

NEBRASKA

Group Travel Planner



Tour 6

**Day Tours from North Platte, Western and
Southwestern Nebraska**

2009

Tour 6: Day Tours from North Platte

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“Buffalo Bill” Cody spent many years in North Platte where he originated the rodeo. His ranch, [Buffalo Bill State Historical Park](#), 308-535-8035, is the focal point of the city. You can tour his house, as well as his beautifully maintained historic barn. During the third week of June, the entire community dons their western duds for NEBRASKAland Days, 308-532-7939. It’s ten days of western fun, ethnic celebrations and live entertainment! If a hands-on experience



with trains is what you want, don’t miss the **Railroad Museum**, 308-535-6719, in Cody Park where you will find Union Pacific’s Challenger 3977—one of the largest steam locomotives ever built. Elk, peacock, geese, deer, and a variety of other critters call the park home. Hint: They’ll like you better if you feed them.

Made famous by Bob Greene’s book *Once Upon a Town*, the North Platte World War II Canteen display is housed at the **Lincoln County Historical Museum**, 2403 N. Buffalo Bill Ave., 308-534-6579. The interpretative display details the story of the Canteen and its volunteers who, for 51 months, 24 hours per day, 7 days a week throughout World War II, met every U.S. military train to provide food, treats and hospitality to passengers. A community of less than 15,000 served more than six million service men and women free of charge. Don’t miss the [20th Century Veterans’ Memorial](#), 2811 S. Jeffers St., 308-532-6579, which is dedicated to the men and women who have served their country. The memorial features larger than life bronze statues and wall murals that honor the five branches of the armed forces. A “Walk of Honor” that is lined by thousands of commemorative bricks shows the names of veterans.

Feel like a kid again and enjoy a spectacular view of Union Pacific Railroad’s Bailey Yard—the world’s largest railroad classification yard—from atop the 8-story [Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center](#), 308-532-9920, 1249 N. Homestead Road. The 95-foot tall tower and visitor center feature an enclosed 360 degree view of all the action below, historical and regional railroad memorabilia, and a gift shop where your group tour can purchase that special gift for their railroad enthusiast.

Conveniently located at the intersection of Interstate 80 and Highway 83, [Fort Cody Trading Post](#), 308-532-8081, is one of the state’s largest and engagingly eclectic gift

Tour 6: Day Tours from North Platte

shops. Antiques, leather goods, jewelry, western gifts, novelties, books, clothing, gag gifts and a variety of other fun gifts and souvenirs can be picked up at Fort Cody. If it's fun, it's at Fort Cody! Make sure you walk through the Old West Museum in the back of the store to view the miniature version of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show—a 20,000-piece hand-carved animated display. Fort Cody is a definite must-see!

