

South Dakota

ROAD TRIP Guide



South Dakota is the land of Great Faces and Great Places, thanks to its friendly people and a long list of must-see attractions that includes the iconic Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

Where to go?

Black Hills National Forest encompasses a large part of the western side of the state and is home to Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, and Spearfish Canyon. Native Americans called the area “paha sapa” (“hills that are black”) because of the dark appearance of the pine trees from a distance on its mountains and hills.

History certainly has its place in South Dakota. From the infamous Wild West characters & history of Deadwood to the prairie life preserved in De Smet at the Laura Ingalls Wilder sites, the past is always present in South Dakota.

Outdoor activities are also a big draw for families and adventurers. There’s hiking the Centennial Trail, rock-climbing the Needles in Custer State Park, and camping along the colorful spires in Badlands National Park. You can also spot endless wildlife, like bison herds, bighorn sheep, mountain goats and even prairie dogs!

Cities like Sioux Falls and Rapid City give unique metro experiences with strong local business and restaurant scenes, while communities like Aberdeen, Mitchell, Pierre, Vermillion, Yankton, Brookings and Watertown are home to positive vibes that stick with you long after you leave.



How to get here?

The best way to experience South Dakota is on wheels. A road trip here can easily include scenic drives along winding roads like Needles Highway and the Badlands Loop, and wide views of the open prairie from the interstates and back roads. And there's no shortage of fun, including one-of-a-kind roadside stops to explore like Wall Drug (Wall), The World's Only Corn Palace (Mitchell), the Dignity statue (Chamberlain), and the World's Largest Pheasant (Huron).

Two interstate highways cut across South Dakota. Interstate 90 runs east-west through the state, with access to Sioux Falls, Mitchell, Rapid City, Sturgis and Spearfish. Interstate 29 runs north-south through the eastern part of the state from the North Dakota border through Sisseton, Watertown, Brookings, Sioux Falls and North Sioux City. These interstates can help you make good time, but you can expand upon your experience by exploring alternate routes and scenic byways.

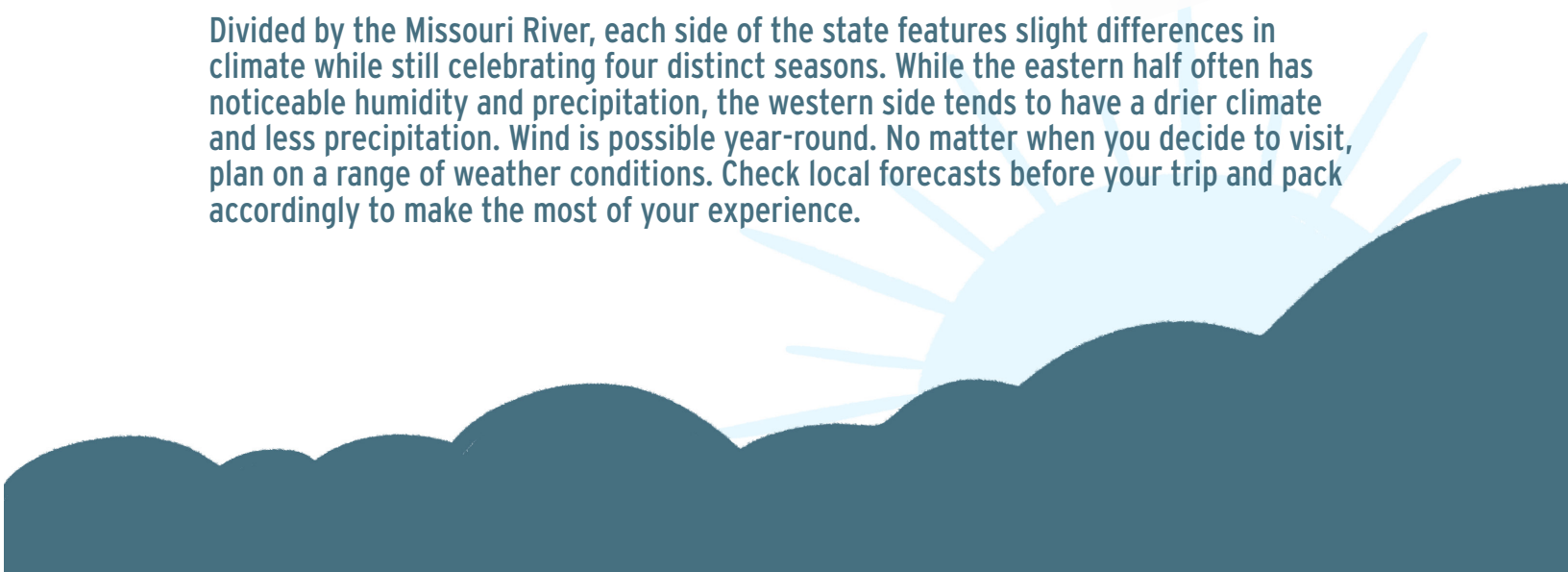
Drive Time to Mount Rushmore, approximate one-way:

