

C.M. Russell Auto Tour

Montana's Favorite Son



6 Days/5 Nights

Gateway City: Great Falls, Montana



Charles Marion Russell is a Montana favorite son. So much so, that a statue of the artist is only one of two that represent Montana in the U.S. Capitol. Russell came to Montana at age 16 to work on a sheep ranch. He later found work with a trapper who became a rancher, learning the ways of the West. Russell's artistic fame began when he depicted the harsh winter of 1886 in a watercolor that was eventually displayed in a shop window in Helena. The painting, captioned "Waiting for a Chinook," became one of his best known works. Settling in Great Falls, he began working as a full time artist and met his wife Nancy, who is credited with making him internationally known. Overall, he created about 4000 works that illustrate the Montana West in a variety of mediums, including oils, watercolors, drawings, and sculpture in wax, clay, plaster and others. He was so venerated by Montanans that children in Great Falls were released from school to watch his funeral procession. Russell's art provides a window into the past seen through the eyes of a cowboy's cowboy. Striking visuals showcase Native Americans, buffalo, wolves, the open range, mountain men, and miners. In 1987, the Montana Legislature declared Route 87 between Great Falls and Lewistown the Charles M. Russell Trail. This trip follows that route.



Touring the Byway

We recommend starting your journey in Great Falls to begin exploring the legend and the art of C. M. Russell. There are no less than four walking tours you can take to get to know the city: Historic Residential, River's Edge History, Central Business District, and the Historic Railroad District. You can also take a Historic Trolley Tour past local landmarks. Great Falls is home to the C. M. Russell Museum, which houses the largest collection of Russell's work. While in Great Falls, you can also visit the Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, and The History Museum, and call for an optional tour of the Gibson Mansion, built by the founder of Great Falls, with a very interesting story.

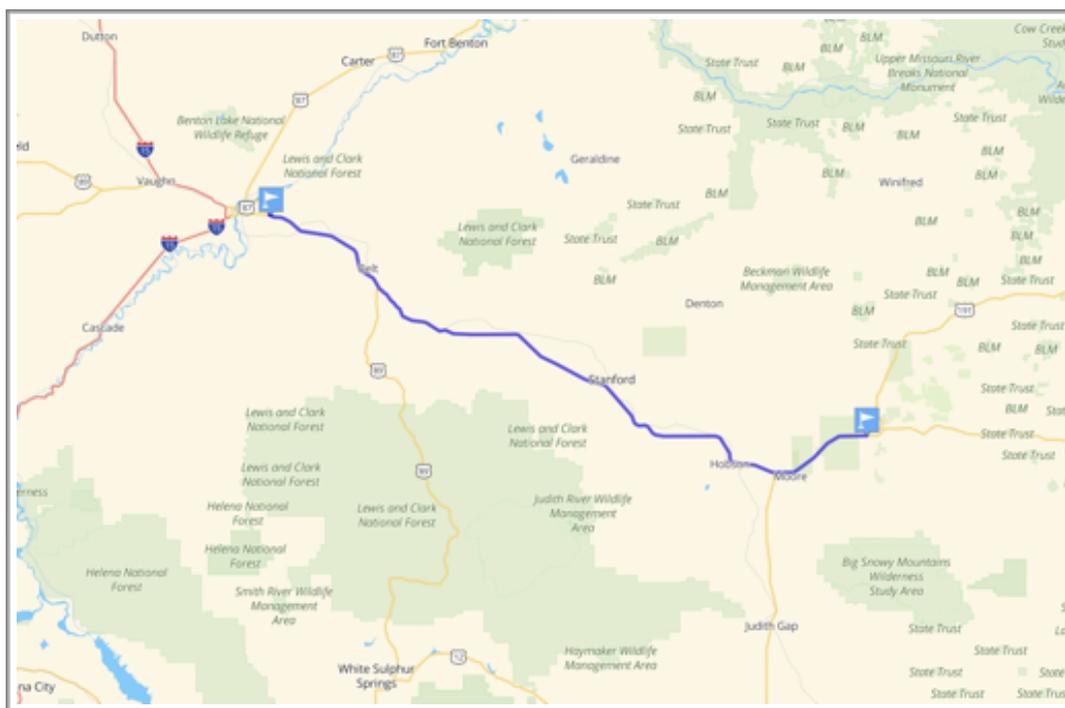
On Day Two, you'll be off on the C.M. Russell Auto Tour Route starting in Belt, referred to as "Coal Banks" and the start of hardscrabble Charlie Russell Country. Sluice Boxes State Park preserves the remains of a several mile stretch of mines and mining camps. Hiking in the Sluice Boxes is limited to the low water season, generally mid-July through September, due to the fact that fording the river in high water conditions can be dangerous.