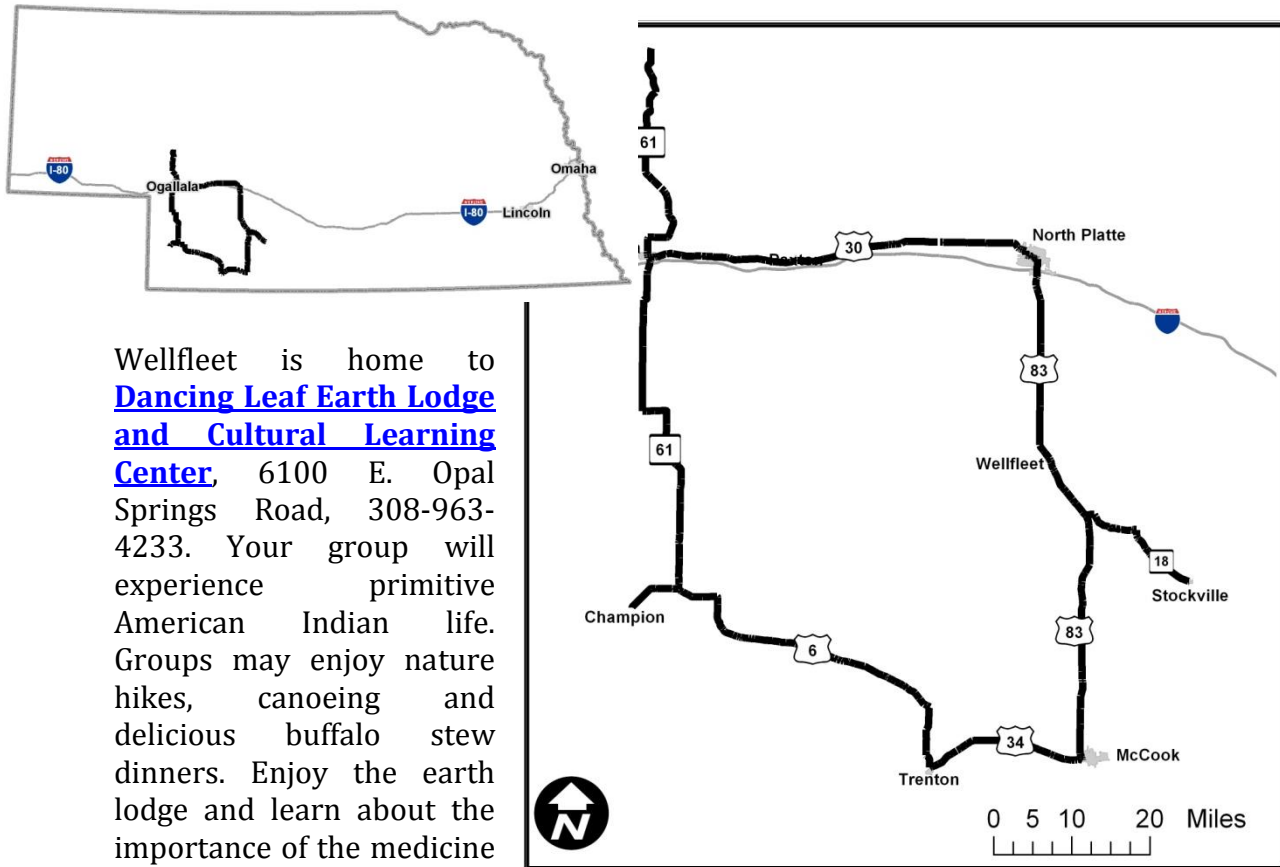
The **Artist's Co-op Art and Gift Gallery**, 308-534-1946, is a showcase of original work of west central Nebraska artists. Five large gallery rooms and an outdoor sculpture garden provide great opportunities to view the works of art at your own leisure. Workshops are hosted by artist members and nationally acclaimed professional artists.

If members of your group tour have always wanted to bring back some of that Old West charm into their homes or offices, now they can at [Rustic Traditions](#), 671 Halligan Dr., 308-534-5795. Take home furniture, lamps, pottery, glass, mirrors, and other pieces created in a western flair. Snacks and light refreshments can be available with advance planning.

Enjoy a delicious dinner, lunch, or wine tasting under tents surrounded by rows of grapevines at [Feather River Vineyards](#), 5700 South East State Farm Rd., 308-534-1538.

Tour 6: Day Tours from North Platte

Tour A: Traverse the Great Southwest



Wellfleet is home to [Dancing Leaf Earth Lodge and Cultural Learning Center](#), 6100 E. Opal Springs Road, 308-963-4233. Your group will experience primitive American Indian life. Groups may enjoy nature hikes, canoeing and delicious buffalo stew dinners. Enjoy the earth lodge and learn about the importance of the medicine wheel. Guided tours of the area can be scheduled with prior notice.

