



CELEBRATED NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND LANDMARKS

South Dakota is home to a number of world-renowned national monuments and historic landmarks representing the state's unique history. The iconic sites are not only part of the states' culture, but American treasures as well. From Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Crazy Horse Memorial, to the Mickelson Trail and the site of Wounded Knee, there lies a piece of history and inspiration for every traveler to discover.

[Arc of Dreams \(Sioux Falls, SD\)](#)

A Tribute to the Dreamers - the Arc of Dreams™ - is a massive stainless-steel sculpture that spans the Big Sioux River in downtown Sioux Falls. Located between 6th and 8th Streets, the sculpture is nearly the length of a football field. At the center of the Arc of Dreams is an 18-foot gap, 70 feet above the river, representing the leap of faith dreamers take to see their dreams come true. Part of SculptureWalk, the Arc of Dreams is a signature piece of art for the city of Sioux Falls.

[Crazy Horse Memorial \(Crazy Horse, SD\)](#)

As the largest mountain carving in progress, the colossal carving can be seen just 17 miles from Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski started work on the mountain in 1948 as a tribute to Native Americans. It depicts Crazy Horse, an Oglala Lakota warrior, riding a horse and pointing into the distance and is operated by the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, a private, non-profit organization. Following his death in 1982, Korczak's family continued to carve the mountain, using three books of his detailed plans. The bi-annual Volksmarch offers visitors a chance to climb up to the arm of the memorial in June and September. When complete, Crazy Horse Memorial will be the world's largest mountain carving standing 563 feet high and 641 feet long.

- **Fun Facts:** All four of Mount Rushmore presidents' heads can fit in the head of the horse. The face of Crazy Horse is nine stories high.

[Dignity: of Earth & Sky Sculpture \(Chamberlain, SD\)](#)

The Dignity sculpture is a stunning combination of art and history. Located on a bluff near the Missouri River, the 50-foot-tall statue was specifically designed by sculptor Dale Lamphere to honor the cultures of the Lakota and Dakota people. Representing the rich Native American culture of South Dakota, the Native woman gracefully wears a dress patterned after a two-hide Native dress of the 1850s. She holds outstretched a quilt featuring 128 stainless steel blue diamond shapes designed to flutter in the wind.

[George S. Mickelson Trail](#) (Black Hills, SD)

Stretching out 109 miles through South Dakota's Black Hills, the Mickelson Trail offers visitors some the best terrain to choose from when it comes to hiking, biking, horseback riding, and even cross-country skiing. The Mickelson Trail surface varies from gravel to crushed limestone and features more than 100 converted railroad bridges and four rock tunnels, all fit for exploration. The trail was built along a former railroad corridor, so its nearly level grade makes it an ideal outing for visitors of all ages. The first segment of the trail was opened in 1991 and the entire route was completed in 1998 and is considered the first "rails to trails" outdoor project in South Dakota.

[Minuteman Missile National Historic Site](#) (Philip, SD)

The drama underlying the Cold War is relived at this National Historic Site. This is the first national site in the world dedicated to commemorating the events of the Cold War. The Delta-09, an underground concrete silo on the edge of Badlands National Park, held a Minuteman II missile that could send a nuclear weapon to the Soviet Union in 30 minutes. There were 150 U.S. Minutemen missiles and 15 Launch Control Facilities standing guard as silent sentinels, preserving peace during the Cold War, in the western part of the state. Visitors can view the Launch Control Facility, which features a subterranean command center from which 10 Minuteman missiles could be launched on the orders of the President. Guided tours are offered and led by National Park rangers who provide background on the site, including nuclear strategies and workday details for those who lived with their "fingers on the nuclear trigger."

- **Fun Facts:** The only Minuteman Missile ever launched out of an active silo took place at a silo north of Newell, South Dakota on March 1, 1965. The flight only lasted a total of seven seconds with the rocket landing in a nearby pasture.

[Missouri National Recreational River](#)

The Missouri River served as part of the trail Meriwether Lewis and William Clark traveled as they explored the new territory, making history a vital part of the communities that line the river. The portion of the river from Fort Randall south to Nebraska is officially known as the Missouri National Recreational River. This stretch of the river is protected by the National Park Service and looks today just as it did when Lewis and Clark explored that area in 1804 and 1806. Visitors can embark on a variety of outdoor activities on and along the banks of the river, including, hiking, biking, camping, fishing, kayaking, and water skiing.

- **Fun Facts:** Before the 1950s, the Missouri River carried an average of roughly 140 million tons of sediment per year past Yankton, South Dakota. After closure of the dams in the 1960s, an average of roughly 4 million tons per year moved past the same location. At 2,320.7 miles, the Missouri River is America's longest river. It is 2.5 miles longer than the Mississippi River.

[Mount Rushmore National Memorial](#) (Keystone, SD)

An American treasure, Mount Rushmore National Memorial is one of the state's most famous landmarks and features the 60-foot faces of four great U.S. Presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. Visitors can walk the Presidential Trail for a unique and up-close view of the faces or explore museum exhibits for more in-depth information about the creation of the memorial.

- **Fun Facts:** Mount Rushmore is the only place in the country you can enjoy Thomas Jefferson's original vanilla ice cream recipe.

[Sitting Bull & Sakakawea Monuments](#) (Mobridge, SD)

The Sitting Bull and Sakakawea Monuments stand in a remote spot on SD Highway 1806, two miles southwest of Mobridge, overlooking the Missouri River. Although there is some contention, many believe this to be the final resting place of Native American spiritual and social leader, Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull's Monument was sculpted by Korczak Ziolkowski, known for Crazy Horse Memorial in the Black Hills. The Sakakawea Monument was created with funds raised by Mobridge school children in the 1920s.

Wounded Knee (Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, SD)

The Wounded Knee massacre occurred on December 29, 1890 near Wounded Knee Creek and was the last battle of the American Indian Wars. A great tragedy in American history, there was an estimated 300 dead as a result of the fatal event. Now a National Historic Landmark, a church sits on the hill behind a burial ground where victims have been laid to rest. In 1903, descendants of those who passed away in the battle erected a monument at the gravesite. The memorial also lists many of those who were killed at Wounded Knee, along with a spiritual inscription. To learn more about Lakota History, visit the nearby [Heritage Center](#) at the Red Cloud Indian School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

For additional information, visit [TravelSouthDakota.com](#).

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