

Overview of South Dakota

South Dakota is sparsely populated and often overlooked as a holiday destination in the USA, and visitors won't find flashy attractions or nightlife. Instead, the state enjoys a hauntingly beautiful landscape of vast prairies, broken granite hills, and echoing caverns.

Attractions in South Dakota include the famous tyrannosaurus rex called Sue, unearthed in the bewitching Badlands. The iconic stone faces of Mount Rushmore are instantly recognisable while the city of De Smet was influential in shaping the stories of Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of children's literature classics such as Little House on The Prairie. The city of Deadwood is also the location of gunman Wild Bill Hickok's fatal poker game.

Long being the home of the Sioux nation, the inhabitants of this harsh land followed great buffalo herds across the plains. In the 1800s, settlers seeking riches flocked to South Dakota and skirmishes between the Native Americans and US soldiers quickly followed.

The infamous Wounded Knee Massacre was one of the last conflicts. It was here that US soldiers slaughtered a large group of Sioux, including women and children. Today, visitors can pay homage at a small memorial at the site.

The Sioux remain a large part of the population of South Dakota, their culture continuing to permeate and enrich the land. The Black Hills form a solitary range of mountains covered with pine trees, dramatically rising from the plains and considered sacred by the Sioux.

The rolling prairies, meandering rivers, and staggering peaks of South Dakota create a landscape naturally groomed for the classic American road trip. It makes for some of the most beautiful scenery in the country and is a must-see on any American journey.

Key Facts

Language:

English is the most common language spoken but Spanish is often heard in the south-western states.

Passport/Visa:

It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. A visa is required for short visits unless travellers qualify for entry under the Visa Waiver Program. The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the US for a stay of up to 90 days without a visa. Visitors under the VWP need to register online three days before travel and have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). This allows the US government to screen all visitors before travel. Visitors entering the country under the VWP must have a machine-readable passport (MRP) that has a barcode on the photo page. Travellers under the VWP must have passports that include biometrics if they wish to enter the country without a visa, which means that passports must contain unique personal data such as fingerprints or iris details. All passports must contain a digital photo image in order to travel visa-free. All visitors to the USA have a photograph and two fingerprints taken by an inkless scanner on arrival, including those travelling visa-free under the VWP. As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA, a valid passport is required by immigration authorities. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Currency:

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 120 volts, 60Hz. Plugs are mainly the type with two flat pins, though three-pin plugs (two flat parallel pins and a rounded pin) are also widely used. European appliances without dual-voltage capabilities will require an adapter.

Travel to South Dakota

Climate for South Dakota

South Dakota has a temperate climate. Its summers, particularly July and August, are hot, dry, and pleasant, making it the best season for tourists. There are occasional occurrences of thunderstorms. Winters are bitterly cold and harsh, with relatively significant snowfalls and strong winds. January and February are typically the coldest months of the year, though snow is more likely to fall in March and April.

Health Notes when travelling to United States of America

There are no specific health risks associated with travel within the USA. Medical facilities are excellent, but expensive. Only emergencies are treated without prior payment and treatment can be refused without evidence of insurance or proof of funds. Good medical insurance is essential. Visitors must be fully vaccinated with the primary series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine to travel to the United States by plane if they are non-U.S. citizens.

Safety Notes when travelling to United States of America

Travel within the United States is generally trouble-free, though travellers should be aware that the US shares with the rest of the world, an increased threat from terrorist incidents. Security has been heightened, particularly at airports. Restrictions on hand luggage apply and travellers are advised to check on the latest situation with airlines in advance. Travellers should also be alert to the dangers of car and street crime in cities and should use common sense and take basic precautions. Hurricanes are common between June and November, putting the southern USA, including the Gulf Coast and the eastern US at risk. There is a risk of wildfires in many dry areas in the US, particularly on the West Coast from March to November.

Customs in United States of America

Laws vary from state to state, including speed limit, fines and punishment. The age at which alcohol may be legally bought and consumed is 21 years.

Duty Free in United States of America

Travellers to the United States who are returning residents of the country do not have to pay duty on articles purchased abroad to the value of \$800 provided their stay was longer than 48 hours and their duty-free allowance was not used in the 30-day period prior. For passengers arriving from Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands, a duty-free allowance of \$1,600 is allowed. The following items are included in this: 50 cigarettes and 10 cigars and 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages or 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of perfume containing alcohol. Restrictions may apply to goods from Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Burma (Myanmar), Angola, Liberia and Sudan. It is prohibited to import Cuban cigars from any country.

Travellers to the United States who are non-residents do not have to pay duty on the following items: 50 cigars or 200 cigarettes and gifts to the value of \$100 provided their stay in the USA is not less than 72 hours and that the allowance has not been used in the preceding six-month period.