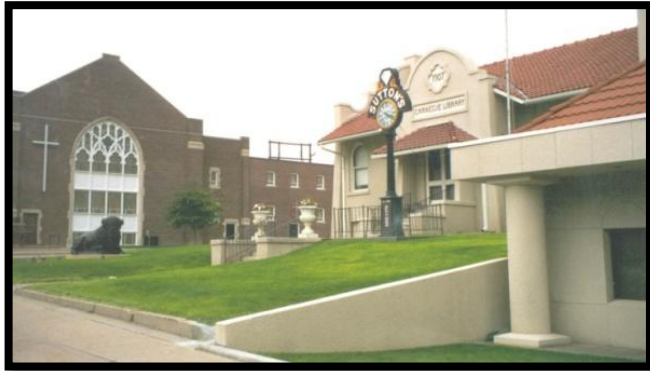
[Perk's Prairie Paradise](#), 308-367-8782, near Stockville truly is one of Nebraska's hidden gems. This privately-owned tribute to Nebraska's pioneer spirit and history boasts 19 structures that visitors can walk through, including a one-room schoolhouse, sod house, church, saloon, two-story house and a replicated "pioneer street" featuring a boardwalk along false building facades. The buildings depict a surveyor's office, millinery shop, dentist office and carpenter's shop, among others. You gotta see it to believe it! A refreshment break can be provided with advance notice.

McCook is southwest Nebraska's commerce center and offers excellent restaurants, shops and boutiques to explore, as well as one of the most charming historical downtown districts in the state. One of the nation's most influential senators, George Norris, was born in McCook. An independent thinker, Norris helped create the Rural Electrification Act, the Tennessee Valley Authority Act (which brought electricity to many rural parts of the country), and the one-house legislative body in Nebraska—the Unicameral. The [George Norris Home](#), 706 Norris Ave., 308-345-8484, is a

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branch of the Nebraska State Historical Society. Groups can view artifacts from Norris' life as well as memorabilia from his 45 years in Congress.

The **Museum of the High Plains**, 421 Norris Ave., 308-345-3661, boasts a number of fine exhibits, including pioneer artifacts from the late 1800s, historic photographs, clothing and rooms devoted to the Daughters of the American Revolution, Senator George Norris, and three former Nebraska governors (Frank Morrison, Ralph Brooks, and Ben Nelson). The museum also has an impressive model railroad exhibit to demonstrate the railroad's impact on the region.



Hands down! **Sehnert's Bakery and Bieroc Café**, 312 Norris Ave., 308-345-6500, has some of the best cheesecake in Nebraska, possibly the entire U.S! In addition to cheesecake, your group can enjoy a variety of mouthwatering dishes and desserts.

Visit Trenton and spend time at **Massacre Canyon**, the site of the last great battle between the Sioux and Pawnee Tribes. The Pawnee suffered a tragic loss of life at this battle. The **Massacre Canyon Monument and Visitor Center**, 308-334-5171, tells the story of this eventful time. Restrooms and a gift shop are available.

Site of the state's last water-powered flourmill, [Champion Mill State Historical Park](#), 308-882-5860, in Champion chronicles the history and story of the mill. From its beginning in 1886 through 1968, the mill produced outstanding flour products sold throughout the region. Today visitors can take a guided tour through the facility, relax on a bench underneath one of the many shade trees that surround the nearby pond, or buy a souvenir sack of flour to take back home.

Nearby Imperial offers a variety of conveniences and boasts one of the most fun-filled county fairs in the state. The town has an active downtown district and a lovely bed and breakfast with a wrap-around porch (each room has an enclosed balcony). The [Balcony House Bed and Breakfast](#), 308-882-5597, can provide your group tour with delicious refreshments with prior notice. Take a few moments to sit on the front porch and enjoy the quiet of small town Nebraska.

Browse the works of some of the best artists in southwest Nebraska at [Meadowlark Gallery](#), 246 Central Ave., 308-352-2450, in Grant. A gift shop is available to purchase that special piece of art or souvenir.

Tour 6: Day Tours from North Platte

Once a bustling cowboy town with a very colorful reputation, Ogallala now is a family-friendly town that embraces its colorful western past. Be sure to make time to visit [Front Street](#), 519 E. 1st St., 308-284-6000, to watch **The Crystal Palace Revue and Shoot Out**—Nebraska’s longest-running summer theatre. Belly up to the bar for a sarsaparilla or other beverage to wet your whistle while you watch showgirls and desperados perform. Plan a visit to the [Petrified Wood Gallery](#), 525 E. 1st St., 308-284-9996, after the show. This natural history gallery specializes in ancient woods, fossils and American Indian artifacts. The Ogallala/Keith County Tourism Office, 204 East A St, 308-284-4066, can arrange a visit to legendary **Boot Hill** and the stately **Mansion on the Hill**.