Next up, Raynesford, a railroad town, and Geyser, named for its bubbling mud springs. Stanford was a hangout for cowboys, including Charlie Russell, who painted and sketched his memories of this area and its people. Stanford also hosts

the Judith Basin County Museum and the Prairie Past Museum with agricultural machinery. A bronze sculpture “On Top of the World” by artist J.C Dye sits at the Judith Basin County Courthouse.

An overnight stay in the historic Judith Guard Station and Cabins enables you to settle into completely unique accommodations in the Lewis and Clark National Forest. On Day Three, it’s off to Utica where the Utica Museum holds a collection of homestead era artifacts. Next up, Sapphire Village, the only place in the world where Yogo Sapphires are found. Hobson also hosts the Hobson Museum and Ackley Lake State Park, which also inspired Charlie Russell’s art. At the end of the trail, Lewistown showcases Western life in Montana. The Central Montana Historical Museum portrays the area’s story beginning in the 1870s when it was still largely unsettled and buffalo roamed the open prairies. Fort Maginnis was established in 1880 to protect settlers in the Judith Mountains following General Custer’s demise.

If you’re so inclined, take a side trip to Gilt Edge, Kendall, and Maiden, mining ghost towns that surround Lewistown, after which you can travel south to Billings, another great Montana city. From there, we wish you safe passage if you’re traveling on another Montana Scenic Drive, or a safe and pleasant journey home.



DAY ONE



Great Falls

Lewis and Clark could hear the “great falls” of the Missouri River more than seven miles away. The river was so treacherous it took the expedition nearly a month to portage around the falls, celebrating July 4th in the new territory. When Paris Gibson arrived in 1882, he created a plan for the town for railroad magnate James Hill, who provided financial backing, believing that the city would be a great connection point for the region’s railroads. Gibson made sure the streets were laid out in a precise, straight pattern, set aside 886 acres for city parks, and had trees planted on every street and boulevard. Today, you can still enjoy the results of his thoughtful planning for the city.

Great Falls Historic Tours

When you reach Great Falls, get to know the city on one or more of the historic walking tours available or take the trolley around town.

- **Central Business Historic District Walking Tour:** Features the architecture of 25 buildings and the stories behind them, plus engage in the Great Falls Buffalo Hunt with 26 life sized colorfully painted buffalos sprinkled about downtown. Tour starts at 300 First Avenue South.
- **Historic Residential Walking Tour:** Features the grandest neighborhood in Great Falls with stately Queen Annes, sprawling Colonial Revivals, Tudor, Second Empire, Arts and Crafts, and Prairie style residences constructed during the 1890s boom – intended to be as stylish, elegant, and majestic, as mansions back East. Tour begins at 212 Fourth Avenue North.
- **River’s Edge History Walking Tour:** Features 16 points of interest including Encounter with a Grizzly Bear by Captain Meriwether Lewis, a 2500-year old Native American archaeological site, and the dawn of water powered electricity. Tour begins at the Meriwether Lewis and the Grizzly Bear statue.
- **Historic Railroad District Walking Tour:** Reflects the development of Great Falls into central Montana’s trade, service, and cultural center during three major construction periods. Tour begins at Great Falls Civic Center.

Historic Trolley Tour: As an alternative to walking, discover the magic, history, and beauty of Great Falls, Montana on the historic trolley that takes you past local landmarks and attractions.

