



Native Legends and Lore

The First Nations people of Canada, and Dakota and Ojibwe tribes in the U.S. founded their nations on a profound respect for the natural world and, as nomadic hunters, followed the herds and a seasonal cycle of fishing, hunting and food gathering. Though individual tribes differ in origin and history, each is somewhat united with others through beliefs, traditions, philosophies, respect for the Earth and an understanding of humankind's place with nature. Their ethos and proud heritage have been significant contributions to the region's history and culture. Attend a pow wow with traditional music and dancing, visit a museum where you can see genuine Native American beadwork, or watch a bison herd, and you'll begin to understand the beliefs and values of this fascinating culture.



Day 1 Onamia – Minneapolis/St. Paul (86 mi/138 km)

As Minnesota's second largest inland lake, Mille Lacs is popular with anglers and boaters, and also includes the historic land of the Ojibwe tribe. The **Mille Lacs Indian Museum**, based on traditional design, tells the Ojibwe history from their arrival in Minnesota through the present. In the Four Seasons Room, life-size dioramas portray Ojibwe life in each season. Ojibwe storytelling, traditional crafts artisans and traditional food tasting are special event features. The **Mille Lacs Indian Museum Trading Post** has Ojibwe crafts and quality items from other tribes (2.0 hrs). Enjoy lunch and gaming at the Native American-owned **Grand Casino Mille Lacs**. Depart for St. Paul. In 1805, Lt. Zebulon Pike bought most of today's St. Paul and Minneapolis from the Dakota Indians for \$200 in trade goods and 60 gallons of liquor, and then established **Fort Snelling** (1.5 hrs). Overlooking the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, costumed interpretive guides re-create daily fort life in the 1820s with drills, crafts and demonstrations.

Overnight: Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN



Day 2 Minneapolis/St. Paul – Mankato (81 mi/130 km)

A Native American tour takes visitors to Minneapolis and St. Paul historic sites, including **Indian Mounds Park**, the site of the Pine Coulee battle, and a Native American craft shop. At **Minnehaha Park**, see the statue of the legendary **Hiawatha**, the young Indian brave of Longfellow's poems (4.0 hrs). After lunch, depart for St. Peter and the **Treaty Site History Center** (1.0 hr). It was in St. Peter, at a river crossing called the Traverse des Sioux, that one of the most crucial events in Minnesota history took place in 1851. Two treaties were signed between the U.S. government and four chiefs of the Dakota tribe. Treaty terms permitted mass settlement of former Dakota land by Europeans. However, many of the U.S. government's promises went unfulfilled, and dozens of settlers and Dakota Indians lost their lives in the bloody conflict of 1862. What began in St. Peter ended just 12 miles (20 km) away in Mankato. Originally 303 Dakota were condemned to death, but President Abraham Lincoln pardoned all but 38, who were hanged. The city of Mankato has recently completed Reconciliation Park at the site, with formal memorial ceremonies held each year (30 min).

Overnight: Mankato, MN

Day 3 Mankato – Pipestone (160 miles/256 km)

Follow the scenes of battles to **Fort Ridgely** (1.0 hr) and the **Lower Sioux Agency**, the site of the first organized Indian attack in the 1862 Conflict (1.0 hr). Dine at the Native American-owned **Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel** in Morton. En route to Pipestone, buffalo still roam at the **Blue Mound State Park**, and prairie grasses and wildflowers abound. The park is named for the mile and a half long cliff-mound that appeared blue in the distance to settlers heading west (1.0 hr). **The Pipestone National Monument** is the site of a quarry visited for centuries by various Indian tribes for the red stone used in ceremonial pipes. The National Monument preserves this area and the right of all Indians to quarry the pipestone. Indian crafts, including pipe making, are demonstrated at the site (2.5 hrs).

Overnight: Pipestone, MN

*Song of Hiawatha
Pageant, Pipestone,
late July and
early August*

Day 4 Pipestone – Mitchell (133 mi/213 km)

Sioux Falls derived its name from the falls of the Big Sioux River. The city was settled in 1857, one of the first settlements in the state. The **Center for Western Studies**, on the campus of **Augustana College**, displays historic photographs, manuscripts, and American Indian art and artifacts (45 min). Shopping for American Indian art is available at several shops and galleries in the Sioux Falls area. In **Mitchell**, the **Middle Border Museum and Oscar Howe Art Center** (1.0 hr) showcase the works of Oscar Howe, nationally recognized artist and member of the Yanktonai Sioux Tribe. Howe is known for using modern art to depict the spirit and pride of his people. The **Prehistoric Indian Village** (1.0 hr) offers guided tours of the 11th century village where you can walk through a full-scale reconstruction of an earth lodge and visit the **Thomsen Center Archeodome** that encloses a portion of the village.

