

FAMILY ATTRACTIONS



South Dakota offers a variety of unique and educational adventures for the whole family. Beyond iconic monuments like Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Crazy Horse Memorial, families can journey back in time to learn about the Old West and enjoy an old-fashioned chuck wagon cookout, become a junior ranger and dig for fossils or discover the night sky and spend an evening under the stars at Badlands National Park.

1880 Train, Black Hills Central Railroad (Keystone/Hill City) - Fun for all ages, enjoy a train ride through the Black Hills of South Dakota on the 20-mile journey between Keystone and Hill City. The vintage steam train, just like the ones used to settle the American West, travels through the historic and scenic Black Hills region. Passengers on the train can see forests, meadows and wooded canyons, as well as remnants of old mines and mining operations.

Badlands Observatory (Quinn) - View the moon, planets, sun, stars, and comets all from small-town South Dakota. Badlands Observatory is a private facility used for research, education, and stargazing, offering daytime and nighttime guided tours.

Bear Country USA (Rapid City) - Get up close (from the comfort of your vehicle!) with black bears, reindeer, buffalo and more at Bear Country USA. Take the three-mile drive through more than 250 acres of the Black Hills to view over 20 species of North American mammals, including bighorn sheep, mountain lions, timber wolves and more. Kids will love exploring Babyland where they can see bear cubs, otters and other playful creatures.



Black Hills Balloons (Custer) - Soar over the heart of the Black Hills in a majestic hot air balloon! Your flight over mountains, valleys, lakes and prairies is a great way to view the land. Keep an eye out for elk, mountain goat, buffalo, deer and other wildlife that call the Black Hills home. Black Hills Balloons offers hot air balloon rides for the whole family.

Broken Boot Gold Mine (Deadwood) - The story of one of America's greatest gold rushes comes to life at Deadwood's Broken Boot Gold Mine, established in 1878. Experienced guides help you discover the mysteries and magic of old-time gold mining techniques. Then try your luck at gold panning the same way countless prospectors did.

Butterfly House & Aquarium (Sioux Falls) - Butterfly House & Aquarium is the only public saltwater aquarium in the Dakotas and one of only a few butterfly houses nationwide that are open year-round. Through educational experiences with the smallest and most delicate animals like butterflies, corals, and jellyfish, we fulfill our mission of creating connection and inspiring conservation of wild species and spaces.

Catfish Bay Greatest Show on H2O (Sioux Falls) - Catfish Bay's Greatest Show on H2O is one of the top summer attractions in Sioux Falls. Come to a show and you will see amazing water-skiing tricks, stunts, and a funny family friendly stage show. The show is performed by the Catfish Bay Water Ski Team and consists of over 30 water ski performers, boat drivers, actors, sound technicians, and more.

Cosmos Mystery Area (Rapid City) - The area known as the Cosmos is the strangest location in the entire Black Hills. Here the world is different, topsy-turvy with nothing in its normal position including yourselves. The laws of nature seem to have gone completely berserk, especially in the mystery house itself. However, to feel the pressure of the area against you is the most unusual feature of all. A physical experience you and your family will never forget.

Custer State Park (Custer) - Few truly wild places remain in this country. Custer State Park is one of them. Nearly 1,300 bison wander the park's 71,000 acres, which they share with pronghorn antelope, elk, mountain goats and a band of burros. Hiking trails, scenic drives, bike rides and safari tours are perfect ways to explore this impressive South Dakota attraction.



Great Plains Zoo (Sioux Falls) - The Great Plains Zoo in Sioux Falls features more than 1,000 animals from around the world. The 45-acre park offers up-close views of animals often not found in larger zoos, including giraffes, tigers, rhinos, zebras, primates, and an award-winning snow monkey exhibit.

Home of Laura Ingalls Wilder (De Smet) - Families are invited to Laura Ingalls Wilder's homestead to travel back in time and experience what life was like in the 1880s when Laura and her family first settled in De Smet. The homestead offers covered wagon rides, an 1880s school session and pioneering activities like making rope and cob dolls.



Outdoor Campus East (Sioux Falls) and Outdoor Campus West (Rapid City) - Experience the great outdoors of South Dakota at one of two Outdoor Campuses where children can learn about and enjoy outdoor activities like fishing, archery and gardening for butterflies. The Outdoor Campuses feature nature trails and freshwater aquariums for interactive family fun.

Reptile Gardens (Rapid City) - Housing more species of reptiles than any other zoo or wild animal park, Reptile Gardens was recertified by the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest reptile zoo in the 2018 edition. Families can experience hands-on demonstrations, and animal shows sure to thrill the group. Special exhibits like the Sky Dome and a fun-filled Prairie Dog Town, as well as areas featuring giant tortoises and Komodo dragons add to the fun.

Rush Mountain Adventure Park (Keystone) - Rush Mountain Adventure Park, home to Rushmore Cave, offers a variety of family activities, including a scenic cave tour to explore ancient rock formations. The site is also home to the Soaring Eagle Zipline Ride, the Gunslinger 7-D Interactive Ride, Rushmore Mountain Coaster, and so much more!

Sprockets Fun Foundry (Keystone) - An innovative, multi-level entertainment center features fully immersive virtual reality experiences with moving platforms, a state-of-the-art arcade, duckpin bowling, restaurant, taproom and more.

Storybook Island (Rapid City) - Storybook Island invites children to visit their favorite storybook characters throughout the theme park. The eight and a half-acre park features life-size figurines from classic children's stories and also offers children's train rides.

Storybook Land/Wylie Park (Aberdeen) - At Storybook Land in Aberdeen, classic fairytale stories are brought to life. Children can travel down the Yellow Brick Road from the Wizard of Oz story, take a ride on a replica 1863 train and carousel and discover more than 60 larger than life displays of classic fairytale and nursery rhyme stories. Wylie Park offers endless fun for families with a zoo, 1881 authentic train depot museum, go-karts, bumper boats, bicycle and surrey rentals, miniature golf and a small lake with a swimming beach.

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