Ogallala is home to “Big Mac” or [Lake McConaughy](#)—the largest inland lake in the region, 308-284-8800. The lake is a water lover’s paradise and offers white sand beaches, excellent fishing and relaxing lounges on a boat in the middle of the water. The **Lake McConaughy Visitor/Water Interpretive Center**, 308-284-8800, is Nebraska’s first water museum and interprets the significance of water to the state’s past, present and future. With advance notice, the Ogallala/Keith County Tourism Office can arrange a beach party, boat rides and a tour of **Kingsley Dam**. From late December to early March, the [Bald Eagle Viewing Center](#), 308-284-2332, is open below the dam, and is one of the best locations in the region to view these magnificent birds.

View one of the largest, privately held lilac collections in the country—**The Lilacs of Meadowlark Hill**, 308-284-2524. The best time to visit is May during “Lilac Time,” when the air is heavy with the perfume wafting from these beautiful flowers.

Explore the land of grapes and honey at [South Fork Vineyard](#), 845 Road East D, 308-248-6394, near Ogallala. Not only can your group tour stroll through the vineyards while sipping a delicious glass (or two) of Nebraska wine, they can take home a variety of honeybee products. Pure Nebraska honey, flavored honey cream, honey sticks, natural soaps and lotions, beeswax candles, and savory honey spread are just some of the many bee products available at the vineyard. Afterward, spend a pleasant time picking your own grapes.

Take in colorful history and stories, breathtaking scenery, small town charm, and wine...oh my, lots and lots of wine. [The Wines of the Historic Trails](#) takes your group tour along the modern day routes of the Oregon, Mormon, and California trails via the Western Trails Scenic and Historic Byway. Eat, drink, and be merry as you explore a variety of Nebraska wines at four wineries along the trail: **South Fork**

Tour 6: Day Tours from North Platte

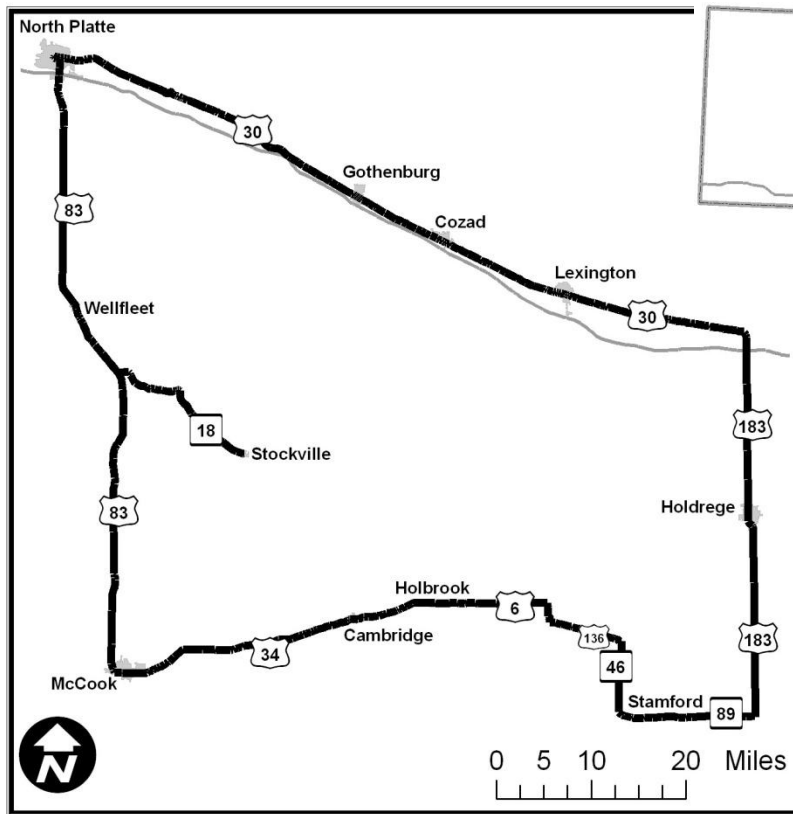
Vineyard and Honey Hut, 17 Ranch Winery, Last Chance Winery, and Prairie Vine Winery.

