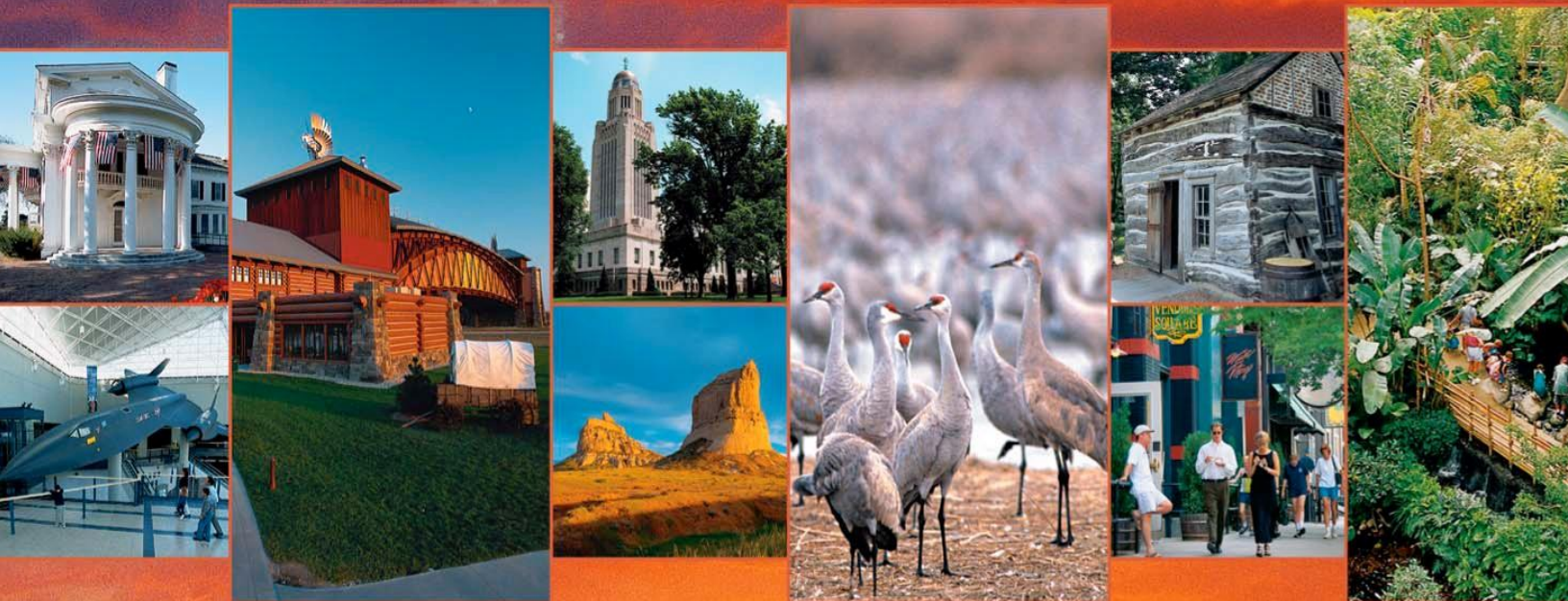


NEBRASKA

Group Travel Planner



Tour 3 **Day Tours from Norfolk and** **Northeastern Nebraska**



Tour 3

Day Tours from Norfolk and Northeastern Nebraska

Norfolk, northeast Nebraska's largest city, offers a fine selection of overnight and dining facilities that cater to the group tour market. While in town be sure to visit the [Elkhorn Valley Historical Museum](#), 515 Queen City Blvd., 402-371-3886. Here you'll see a great collection of historic artifacts relating to the area, including one of the few remaining antique square turn tractors that can make a full square turn so as not to waste field space to turn around. Memorabilia on Norfolk's two famous sons—*Tonight Show* host Johnny Carson and Thural Ravenscroft, the voice of Kellogg's™ "Tony the Tiger" are on display.