1400 First Avenue North, Great Falls, MT 59405, 406-868-2913, Adults \$20

C. M. Russell Museum

Voted Montana’s best museum, it holds the most complete collection of Charlie Russell’s art, plus his studio and the Russell home. ,

400 13th Street North, Great Falls MT 59401, 406-727-8787, W-M 10AM-5PM

Adults \$14

Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art

The magnificent Romanesque Revival 1896 structure that houses this museum was the Great Falls High School. Collections here hold 800+ pieces of Northwest regional contemporary art, American Indian contemporary art, and American self-taught art. Over 230 sculptures created from cottonwood branches and found objects by self-taught artist Lee Steen are on display. 1400 First Avenue North, Great Fall, MT 59401, 406-727-8255 M, W, Th, F 10AM-5PM, Tu 10AM-9PM, Sat Noon to 5PM.

The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center features exhibits on the explorers' route through Giant Springs State Park. It also hosts North America's most extensive display detailing the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Stand in awe of the museum's 2-story diorama centerpiece. 4201 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls, MT 59405, 406-727-8733, W-Sun 9AM-5PM, Free



The History Museum

Housed in the 1929 International Harvester building known as Machinery Row, the museum focuses on preserving the folk heritage of the North Central Montana region.

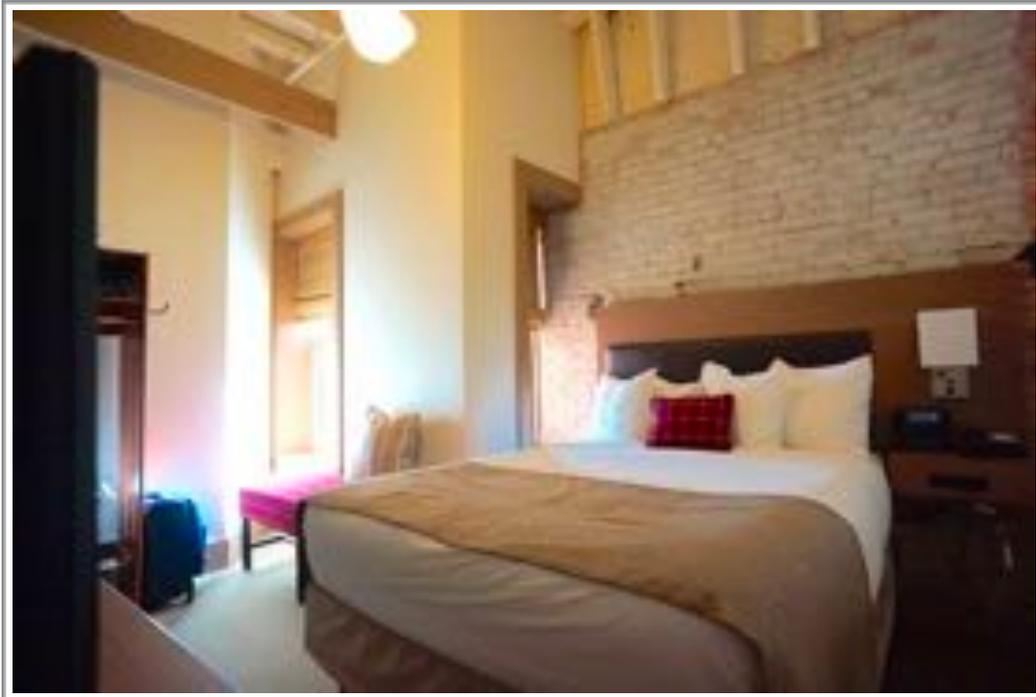
422 2nd Street South, Great Falls, MT 59401, 406-452-3462, Tu-F and second Sat. Noon-5PM, Free



Gibson Mansion

The home of Paris Gibson, founder of Great Falls, was one of the first constructed on Millionaire's Row in 1890. It had been cut up into a 9-plex apartment building that was in deplorable condition with numerous additions and changes, when the present owner decided to restore it back to its original stately grandeur. The restoration earned a Historic Preservation Award and was the subject of a Travel Channel episode, *Dead Files*, that sought evidence of a haunting or paranormal spirit who is believed to be in residence.

