



# Lewis and Clark's Great Adventure

In 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out at the behest of President Thomas Jefferson to explore the massive new Louisiana Territory that had just doubled the size of the United States. For two and a half years, Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery party traveled 8,000 miles (12,800 km). The results of the mission opened up the American West and did much to define the nation's character and destiny. Modern day explorers can follow the Lewis & Clark Trail, learning about this historic adventure at interpretive centers and historic sites along the route.

## Day 1 Elk Point – Chamberlain (167 mi/268 km)

Elk Point, SD, is the site of the first election held by United States citizens west of the Mississippi River. Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery voted Patrick Gass to replace Sgt. Floyd, the only member of the expedition to die during the entire journey. Lewis and Clark hiked to **Spirit Mound** near Vermillion, where according to local native tribes, 18-inch devils armed with arrows prowled. The **Lewis and Clark Lake Regional Visitor Center**, located on the Missouri River near Yankton, depicts the story of the Calumet Bluff Council and Upper Missouri native peoples (45 min). The new **Lewis and Clark Information Center** in Chamberlain is situated on the site of a Corps of Discovery encampment (1.0 hr). At the center, visitors are able to climb aboard a re-creation of the expedition's 55-foot keelboat, which sits both inside and outside the center and appears to traverse a 30-foot wall of windows overlooking the Missouri River.

Overnight: Chamberlain, SD



*Yankton Lewis and Clark Festival, Yankton, late August*



## **Day 2 Chamberlain – Pierre (90 mi/144 km)**

Learn about the history, heritage and culture of South Dakota's indigenous people at the **Akta Lakota Museum** at the **St. Joseph Indian School** (1.0 hr). The **Circle of Tipis**, nine tipis representing the tribes in South Dakota, is also located near Chamberlain. Follow the **Native American National Scenic Byway** (Highway 50 and BIA Highway 47) to Lower Brule. Enjoy a traditional Lakota meal, a tour of the **Narrows**, and a visit to **Big Bend Dam**. The **Cultural Heritage Center** in Pierre (1.0 hr) houses a replica of the Jefferson Peace and Friendship Medal that Lewis and Clark presented to the tribes they met. Other options include visiting the **State Capitol** (1.0 hr), a working buffalo ranch (2.0 hrs), or a pontoon ride on the river. For the more energetic, hike the trail along the Missouri River to **La Framboise Island** or **Farm Island**. Near the confluence of the Bad and Missouri Rivers, **Ft. Pierre's Lilly Park** was the site of a tense encounter with the Teton Sioux.

*Overnight: Pierre, SD*

## **Day 3 Pierre – Mobridge (240 mi/384 km)**

Travel along the Lewis & Clark Trail on Highway 1804 to the junction of U.S. Highway 212, near Gettysburg, then west to Eagle Butte. The **Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Game, Fish and Parks Department** hosts tours showcasing wild horse, bison and elk herds (2.5 hrs). Additional options include native dancers and a traditional Lakota meal. At **West Whitlock Recreation Area**, north of Gettysburg on Highway 1804, visitors can walk inside a replica of an Arikara lodge. The typical Arikara home was made with cottonwood logs, willow branches and grass, housing up to 20 people. Jerry Gray, park manager of West Whitlock Recreation Area, is a possible speaker for your tour (30 min). Tour the **Sacagawea** and **Sitting Bull Monuments** (30 min). A monument to Sacagawea, the expedition's only female member, stands on a bluff across the river from Mobridge. Six years after the expedition, Sacagawea died at Fort Manuel, also in this area. Sitting Bull, another famous American Indian, is buried near the Sacagawea monument. A seven-ton granite bust marks his grave.

*Overnight: Mobridge, SD*

## **Day 4 Mobridge – Bismarck (121 miles/194 km)**

Cross the border into North Dakota, entering Standing Rock Reservation. In Fort Yates, according to the legend of the **Standing Rock** (10 min), 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. 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. Near the Village, the **Fort Abraham Lincoln Visitor's Museum** (30 min) and the **Custer House** (1.0 hr) offer exhibits and insight into the last home and command of General George and Libbie Custer. Then it's on to Bismarck and the **North Dakota Heritage Center** (1.5 hr). This state museum has one of the nation's largest collections of Plains Indian artifacts, second only to the Smithsonian. Finish the day with a relaxing ride on the **Lewis and Clark Riverboat** (1.5 hrs).

*Overnight: Bismarck, ND*

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

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



## **Day 5 Bismarck – Williston (268 miles/429 km)**

In Washburn, the **Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center** (1.5 hrs) is a world-class interpretive site along the route Lewis and Clark traveled on their “voyage of discovery” almost 200 years ago. Nearby is the reconstructed site of **Fort Mandan** (1.0 hr), winter home of Lewis and Clark from 1804 to 1805. Visit the ruins of an ancient Indian village last occupied in 1845 by the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians at **Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site** (1.5 hrs) in Stanton. The site features a beautiful state-of-the-art museum, a reconstructed earth lodge, and an array of artifacts from the Plains Indian culture. Continuing north, you will have a breathtaking view of **Lake Sakakawea**, which is the largest lake in North Dakota. 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 Las Vegas-style casino. Next to the Casino is **Three Tribes Museum** (30 min), displaying artifacts related to the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara tribal history and offering traditional American Indian arts, crafts and books.

*Overnight: Williston, ND*

*Lewis and Clark Days,  
Washburn, early June*

*Northern Plains Indian  
Culture Fest, Stanton,  
late July*

## **Day 6 Williston**

**Fort Buford State Historic Site** (30 min) was a military post established at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers in 1866. It was a major link in American military strategy of the 19th century and played an important role as a supply depot during the Indian wars era. Near Fort Buford, the **Confluence Interpretive Center** (30 min) is scheduled to open in 2003. The facilities will include a 3.6-mile hiking and biking trail from Confluence Park to the **Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site** (1.0 hr). From 1829 to 1867, John Jacob Astor's powerful American Fur Company and Fort Union, located near the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, shaped and controlled the trading economy of the Northern Plains. The **Bourgeois House** dominates the setting and contains the museum exhibits and replicas of trade items that were bartered for in the days of the successful fur trading companies. Select a special souvenir as a memory of your Lewis and Clark's Great Adventure tour.

*Fort Union Trading Post  
Rendezvous, Williston,  
mid-June*