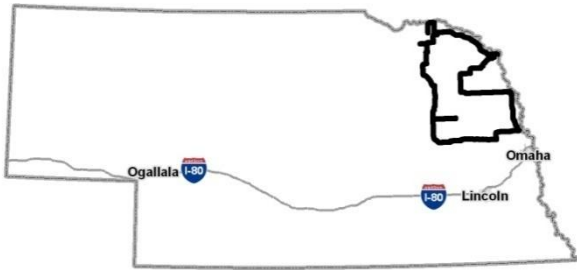
A must see is the **Johnny Carson Exhibit**. Norfolk was the boyhood home of Johnny Carson from age eight through high school. Mr. Carson donated a large collection of personal items to the museum, including videotapes, early boyhood photos and vintage photos of his stage and radio days, as well as many personal items. A display of Carson's special awards—six Emmy Awards, Kennedy Center Honors Medallion, Presidential Medal of Freedom, Television Hall of Fame, and many more are on display. A unique "Best Of" home theater showing favorite *Tonight Show* episodes and monologues chosen by Johnny himself for the museum are part of this impressive collection. A full-sized, life-like Carson mannequin delivers the monologues when visitors step close enough to the exhibit. In the immortal words of Ed McMahon, "Heeeeeeeere's Johnny!"

Also be sure to check out the **Willetta Lueschen Bird Library** at the museum. With prior arrangements, museum staff can take your group to the nearby cave for a "cool" break. Located close to the museum is the new [Norfolk Arts Center](#), 305 N. 5th St., 402-371-7199. This beautiful, new facility features an ever-changing traveling exhibit gallery, as well as showcases the works of local and regional artists.

Use Norfolk as a home base for excellent day trips around the area.

Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

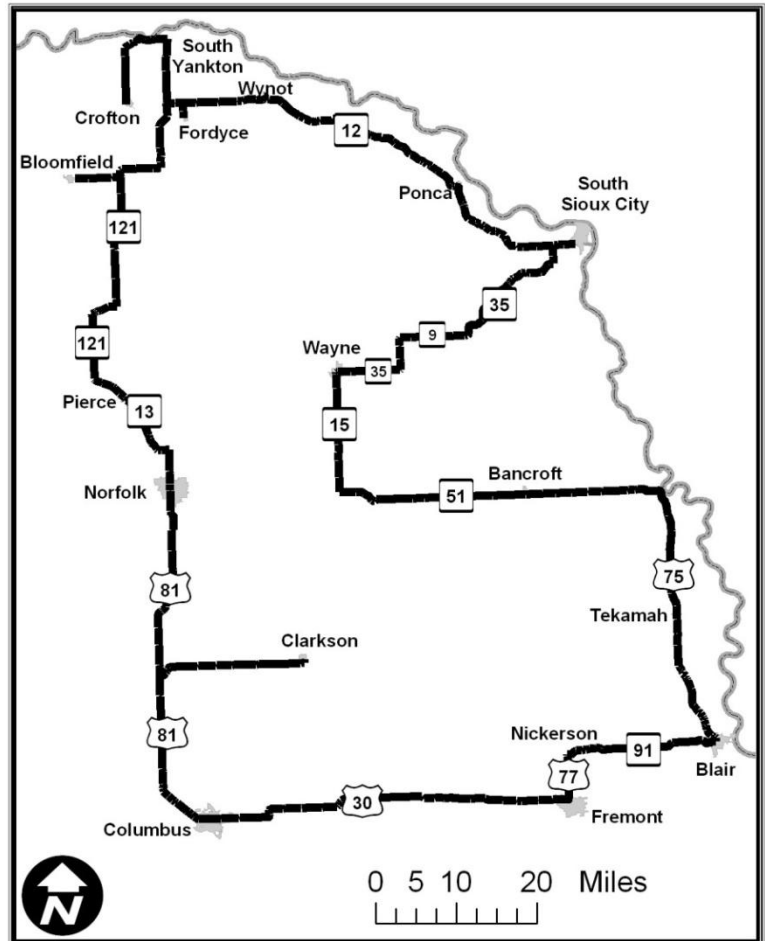
Tour A: Between Two Rivers



Wine making in Nebraska? You betcha! Located northeast of Pierce is Nebraska's first vineyard—[Cuthills Vineyards](#), 54663 853 Road, 402-329-4181. Walking tours of the vineyards are available, and depending on what time of year your group stops, you may be able to witness the winemaking progress. Fun things to do at the winery include sampling wines, relaxing on the spacious patio overlooking the vineyards, and eating a delicious catered meal in the historic barn.

