



Spirit of the Frontier

The rich traditions of the North American Indians, the adventures of the “voyageur” fur traders, the perseverance of the early pioneers, the faith of the early missionaries, the ethnic heritage of the immigrants who came across the sea – the settlement of the area came slowly. They came to farm the land, to find adventure, and later, to seek their fortune in gold. These brave pioneers left behind a rich legacy, found at historic sites, pioneer villages and museums across the region. Together with the history of the North American Indians, these immigrant stories weave the tapestry of the spirit of the frontier.

Day 1 St. Paul - Chanhassen - Bloomington (37 mi/60 km)



In 1805, Lt. Zebulon Pike bought the site of **Fort Snelling**, including most of the current area of Minneapolis and St. Paul from the Dakota Indians for \$200 in trade goods and 60 gallons of liquor. The Fort overlooks the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. Visit the interpretive center and costumed staff who re-create daily life in the 1820s (2.0 hrs). Inside the **Minnesota History Center**, the dramatic architecture of the vault in the rotunda and arched window framing the **State Capitol Building** are magnificent. The Minnesota A to Z Exhibit is a fun look at the state’s history (1.0 hr). On St. Paul’s Summit Avenue, tour the **James J. Hill House**, mansion of the railroad magnate. His railroads opened the land west of the Mississippi to new settlers and commerce (1.0 hr). Travel to Shakopee for a tour of **Murphy’s Landing**, a pioneer village and living history center on the banks of the Minnesota River (2.0 hrs). This evening visit **Mystic Lake Casino** or enjoy dinner and a play at the **Chanhassen Dinner Theater**.

Overnight: Bloomington, MN



Spirit of the Frontier continued

Day 2 Bloomington – Pipestone (181 mi/290 km)

Follow the Minnesota River south to New Ulm, a charming German settlement, showcasing German-style architecture. On the main street, a **Glockenspiel** chimes the hour and plays musical pieces at noon, 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. (20 min). Visit the **Schell Brewery**, one of the four original breweries operated by early German immigrants (2.5 hrs). Beautiful gardens surround the home of the brewery owners. Then depart for Walnut Grove, the town featured on the television series, “Little House on the Prairie.” In one of many moves across the region, the Ingalls family came here from Wisconsin in 1874. See the dugout site that was the Ingalls’ home described in the book, **On the Banks of Plum Creek**. Nearby, the **Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum** includes memorabilia from the family and other pioneer artifacts (2.5 hrs). Finish the day with a tour of the **Pipestone National Monument**, where North American Indians still harvest pipestone from the natural quarry.

Overnight: Pipestone, MN

*Heritagefest, New Ulm,
mid-July*

*The Laura Ingalls Wilder
Pageant, Walnut Grove,
July weekends*

Day 3 Pipestone – Mitchell (339 mi/543 km)

From Pipestone, cross the border into South Dakota this morning. The **Old Courthouse Museum** (45 min) and **Pettigrew Home and Museum** (45 min) depict the history of Sioux Falls, South Dakota’s largest city. The **National Music Museum** in Vermillion (1.0 hr) features 7,500 rare, antique musical instruments from around the world at this internationally famous museum. Yankton was the site of the **Dakota Territorial Capitol** (15 min), a bustling trading post and riverboat town on the banks of the mighty Missouri River.

Overnight: Mitchell, SD

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

Day 4 Mitchell – Brookings (107 mi/172 km)

In **Mitchell**, visit the world’s only **Corn Palace** (30 min), a tribute dating back to the 1890s to celebrate the harvest in South Dakota. The building is decorated in thousands of bushels of corn and small grains. Tour the **Prehistoric Indian Village and Archeodome** (1.0 hr) in Mitchell. This site was the home of the Woodland people 900 to 1,000 years ago. The **Middle Border Museum-Oscar Howe Art Center** (1.0 hr) exhibits the lives, culture and art of pioneers from the 1800s through the 1930s. **Madison’s Prairie Village** (1.0 hr) is a genuine turn-of-the-century prairie town with authentic buildings of South Dakota’s early years. The **South Dakota Art Museum** in Brookings (1.0 hr) features South Dakota’s diverse artistic legacy. The Museum’s collection consists of more than 6,000 objects and artifacts and works by nationally known artists like Harvey Dunn and Oscar Howe. Visitors to the **South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum**, dedicated to preserving the area’s rich rural heritage, will understand the important role of agriculture in South Dakota’s past, present and future (45 min).

Overnight: Brookings, SD

*Prairie Village Steam
Threshing Jamboree,
Madison, late August*

Day 5 Brookings – Sisseton (221 mi/354 km)

Laura Ingalls Wilder, famous author of the “Little House on the Prairie” books, based six of her books on her life in **De Smet**. Tour original **Ingalls’ homes** and enjoy wagon rides and demonstrations of pioneer activities (3.0 hrs). Relive days gone by through the artwork of Terry Redlin, one of America’s best-loved artists, at the **Redlin Art Center** (1.5 hrs) in Watertown. **Fort Sisseton**, established in 1864, is one of the nation’s best-preserved cavalry forts. Tour the barracks, officers’ quarters, guardhouses and museum of this military outpost (1.5 hrs), now a scenic state park near Sisseton. Trek to the top of **Nicollet Tower** for a breathtaking three-state view. The observation tower honors Joseph N. Nicollet, a French cartographer, who mapped the Coteau des Prairies in the 1830s.

