




Fodor's Travel

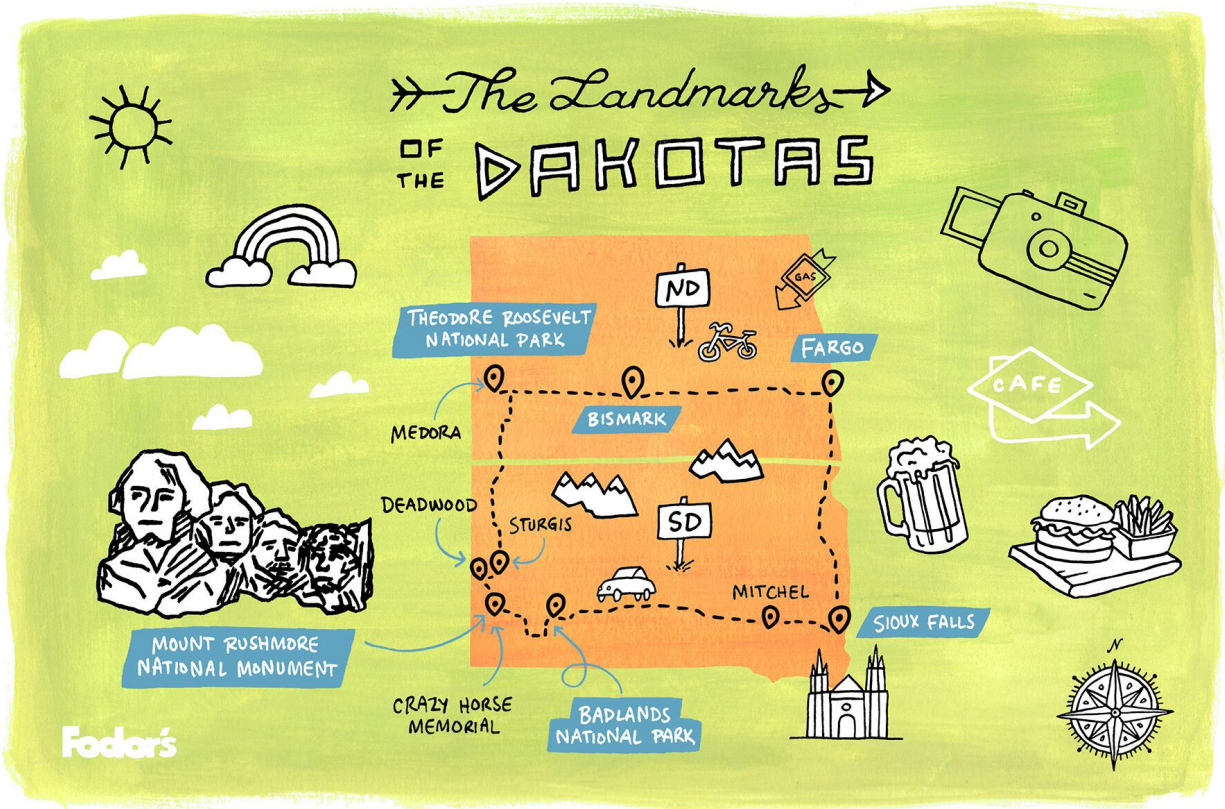


Collectively known as “The Dakotas,” North and South Dakota truly have something for everyone.








Rolling hills, underground cave systems, Wild West history, rich Native American culture, and National and State parks brimming with hiking, biking, kayaking, and wildlife viewing. From rustic cabins and campgrounds to chic glamping sites and upscale hotels, The Dakotas have accommodations for every budget and every type of traveler. ...[Read More](#)

At A Glance

START	END
Sioux Falls, South Dakota	Sioux Falls, South Dakota
 MILES TRAVLED	1,195
 SUGGESTED DURATION	7 nights
 STATES: STATES VISITED	North Dakota, South Dakota



The Itinerary

-  **STOP 1** Sioux Falls to Badlands National Park
-  **STOP 2** Badlands National Park to Mount Rushmore
-  **STOP 3** Mount Rushmore to Deadwood
-  **STOP 4** Deadwood to Medora
-  **STOP 5** Medora to Bismarck
-  **STOP 6** Bismarck to Fargo
-  **STOP 7** Fargo to Sioux Falls



STOP 1

Sioux Falls to the Badlands National Park, South Dakota

○ Sioux Falls
○ Badlands National
Park

4 h

275 mi

Route: Today's drive is a straight shoot across Highway 90, including several optional stops at quirky roadside attractions.

Along the Way

Upon Arrival

Roadside Attraction: Stop at the [World's Only Corn Palace](#) in Mitchell at the beginning of your route (70 miles from Sioux Falls) and at the six-ton [Giant Prairie Dog](#) at the end (20 miles before Wall).

Photo Op: The town of [Chamberlain](#) is the home of the impressive [Dignity of Earth and Sky](#) sculpture, a statue dedicated to the Native American population of South Dakota. The sculpture depicts a 50-foot Lakota woman with a traditional star quilt.

Detour: Just north of the town of Wall (the gateway town to Badlands National Park) is [Wounded Knee The Museum](#), a memorial to the Indigenous people killed at the infamous Wounded Knee Massacre.





WHAT TO LISTEN TO

KILI Radio (90.1 FM), broadcasts from a local Native American reservation



STOP 2

Badlands National Park to Mount Rushmore, South Dakota

-  **Badlands National Park** 1 h 30 m 75 mi
-  **Mount Rushmore**

Route: Today is a quick drive but if you're a photographer and want to get the best light, you'll want to be to Mount Rushmore before 11 a.m.