The picturesque community of Bloomfield offers a variety of shopping opportunities, including a wonderful antique/tea shop downtown, and with prior notice, a delicious afternoon lunch or tea can be arranged. The **Bloomfield Bakery**, 104 N. Broadway St., 402-373-2343, is one of Nebraska's best bakeries, so make sure you save plenty of room on the motorcoach (and in your stomach) for all the goodies your group will want to take back. Homemade noodles, huge loaves of bread, one of the tastiest pancake mixes in the state, and everything in between await your tour at the bakery. Search for that perfect bargain or antique that you've been trying to find for years at **Sally's Antiques and Sweets**, 112 E. Main St., 402-373-2423. This store offers many beautiful antiques, furniture, and other quality historic pieces in surroundings that will make you feel you're in a big city. However, the prices are all small town! Call ahead to make reservations for a scrumptious lunch in the intimate tearoom located in the back of the store. Tea, coffee and homemade deserts are available daily. You won't regret it!

Get an up-close view of one of the few grass-based dairies in the upper Midwest at [Brun's Dairy](#), 88088 538 Ave., 402-373-4906, near Bloomfield. Impressive grassland vistas and an abundance of green grass, colorful prairie flowers, and some

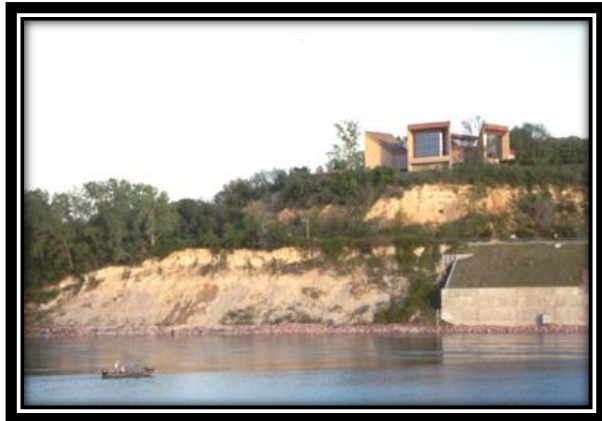


Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

of the most docile dairy cattle you've ever seen will make you think you've taken a trip to Ireland instead of northeast Nebraska. The dairy is home to the first New Zealand style milking parlor in Nebraska and soon, an on-farm cheese plant will offer visitors fresh cheese made from the milk of the Bruns' dairy herds. Tours of the dairy farm are available from May 15 to October 1. Directions: 6 miles west on Highway 84 to 538 Ave. from Bloomfield, farm is 100 yards south on gravel road.

The historic [Argo Hotel](#), 211 W. Kansas St., 402-388-2400, in Crofton is a great place for your group to spend an afternoon relaxing on the spacious front porch. This beautiful hotel has been restored into a bed and breakfast, while the restaurant is able to accommodate group tours for full meals or afternoon teas. Spend time downstairs singing along with the player piano in the restored speakeasy tavern. And don't forget to ask your host about the Argo Hotel ghost! Make plans to spend time at the [Jolene Steffen Studio](#), 55472 888th Road, 402-357-3740, near the hamlet of Constance, east of Crofton. Her art reflects the things that mean the most to her—wide-open sky and rolling hills, beautiful wildflowers and garden flowers, children, animals, creeks and pastoral northeast Nebraska scenes. The vividness and quality of Jolene's works truly will amaze you! Plus, they are affordable to practically everyone, with most prices ranging from \$30 to more than \$500 for the larger pieces.

One of Nebraska's largest lakes, **Lewis and Clark Lake**, is located in the **Lewis and Clark State Recreation Area**, 402-388-4169, 7 miles north of Crofton on Highway 121. This is a prime area for bird watching, especially for bald eagles. Winter is a great time to visit when frigid temperatures freeze the lake and provide great opportunities for ice fishing, skating, and snowmobiling. The Corps of



Engineers operates a power generation plant at **Gavins Point Dam**, 402-667-7873, and the [Lewis and Clark Visitor Center](#), 10 miles north on Highway 12, 402-667-2546. Tours of the power plant are given Memorial Day through Labor Day.