400 Fourth Avenue, Great Falls, MT 59401



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Historic Hotel Arvon 118 First Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59401, 406-952-1101 The original "Celtic Cowboy" Robert Vaughn opened a Livery/Freight Transfer station, Teamster Boarding House, and Vegetable and Fruit market all under one roof in 1890. By 2010, it was vacant and slated for the wrecking ball. The Jennings Family completely transformed the structure into the Celtic Cowboy Pub and Restaurant, the Darkhorse Hall and Wine Club, and the Hotel Arvon.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Roadhouse Diner 613 15th Street North, Great Falls, MT 59401, 406-788-8839

Not your everyday diner!

Celtic Cowboy Pub and Restaurant in the Avron Hotel Brew pub, dining, breakfast, lunch, dinner, brunch and late night

Mackenzie River Pizza Company 500 River Drive, Great Falls, MT 59401, 406-761-0085
American and Italian

Destination Distinctive Retail

Candy Masterpiece 120 Central Avenue, Great Falls, MT 59401, 406-727-5955

Don Hanson Studio Pottery 406-870-2363, by appointment only

The Farmer's Daughter Fibers 320 Central Avenue, Great Falls, MT 406-890-8809

Dragonfly Dry Goods 504 Central Avenue, Great Falls, MT 59401, 406-454-2263

Hoglund's Western Wear 306 First Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59401, 406-452-6911

The Popcorn Colonel 900 Ninth Street South #2, Great Falls, MT 59401, 406-727-5676

DAY TWO

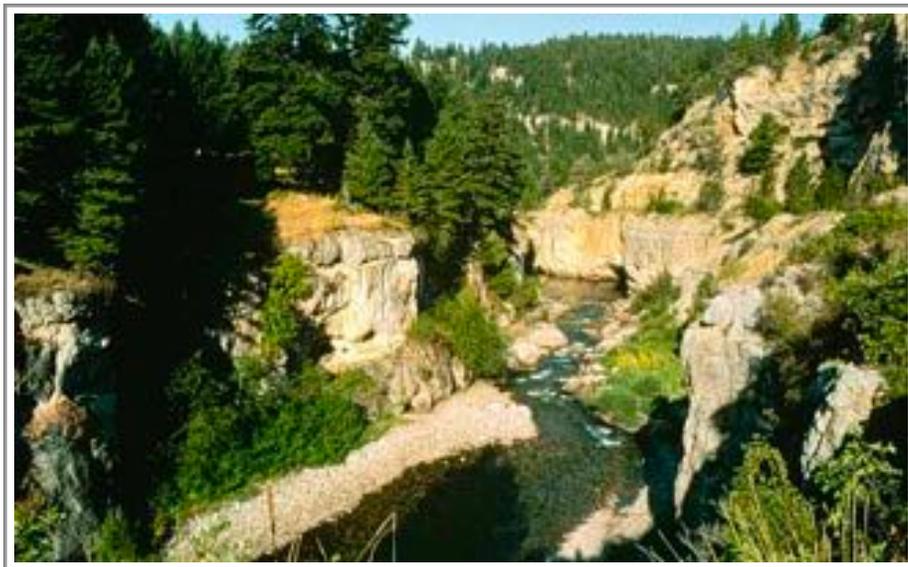
Belt

Belt came about when coal deposits were discovered along Belt Creek in 1870 that attracted workers from all over the United States and the world. In 1885, founder John Castner and his wife, Mattie, one of Montana's earliest African-American businesswomen, established a stage station and hotel. By the early 1900s, it had grown into a jumble of wooden false-front mining town buildings. Eventually, they gave way to stone and brick, which lacked architectural ornamentation but gave the appearance of a prosperous and stable community referred to as "Little Pittsburgh," "Coal Banks," and "Black Diamond City."

Belt Museum

Housed in the original 1895 jail, the Belt Museum still has a historic jail cell, surrounded by exhibits and records of the area's gold mines.

37 Castner Street, Belt, MT 59412, 406-277-3574



Sluice Boxes State Park

Just a short distance off the C. M. Russell Auto Tour route, this park preserves eight miles of Belt Creek Canyon with actual mining sites. The preserve on Belt Creek includes a railroad and historic cabins.