Prohibited items for residents and non-residents include meat or meat products, poultry, narcotics, absinthe, plants, seeds, vegetables, fruits, soil, live insects and other living plants or animal pests. Fish is prohibited unless it carries disease-free certification. Wildlife and animals or their by-products carry restrictions. Dairy products and eggs from specified countries are not allowed. Firearms and ammunition are not allowed without the necessary license and permit.

Doing Business in United States of America

In such a large country, filled with so many diverse groups, business practices may differ according to each state, however rarely to any large degree. The East Coast is traditionally more formal than the West Coast, though in states such as California, dress code and conservative appearance are as common as they would be in New York. Punctuality is important throughout the country and it is considered rude to be late for a meeting. Gift-giving is uncommon as it may be construed as bribery. Appropriate titles (Mr, Mrs, Ms) are used upon introduction and until otherwise stated. Americans favour politeness and greetings of 'Hello' and 'How are you?' are often expressed with sincerity. Business hours may vary in each state, but an 8am start and 5pm finish Monday to Friday is the most common with an hour over lunch.

Status and age are not necessarily indicative of seniority, nor do they carry much weight in themselves. Those doing business in the States should be mindful of this fact; foreigners should never make assumptions about someone's position or rank. Best practice is to be respectful to all parties. That said, the US upholds a hierarchal business structure, in which 'the boss' is the ultimate decision-maker. Senior leaders have the power of the last word, and can go against the grain just as easily as they can follow popular opinion. Foreigners should concentrate on winning over this individual, even if the greater group seems unsupportive. Americans value a direct style of communication. In this fast-paced, consumer culture 'time is money', and small-talk is viewed as unnecessary and wasteful. It's best for foreigners to get to the point quickly, speak about issues in a frank and open manner, and to avoid taking offence if someone questions or challenges them outright.

Communication in United States of America

The international country dialling code for the United States is +1. Mobile networks cover most of the country, especially all urban areas, and WiFi is widely available.

Tipping in United States of America

A 15 percent tip is expected by taxi drivers, bartenders, hairdressers and waiters, but travellers shouldn't tip in fast-food or self-service restaurants. In expensive restaurants or for large parties, the tip should be 20 percent of the bill. It is normal to tip staff such as valets and porters in hotels; this is discretionary, although a minimum of \$5 is expected. Most services are customarily tipped if the service is good.

Passport/Visa Note

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Airports in South Dakota

Rapid City Regional Airport (RAP)

Rapid City Regional Airport

www.rapairport.com/

Location: Rapid City The airport is located 11 miles (18km) from Rapid City.

Time: GMT -7 (GMT -6 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: (605) 393 9924

Getting to the city: There is a shuttle service to any location in the Rapid City and Black Hills region. The shuttle runs seven days a week but arrangements should be made prior to arrival.

Car rental: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National operate at the airport.

Airport Taxis: Several taxi companies operate at Rapid City Airport.

Facilities: Facilities at the airport include a gift shop and a restaurant.

Parking: Both short and long-term parking options are available. Short-term parking is free for the first 30 minutes, after which it's \$1 for every additional 30 minutes. There is a daily maximum of \$12. Long-term parking is \$2 per hour, with a daily rate of \$10 and a weekly rate of \$60.

Sioux Falls Regional Airport (FSD)

Sioux Falls Regional Airport

www.sfairport.com

Location: Sioux Falls The airport is located three miles (5km) northwest of Sioux Falls.

Time: GMT -6 (GMT -5 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: (605) 336 0762

Getting to the city: Several taxi, limo, and shuttle services are available, as well ride-hailing apps like Lyft.

Car rental: Avis, Enterprise, Hertz, and National operate at the airport.

Airport Taxis: A number of taxi companies offer service to and from the airport. Cabs are not guaranteed to be waiting curbside, however, so it is a good idea to book ahead. All cabs use a meter and tipping is expected. Ride-hailing apps like Lyft also operate at the airport.

Facilities: Facilities at the airport include gift shops, a snack bar, a restaurant, and an information desk. Numerous works of art are placed throughout the airport.

Parking: The short-term lot charges \$2 for the first hour, \$2 for each additional hour, and up to \$14 a day. The long-term lot charges \$2 per hour, \$2 for each additional hour, and up to a daily rate of \$8. The Economy Lot charges \$1 each hour with a daily maximum of \$7 and a weekly rate of \$35. Credit and debit cards are accepted.

Black Hills

Home to the tallest peaks east of the Rocky Mountains, the Black Hills lie in the western region of South Dakota. Blessed with towering summits, sprawling forests, and meandering rivers, the Black Hills are a pristine haven for sightseeing, fishing, hiking, camping, and rock climbing.

Native American peoples have inhabited the area since 7,000 BC, making the Black Hills a site of spiritual and historical significance. Ownership has passed through many hands, resting today with the Lakota. There is a history of conflict, with it experiencing bloodshed and massacre during the Great Sioux War of 1876.