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Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

The [Corps of Discovery Welcome Center](#), 402-667-6557, in South Yankton is located at the intersection of two historic transportation routes—the Lewis and Clark Trail and the Pan-American Highway (Highway 81). The visitor center boasts a gorgeous view of the Missouri River and the surrounding countryside from the scenic overlook. Other features of the center include interpretive panels that retell the story of Lewis and Clark, an art gallery and a gift shop full of Nebraska-made products. With advance scheduling, tours from the visitor center to area attractions can be arranged.

[Prairie Blossom Trails](#), 55582 887 Road, 402-357-3702, near Fordyce is one of the few places in the country that graze Scottish Highland cattle. On your tour of the farm, you can get a firsthand view of these unique looking creatures, walk trails made by pioneer wagons of the past, or simply take in the breathtaking pasture landscape or sunset. Make sure you pick up some of the Scottish Highland beef. It's some of the best beef you'll ever eat! Group tours are offered between May 1 and October 31. Directions: (A) 3 miles south of Highways 81 and 12 junction, turn east on 887 Road, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile and south $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile; (B) 5 miles north to 887 Road from Pleasant Valley Store at Highways 81 and 84 junction.

Spend some time with certified organic farmers at [Marv and Ed's Farm](#), 55996 Highway 12, 402-357-2150 near Fordyce. You won't find any additives or preservatives here! These lifelong farmers raise a variety of organic vegetables and grains, such as corn, oats with sweet clover, alfalfa, turnips, soybeans and hay. You also can spend some time watching the many critters they raise—dairy cows and calves, herds of cattle, hens, turkeys, geese, hogs, Angora goats, and Guinea fowl. Tours are provided from May 1 to October 1. Directions: (A) 4 miles east and south of intersection of Highways 81 and 12; (B) north of Hartington, 3 miles west and south from intersection of Highways 12 and 57.

Grape growing and wine production facilities are sprouting up all over Nebraska. [Nissen Brothers Vineyards](#), 88560 566 Ave., 402-254-3426, near Bow Valley is home to one of the state's newest vineyards. Spend time with the owners learning about the process of growing grapes for wine. Directions: 3 miles north of Hartington on Highway 57 and 886 Road, then $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east to 566 Ave., then south $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

Located 2 miles east of Wynot off Highway 12, [St. James Marketplace](#), 89039 570 Ave., 402-357-3330, is located in a historical schoolhouse. Today it's home to a wonderful farmer's market, craft fair and tearoom that is ideal for an afternoon snack. A variety of historical exhibits also are on display. This unique attraction is a must-see for your group tour. If your tour comes through in late September, plan to stay for the Heritage Fest. Inquire from the ladies



Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

at the marketplace about taking a side trip on **Rattlesnake Road**—one of the most breathtaking backcountry roads in the region. The **Wiseman Monument** along the road recounts a chilling pioneer murder story. Note: The monument and scenic drive are via dirt roads, and no services are available.

Horseback riding, watching nature, kayaking, and bird watching are some of the endless possibilities your group tour can experience at [Turkey Creek Ranch](#), 402-355-2614, near Newcastle in scenic northeastern Nebraska.

Located a short drive north of Ponca on Highway 12, [Ponca State Park](#), 402-755-2284, features one of Nebraska's most comprehensive outdoor/environmental education programs, including history, biology, ecology, astronomy, geology and archaeology of the area. With more than 20 miles of recreational trails, the park provides plenty of opportunities for your group to commune with nature. During the fall months, hayrack rides are available for groups of 15 or more. As part of the park's annual Halloweenfest, the second weekend in October, haunted hayrack rides are given. Buffalo burgers, Lewis and Clark stew and fish fries are held in the summer and fall months. During spring, the park comes alive with the sounds of migratory and native songbirds. The [Missouri National Recreational River Resource and Education Center](#), 402-755-2284, boasts a large interpretive display and exhibit area, a field laboratory and plenty of meeting rooms. Make sure you drive to the tri-state overlook along the Missouri River for a phenomenal view of the river and surrounding countryside.