38 Evans Riceville Road, Belt, MT 59412, 406-454-5840. \$8 per vehicle

Raynesford

Named after the daughter of the man who sold land to the railroad, Raynesford began as a railroad town. It lies north of the ghost towns of Albright and Hughesville.

Geyser

Named for the nearby bubbling mud springs, Geyser was moved to its present site as a station when the Great Northern Railroad was constructed from Great Falls to Billings. It was mostly populated by Finnish homesteaders who had been coal miners in Belt, that were attracted to an offer of free land.

Stanford

Stanford, which began as a trading post in 1875, was moved about 3 miles to be next to the new railroad in 1908. The landscape here played an integral role in Charlie Russell's art and a favorite cowboy hangout.

Judith Basin County Museum

The Judith Basin County Museum illustrates the transition of the Judith Basin from open range cattle ranching, sheep-herding, and homesteading, and from stagecoaches to railroading. Displays include Native American artifacts, the White Wolf saga, historic pictures, early homesteaders' handmade items and other frontier artifacts, all complemented with work by Charlie Russell.

93 Third Street South, Stanford, MT 59479, 406-566-2277

Prairie Past Museum

This museum was created as a collection point for old agricultural machinery, much of it still in working condition.

36377 US Highway 87, Stanford, Montana 59479, 406-566-2428



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Historic Judith Ranger Station and Cabins, Lewis and Clark National Forest, 406-566-2292 The Judith Guard Station provides an opportunity to stay in authentic frontier accommodations. The two-story frame building, located about 30 miles south of Stanford, is furnished with historically accurate furnishings and wallpaper, has a modern vault toilet, propane heating, and cookstove. Water is available from a hand pump during the summer months. Bring bedding, food, an ice chest and carry out all items. Available yearlong on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Waterhole Saloon 87 Central Avenue, Stanford, MT 59479, 406-566-2743

Like eating with family.

Dauna's Deli 94 Central Ave, Stanford, MT 59479, 406-366-5433

Destination Distinctive Retail

Basin Gallery & Trading Post 94 Central Avenue, #3, Stanford, MT 59479, 406-566-2336

Double B Gift Shop 517 Third Street South, Stanford MT 59479, 406-566-2363

Steven E Lillegard Studio and Foundry 36377 US Highway 8, Stanford, MT 59479, 406-566-2552

DAY THREE

Utica

Jake Hoover discovered gold here in 1865, and 30 years later, he found the Yogo Sapphires. He befriended Charlie Russell when Charlie arrived in Montana, loaning him a cabin while he learned the ropes as a cowboy. Russell commemorated this time with “Cowboy Camp During Roundup,” “Bronc to Breakfast,” “Last of 5000” and “A Quiet Day in Utica.” The town became a stage stop on the Billings to Great Falls line, with two hotels, a general store, a meat market, a church, and post office. Calamity Jane was a periodic resident. Today’s Main Street is the same street where stagecoaches once rolled.

The Utica Museum

The Utica Museum collects artifacts from the frontier homestead era; dishes, clothes, furniture, tools and leather goods, along with pictures of local homesteaders and information about their lives on the frontier.

Main Street, Utica MT 59452, 406-423-5208, Summer weekends 10AM-5PM

Destination Distinctive Dining

Oxen Yoke Inn 11532 MT-541, Utica, MT 59452, 406-423-5560

The tradition of Charlie Russell is evident in the Oxen Yoke Inn with artwork and images throughout the building.





Sapphire Village

300 million years ago, the sea over Montana formed the Madison limestone layer with a five mile, 10 foot wide fracture that allowed molten magma to flow into, filling it with lamproite, host rock of the Yogo Sapphires. Coveted by the rich and famous, the sapphires are in the Smithsonian, Museum of Natural History in New York, and the British Royal Crown jewel collection. Sapphire Village is the only place in the world where Yogo Sapphires are mined. It is accessed by a gravel road that climbs into the foothills along the Judith River, 11 miles from Utica.

Hobson

Once known as the “Gateway to the Judith Basin,” the town was named after S. S. Hobson, an early-day cowboy and rancher who settled on the Judith River, and later became a state senator from the area.