- From Minneapolis | 9 hrs, 1,282 miles
- From Des Moines | 9 hrs 30 mins, 1,300 miles
- From Milwaukee | 12 hrs 30 mins, 1,731 miles
- From Winnipeg | 12 hrs, 1,639 miles
- From Omaha | 8 hrs, 1,108 miles
- From Chicago | 13 hrs 45 mins, 1,878 miles
- From Denver | 6 hrs, 770 miles
- From Dallas | 16 hrs 45 mins, 2,215 miles
- From Grand Rapids | 16 hrs 30 mins, 2,231 miles
- From Kansas City | 10 hrs 30 mins, 1,463 miles



How's the weather?

Divided by the Missouri River, each side of the state features slight differences in climate while still celebrating four distinct seasons. While the eastern half often has noticeable humidity and precipitation, the western side tends to have a drier climate and less precipitation. Wind is possible year-round. No matter when you decide to visit, plan on a range of weather conditions. Check local forecasts before your trip and pack accordingly to make the most of your experience.



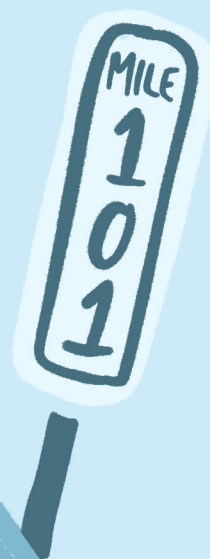
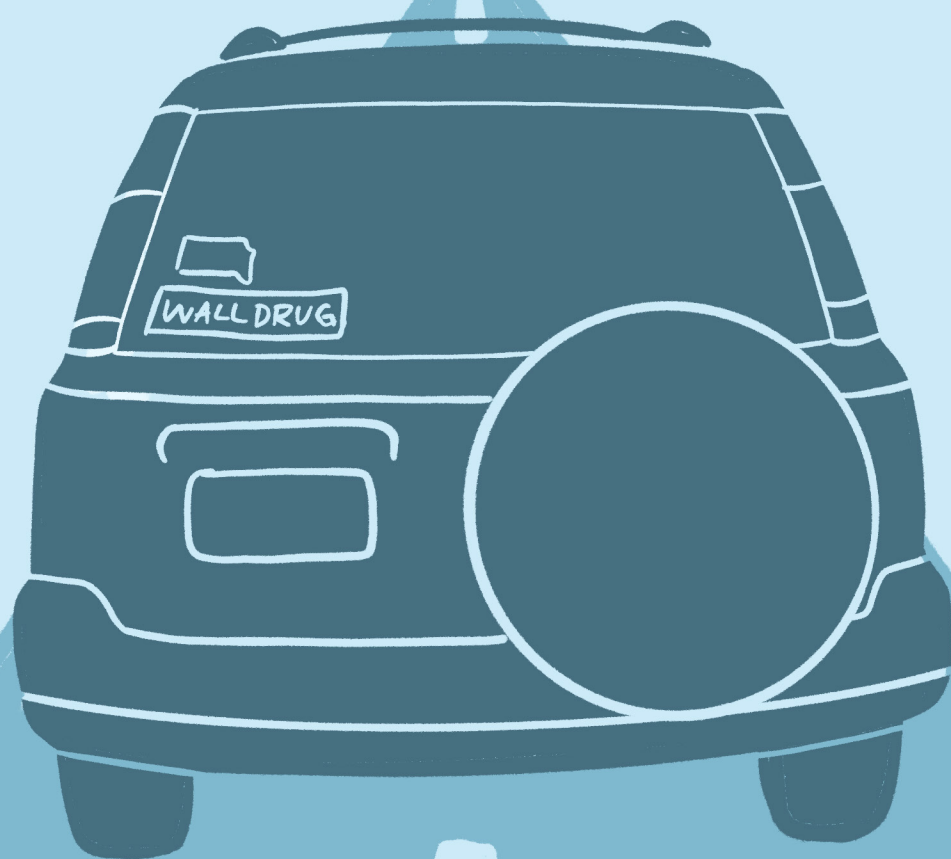
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GAMES FOR
Between
the
Mile Markers