Overnight: Mitchell, SD

*Corn Palace Festival,
Mitchell, last weekend
in August*

Day 5 Mitchell – Pierre (159 mi/255 km)

The **Lower Brule Reservation** is nestled along the Missouri River in central South Dakota. The 101-mile (162-km) **Native American National Scenic Byway** crosses the Lower Brule Reservation following the Missouri River. Stop at the **Akta Lakota Museum** in Chamberlain (45 min) where displays of ceremonial dress, weaponry and tools allow visitors to experience the Lakota past. Visit the **Circle of Tipis**, nine tipis representing the tribes of the Great Sioux Nation in South Dakota. In **Pierre**, the **Cultural Heritage Center** showcases South Dakota history. An extensive collection called "Oyate Tawichioan" meaning the "ways of the people" explores Plains Indian heritage.

Overnight: Pierre, SD

*Capitol Christmas Trees,
Pierre, late November
through December 25*



Day 6 Pierre – Mobridge (236 mi/378 km)

The **Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe** owns and manages herds of 2,000 bison and more than 100 wild horses. Your guide will explain the significance of the animal nation and will interpret the landscape for you (2-3 hrs). Lunch can consist of buffalo fare, chili and soup with fry bread. Enjoy a performance of traditional Lakota dancing and singing. Tour the **HVJ Cultural Center** in Eagle Butte to understand the significance of the Lakota culture (30 min). The **Hall of Murals** features eight large murals by local artists depicting Lakota history, culture and legend. The **Standing Rock Reservation** straddles the South Dakota-North Dakota border. The area is the birthplace of Sitting Bull, one of the Lakota's greatest warriors and most respected medicine men. Visitors can pay homage at his grave overlooking the Missouri River west of Mobridge (15 min).

Overnight: Mobridge, SD

Day 7 Mobridge – Bismarck (121 miles/194 km)

According to the legend of the **Standing Rock** (10 min) in Fort Yates, an Arikara woman refused to follow her husband because he had taken a second wife. When he and the tribe returned for her, she had turned to stone! The original **Sitting Bull Burial State Historic Site** (10 min) is nearby. Just north of Fort Yates at **Prairie Knights Casino & Resort** (1.0 hr), an "Old West ambiance with refined Dakota hospitality" exists in this Las Vegas-style casino. **Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park** is located on the banks of the Missouri River just south of Mandan, Bismarck's sister city. The park's history goes back over 300 years and includes the **On-A-Slant Indian Village** (1.0 hr), which was once home to a thriving Mandan Indian population in the mid-1600s who lived in earth lodges along the river. Near the village is the **Fort Abraham Lincoln Visitor's Museum** (30 min), displaying exhibits relating to the life of the Mandan Indians and the military history of the Fort. The **North Dakota Heritage Center** (1.5 hr) in Bismarck has one of the nation's largest collections of Plains Indian artifacts, second only to the Smithsonian. North of Bismarck, visible depressions are all that remain of **Double Ditch State Historic Site** (30 min), a large Mandan Indian earth lodge village. Interpretive signs assist visitors in understanding the history of this fascinating people.

Overnight: Bismarck, ND

*The American Legacy
Exposition, Mandan,
last weekend in July*

*United Tribes
International Pow Wow,
Bismarck, first weekend
in September*

Day 8 Bismarck – Minot (270 miles/432 km)

In Stanton, visit the ruins of an ancient Indian village, **Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site** (1.5 hrs), which was last occupied in 1845 by the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians. This is also the site of a beautiful state-of-the-art museum dedicated to preserving the culture of the Plains Indians. Continuing north to the shores of **Lake Sakakawea** is a breathtaking view of North Dakota's largest man-made lake, formed behind the **Garrison Dam** near Riverdale. Traveling northwest just past New Town, you will cross **Four Bears Bridge**, named for 19 tribal chiefs of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Indian tribes. It is the longest bridge in North Dakota, spanning nearly a mile over Lake Sakakawea. Visit **Four Bears Casino & Resort** (1.0 hr), a full Las Vegas-style casino. There is live entertainment and the casino overlooks Lake Sakakawea. Next to the Casino is **Three Tribes Museum** (30 min). This museum displays artifacts relating to the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara tribal history and sells traditional American Indian arts, crafts and books.