The diverse geology of the Black Hills attracts visitors each year, as well as its abundance of indigenous flora and fauna. Erosion has formed a terrain of desolate beauty in Badlands National Park, with sharp buttes, twisting spires, deep gorges, and one of the richest fossil beds on the planet.

Jewel Cave is the third longest cave in the world, with visitors exploring miles of underground passageways and stunning rock formations. Scenic drives through Custer State Park provide amazing encounters with the once-endangered bison that now flourish in free-roaming herds.

Black Hills is also the setting for the popular HBO series *Deadwood*, although it was filmed in California. The City Fathers of Deadwood have created a false wooden street front based on the original town and similar to the one on the television series.

Mount Rushmore is one of the most iconic attractions in South Dakota, and indeed the country. Carved into Thunderhead Monument, the Crazy Horse Memorial has been in construction since 1948 and would potentially be the largest sculpture in the world on completion.

Climate in Black Hills

The Black Hills enjoys a continental climate with four distinct seasons. The area is known to be susceptible to wide ranging weather systems from raging blizzards to blistering droughts. During the winter months, snowstorms do occur.

The Black Hills is often warmer than Rapid City in the winter due to its elevated position and a temperature inversion. During the summer months, days are sunny and warm but afternoon thunderstorms are common. May and June are the wettest months of the year.

Black Hills Attractions

Deadwood

Deadwood in South Dakota grew into a mythical Wild West town in the 1800s when gold was discovered in the Black Hills. It quickly became home to a colourful cast of prospectors, gunslingers, and gamblers. Brick streets, frontier architecture, and turn-of-the-century streetlamps are restored, with the entire town designated a National Historic Landmark. Visitors can relax in a historic hotel near Main Street, have a drink at the local saloon, or try their luck in one of the historic gambling halls. They can pan for gold at the Broken Boot Mine or climb to the Mount Moriah Cemetery to visit the graves of notorious Old West legends like Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane. From the cemetery, there is a breathtaking view of the surrounding hills. There are several historical museums in town, including the Adams Museum and the Days of '76 Museum. Deadwood's notorious reputation inspired the hit television series *Deadwood*, which takes place during the town's early rough and tumble days.

Website: <http://www.deadwood.com/>

Mount Rushmore

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is literally South Dakota's biggest attraction. It covers 1,278 acres (5 square km) and draws over two million annual visitors. It depicts 60-foot (18m) carvings of US Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Lincoln, representing the first 150 years of American history. Together with 400 workers, Gutzon Borglum sculpted Mount Rushmore between 1927 and 1941. Costing under one million dollars, it's somewhat remarkable that nobody died from the dangerous nature of the work during its creation. Interestingly, the artist originally intended the faces to have bodies. The sculpture is controversial among Native Americans, as a previous treaty had granted the land and mountain, known as Six Grandfathers, to the Lakota tribe. Visitors to the site stroll through the Avenue of Flags that depicts all 50 states, walk the Presidential Trail to the best viewing areas, and watch the evening lighting ceremony held nightly from late May to September. The site has a visitors' centre, gift shop, and cafe.

Website: <http://www.mountrushmoreinfo.com>

Badlands National Park

The Lakota tribe gave this area of South Dakota the name Mako Sica, translating roughly to 'bad land'. The people led by Chief Sitting Bull weren't exaggerating, as modern visitors to Badlands National Park brace themselves for an unsettling and otherworldly terrestrial experience. Drenched and blasted by winds for millennia, the landscape is a series of sharp ridges, steep canyons, gullies, pyramids, and buttes. Exposed rock often appears in beautiful bands of colour, from deep purples through to vermillion, orange, and gold. Trips to Badlands National Park offer hiking trails with plenty of signage and first-class camping facilities. Programmes with rangers are available, including children's activities, hikes, lectures, and audio-visual presentations. Exhibits display fossils from ancient plants and animals, alongside the pretty wildflowers. Guests can also take advantage of the Night Sky Program, enjoying the clear blanket of darkness studded with silver stars. Rangers will help to identify constellations and planets.

Website: <http://www.nps.gov/badl/index.htm>

Crazy Horse Memorial

Located near popular Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Crazy Horse Memorial is carved out of Thunderhead Mountain and depicts the eponymous and iconic Sioux warrior mounted on a horse. Work began all the way back in 1948. Currently incomplete, the memorial nevertheless includes the Indian Museum of North America and the Native American Educational and Cultural Center. Both contain art collections and other artefacts, offering visitors the chance to learn more about the culture of the Plains Indians such as the Lakota and the Sioux. Various events occur throughout the year, including rodeos, laser light and pyrotechnic shows, and art exhibitions. The Crazy Horse Memorial is privately funded and relies on admission fees and donations to continue construction of the monument.