The **Towers of Time**, 402-755-2284, exhibit features relief carvings of the flora and fauna of three time periods in northeast Nebraska. A waterfall, pond, fountain and walking path complement the towers. Check it out after dark when the entire exhibit is beautifully lit.

The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska will delight and inspire you as they give you a view into their culture, way-of-life, art, and history. The [Winnebago Cultural Center and Museum](#), 402-878-3313, tells the story of the Winnebago Tribe and its rich cultural and historical heritage.

One of the goals of the Winnebago Tribe is to restore bison to the area. Visitors can quietly admire these majestic animals from a pull-off along the main highway; it truly is an amazing sight, 402-878-4075.

Afterward, spend quality time shopping in the Winnebago Village Center for hand-crafted American Indian products at the [Woodland Trails Art Center](#), 503 Ho-Chunk Plaza, 402-878-2400. This multi-attraction destination centered on the arts and fine crafts features a gallery for traveling exhibits. Separate studios give Woodland Trails' artists and craftspeople a setting to demonstrate and educate others about their works, such as pottery, painting, drawing, quilting, and beading

Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

lessons. An impressive show by the Many Moccasins Dance Troupe and a delicious fry bread lunch or dinner at the arts center can round out your group tour's fun.

Next to the arts center is [AllNative.com](#), 503 Ho-Chunk Plaza, 402-878-2400, which specializes in American Indian-made and native-themed products, such as jewelry, home décor, clothing, books, and videos. In the center of Winnebago Village Center is the [Honoring-the-Clans Sculpture Garden and Cultural Plaza](#), 402-846-5353. Twelve statues, each representing one of the Winnebago Tribe's clans, are arranged in a large circle.

Emerson, the only town in Nebraska located in three counties, is home to the **Iron Horse Bar and Casino**, 1010 S. Main St., 402-695-0180. Owned by the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, this 2,000-square-foot facility offers Las Vegas fun and excitement, Nebraska style. The friendly staff at the Iron Horse will serve you up some great food and drinks while you're going for that big pay off! Great for small group tours.

Home of the popular Wayne Chicken Show each July, Wayne also boasts a historic downtown district. The **Wayne State College Arboretum**, 1111 Main St., 402-375-7384, has an herb garden, nature center, trails and hundreds of varieties of plant life. **Garden Perennials**, 402-375-3615, is three acres of gardens and thousands of perennial flowers. Group tours of both facilities are available upon request.

Bancroft was home to Nebraska Poet Laureate John G. Neihardt. The [John G. Neihardt State Historical Site](#), 306 W. Elm St., 402-648-3388, gives your tour a fascinating look at an individual who dedicated his entire life to understanding and helping the American Indians. His most famous book, *Black Elk Speaks*, chronicles many years of interviews with this famous Indian chief. Neihardt's study, where he wrote many of his books and poems, is located on the grounds of the center. A gift store is on site where your tour can purchase exquisite American Indian jewelry and artifacts.



Enjoy a glass of full-bodied Nebraska wine and a tour of the operation at [Silvercreek Hill Vineyards](#), 3130 County Road M, 402-374-1602. The farm operation also raises corn, soybeans and cattle.

Nebraska and Iowa share [DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge](#), 402-533-4455. Located near Blair, Neb., the refuge is a great place to view wildlife year-round along the Missouri River. Also located in the refuge's visitor center is a premier

Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

archaeological display of artifacts from the Steamboat **Bertrand** that sank in the Missouri River in 1865. More than one million artifacts were recovered from the wreckage, and many are in remarkable condition to this day.

The [Apple Barn at Fontenelle Orchard](#), 402-727-5272, in Nickerson features fresh, tree-ripe fruit that you can pick yourself. Tours of the orchard are available upon request.

Fremont has a great selection of antique shops in its historic downtown district, and a lovely county museum—the [Louis E. May Museum](#)—is housed in a stately mansion, 1643 N. Nye Ave., 402-721-4515. After spending time shopping and visiting the museum, climb aboard the **Fremont & Elkhorn Valley Railroad**, 1835 N. Somers Ave., 402-727-0615, for a picturesque 16-mile ride through northeast Nebraska in a diesel powered train. The tour includes a half-hour stop in Nickerson. Between May and October, you can depart on an exciting two-hour journey. Caboose and climate-controlled group coach charters are available year-round. The [Fremont Dinner Train](#), 650 North H St., 402-727-8321, can provide a full dining and riding experience for your group. Some special events that happen on the train include murder mysteries, USO shows, dinner theatre, winetasting and seasonal shows.

