over the world. Take a brewery tour at **Dusters Restaurant and Gottberg Brew Pub** (allow 2 hours) before enjoying a fresh, made-from-scratch dinner. Settle in for the evening at one of Columbus' fine lodging establishments.

DAY 4

York • Lincoln

MORNING

After a fresh start, depart for York and an attraction unique to this town. **Lee's Legendary Marbles and Collectibles** (allow 45 minutes) houses the largest collection of marbles in the world. So, if you want to find your marbles, you might just do so at this one-of-a-kind attraction. Next stop is **Wessel's Living History Farm** (allow 1.5 hours) where you can experience first-hand farm life from the 1920s until modern times.

AFTERNOON

Next, depart for Lincoln for lunch in the Historic Haymarket District or the new Railyard. Afterward, take a walking tour and explore the district's many turn-of-the-century buildings that have been converted into specialty shops, restaurants, bars and apartments (allow 2 hours for lunch and

walking tour). While downtown, explore the impressive **Sheldon Museum of Art** (allow 1 hour), an excellent modern art gallery housing Twentieth-century American art. The building, designed by internationally acclaimed architect Phillip Johnson, is a work of art within itself and a definite must see.

Get an up-close understanding of Nebraska's unique Unicameral Legislature-the only one in the country-with a guided tour of the impressive **State Capitol** (allow 1 hour).

A short drive south of Lincoln is **Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center** (allow 1 hour), which includes more than 350 plant species and 170 bird species on more than 600 acres of rare native tall-grass prairie, springs, wetlands and ponds. An on-site gift shops features a diverse selection of nature-related gifts and souvenirs. Enjoy dinner and a restful evening in Lincoln at one of the city's fine restaurants and hotels. You can depart Nebraska the following morning or extend your tour to southeast Nebraska.