Website: <http://www.crazyhorsememorial.org>

South Dakota Attractions

Overview

South Dakota is a rugged and beautiful state in the heartland of the USA, celebrated primarily for its incredible outdoor grandeur and touch of cowboy romance. Mount Rushmore is a state treasure and one of the most recognisable landmarks in the country, with the Mount Rushmore National Park drawing thousands of visitors each year.

The Badlands National Park offers keen hikers some lovely trails, while the more daring explore some of the world's longest and deepest caves. A region rich with fossils, incredible sites in the Badlands include the resting place of the world-famous tyrannosaurus rex named Sue.

Wild West enthusiasts can stop in historic Deadwood, the setting of the hit television series of the same name. History buffs will enjoy learning the background surrounding the Gold Rush Era, which attracted droves of hardy pioneers to the Black Hills.

Deadwood

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Currency

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

Exchange rate for 1 USD - U.S. Dollar

0.00 BMD Bermudan Dollar	0.93 EUR Euro	0.80 GBP U.K. Pound Sterling	152.99 JPY Japanese Yen	1.37 CAD Canadian Dollar	0.91 CHF Swiss Franc
1.52 AUD Australian Dollar	39.40 UAH Ukrainian Hryvnia	443.91 KZT Kazakhstani Tenge	93,075.00 LBP Lebanese Pound	4.86 LYD Libyan Dinar	6.86 BOB Bolivian Boliviano
0.00 NPR Nepalese Rupee	0.00 OMR Omani Rial	0.00 QAR Qatari Rial	1.35 SGD Singapore Dollar	10.82 SEK Swedish Krona	0.00 TTD Trinidad Tobago Dollar
0.00 VEF Venezuelan Bolivar	58.11 DOP Dominican Peso	0.00 HRK Croatian Kuna	16.95 MXN Mexican Peso	610.53 XOF West African CFA Franc	0.00 PGK Papua New Guinean kina
0.00 BSD Bahamian Dollar	0.00 FJD Fiji Dollar	0.00 HNL Honduran Lempira	133.87 DZD Algerian Dinar	0.00 MMK Myanma Kyat	0.00 BWP Botswana Pula
3.72 PEN Peruvian Nuevo Sol	938.44 CLP Chilean Peso	386.84 AMD Armenia Dram	23.29 CZK Czech Koruna	17.63 MDL Moldova Lei	139.89 ISK Icelandic Krona
12,582.40 UZS Uzbekistan Sum	3.72 ILS Israeli New Sheqel	0.71 JOD Jordanian Dinar	0.00 KWD Kuwaiti Dinar	38.15 UYU Uruguayan Peso	0.00 MUR Mauritian Rupee
0.00 NIO Nicaraguan Córdoba	10.88 NOK Norwegian Krone	4.03 PLN Polish Zloty	3.75 SAR Saudi Riyal	0.00 LKR Sri Lanka Rupee	36.79 THB Thai Baht
3.66 AED U.A.E Dirham	5.09 BRL Brazilian Real	4.63 RON Romanian New Leu	7.81 HKD Hong Kong Dollar	610.53 XAF Central African CFA Franc	25,405.70 VND Vietnamese Dong
878.36 ARS Argentine Peso	0.00 XCD East Caribbean Dollar	0.00 GTQ Guatemalan Quetzal	10.06 MAD Moroccan Dirham	0.00 BHD Bahrain Dinar	1.00 PAB Panamanian Balboa
1.70 AZN Azerbaijan Manat	3,920.00 COP Colombian Peso	88.42 KGS Kyrgyzstan Som	362.00 HUF Hungarian Forint	10.89 TJS Tajikistan Ruble	16,073.70 IDR Indonesian Rupiah
47.95 EGP Egyptian Pound	1,358.84 KRW South Korean Won	7,456.52 PYG Paraguayan Guaraní	4.74 MYR Malaysian Ringgit	508.31 CRC Costa Rican Colón	1.67 NZD New Zealand Dollar
277.87 PKR Pakistani Rupee	91.39 RUB Russian Rouble	18.51 ZAR South African Rand	3.13 TND Tunisian Dinar	0.00 BBD Barbadian Dollar	1.82 BGN Bulgarian Lev
32.33 TRY Turkish Lira	57.28 PHP Philippine Peso	32.31 TWD New Taiwan Dollar	1,164.84 NGN Nigerian Naira	0.00 XPF CFP Franc	0.00 GHS Ghanaian Cedi
0.00 JMD Jamaican Dollar	0.00 ANG Neth. Antillean Guilder	0.00 BND Brunei Dollar	108.90 RSD Serbian Dinar	7.24 CNY Chinese Yuan	6.94 DKK Danish Krone
3.49 TMT New Turkmenistan Manat	83.42 INR Indian Rupee				