Overnight: Minot, ND

*North Dakota State Fair,
Minot, mid to late July*

*Norsk Høstfest, Minot,
early October*



Day 9 Minot – Devils Lake (118 miles/189 km)

The **Fort Totten State Historic Site** (1.5 hrs), located south of Devils Lake on the Fort Totten Indian Reservation, is the best-preserved military post on the Western frontier. Later it became an Indian boarding school and community school. Dating from the era of Indian wars in the 1860s, this “outdoor museum” consists of 17 original historic buildings. The fort also houses the **Pioneer Daughters Museum** (30 min), which includes frontier, military and American Indian displays and artifacts. The **Totten Trail Historic Inn** is located on the premises and is furnished in the style from 1870-1910.

Overnight: Devils Lake, ND

Day 10 Devils Lake – Riding Mountain National Park (183 mi/293 km)

As you enter Canada at **Boissevain**, a Manitoba Heritage Council plaque honors Manitoba’s first explorers, the Aboriginal people who entered the region from the south more than 11,000 years ago while **Moncur Gallery** contains 10,000 BC native artifacts (1.0 hr). Stott Site, near Brandon, is an important archaeological bison kill area where artifacts dating back 1,200 years have been found (30 min). Travel to **Riding Mountain National Park** with its cool lakes, rushing rivers and dense green forests. The park is a precious resource home to elk, deer, black bear and other magnificent wildlife. Today’s Aboriginal descendants keep time-honored traditions alive in **Shawenequanape Kipichewin (South Quill Camp)** and bison still roam the range near Lake Audy (4.0 hrs).

Overnight: Riding Mountain National Park, MB

Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, Brandon, late March

Day 11 Riding Mountain National Park – Gimli (220 mi/352 km)

Enjoy an early morning wildlife tour and stop at **Agassiz Tower** for a scenic view of the Manitoba escarpment (3.0 hrs). The name Manitoba is generally believed to be of Cree or Ojibway origin. The ancient story tells of an island at the Narrows of Lake Manitoba, where the pounding of the waves produced a roaring sound that was said to be the action of a **manitou**, or spirit, beating his drums. The strait was called **manito bau**, meaning strait of the spirit. Its name, Manitoba, was given to the lake and province. Follow the trail to the rock formation of the **Thunderbird Nest**, the ceremonial site of the legendary Thunderbird, the guardian spirit. Travel to the lakeside community of Gimli, an Icelandic word meaning “home of the Gods”. It was the capital of an independent colony of Icelanders who settled along the western shores of Lake Winnipeg as early as 1875.

Overnight: Gimli, MB

Canada’s National Ukrainian Festival, Dauphin, first weekend in August

Islendingadagurinn (Icelandic Festival of Manitoba), Gimli, first weekend in August

Day 12 Gimli – Winnipeg (107 mi/172 km)

Experience the traditional lifestyle of the **Ojibway** people at **Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Historic Village** (1.0 hr). Stop at **Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park** and discover the importance of First Nations people to the development of western Canada. Traveling on to Winnipeg, **The Forks** heritage site pays homage to this aboriginal meeting place (1.0 hr). The **Riel House National Historic Site** (1.0 hr) and the **St. Boniface Museum** (1.0 hr) also depict the importance of Manitoba’s Metis. A bison herd at **Fort Whyte Nature Centre** demonstrates the significance of these animals to the Aboriginals. **The Manitoba Museum** showcases the culture of the Aboriginal people (2.0 hrs), while **St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park** tells about the transition of the Native peoples’ gathering places to French Canadian agricultural communities. You’ll find art galleries and craft shops with Aboriginal wares throughout Winnipeg, and one of the world’s largest collections of modern Inuit art at the **Winnipeg Art Gallery** (1.0 hr). Conclude your Native Legends and Lore Tour at one of Winnipeg’s fine ethnic restaurants.

Overnight: Winnipeg, MB

Festival du Voyageur, Winnipeg, mid-February

Oak Hammock Marsh Waterfowl Celebration, Winnipeg, May and October

Winnipeg Folk Festival, Winnipeg, early July

Folklorama – Canada’s Cultural Celebration, Winnipeg, first two weeks in August