Along the Way

Upon Arrival

Shop: [Native West Trading Co.](#), near Interior, South Dakota, is a great place to purchase authentic, handcrafted items made by local Native artists.

Detour: Visit the rolling hills of [Custer State Park](#), where roaming bison and towering granite spires line the route. The park is famous for its herd of 1,300 bison, which you can spot along the Wildlife Loop Road. It's the largest publicly-owned bison herd in the country and the experience is similar to what you'd encounter in Yellowstone. Each September, the park hosts its annual [Buffalo Roundup](#), where wranglers on horseback round up the park's herd to be sorted and vaccinated. The park offers mountain biking, fishing, paddle boating, mountain climbing, and some of the best hiking in the Black Hills. You could spend anywhere from a few hours to a few days hiking in the park.



WHAT TO LISTEN TO

"Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West" by Dee Brown



STOP 3

Mount Rushmore to Deadwood, South Dakota

○ Mount Rushmore 1 h 10 m 50 mi
○ Deadwood

Route: No matter which route you take from the Crazy Horse Memorial to Deadwood, the drive is beautiful, but the most spectacular route would be to detour a bit along the Spearfish Canyon byway. The route will add about an hour to the drive, but you'll pass beautiful waterfalls and gorgeous landscapes. This route is particularly stunning when the leaves are changing in autumn.

Along the Way

Upon Arrival

Detour: Wind Cave National Park is home to one of the longest and most complex cave systems in the world. Aboveground, there's hiking trails and an abundance of wildlife while belowground, candlelit tours explore the cave, its maze of passages, and its unique honeycomb-like boxwork formations. You could spend a couple of hours here before or after visiting Mount Rushmore (it's about an hour's drive each way).

Detour: Explore the living history and culture of South Dakota's Native American tribes at the Crazy Horse Memorial. It's worth spending a few bucks to take the bus to the base of the memorial. Also, don't miss the Native American Museum on site, which is included with the admission to Crazy Horse.

Eat & Drink: For lunch, head to Black Hills Burger and Bun Co. which serves up homemade burgers, salads, and fun sides (think cheese curds and fried green tomatoes) using minimally-processed ingredients.



STOP 4

Deadwood to Medora, North Dakota

○ Deadwood
○ Medora

3 h 45 m

220 mi

Route: Enjoy beautiful rolling hill and wide-open prairie landscapes as you drive to North Dakota. About 30 minutes outside of Deadwood, you will pass through the community of Belle Fourche, pronounced as “Bell Foosh.” This town is considered to be along the geographic center of the United States (with the admission of Hawaii and Alaska).

Along the Way

Upon Arrival

Town: Stop by Sturgis, a sleepy town that livens up for three weeks of rallies during the annual [Sturgis Motorcycle Rallies](#) each August. If you’re not there for the rally, pop into the [Motorcycle Museum](#) to learn a bit about the town’s motorcycle culture.

Detour: The 144-mile [Maah Daah Hey trail](#) is an epic single-track trail carved through the North Dakota badlands, showcasing some of our country’s most unique and breathtaking terrain. Majestic plateaus, large expanses of rolling prairie, and rivers intertwine to offer the adventurous outdoors lover a taste of pure, unadulterated badlands.



STOP 5

Medora to Bismarck, North Dakota

○ Medora
○ Bismarck

2 h

130 mi

Route: Today's route is an easy drive on Interstate 94, with several potential detours and photo ops.

Along the Way

Upon Arrival

Nature: Bison, deer, prairie dogs, wild horses, and eagles are plentiful in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and a loop ride in the South Unit gets you up close with the wildlife. The park's 70,400 acres of breathtaking Badlands is full of hiking trails, scenic overlooks, picnic spots, and campsites.

Photo Op: The best places for great photo ops in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park are Buck Hill and Wind Canyon. Also, stop at the Painted Canyon for one last look (and a quick pic!) as you leave the park and head to Bismarck.

Detour: Beginning at Exit 72 on 1-94, near Gladstone, is the Enchanted Highway, a 32-mile stretch that ends in the small town of Regent. Beginning with the "Geese in Flight" sculpture at Exit 72, large metal sculptures are placed along the county highway, each with a parking area and kiosk. Some of the sculptures include "World's Largest Tin Family," "Teddy Rides Again," "Pheasants on the Prairie," and "Grasshoppers in the Field."



Photo Op: About 30 miles before Bismarck, you'll pass Salem Sue, the "World's Largest Holstein Cow."

Detour: Forty minutes north of Bismarck is Fort Mandan, where Lewis and Clark met up with Sakakawea on their expedition. Here, you can tour this historic site and walk in the footsteps of these legendary explorers.



STOP 6

Bismarck to Fargo, North Dakota

 Bismarck
 Fargo

3 h 40 m

245 mi

Route: You may notice the flattened topography and fields abound as you enter North Dakota's Red River Valley.

Along the Way

Upon Arrival

Town: Visit [Frontier Village](#) in the town of Jamestown to take a picture with the “World’s Largest Buffalo” and to visit the [National Buffalo Museum](#), where you can learn about the history and preservation of buffalo and see an albino bison.

Photo Op: Stop by the [Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau](#) to take a picture with the original “Woodchipper” from the movie *Fargo*. Also, if North Dakota is your last state to check off your bucket list, you can join the [“Saved the Best for Last”](#) club!



STOP 7

Fargo to Sioux Falls, South Dakota

○ Fargo 3 h 40 m 245 mi
○ Sioux Falls

Route: Today is a quick, easy drive along I-29 so you'll have plenty of time to explore Sioux Falls when you arrive.

Along the Way Upon Arrival

Detour: Explore Fort Abercrombie, which was the first permanent U.S. military fort and was once known as "The Gateway to the Dakotas."