I SPY

SEE HOW MANY OF OUR STATE SYMBOLS
YOU CAN IDENTIFY DURING YOUR TRIP.



Animal: Coyote

Bird: Chinese ring-necked pheasant

Dessert: Kuchen

Flower: Pasque

Fish: Walleye

Fossil: Triceratops

Gemstone: Fairburn agate

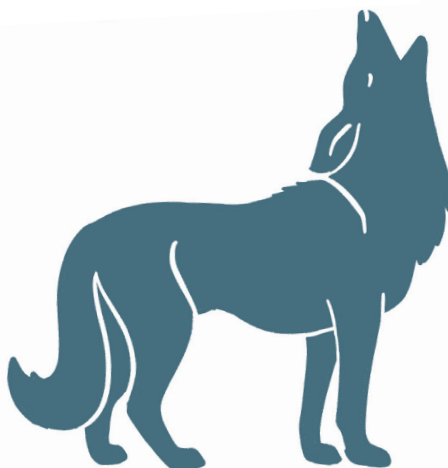
Insect: Honey bee

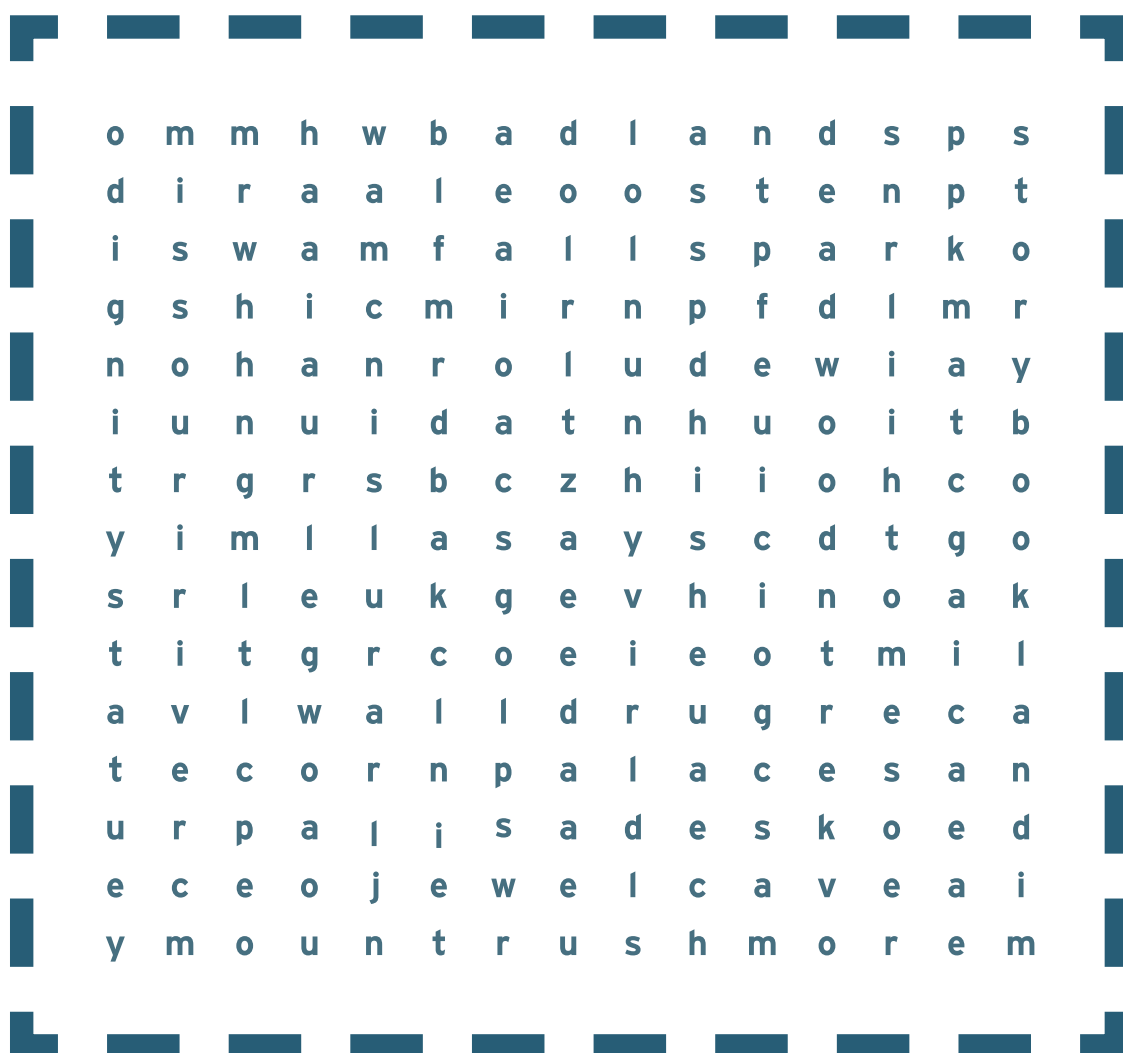