Overnight: Sisseton, SD

*Laura Ingalls Wilder
Pageant, De Smet,
last June weekend,
first two July weekends*



Day 6 Sisseton – Fargo (103 mi/165 km)

This morning you will depart South Dakota and head north. In Wahpeton, take a ride that will transport you back in time on the **Prairie Rose Carousel** (30 min), a fully restored and enclosed 1926 Spillman carousel. The **Bagg Bonanza Farm** (1.0 hr) is America's only intact bonanza farm with restoration of 29 buildings. North of Wahpeton, tour **Fort Abercrombie** (30 min) which protected the northwestern frontier and became a link to the chain of military posts from St. Paul to the Montana gold fields. Located in West Fargo, **Bonanzaville** (1.5 hrs) is a 45-building restored pioneer village set on 15 acres. Then enjoy the ambiance of the city of Fargo with its many cultural attractions. The **Plains Art Museum** (1.0 hr), the largest art museum between Minneapolis and Seattle, features three galleries including regional artists, a permanent collection and special exhibits. A great conclusion to an action-packed day awaits you at the **Fargo Theatre**, a vintage movie palace built in 1926 to showcase major silent films and vaudeville acts (2.0 hrs for film showing, 30 min for tour). Their Wurlitzer pipe organ has been restored to its art modern décor.

Overnight: Fargo, ND

Pioneer Days, West Fargo, late August

Day 7 Fargo – Grand Forks (80 mi/128 km)

Start the day with a visit to the **Heritage-Hjemkomst Center** (1.0 hr), which displays an authentic handmade Viking longship that was sailed from Duluth, MN to Bergen, Norway in 1982. The center, located just across the Red River from Fargo in Moorhead, MN, also includes a permanent interpretive exhibit. At the **University of North Dakota Center for Aerospace Sciences** in Grand Forks, you will find that the UND Aerospace Center is a leader in aviation training and research development. Tours feature CAS – Altitude Chamber, Atmospherium Planetarium, Severe Weather Analysis Center and the Aeroheritage Room (2.0 hrs). Grand Forks is also home to the 319th Air Refueling Wing. At the **Grand Forks Air Force Base**, tours can be set up to meet interests of the group (1.0 hr). Visit the **North Dakota Museum of Art** (1.0 hr), offering a contemporary art display with an extensive gift shop. In New Rockford, the **Siouxland Buffalo Ranch** (1.0 hr) features herds of buffalo, a meat processing plant and a buffalo gift shop.

Overnight: Grand Forks, ND

Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival, Moorhead, late June

Day 8 Grand Forks – Winnipeg (144 mi/231 km)

North of Grand Forks in Pembina, the **Pembina State Museum** (1.0 hr) features 100 million years of regional history. The seven-story observation tower offers a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape. Manitoba's capital city of Winnipeg (pop. 670,000) delights in the flavor of St. Boniface, also known as the French quarter. It is the largest French-Canadian community west of Quebec and grew out of the fur trade. The voyageurs' joie de vivre (love of life) is shared with visitors on the area's walking tour, featuring stops at the **St. Boniface Museum**, the **Centre Cultural Franco-Manitobain** and **Fort Gibraltar** (4.0 hrs). Stop at **The Manitoba Museum** for a full accounting of the fur trade era, including a life-size replica of a ship that carried fur pelts from Hudson Bay to England. The museum also highlights the historical significance of the Metis, the offspring of unions between European and Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba (2.0 hrs).

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



Spirit of the Frontier continued

Day 9 Winnipeg – Brandon (122 mi/196 km)

Step back in time with a stroll through the heritage buildings and native encampment of **Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site**. Learn about the day-to-day lives of the settlers who once lived in this premier fur trading post (2.0 hrs). Then visit the fur trading headquarters at **Fort la Reine Museum and Pioneer Village** in Portage la Prairie (1.0 hr). This was an important trading post in the mid-1700s. The **Manitoba Agricultural Museum** and Homesteaders Village simulates life in the 1800s in Austin and contains one of the largest collections of vintage farm machinery in Canada (1.0 hr). A **Brandon Walking Tour** will introduce you to the architecture that charts the lifestyle of the downtown area from the 1820s to the 1940s (1.0 hr). Tours of the **Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum**, the Royal Canadian Air Force's training schools for World War II pilots (1.0 hr) and the **Daly House** (1.0 hr) showcase Brandon's history.

Overnight: Brandon, MB

Manitoba Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede, Austin, late July

Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, Brandon, late March

Day 10 Brandon – Boissevain (62 mi/100 km)

Enjoy a short drive to the charming town of Souris. The historical home of early settler Squire Sowden's family, the **Heritage Church** and the **Souris Suspension footbridge**, are a few of the highlights found in this pretty rural community (2.0 hrs). The past comes alive with the **Boissevain art murals**, **Beckoning Hills Museum** and **Moncur Gallery**, containing native artifacts dating back to 10,000 BC (3.0 hrs). Wind up the Spirit of the Frontier Tour through the warm hospitality found at **Dueck's Cedar Chalet** and **Walkinshaw Place** and stop in Deloraine where 250 Flags of the World stand.

Overnight: Boissevain, MB