Hobson Museum

Housed in a 1909 Cook and Dunn Drugstore, the museum includes an interesting collection of old agricultural machinery and pioneer artifacts from central Montana, which illustrate farming and ranching a century ago.

212 Central Avenue, Hobson, MT 59452, 406-423-5453

Ackley Lake State Park

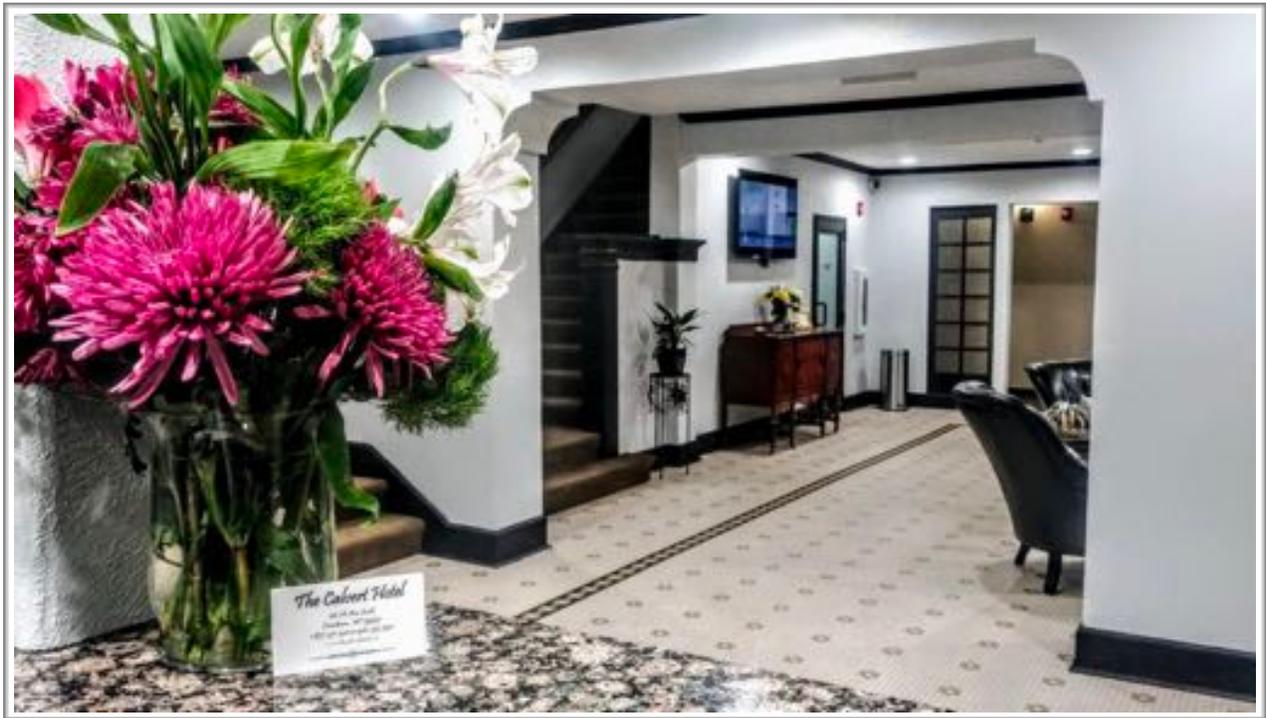
This state park preserves the beautiful mountain views and rich agricultural lands that inspired Charlie Russell a hundred years ago.

989 Ackley Lake Road, Hobson, MT 59452, 406-727-1212, \$8 per vehicle _

Lewistown

Showcasing the heart of the Western lifestyle, Lewistown is an agricultural community intersected by a beautiful, spring-fed stream and encircled by the Snowy, Judith, Moccasin, Belt, and Highwood mountains. History here goes back to the early Montana Territory and to the first permanent settlers, who were Metis, French Canadians who married into Native American families. When gold ran out in Maiden, any of the miners moved to Lewistown to settle permanently.





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

The Calvert Hotel 216 Seventh Avenue South, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406-535-5411 Built in 1917 as a dormitory for ranch children, the Calvert became a hotel in 1929 and is still part of Lewistown's quaint downtown.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Central Feed Grilling Company 220 East Main Street, Lewistown, MT 59457. 406-535-2337 American pub with lots of food options and vegetarian options.