Take a step back in time at a working cattle ranch located in the heart of the Nebraska Sandhills, north of Ogallala. The historical [Haythorn Ranch Tours and Figure Traditions Event Center](#), 308-355-4000, maintains a herd of more than 500 ranch-bred horses that are used in day-to-day ranching activities. It is the largest breeder of quarter horses in the U.S. and the second largest in the world. Call for reservations for large and small group tour packages.

It's off to one of Nebraska's most famous watering holes—[Ole's Big Game Steakhouse and Lounge](#), 308-239-4500, in Paxton. Ole's is known for its impressive collection of mounted animals, as well as quality food and exceptional hospitality that attracts many group tours to this unique restaurant. There is plenty of room for groups, and the delicious food will bring you back again and again.

Before heading to Ole's for dinner, make sure you stop by [5 Trails Winery](#), 104 Main St., 308-239-4999 for a glass of fine Nebraska red, white or desert wine. You also can tour the production facility and pick up some gifts for friends back home.

Tour B: Peaceful Prairies



One of the few Pony Express stations, 308-537-3505, still standing in Nebraska is located in Gothenburg's charming city park. Original historic items are on display and your clients can send postcards to friends and family back home postmarked with the original Pony Express stamp. The **Sod House Museum**, 308-537-2680, at the Gothenburg

Tour 6: Day Tours from North Platte

Interstate 80 exit shows visitors how the pioneers lived and survived on the treeless Great Plains. Both attractions have gift shops.

Cozad is home of painter Robert Henri, who founded the Ash Can style of painting and became a major influence in the art world. In fact, his works hang in galleries in New York City and Paris, France. His childhood home is the [Robert Henri Museum and Historical Walkway](#), 218 E. 8th St., 308-784-4154, where several prints of his art are on display, along with other Henri-inspired art.

The [Heartland Museum of Military Vehicles](#), 308-324-6329, in Lexington is an impressive collection of military equipment and machinery. Lexington also is home to [Mac's Creek Vineyards and Winery](#), 308-324-0440. Make sure you take time to sample their excellent Nebraska-produced wines and tour the vineyards and production facilities. Explore the history of Dawson County at the [Dawson County Historical Museum](#), 805 N. Taft St., 308-324-5340.

During World War II, this region of Nebraska housed several German prisoner of war (POW) camps. Many POWs settled in the area and became productive and valued residents. The [Nebraska Prairie Museum](#), 308-995-5015, in Holdrege has an impressive collection from Camp Atlanta, originally located five miles from Holdrege. Works of art by POWs, as well as a variety of other exhibits, are displayed. The museum also has several historical buildings on its grounds.

Relive the days of the American Plains Indians at [Living History Tepee](#), 308-868-9400, in Stamford. Agricultural tours, a working family farm, and pumpkin patch will delight everyone on your group tour. Spend a relaxing autumn afternoon searching for just the right pumpkin or enjoying a hayrack ride at [Pumpkin Corners](#), 308-868-4121.

Visit the [GROW Nebraska](#) store, 416 Central Ave., 888-476-9632, in Holbrook where your tour can purchase locally made and Nebraska-made crafts, products and souvenirs. Call ahead to make sure the store is open for your tour's arrival.

Two outstanding tourist attractions in Cambridge are the [Cambridge Bed and Breakfast](#), 606 Parker St., 308-697-3220, and the [Sondra L. Jonson Studios](#), 716 Nelson St., 800-720-8574. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Cambridge Bed and Breakfast is a neoclassical style, three-story home, completed in 1910. The house's owners host a living history tour experience where your tour can learn about the Faling family (the house's original owners), life in rural Nebraska, neoclassical architecture, and marvel at the house's beautifully designed interior. Special events, such as high tea, dessert or an ice cream social can be provided to groups of 10 or



Tour 6: Day Tours from North Platte

more. Between 1998 and 2002, Sondra L. Jonson created more than 14 life-sized sculptures to display in six states. Her small bronze statues appear in collections throughout the United States and Europe, including the White House and the Vatican.

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