Good times will be had by all as your tour speeds down the Platte River, the wind blowing through their hair. Admire eagles as they soar overhead looking for food or a comfy branch from which to watch you tear down the river. Wildlife, great scenery, relaxation and a rip roarin' good time are at [Bryson's Airboat Tours](#), 402-968-8534. Spend some quality time surrounded by the arts at **Gallery 92 West**, 92 W. 6th St., 402-721-7779. Enjoy a good time at [John C. Fremont Days](#), 402-727-9428, each July.

Columbus offers a wide variety of tours to fit the tastes of any group, from history buffs to modern technology enthusiasts. A 1904 steam locomotive, Quicentenary Belltower, and the [Andrew Jackson Higgins Memorial](#), 2001 A.J. Higgins Road,



402-564-2769, are a few reasons to tour Freedom Park. The center point of the park is a life-size replica of the Higgins landing craft that he designed and built to help win WWII. The replica is made of steel and set in sand as if it were beached. Its ramp is down to let visitors walk inside, while sand samples collected from invasion beaches across the globe are mixed with the sand that surrounds the craft. Equally impressive is the bronze eagle with a seven-foot wingspan that sits atop a steel structure made from material from the 2001 World Trade Center disaster in New York City. The [Platte County Historical Society Museum](#), 2916 16th St., 402-

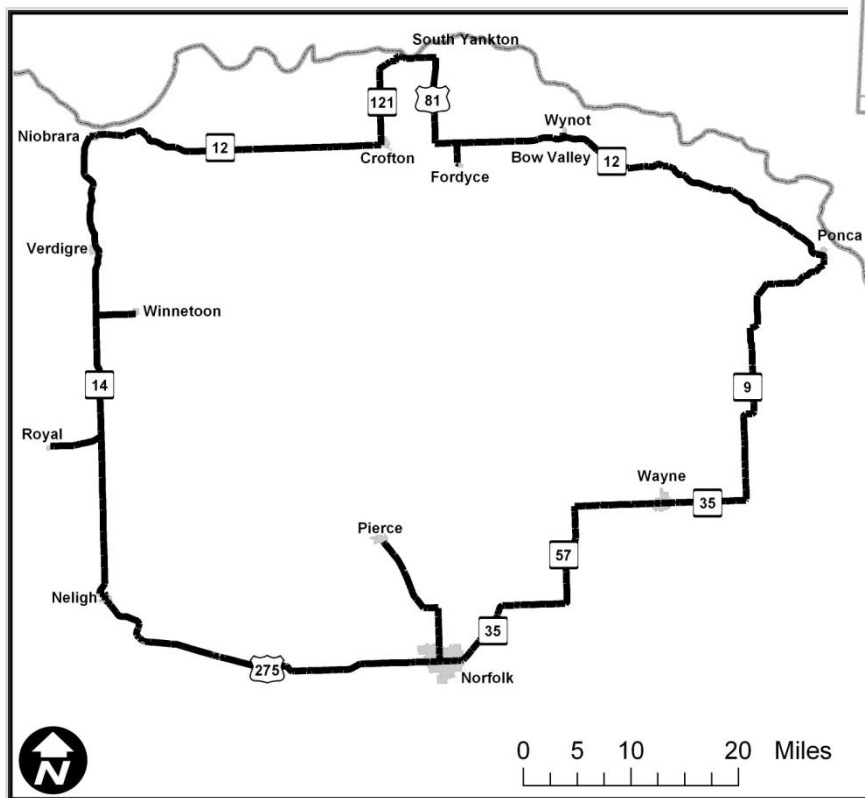
Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

564-4553, features an 1857 log cabin complete with period furnishings.