Jewelry: Black Hills gold

Mineral: Rose quartz

Sport: Rodeo

Tree: Black Hills spruce





WORD FIND

Mount Rushmore

Missouri River

Storybook Land

Badlands

Deadwood

Wall Drug

Crazy Horse

Corn Palace

Mammoth Site

Wind Cave

Falls Park

Palisades

Jewel Cave

Dignity Statue

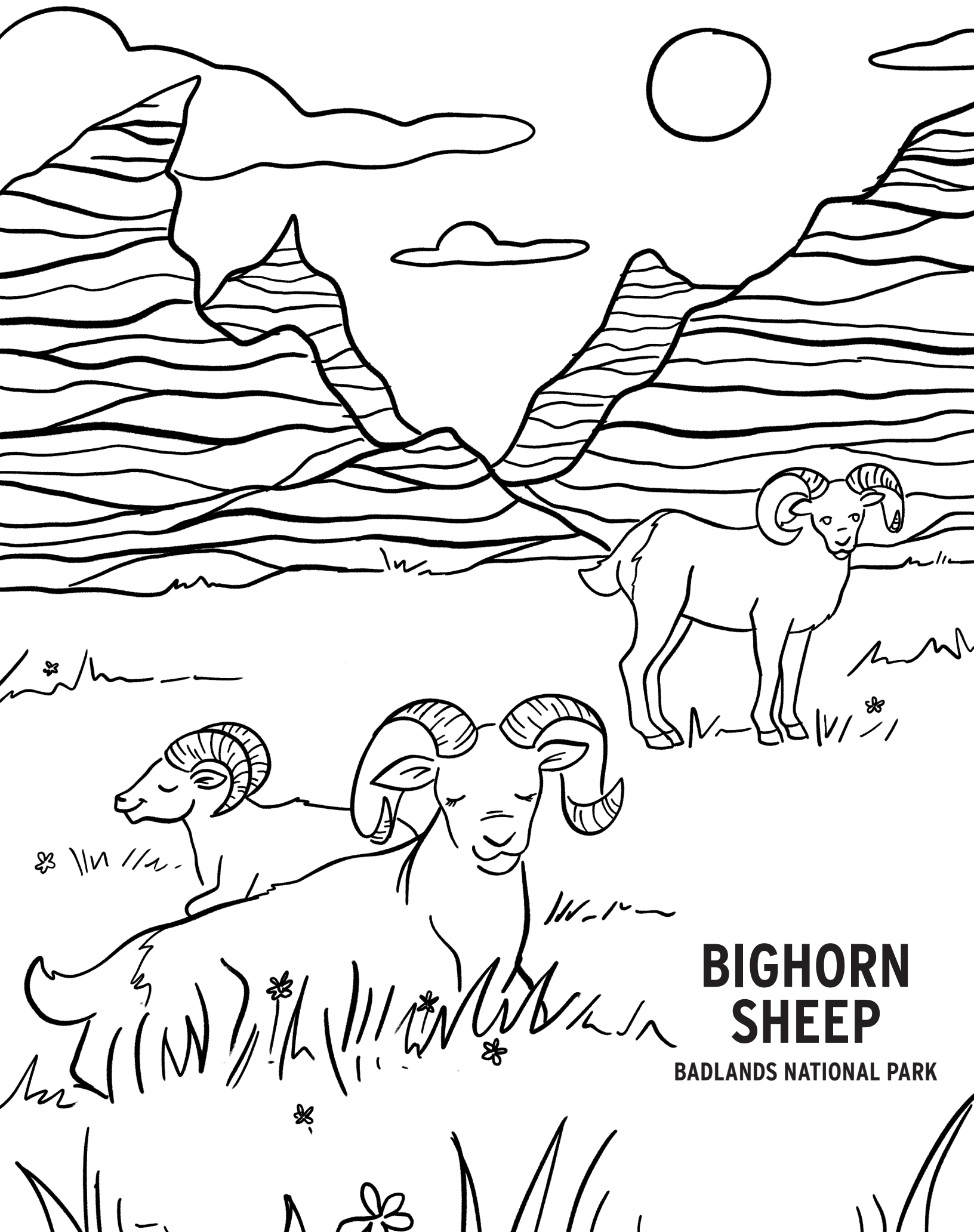
True or False?