Harry's Place 631 NE Main Street, Lewistown, MT, 406-538-9510 Great sandwiches and other American choices.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Moccasin Mountain Arts & Gifts 408 West Main Street, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406-538-5125

Lewistown Art Center 323 West Main Street, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406-535-8278

Clint Loomis Studio 221 West Main Street, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406-366-3068

DAY FOUR

Central Montana Historical Museum

The area's history is chronologically displayed in the museum, starting in the 1870's when the area was largely unsettled and buffalo roamed the open prairies. The variety of collections includes dolls, hats, wedding dresses, firearms, forts, fossils, historic replicas and dioramas, Native American artifacts, medical equipment and photos, military gear, and musical instruments, complemented with interpretation featuring some of the area's most notorious events and residents.

408 Northeast Main Street, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406-535-3642

Fort Maginnis

Following the General Custer debacle at Little Bighorn in 1876, Martin Maginnis was tapped to provide military forts to protect settlers in other parts of the region. Fort Maginnis ultimately became so much more than a military location, it also delivered social life with regular theater and music, dances, and gatherings that brought women from nearby Maiden. The original buildings housed men's quarters, a commissary, bakery, guardhouse, clerk's office, a chapel, school, blacksmith shop, and hospital. At least two buildings from the fort are standing in Lewistown and many others were used to build the now ghost town of Gilt Edge. Fort Maginnis Road, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406-538-3820

Bear Gulch Pictographs

Well preserved pictographs and petroglyphs can be reached in Bear Gulch Canyon by hiking approximately a half a mile in each direction, up and down.

2749 Fairview Road, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406-428-2185, Adults \$20

Gilt Edge

Founded in 1893, the town used the hospital and school from Fort Maginnis, coupled with stores, a jail, brothel and more. Today, the site is dotted with a few remains of the stone storefronts, a wooden jail, and brick buildings.

Maiden Road and Gilt Edge Road. Gilt Edge Road 406-538-3820

Maiden

Founded in 1881, Maiden was not platted. The town grew so fast that settlers just built a fence around the land they wanted. Within a year, the town boasted eight

saloons, two clothing stores, five general merchandise stores, a dry-goods store, a butcher shop, a blacksmith, two barbers, a feed stable, a lawyer's office, a doctor, a hotel and a restaurant. In 1885, it became the seat of Fergus County, having added five saloons, a newspaper, a Cornet band and several hundred more residents. Unfortunately, the town slowly withered as the mines shut down and fire swept through in 1905. A saloon/assay office and the Maginnis' 1884 ten stamp mill remains have been privately preserved.

Maiden Road, 406-538-3820

Kendall

In the early 1880s, a placer and lode gold discovery in the North Moccasin Mountains promoted Harry Kendall to build a plant to house a new cyanide gold recovery process to ore from on the surface. By 1901, the town had a bank and opera house constructed of stone from the nearby quarry. A few stone ruins and foundations, a bandstand, and a boulder used in drilling contests still exist.

Interpretative signs explain what you are seeing.

North Kendall Road 406-538-3820

Charlie Russell Chew Choo Dinner Train

If there's time in the evening, take the dinner train to travel through the rolling hills, ranch lands, and breathtaking sunsets of Big Sky Country,. There are usually antelope, eagles, deer, hawks, and coyotes on the 56-mile trip which follows the route of the old Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad to Denton. Be sure to watch for masked bandits, as a hold up occurs when you're least expecting it. The train boards at the Hanover Boarding Station one hour before departure which is 10 miles and approximately 20 minutes from Main Street.

7188 Hanover Road, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406-535-5436



DAY FIVE



Billings

The Crow, who lived here for millenniums, called it Ammalapashkuua – or where they cut wood. Caves south of town contain more than 100 pictographs over 2,000 years old, 30,000 stone tools, weapons and other artifacts that prove the area was occupied for 4,500 years before Europeans arrived. Lewis and Clark passed through in 1806. The Billings area was originally known as Clark’s Fork Bottom and then Coulson, a rough town founded in 1877, filled with dance halls and saloons, considered the best location for commerce. The railroad had other ideas, founding Billings in 1882, which grew from three buildings to 2,000 residents in a matter of months. Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the Rims (rimrocks) Billings is now a thriving city with diverse cuisine, arts, and culture.