Columbus boasts one of the best restaurants in Nebraska, [Dusters and the Gottberg Brew Pub](#), 2804 13th St., 402-564-8338. Dining here will make you think you're in a much larger city. Even though the menu is full of delicious dishes, and you can't go wrong with anything you chose, try the Chicken Kiev. You won't regret it! Columbus is known as the most industrialized city per capita in Nebraska, and the Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau, 764 33rd Ave., 402-564-2769, can arrange industrial tours for your group. The attractive **St. Michael's Catholic Church**, 309 3rd St., 402-428-2675, in nearby Tarnov is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Clarkson enjoys two major claims to fame—its rich Czech heritage and the renowned [Bluebird Nursery](#), 519 Cherry St., 402-892-3457. The Clarkson Chamber of Commerce can arrange a Czech breakfast for your group (make sure you eat a kolach, a delicious Czech pastry) and arrange a tour of the outstanding nursery. The Bluebird Nursery is one of the largest in the Midwest, and they ship seeds and plants around the globe. As you tour this quaint community, you'll notice the influence that the nursery has had on it. Clarkson is one of Nebraska's more colorful communities and boasts some of the best-kept gardens and green spaces in the state.

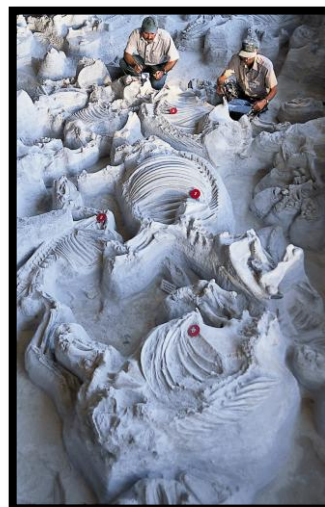
Tour B: Exploring with Lewis and Clark



Wine making in Nebraska? You betcha! Located northeast of Pierce is Nebraska's first vineyard—[Cuthills Vineyards](#), 54663 853 Road, 402-329-4181. Walking tours of the vineyards are available, and depending on what time of year your group stops, you may be able to witness the winemaking progress. Fun things to do at the winery include

sampling wines, relaxing on the spacious patio overlooking the vineyards, and eating a delicious catered meal in the historic barn.

Home to one of the few remaining water-powered mills in the state, [Neligh Mills State Historical Site](#), 402-887-4303, in Neligh takes groups back to a time when the mill was the center of commerce for many towns. The mill's colorful history is displayed throughout the facility. The Neligh Chamber of Commerce, 202 W. 4th St., 402-887-4195, can recommend several local spots for lunch. The [Pierson Wildlife Museum Learning Center](#), 205 E. Fifth St., 402-887-4212, features one of the largest private wild game collections in the U.S., all in one exhibit that includes 100 full mounts and 50 head mounts from around the world.



Scientists claim that [Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park](#), 402-893-2000, near Royal is one of the richest fossil finds of its kind in the northern hemisphere. Millions of years ago, a giant volcano in Idaho spewed volcanic ash into the area for several months, suffocating thousands of camels,

Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

horses and other prehistoric mammals. The ash encased the animals intact, and today visitors can go to the “Rhino Barn” to watch staff diligently uncover whole skeletons. There also is a visitor center/gift shop at the facility. Go wild at [Zoo Nebraska](#), 4030 Highway 20, 402-893-2002, where you can view chimpanzees, monkeys, tigers, parrots, birds of prey, reptiles, wolves and much more.

With only 59 residents, Winnetoon, 402-847-3368, is a sleepy Nebraska town, but a great stop for any group tour! Your first stop should be the post office/general store/antique store, then stroll along the boardwalk to explore the many other buildings of this unique cowboy town. If you time it right, you might catch the “**Cowboy Chainsaw Carver**” at work as he uses his chain saw to turn an ordinary block of wood into a work of art.

Spend a few minutes in Verdigre, the Kolach Capital of the World. The **Verdigre Bakery**, 405 N. Main St., 402-668-2233, makes this Czech and Slovak baked pastry fresh every morning in a variety of flavors, such as prune, poppy seed, apricot, cherry and cream cheese. If you’ve never enjoyed this eastern European delicacy, they’re definitely worth a try.

