



VisitWatfordCity.com

Sample Tour Itineraries through McKenzie County and Watford City

Highway 200 from Montana through McKenzie County/Watford City to Highway 200 to Minot

At Bainville, MT take Highway 327 to **Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site** (located on the Montana & North Dakota state line)

Fort Union Trading Post: The Grandest Fort on the Upper Missouri River

Between 1828 and 1867, Fort Union was the most important fur trade post on the Upper Missouri River. Here, the Assiniboine and six other Northern Plains Indian Tribes exchanged buffalo robes and smaller furs for goods from around the world, including cloth, guns, blankets, and beads. A bastion of peaceful coexistence, the post annually traded over 25,000 buffalo robes and \$100,000 in merchandise.

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site and its visitor center in the Bourgeois House are open daily throughout the year except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Days. The Trade House, including the trade room and the clerk's office, is open seasonally.

> www.nps.gov/fous

Continue down Highway 1804 just past Highway 58 to **Fort Buford State Historic Site**

Fort Buford State Historic Site preserves remnants of a vital frontier plains military post. Fort Buford was built in 1866 near the confluence of the Missouri & Yellowstone rivers, and became a major supply depot for military field operations. Original features still existing on the site include a stone powder magazine, the post cemetery site, and a large officers' quarters building which now houses a museum.

Fort Buford was one of a number of military posts established to protect overland and river routes used by immigrants settling the West. While it served an essential role as the sentinel on the northern plains for twenty-nine years, it is probably best remembered as the place where the famous Hunkpapa Sioux leader, Sitting Bull, surrendered in 1881.

> history.nd.gov/historicsites/buford

Just one-half mile east of Fort Buford sits the **Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center**

The center tells the story of the confluence of these two mighty rivers, as well as provides the same magnificent view that Lewis and Clark Expedition members enjoyed when they visited in 1805 and 1806. The rotunda area includes three large murals featuring quotes from the Lewis and Clark Journals, and paintings of the Missouri River landscape by Colonel Philippe Régis de Trobriand, commanding officer of Fort Stevenson near present-day Garrison, N.D. in the late 1860s. The center features exhibits on the geography, geology, and history of the area. The interpretive center is located one-half mile east of historic Fort Buford near Williston, North Dakota.

> history.nd.gov/historicsites/mycic

Get back on Highway 1804 and head south on Highway 58, you will cross the Missouri River as you enter McKenzie County.

Continue down Highway 58 to Highway 200. Go west & jump into Montana for lunch (remember, Montana is on Mountain Time). Some great places for lunch are The Double Barrel & the Powder Keg for their unique pizzas. Once you have satisfied your hunger, take Highway 200 back into North Dakota. Just over a mile down the road you will come upon **Sundheim Park**, a beautiful stop located on the bank of the Yellowstone River at the base of the **Fairview Lift Bridge**. This bridge was built in 1913 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, the bridge is a tourist attraction & a popular spot for water-sports among locals. You can take the bridge across the Yellowstone River to the **Cartwright Tunnel** or simply enjoy the views of the Yellowstone River - which is one of the longest un-dammed rivers in the western hemisphere. The bridge & tunnel are both handicap accessible.



Continue east on Highway 200 to Highway 85. Take Highway 85 into Watford City, check into your hotel, have some dinner at one of the many restaurants in town before taking a short drive to the **North Unit Theodore Roosevelt National Park**.

The North Unit is 14 miles south of Watford City just off of Highway 85. Its ruggedness and beauty, and the solitude you'll find in this less-visited unit of the park are well worth drive. The North Unit includes a 14 Mile Scenic Drive

The first half of the road traces the bottom of the badlands. Midway through, it crawls up out of the canyon to the North Unit's most iconic view, River Bend Overlook. From there, it's an easy drive along the rim of the badlands to Oxbow Overlook at the road's end. The road is almost entirely paved with only one stretch of gravel and is open to motor vehicles (including RVs) and cyclists.

Nature Trails in the North Unit are perfect for casual hikers and nature enthusiasts, but the backcountry trails really steal the show! The Buckhorn, Caprock Coulee, and famed Achenbach Trails traverse the park's vast wilderness areas.

Bison are often visible from the scenic drive at all hours of the day, while mule deer usually make appearances around dawn and dusk. Careful observers may spot bighorn sheep on or near steep cliff edges. Driving is often the best way to view wildlife, as you can cover more ground this way than on foot. However, to see prairie dogs in the North Unit, you'll have to take a hike!

> www.nps.gov/thro/planyourvisit/north-unit.htm

Travel back to Watford City for a restful night in your hotel. Have a leisurely breakfast at your hotel or check out the Little Missouri Grille before heading off to **Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina**, nestled on the south shore of Lake Sakakawea. From Watford City you will take Highway 1806 north for approximately 25 miles to the resort.

Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina is a great place for adventures of all kinds. The name Tobacco Gardens comes from the area's rich history. A plant called Kinnikinnick once spanned the hillside. It had no hallucinogenic or medicinal properties, but Native Americans dried & smoked its leaves, using it for trade. While you will no longer find the plant inhabiting the landscape, you can experience the rich history of the land with a hike through the neighboring Little Missouri National Grasslands or along the nearby "Birnt Hills" trail once traveled by Lewis and Clark.

After enjoying the tranquility & beauty of the resort, you may want to refuel at the resort's full-service restaurant. Best known for the chicken fried steak & Peggy's homemade apple pie, you won't leave disappointed. Come inside for climate-controlled indoor seating or enjoy scenic views from the patio.

> www.tobaccogardens.com

It is decision time! You have two options are your travels to the Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation. You can continue on Highway 1806 north of Tobacco Gardens following Lake Sakakawea. Or you can go south across the high plains to the MHA Nation.

Option 1: Highway 1806 North via Birnt Hills Trail to Highway 23 onto the MHA Nation (includes a scenic gravel road for approximately 12 miles)

As you leave the resort you will travel north on Highway 1806 as is borders the south shore of Lake Sakakawea. About three miles down the gravel road is the entrance of Birnt Hills Trail which is approximately 2.5 mile long with beautiful vistas of the Lake. Continue east down the gravel road to the interchange of County Road 55 and Highway 1806. Continue on Highway 1806 to Highway 23. Take Highway 23 east to Four Bears and the MHA Nation.

Option 2: Highway 1806 South to County Road 10 to Highway 23 onto the MHA Nation

As you leave the resort you will travel back south on Highway 1806. You will turn east on County Road 10, just past the historic Banks Church. Continue on County Road 10 across the rolling plains through the roundabout onto Highway 23. Take Highway 23 east to Four Bears and the MHA Nation.

As you enter the Four Bears area, the **Earth Lodge Village** will be on your right.

Full scale reconstructed earth lodges and tipis for tours. Learn the history and the sorties of the Manda, Hidatsa and Arikara while exploring these earthen structures. Located on the shores of Lake Sakakawea.

Continue down Highway 23 into the Four Bears area and you will come upon the Three Affiliated Tribes Museum, located in the A frame building on the right.

This museum is full of Manda, Hidatsa and Arikara culture and history. Visit the center between 10 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday.

Just past the Four Bears Casino & Lodge, across the bridge, you can take the access to the **Crows Flies High Butte overlook**.

This scenic overlook provides views of Four Bears Bridge, Lake Sakakawea, and during times of low water, glimpses can be seen of the town of Sanish that was flooded when the lake was created.

Continue east on Highway 23 through the community of New Town. Approximately 5 miles past New Town you will take Highway 8 north to Stanley where you will connect to Highway 2. Continue east on Highway 2 for 55 miles into Minot.

CREATE A TOUR IN THE REVERSE

From Interstate 94 Bismarck to Watford City to Medora and West on Interstate 94

This morning travel north out of Bismarck on Highway 83 towards Washburn and the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center & Fort Mandan.

The newly-remodeled Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center is a world-class museum in the heart of North Dakota. Here, you'll find state-of-the-art interactive exhibits about the Lewis & Clark Expedition, the story of Fort Clark and the early fur trade, and "Our First Farmers" to the present. Whether it's your first visit or your tenth, there is so much more to explore!

> www.fortmandan.com

Fort Mandan is a short two miles down the road from the Interpretive Center. Entrance for the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and Fort Mandan can be purchased at the interpretive center.

Take a step back in time when you visit the reconstructed Fort Mandan, the winter home of the Lewis & Clark Expedition from 1804-1805. The fully-furnished quarters bring to life what it was like for the brave men in the Corps of Discovery during that North Dakota winter over 200 years ago.

> www.fortmandan.com

From Fort Mandan, you will want to get back on Highway 83 to travel north towards Minot. Before you leave, you may want to grab a bite to eat in Washburn or travel north to Totten Trail Bar & Grill. The bar & grill is located on Highway 83 just north of Lake Audubon and Lake Sakakawea.

Following lunch, continue north on Highway 83 until you reach Highway 23. Go west on Highway 23 towards New Town. As you travel through New Town and just before the Four Bears Bridge you can take the access to the **Crows Flies High Butte** overlook on the north side of the road.

This scenic overlook provides views of Four Bears Bridge, Lake Sakakawea, and during times of low water, glimpses can be seen of the town of Sanish that was flooded when the lake was created.

Continue across Four Bears Bridge and into the Four Bears area and you will come upon the **Three Affiliated Tribes Museum**, located in the A frame building on the left.

This museum is full of Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara culture and history. Visit the center between 10 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday.

Continue west on Highway 23 for approximately a ½ mile. The **Earth Lodge Village** will be on your left.

Full scale reconstructed earth lodges and tipis for tours. Learn the history and the sorties of the Manda, Hidatsa and Arikara while exploring these earthen structures. Located on the shores of Lake Sakakawea.