Historic Walking Tour of Billings

Starting at the Visit Southeast Montana Visitor Center, plan to walk the 45-stop Historic Walking Tour, which ends at the Western Heritage Center and covers mostly Minnesota and Montana Avenues. While you are walking, you'll see the work of the Public Art Committee which has supported 27 utility box wraps and other installations including "Between This Life and the Next," "Wildlife," "Paper Moon" and "Magenta#1." They also sponsored a series of murals and "Art Alley" next to the Good Earth Market.

815 South 27th Street #4513, Billings, MT 59101, 406-294-5270

Western Heritage Center

The collections of the Western Heritage Center, located in the Richardson Romanesque Parmlly Billings Library, tells the story of life in the Yellowstone River Valley through over 16,000 artifacts in collections including Yellowstone River Culture American Indian Tribal History, Native American Collection, Regional Western Art Collection, Harry Frahm Collection, Thomas Molesworth Collection, and the James Kenneth Ralston Collection. Exhibits include the Dude Ranch Lobby, Parading Through History, Montana's Black Gold, Blackfoot Tipi Legends, The Real West: Farming, The Southsiders, Women Ranchers and more.

2822 Montana Avenue, Billings, MT 59101, 406-256-6809, Tues-Sat 10AM-5PM, Adults \$5





Moss Mansion Museum

When Preston Boyd Moss built the Moss Mansion in 1903, he influenced the entire culture of the city. Designed by the architect of the Waldorf Astoria and the Plaza Hotel in New York, the mansion showcases unrivaled craftsmanship. Amazingly, the original fixtures, including heated indoor plumbing on each floor, call buttons for servants, and other impressive feats of technology for the period, remain intact. Be sure to watch the 13-minute video which describes the activities of the Moss family in the development of Billings.

914 Division Street, Billings, MT 59101, 406-256-5100, Year-round, Tues-Sat 10AM-4PM, Sun Noon-3PM, check availability of guided tours, Adults \$12

Yellowstone Art Museum

The Yellowstone Art Museum hosts a unique collection of Western art, focused on preserving the living artistic heritage of the West. The Visible Vault, one of only a few in the country, allows guests to observe art collections, storage, and preservation. Collections have grown from 600 pieces in 1991 to over 7,300. The works of Charlie Russell, J.H. Sharp, Bill Stockton, Isabelle Johnson, and Edith Freeman, and the Virginia Snook Collection are complemented by the largest collection of drawings, paintings, books, and memorabilia of cowboy illustrator Will James. The Raven Café d'Art is a favorite local hot-spot for lunch.

401 North 27th Street, Billings, MT 59101, 406-256-6804, Tues-Sun 10AM-5PM, until 8PM on Thursday, Adults \$15.



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Northern Hotel 19 North Broadway, Billings, MT 59101, 406-867-6767.

Escape to the new Northern Hotel, which has welcomed guests since 1904, to relax in luxuriously renovated guest rooms with warm, contemporary interiors.

Destination Distinctive Restaurants

Walkers American Grill 2700 First Avenue North, Billings, 59101, 406-24-9291

Barbed-wire chandeliers and local art complement a very creative menu and extensive wine list.

Montana's Brewing Company 113 N Broadway, Billings, MT 59101, 406-252-9200

Seasonal selection of house-brewed beer on tap and pub fare served in a lively, casual setting.

Uberbrew 2305 Montana Avenue, Billings, MT 59101

Destination Distinctive Retail

Liberty & Vine Country Store 2019 Montana Avenue, Billings, MT 59101, 406-534-8667

Tues-Sat, 10AM-6PM, Sun 11AM-4PM

Brockel's Chocolates 117 North 29th Street, Billings, MT 5910, 406-248-2705

Sandstone Gallery 2913 Second Avenue North, Billings, MT 59101, 406-256-5837

Toucan 2505 Montana Avenue, Billings, MT 59101, 406-252-0122