- 1. Mount Moriah Cemetery is the final resting place of gunman Wild Bill Hickok and the notorious Calamity Jane.
- 2. Badlands National Park shows the effects of 1 billion years of erosion.
- 3. Storybook Land is located in Brookings.
- 4. Crazy Horse Memorial near Custer is the world's largest in-progress mountain carving.
- 5. Meriwether Lewis' dog, Seaman, accompanied the Lewis and Clark expedition from 1804 to 1806.
- 6. Vermillion is home to the National Music Museum.
- 7. American Legion baseball was first conceived at a 1925 convention in Milbank.
- 8. The Oahe Dam near Pierre is the second-largest rolled-earth dam in the world.
- 9. Author Laura Ingalls Wilder never lived in South Dakota and based her books on her extended family's experiences.
- 10. South Dakota is known as the "Pheasant Capital of the World." At one time in the 1940s, pheasants outnumbered people by 20 to 1.



**RING-NECKED
PHEASANT**



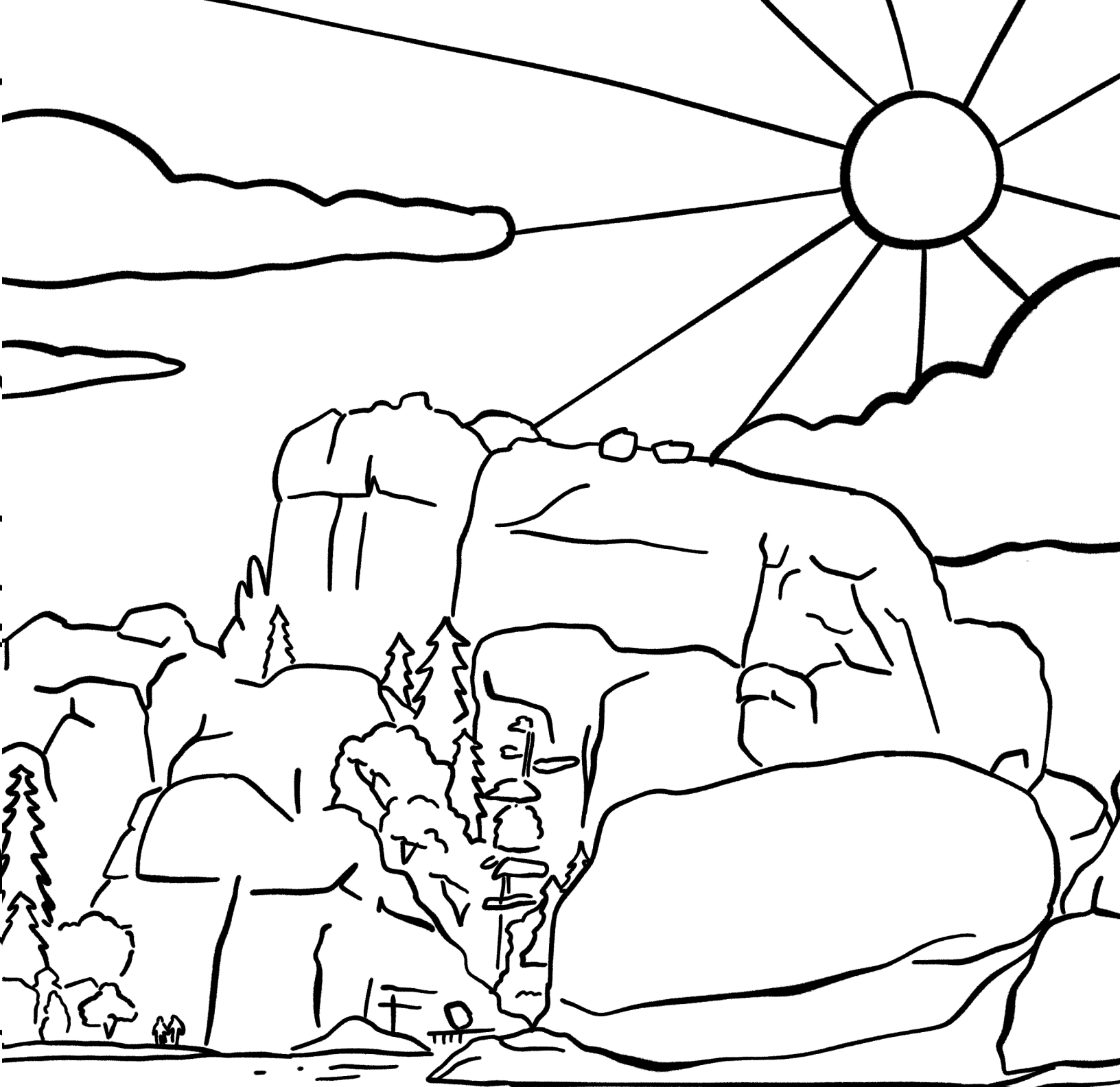
BIGHORN SHEEP

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK



**WORLD'S ONLY
CORN PALACE**
MITCHELL, SD

DRAW YOUR OWN CORN MURAL ON THE
SIDE OF THE WORLD'S ONLY CORN PALACE!



SYLVAN LAKE

CUSTER STATE PARK

Must-See Stops



Mount Rushmore National Memorial

This iconic mountain carving features the 60-foot faces of four great American presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Located near Keystone.

Crazy Horse Memorial

Just 17 miles away from Mount Rushmore, the colossal Crazy Horse Memorial looks out over the Black Hills. Once completed, Crazy Horse will be the largest mountain carving in the world. Located near Custer.

