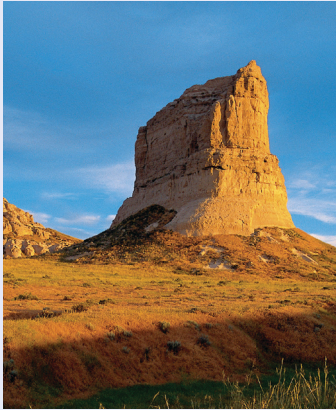


JOURNEYS ACROSS WESTERN NEBRASKA



Western Nebraska is a vast region filled with great diversity. Its wide open, windswept high plains in the south; green, rolling Sandhills in the middle; and rugged buttes and bluffs in the north, this region will delight and inspire you. While there, take your time exploring western Nebraska on one of its four scenic byways: Bridges to Buttes Byway (Highway 20), Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway (Highway 2), Western Trails Scenic & Historic Byway (Highway 92/26), and Gold Rush Scenic Byway (Highway 385).

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
<p>Start your journey in Ogallala, an Old West cow town that truly embraces its colorful western past. Don't miss the Front Street and Cowboy Museum where you can catch The Crystal Palace Revue and Shoot Out, Nebraska's longest-running summer theatre. Visit the Petrified Wood Gallery, a natural history gallery specializing in ancient woods, fossils, and American Indian artifacts. Ogallala also is home to Lake McConaughy, the state's largest lake, and the Lake McConaughy Visitor and Water Interpretive Center. This is Nebraska's first water-related facility and houses interactive educational exhibits highlighting the Platte River and High Plains Aquifer. The Bald Eagle Viewing Center below the dam is one of the best locations to view bald eagles from late December to early March.</p> <p>Continue west on the Western Trails Scenic & Historic Byway (Highway 92/26) to 17 Ranch Winery in downtown Lewellen for a tasting of delicious Nebraska wine. Enjoy a tasty dessert surrounded by pastels, watercolors, glass etchings, wood sculptures, and other works of art created by local artists at The Most Unlikely Place.</p> <p>Visible for weeks along the westward trails, Courthouse and Jail Rocks near Bridgeport were so named because of their similarity to courthouses and jail buildings back east. Continue your journey along the Gold Rush Scenic Byway (Highway 385) to Carhenge. Located northwest of Alliance, this quirky attraction is an exact replica of England's world-famous Stonehenge, but using old cars instead of stones. The Carnegie Arts Center features works by local and regional artists, a gift shop, and a sculpture garden.</p> <p>Overnight: Alliance</p>	<p>The Museum of the Fur Trade in Chadron is a one-of-a-kind facility, housing artifacts from the region's lucrative fur-trading industry. Built in 1837, the Bordeaux Trading Post stands on the museum grounds and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>Head west to Crawford on the Bridges to Buttes Scenic Byway (Highway 20) for buffalo stew cookouts, the Post Playhouse, historic tours, museums, and Jeep rides through the majestic and pine-covered buttes at Fort Robinson State Park. The park's Trailside Museum of Natural History houses the dramatic "Clash of the Mammoths" exhibit and an art gallery of American Indian and Western art.</p> <p>Discover a stark Badlands landscape at Toadstool Geologic Park, northwest of Crawford. An easy-to-use, one-mile loop trail highlights examples of eroded clay/sandstone formations and a reconstructed sod house gives a glimpse into the past when sod was the only abundant building material available on the High Plains. Nearby Hudson-Meng Research and Education Center is the site of a great catastrophe that killed hundreds of bison more than 10,000 years ago.</p> <p>Along the way, stop at High Plains Homestead for some of the best food you'll ever eat. This re-created Old West village features a working blacksmith shop, antique store, and the Dirty Creek Saloon and don't forget to visit the old-fashioned general store to pick up a special gift or rustic souvenir. The 3,000-acre Agate Fossil Beds National Monument south of Harrison is a fossil lover's paradise. An interpretive center and the impressive Cook Collection of artifacts from Red Cloud of the Oglala Lakota Sioux also are on display here.</p> <p>Overnight: Scottsbluff/Gering</p>	<p>Scotts Bluff National Monument near Gering was a prominent landmark American Indians, fur traders, and Oregon and Mormon trail pioneers used as a guide westward. At 800 feet above the North Platte River, a drive to the summit gives you a tremendous view of the entire valley and the wagon ruts that are still visible at the base. A gift shop and museum in the visitor center show the historical importance of the trail and the area's colorful history. Explore the history of farm and ranch equipment with vintage horse-drawn and steam-powered engines at the Legacy of the Plains Museum/Farm and Ranch Museum.</p> <p>Across the North Platte River, the West Nebraska Arts Center in Scottsbluff features an art gallery and a gift shop selling locally made gifts. The Riverside Discovery Center is an impressive facility featuring more than 300 animals from 97 animal species from around the world. For knitters and crochet enthusiasts, enjoy a tour of the Brown Sheep Company and browse its wide selection of yarns.</p> <p>Stand beneath Chimney Rock, the most recognized landmark along the Oregon Trail, near Bayard. The Chimney Rock National Historic Site Visitors Center showcases fascinating stories from pioneers as they trekked westward. Take a historic Old West tour or spend the night on the prairie underneath Chimney Rock at Oregon Trail Wagon Train. Or enjoy a covered wagon history tour of the Oregon Trail, campfire entertainment, and a mouthwatering steak grilled over an open wood fire in the summer.</p> <p>Continue south on the Gold Rush Scenic Byway (Highway 385) to Sidney and Cabela's, the world's largest outdoor outfitter. Don't miss its centerpiece: a man-made mountain featuring dozens of animals. Afterward, become better acquainted with your green thumb at Ricky and Lucy's Country Greenhouse for a wonderful selection of organic herbs and spices, coffee, essential oils, pottery, handmade pasta, and a variety of other natural products.</p>

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