



The Black Hills & Badlands

SEPTEMBER 14-20, 2009

Southwest South Dakota is one of the most diverse ecological and geological regions in the country. This system of national and state parks, national forests, and national grasslands highlights the exciting natural history of this region.

The distinctive mixture of habitats makes South Dakota a perfect setting for abundant wildlife and a wide variety of plant life. Join NPCA as we explore the natural and historical heritage of this diverse region.

Highlights

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK—Badlands National Park is a hauntingly beautiful landscape that often is compared to a moonscape. Sharply eroded buttes, pinnacles, and spires blend with the largest protected mixed-grass prairie in the United States. Bison, pronghorn antelope, and prairie dogs roam this land, as well as one of the rarest animals on earth, the black-footed ferret.

MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MONUMENT—Mount Rushmore National Monument is one of the icons of the United States. The monumental task of carving this amazing sculpture out of the face of a mountain is an uplifting story of inspiration and tenacity.

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK—Located within the unique geologic formation of the Black Hills, Wind Cave National Park is one of the largest cave systems in the world.

ABOVE: MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL, SOUTH DAKOTA © IOFOTO/ISTOCKPHOTO. OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT: BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH DAKOTA © JONATHAN LARSEN/BIG STOCK PHOTO; AN AMERICAN BISON IN SOUTH DAKOTA © RUSTY DODSON/BIG STOCK PHOTO.

Trip Details

NPCA MEMBER TRIP PRICE:

\$2,773 per person double occupancy;
\$550 single supplement.

PRICE INCLUDES:

Airport transfers, transportation during the journey, all accommodations, meals specified in the itinerary (B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, and D-Dinner), professional guide services, park and other entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses.

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

Roundtrip airfare to and from destination; items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone, or drinks from the bar; or gratuities for portering, professional guides, and personal services.

PAYMENTS/CANCELLATIONS:

Space is confirmed by calling the NPCA Travel Desk at 800.628.7275. A \$300 per person deposit is due at registration. Final payment will be invoiced separately and is due 60 days prior to departure. Cancellation notice must be submitted in writing and is effective upon date of receipt. Cancellations up to 60 days prior receive a refund, less a \$200 per person handling fee. Cancellations within 60 days of departure could result in the loss of 100% of your total cost.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:

To protect yourself from the loss of deposit and cancellation fees, you are encouraged to purchase travel insurance. Ask your travel advisor for more details.

ARRIVE/DEPART:

Rapid City, SD

LENGTH:

7 days/6 nights

PACE:

Easy to slightly moderate. Short hikes one mile or less on uneven terrain, with some stairs in Wind Cave National Park.

Itinerary

SEPTEMBER 14: ARRIVAL IN RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

Assemble at 4:00 p.m. at the baggage claim area of the Rapid City, South Dakota, airport. We then transfer to our resort lodging in the heart of Custer State Park. The program begins at 6:30 p.m. with a welcome reception and dinner, after which we will have a short excursion to view the park's abundant wildlife. *Custer State Park Lodge (D)*

SEPTEMBER 15: CUSTER STATE PARK & WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK

Following breakfast and an early morning bird/nature stroll, we travel to some of the remote areas of this huge 73,000-acre state park to view the wildlife and geologic splendor. We should have opportunities to view elk, bison, big horn sheep, antelope, a great variety of birds, and picture-postcard scenery. Later we travel to Wind Cave National Park. The cave actually "breathes" with changes in atmospheric pressure, hence its name. We tour a small portion of one of the largest cave systems in the world and its unusual cave formation, composed of thin calcite fins resembling honeycombs. Then we explore some of the back roads of this beautiful landscape. *Custer State Park Lodge (B,L,D)*

SEPTEMBER 16: WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK & MOUNT RUSHMORE

After breakfast, head out to explore several other natural wonders of the region, including the Hot Springs Mammoth Site and an exploration of the Black Hills back country by train. Late in the day we return to Wind Cave National Park to travel more of its marvelous back roads and trails. At dusk we visit Mount Rushmore National Monument for the spectacular lighting ceremony. *Custer State Park Lodge (B,L,D)*

SEPTEMBER 17: SPEARFISH CANYON & JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL PARK

Today we explore the northwest section of the Black Hills, traveling through and exploring spectacular Spearfish Canyon, a National Scenic Byway. This is a rugged landscape with tree-shaded trout streams and thick forests, making it a true gem in a region of exceptional beauty. We travel some of the back roads of the Black Hills National Forest and visit Jewel Cave National Monument before a mid-afternoon return to our lodging. After sundown, we head to a secluded area to stargaze in the darkness of a prairie night. *Custer State Park Lodge (B,L,D)*

SEPTEMBER 18: BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Today we check out of our hotel and travel to Badlands National Park, where the prairie landscape is in stark contrast to the tree-clad ridges of the Black Hills. This sprawling park encompasses a variety of stunning vistas and scenery and an abundance of prairie plants and animals. Areas in this park are lunar-like, featuring bluffs, pinnacles, and steep gullies exposed by the forces of erosion. As the day draws to a close, we will visit a remote scenic overlook to feast upon a picnic and watch a gorgeous sunset. Late in the evening we will arrive at our lodging at Rapid City. *Hampton Inn (B,L,D)*

SEPTEMBER 19: BEHIND LOCKED GATES

Today we will travel to an area inaccessible to the general public. As always, our experiences will depend upon weather and wildlife, but we may well experience something marvelous! *Hampton Inn (B,L,D)*

SEPTEMBER 20: TRANSFER TO RAPID CITY AIRPORT

Departure flight home from Rapid City after 11:00 a.m. (B)

NOTE: With fewer than 8 participants, a small-group surcharge (typically \$100-300 per participant) will apply.



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