Custer State Park

There are few truly wild places left in this country. Custer State Park is one of them. Nearly 1,300 magnificent bison wander the park's 71,000 acres, while slender granite formations called Needles dominate the skyline. Located near Custer.

Black Hills National Forest

The Lakota called them "Paha Sapa" or "hills that are black" because their pine-covered slopes look as dark as shadows from afar. The forest's wide meadows and rolling tree-covered mountains cover 1.2 million acres.

Badlands National Park

This striking landscape features a maze of buttes, canyons, pinnacles and spires. The Lakota gave this land the name "mako sica," meaning "land bad." Erosion in the Badlands reveals many different colors of sedimentary rock layers. Located south of Wall.

State Capitol

South Dakota's majestic state capitol building in Pierre was completed in 1910. It features hundreds of handcrafted materials, including carved woodwork and marble, special cast brass, and scagliola columns that combine to give the building its stately character.

World's Only Corn Palace

The first Corn Palace was built in 1892 to celebrate the harvest and stimulate economic growth in Mitchell. Today, more than 3,000 bushels of corn, grains and grasses are used to create the murals that decorate the exterior.

Falls Park

Named after the falls of the Big Sioux River, Sioux Falls is South Dakota's largest city. Falls Park showcases the city's namesake with a visitor information center, five-story observation tower and hydroelectric plant-turned-café, as well as several walking trails.