It is decision time! You have two options for your travels to Tobacco Gardens Resort and Marina. You can take Highway 1806 north of Highway 23 to Tobacco Gardens following Lake Sakakawea. Or you can go across the high plains to Highway 1806 and come into Tobacco Gardens from the South.

Option 1: Highway 1806 North of Highway 23 via Birnt Hills Trail to Tobacco Gardens (includes a scenic gravel road for approximately 12 miles)

As you leave the Four Bears area, take Highway 23 to Highway 1806 and turn north towards Charlson. Follow Highway 1806 as it turns west and follow the south shore of Lake Sakakawea. The road becomes gravel and in about 10 miles you will come upon the entrance of Birnt Hills Trail - offering beautiful vistas of the lake. Continue west down the gravel road for about 3 miles and you will come upon Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina.

Option 2: Highway 23 to County Road 10 to Highway 1806 onto the Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina

Continue west on Highway 23 until you come upon a roundabout, continue straight through the roundabout onto County Road 10. Travel this high plains road until you reach Highway 1806. At Highway 1806, go north via the historic Banks Church until you reach Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina.

Depending on your time, **Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina** may be perfect stop for a late afternoon snack or dinner.

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> www.tobaccogardens.com

From Tobacco Gardens you will travel south on Highway 1806 to Watford City where you will check into your hotel for two nights.

This morning, have a leisurely breakfast at your hotel or check out Little Missouri Grill for a hearty breakfast before you depart for **Fort Union, Fort Buford, and the Confluence Center.**

Travel west out of Watford City on Highway 85. Just past Alexander you will continue west on Highway 200. Travel on Highway 200 through the community of Cartwright and across the Yellowstone River to the community of Fairview, MT for lunch (remember, Montana is on Mountain Time). Some great places for lunch are The Double Barrel & the Powder Keg for their unique pizzas. Once you have satisfied your hunger, take Highway 200 back into North Dakota for about a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile & go north on Highway 58. After you cross over the Missouri River, you will take a left on Highway 1804 to **Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site** (located on the Montana & North Dakota state line)

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This morning, enjoy breakfast at your hotel before taking the short drive to the **North Unit Theodore Roosevelt National Park**.

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The first half of the road traces the bottom of the badlands. Midway through, it crawls up out of the canyon to the North Unit's most iconic view, River Bend Overlook. From there, it's an easy drive along the rim of the badlands to Oxbow Overlook at the road's end. The road is almost entirely paved with only one stretch of gravel and is open to motor vehicles (including RVs) and cyclists.

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> www.nps.gov/thro/planyourvisit/north-unit.htm

Travel south on Highway 85. As you cross the Little Missouri River you will be entering Mountain Time. Continue south on Highway 85 until you reach Interstate 94. Cross over Interstate 94 and you will find the Trappers Kettle on the right, a great place for lunch & to pick up some souvenirs.

After lunch, go north on Highway 85 for a quarter mile and go east on Interstate 94 towards Medora. As you travel towards Medora you will come upon **Painted Canyon Visitor Center** at exit 32.

Painted Canyon Visitor Center is not your average interstate rest stop. This visitor center offers incredible views of the badlands. Staffed with a Park Ranger, you will find exhibits and displays on the area. Includes Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association Bookstore. Be alert for bison grazing in the area.

> www.nps.gov/thro/planyourvisit/visitorcenters.htm

About 5 miles west on Interstate 94, you will come upon Exit 27 for Medora. Take this exit and in about one mile you will enter the historic community of Medora. Check into your hotel and prepare for an evening at the cant miss **Medora Musical**. Head out earlier and have dinner at the **Pitchfork Fondue**. Enjoy the musical.

The Medora Musical is the rootin'-tootiest, boot-scootiest show in the Midwest. There's no other show like it. It's an ode to patriotism & Theodore Roosevelt, learn more about the Greatest Show in the West...

The nationally acclaimed Pitchfork Steak Fondue is a traveler's delight. Every evening our chefs load steaks onto pitchforks & fondue them western style. Read on for more about this perfect dinner experience pairing for the Medora Musical...

www.medora.com/

This morning, enjoy breakfast in historic Medora before checking out the **South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park**.

Plan at least 1.5 hours to make it around the South Unit's stunning 36 mile scenic loop drive. The road winds across the rolling, jumbled badlands with fantastic scenery in all directions. Along the way are numerous scenic overlooks and trailheads. The two-way paved loop is open to motor vehicles and cyclists.

Bison, mule deer, prairie dogs, and horses are readily visible along the South Unit's scenic drive. Also be on the lookout for coyotes, pronghorn, bald and golden eagles, white-tailed deer, turkeys, and elk.

Located in the town of Medora at the beginning of the scenic drive, the South Unit Visitor Center is a good place to stop before embarking on your adventure. Rangers are available to help with trip planning and answer questions. A 17-minute park film can help you get acquainted with the park and its history.

> www.nps.gov/thro/planyourvisit/south-unit.htm

Upon leaving the park, take **Business 94 west to Interstate 94 towards Billings, Montana**.



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