



Nebraska Parks plus the Total Eclipse

A total Eclipse! – Nebraska’s 150th Anniversary! – Lots of Parks! *Let’s Go!*

Sunday, August 20th thru Friday, August 25th, 2017

6 Days, 5 nights – 9 meals (2 Dinners, 4 Lunches, 3 Hot Breakfasts)

Double \$909 (\$849) Single*\$1159 (\$1,099)

*Single occupancy at Niobrara State Park means you will be single in one of the two bedrooms.

(\$60 DISCOUNT IF DEPOSIT RECEIVED BY MAY 19th, 2017)

Depart: Best Western, CB – 10:30 AM College of St. Mary – 10:45 A.M.

HIGHLIGHTS: Total Eclipse, Chimney Rock, Scott’s Bluff National Monument, Ole’s Big Game Steak House, Toad Stool Geological Park, Kreycik Buffalo and Elk Ranch, Fort Robinson overnight stay, Great Platte River Road Archway Monument, Mahoney Melodrama, Cowboy Trail Bridge, Smith Falls State Park, Niobrara State Park Cabin Stay, 10 meals, and much more!

DAY 1, Sunday, August 20th - OMAHA - KEARNEY: Let’s put on our blue jeans and get relaxed! Depart Omaha via an Arrow deluxe motorcoach. Our trip to the Nebraska Parks would not be complete without a stop at Mahoney State Park. Here we will enjoy a buffet style lunch in the lodge, followed by a performance of one of Mahoney’s famous Melodramas (to be announced close to our departure date). We will then be provided with a tour describing all of the great attractions at this premier park. We will depart for our overnight stay in Kearney, where we will have dinner tonight on our own. **L.**

DAY 2, Monday, August 21st – KEARNEY - SIDNEY: After a leisurely breakfast on our own at the full-service Holiday Inn restaurant we’ll take a short drive to ***Fort Kearney State Historical Park***. Built to protect Overland Trail travelers, Fort Kearney State Historical Park was a stage station, home station for the Pony Express, outfitting depot for Indian campaigns and home of the Pawnee Scouts. The fort was established in 1848 and used until 1871. After this brief stop we will head over to the ***Great Platte River Road Archway Monument***. Join the 1.5 million visitors who have experienced the westward expansion of a nation through the eyes of those who lived it. Spanning 310 feet over Interstate 80 near Kearney, Nebraska, The Archway presents 170 years of America’s westward movement through detailed displays and harrowing stories you’ll hear as you walk over one of America’s busiest interstate highways. Here we will grab a sandwich, possibly explore the grounds and then gather under the pavilion where we have seats reserved to relax as we prepare to watch ***the total eclipse***. In Kearney, the partial phase starts at 11:33 A.M. Totality starts at 12:57 P.M. and lasts for 1 minute and 54 seconds. At the conclusion of eclipse, we’ll head west towards ***Ole’s Big Game Steak House in Paxton, NE***. Our overnight location this evening is Sidney, Nebraska. **D.**

DAY 3, Tuesday, August 22nd – SIDNEY – FORT ROBINSON: After a nice breakfast at the hotel, we start our day by visiting ***Chimney Rock***. Feel the awe and curiosity the pioneers experienced when they saw the most famous landmark on the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails. Next, towering 800 feet above the North Platte River, ***Scotts Bluff National Monument***, has served as a landmark for peoples from Native Americans to emigrants on the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails to modern travelers. After lunch on our own, we enjoy the beauty as we drive through ***Chadron State Park***. At the end of the day we check into our lodging at ***Fort Robinson***. Weather permitting, we will enjoy a western style dinner at one of the park’s outdoor locations. **B.D.**

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DAY 4, Wednesday, August 23rd – FORT ROBINSON – VALENTINE: After breakfast on our own at the Fort's café, we enjoy a guided tour of the Fort. This stunning State Park comprises more than 22,000 acres of exquisite Pine Ridge scenery, compelling Old West history, exceptional lodging, scenic camping and the park's own buffalo and longhorn herds. You will have time on your own to explore the visitor's center, museum and other areas of the Fort. As lunch time approaches we again board our comfortable motor coach and head to the *Drifter's Cookshack at High Plains Homestead*. There Mike and Linda Kesselring will have prepared a lunch for us before we head to *Toad Stool Geological Park*. It is in the Oglala National Grassland in far northwestern Nebraska. Operated by the United States Forest Service, it contains a badlands landscape and a reconstructed sod house. The park is named after its unusual rock formations, many of which resemble toadstools. Next Stop Valentine, NE. After checking into our motel, we have dinner on our own. Before retiring for the evening, we will visit one of the highest bridges along the Cowboy Trail State Park. Every trail has its high points. The Cowboy's signature sites are its long bridges offering spectacular views. East of Valentine, the former railroad bridge – a quarter-mile long and 148 feet high – spans the Niobrara River. **L.**

DAY 5, Thursday, August 24th – VALENTINE – NIOBRARA STATE PARK: After our breakfast at the hotel we take a short drive to *Smith Falls State Park*. The amazing beauty here makes helps you appreciate the varying landscapes Nebraska offers! As we travel across Nebraska we will have lunch in the small town café located in Naper, Nebraska. Then it is on to *Kreycik Elk and Buffalo* farm near Niobrara. We will travel along in unique tractor pulled covered wagons as we learn how to raise elk and buffalo. As we ride thru the hilly pastures the elk and buffalo are invited to come and get their ear corn treats that you will be hand feeding them from inside the covered wagons! But watch out for Boomer, our long-horn steer who lives with the buffalo, as he happily gallops right to the front of the line of the buffalo not wanting to take a chance on missing out on any treats. Included dinner at the Sportsman in Niobrara and then check into our cabins at *Niobrara State Park*. It is situated at the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri Rivers and the view of the Missouri River from the bluff in this park- it's amazingly beautiful. **B.L.D.**

DAY 6, Friday, August 25th – NIOBRARA STATE PARK – HOME: After a catered breakfast in the Eagle View room we head to *Gavins Point Dam and Lewis and Clark Lake*. Here, the Lewis and Clark Visitor's Center is located atop Calumet Bluff just downstream from the Gavins Point Power plant. The Center provides a spectacular view of Lewis and Clark Lake, Gavins Point Dam, and the Missouri River and information concerning the development of the entire Missouri River Basin. We arrive at *Ponca State Park* just in time to enjoy lunch as we again overlook the Missouri River. One of the rangers will join us for lunch and then board our bus as we tour this beautiful facility. Next, *Fort Atkinson State Historical Park*, established in 1820 as one of the recommendations of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, was the first U.S. Military Post west of the Missouri River. Once again, we have arranged a special tour of the park and the visitor's center. We arrive back at home around 6:00 P.M. with our memories filled with exciting times and places. **B.L.**