Must-See Stops

Redlin Art Center

The Redlin Art Center is home to more than 160 original oil paintings by Terry Redlin, one of America's most popular artists. The surrounding conservation park is carefully contoured to complement the graceful Egyptian Revival architecture designed by the artist's son. Located in Watertown.

The Little Town on the Prairie

At the age of 12, author Laura Ingalls Wilder homesteaded in De Smet with her pioneering family. The farming community and surrounding prairie served as a setting for six of her beloved "Little House" books. Today, De Smet celebrates her life by preserving historic Ingalls sites and performing an annual outdoor pageant.

Fort Sisseton Historic State Park

Fort Sisseton serves as a colorful reminder of South Dakota's frontier history. Situated in the rolling prairie hills of northeastern South Dakota, the military outpost is recognized as one of the nation's best-preserved frontier forts. Located near Lake City.

Tribal Nations

South Dakota is home to the nine Native American tribes whose people recognize each other as "friends" in three dialects - Dakota, Lakota and Nakota. Approximately 72,000 Native Americans call South Dakota home, making for plenty of opportunities for visitors to experience their heritage and culture.

Visitor Etiquette

In order to make your visit as enjoyable and respectful as possible, the following outlines general rules to follow when visiting Native American reservations and events:

- Native American communities contain a diversity of tribal members who practice varying degrees of tradition. Traditionalists and others expect tribal members and visitors alike to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of tribal religion and ceremonies.
- It must be recognized that a code of conduct practiced at one community or event may not be appropriate at another.
- Behaviors that are frowned upon include excessive questioning regarding ceremonial events, excessive talking or laughing, demanding or sneaking photographs or sketches, and demanding preferential seating or viewing of a ceremonial event.
- An unkempt appearance is very offensive at a ceremonial event, since many people wear their finest. Ragged jeans and especially high (short) shorts are also offensive at ceremonial events, though they may be acceptable at other gatherings, such as craft fairs and some powwows.
- The ancestors of today's tribes left many artifacts and ruins behind. So should you by resisting the impulse to pick up souvenirs. Native American remains and artifacts are protected federally by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which carries stiff penalties for violators.
- Do not disturb sites that contain devotions or offerings. These include pipes, bundles, ties, flags of colored material, food offerings and other items. These sites and items are considered sacred.

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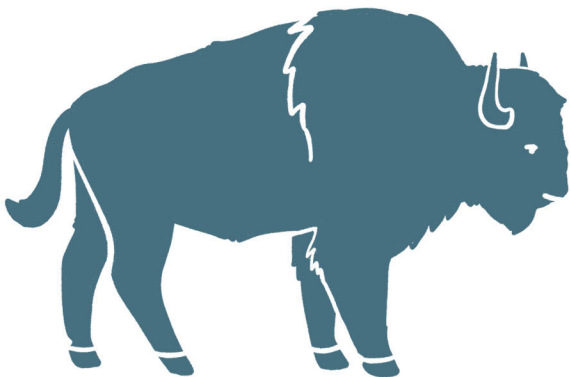
What have been your favorite experiences in South Dakota? Write or draw them here.













On-The-Road Resources



Share your journey with us! Tag your photos with #HiFromSD

Road Conditions

Get current road conditions, including closures and construction, from the South Dakota Department of Transportation (DOT). While in South Dakota, dial 511 from any phone for updated, location-specific weather information and road restrictions/conditions for interstates & highways in South Dakota and nearby states. You can also call 866-MYSD511 (866-697-3511). Online road information is available at SafeTravelUSA.com/sd.