Located at the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri rivers, Niobrara had to be moved twice to higher ground due to flooding. Luckily your group tour doesn’t have to worry about high water as they explore what Niobrara has to offer. The [Kreycik Riverview Elk Ranch](#), 88971 517 Ave., 402-857-3850, southwest of Niobrara State Park, is a fun place to go to encounter wildlife close up. Load your group into a covered wagon for an enjoyable ride around the picturesque ranch to see majestic elk and bison herds. You’ll never forget the experience of hand feeding buffalo as they clamor to the wagon for corn! It’s truly an experience! The gift shop sells a variety of buffalo-related products, clothing, and food, such as tasty buffalo jerky (if you like it a little spicy, try the jalapeño flavor).

[Niobrara State Park](#), 89261 522 Ave., 402-857-3373, offers your group tour a wide variety of outdoor experiences, such as picnicking, swimming, boating, hiking on 14 miles of trails, fishing, horseback trail riding and wildlife watching. The **J. Alan Cramer Interpretive Center**, 402-857-3373, offers an exceptional view of the park and highlights the history and people of the area. If you visit between Memorial and Labor days, make sure to attend the buffalo cookout. With prior arrangements, your tour can experience the history and natural wonders of the Missouri River on the **Upper Missouri River Float Trip**, which follows the same path as Lewis and Clark 200 years ago.

The **Ponca Earthlodge** and **Ponca Tribal Museum**, 2543 Park Ave., 402-857-3519, display the rich culture and heritage of the Ponca Tribe and their influence on this region of Nebraska. The museum displays artifacts from Ponca history, American Indian artwork, tribal archive photographs and a gift shop that specializes in American Indian artwork. Located in the Powwow area, the **Ponca Native Garden**

Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

contains many varieties of plants that were used by the ancestral Ponca, such as maize, squash, beans, pumpkins, sunflowers, strawberries, sage and watermelon. An outer area of the garden includes plants that were beneficial to the Ponca Tribe and wildlife, such as buffalo berries, sweet potatoes, ground cherries and wild plums.

See if Lady Luck is smiling on you at the **Ohiya Casino**, 52946 Highway 12, 402-857-3860, on the Santee Reservation. Located a few miles east of Niobrara, this 12,000-square-foot casino is owned and operated by the Santee Tribe. You also can purchase authentic American Indian jewelry, blankets and other crafts. Adjacent to the casino is the **Ohiya Casino Café**, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. A weekend buffet and Sunday brunch are offered during the spring, summer and fall months. Get out your bucks and start having fun! As you travel across the reservation, you will go through the **Nebraska Everglades** where the highway is lined on both sides by marshes and water.

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Nebraska Group Tour Travel Planner: Tour 3

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Located a short drive north of Ponca on Highway 12, [Ponca State Park](#), 402-755-2284, features one of Nebraska's most comprehensive outdoor/environmental education programs, including history, biology, ecology, astronomy, geology and archaeology of the area. With more than 20 miles of recreational trails, the park provides plenty of opportunities for your group to commune with nature. During the fall months, hayrack rides are available for groups of 15 or more. As part of the park's annual Hallowfest, the second weekend in October, haunted hayrack rides are given. Buffalo burgers, Lewis and Clark stew and fish fries are held in the summer and fall months. During spring, the park comes alive with the sounds of migratory and native songbirds. The [Missouri National Recreational River Resource and Education Center](#), 402-755-2284, boasts a large interpretive display and exhibit area, a field laboratory and plenty of meeting rooms. Make sure you drive to the tri-state overlook along the Missouri River for a phenomenal view of the river and surrounding countryside.

The **Towers of Time**, 402-755-2284, exhibit features relief carvings of the flora and fauna of three time periods in northeast Nebraska. A waterfall, pond, fountain and walking path complement the towers. Check it out after dark when the entire exhibit is beautifully lit.

Home of the popular Wayne Chicken Show each July, Wayne also boasts a historic downtown district. The **Wayne State College Arboretum**, 1111 Main St., 402-375-7384, has an herb garden, nature center, trails and hundreds of varieties of plant life. 1 hour. **Garden Perennials**, 402-375-3615, is three acres of gardens and thousands of perennial flowers. Group tours of both facilities are available upon request.