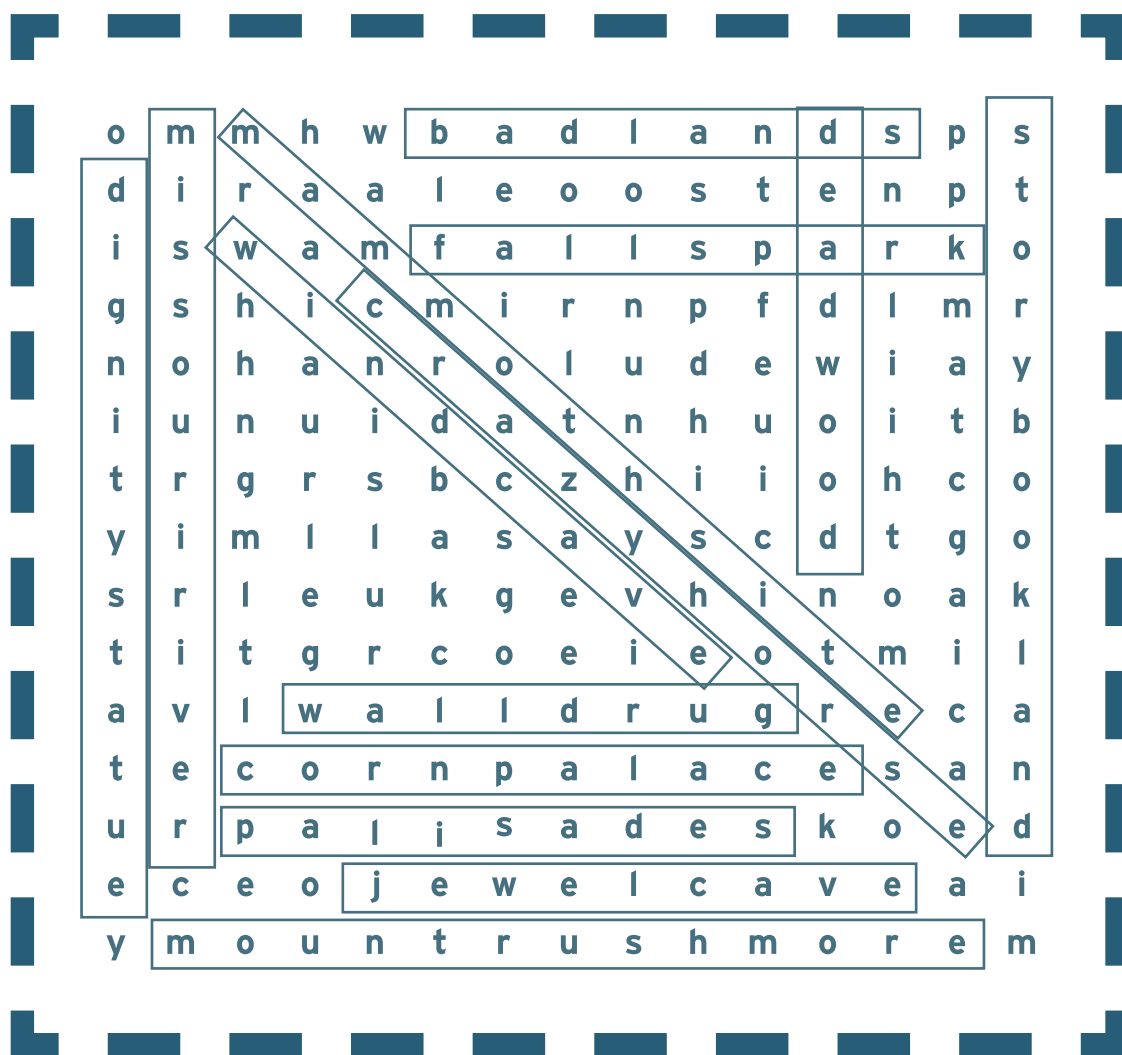
Welcome Centers & Rest Areas

You'll find five Welcome Centers and 12 rest areas along Interstates 90 and 29. The Welcome Centers are staffed from mid-May through mid-September and offer brochures & maps as well as in-person travel information. In addition, you can also find the following amenities:

- Brochures and other printed material for businesses and attractions statewide*
- Free South Dakota highway maps and vacation guides*
- Cultural and historical displays*
- Lewis and Clark exhibit (Chamberlain)*
- Dignity statue (Chamberlain)
- Short-term parking for cars, RVs and trucks
- Restrooms – ADA accessible
- Baby changing stations
- Picnic tables and shelters – ADA accessible
- Pet exercise areas
- RV dump stations* (Not all rest areas have dump stations. View the South Dakota Rest Areas map for locations.)
- Water fountains and potable water filling stations
- Soft drink vending machines
- Emergency phones
- Security camera monitoring system

*Only available seasonally when the Interstate Welcome Centers are in operation.

Visit TravelSouthDakota.com/trip-ideas/welcome-centers for more information.



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