



Midwest Road Trip Itinerary (from Nashville, TN)

Check out our 2-1/2 week itinerary across the midwest! If you have young kids, be sure to take advantage of our nation's *fantastic* Junior Ranger program! My kids enjoyed collecting badges from all the National Parks we visited, which included Mt. Rushmore, The Badlands, Yellowstone, & Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Our travels were planned around visits to friends in Missouri, Michigan & Kentucky. Adapt these plans to suit your needs & tell *us your* highlights!

SUNDAY 5/28 & MONDAY 5/29

Travel Plan: Depart Nashville, Tennessee & Spend the Night in **St. Louis, Missouri**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 4.5 hours (Our actual drive time is about 20-30% longer than all estimated drive times)

Notes: Highlights of the city include Grant's Farm, St. Louis Zoo, The City Museum, & St. Louis Arch

TUESDAY 5/30

Travel Plan: Drive & Spend the Night in **Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 9 hours

Notes: Pass through Iowa - Be sure to clip the edge of Omaha, Nebraska if you want to check it off a list!

Lodging Recommendation: We enjoy Holiday Inn Express. My 4 hotel questions: Do you have rollaway beds? Do you have a room fridge? Do you have a pool? Do you have a laundry facility?

WEDNESDAY 5/31

Travel Plan: Enjoy the Badlands and several other stops on the way

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 3.5 Hours to spend the night in **The Badlands (Interior, South Dakota)**

Notes: Badlands area dining was a disappointment. However, if you are eager to try the local cuisine, try Indian tacos. You will want to stop en route to the Badlands at one of the area's many notable (and not notable) tourist spots. Research to see what interests you or stop when the mood strikes you! Highlights include Ingalls Homestead in De Smet. Corn Palace in Mitchell. Feeding Prairie Dogs was a fun adventure.

Lodging Recommendation: We loved our stay at Cedar Pass Lodge, small cabins in the parks 877-386-4383.

THURSDAY 6/1

Travel Plan: Drive to Mt. Rushmore and then continue driving to spend the night in **Cody, Wyoming.**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 1.5 Hours to Mt. Rushmore, then 6.5 Hours to Cody

Notes: Rushmore's cafeteria isn't fantastic, so you might want to grab a good coffee & stretch at the playground of the cute coffee shop before you head up the mountain towards your tourist destination! But leave room for Thomas Jefferson's original ice cream recipe!! After your visit, there is *a lot* to see between Rushmore and Cody. If your schedule allows, I would suggest that you might add a day here. We missed many of the areas highlights, but have listed them below. Upon leaving Rushmore, we headed towards Deadwood. You will pass through Hill City, Rapid City, then Deadwood. You can take a short detour to Crazy Horse Memorial (a drive by will do). More time would have allowed us to stop at the following recommended highlights: Fantastic bread pudding in Hill City's German restaurant, Devil's Tower (after Deadwood, 22 miles off the interstate), the super fun Cosmos Mystery Area (near Rapid City), The city of Spearfish and Custer State Park. We loved the drive (Hwy 16) around Buffalo, Wyoming. Lots of lovely pull offs for photo opportunities. Keep your eyes open near the Big Horn Forest for a snowy spot to have an impromptu snowball fight! In Cody, we ate a delicious meal at The Local. Don't Forget some chewing gum for long mountainous driving!

Lodging Recommendation: No Holiday Inn Express in Cody, WY. We stayed at the Best Western Standard.

FRIDAY 6/2

Travel Plan: Drive from Cody to Yellowstone. Enjoy **Yellowstone.**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 2.5 hours into Yellowstone's east entrance.

Notes: Yellowstone's Road Services is 307-344-2117. Or ask at the entrance about any road closures that might affect your travel. There are a few entrances in/out of the park, and several places for lodging, so you might want to research various options to best suit your family. Staying in different locations is advised, because the main

lodging locations are hours apart from each other. There are dining options in the park, but remember, things are hours apart! Plan accordingly.

Lodging Recommendation: Canyon Lodge in Yellowstone. Consider booking (in advance) a Wildlife Tour that departs from this area.

SATURDAY 6/3

Travel Plan: Drive around the Park, lodging at the Western Cabin at Old Faithful Snow Lodge in **Yellowstone**

Estimated Drive Time: 2 Hours from the Canyon to the Old Faithful areas

Notes: Dinner at the Old Faithful Inn Dining Room is recommended (Call 307-344-7311 for reservations). PS. Room 229 at the Old Faithful Inn has a direct view of the most famous geyser in the world! Please note! The bathroom is down the hall, so this is certainly not the room for everyone.

Lodging Recommendation: Old Faithful Snow Lodge – we stayed in the cabins

SUNDAY 6/4

Travel Plan: Drive to Grand Teton National Park and then continue to **Jackson Hole, Wyoming**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 3.5 Hours from Yellowstone to Jackson, WY. You will pass the Grand Tetons, which is 30 minutes from Jackson Hole.

Notes: Jenny Lake and Jackson Lake lodge are *must* stops. Make sure to see the antler arches in Jackson's town square. Persephone Bakery is the cutest coffee & bakery shop.

Lodging Recommendation: We spent the night at Alpine House in Jackson, Wyoming

MONDAY 6/5

Travel Plan: Drive from Jackson, Wyoming to **Billings, Montana**.

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 6.0 hours

Notes: We stopped in Bozeman for a meal, which had many good modern dining options.

Lodging: We stayed at Holiday Inn Express in Billings

TUESDAY 6/6

Travel Plan: Drive from Billings, Montana to **Fargo, North Dakota**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 8.0 hours

Notes: Stretch your legs at the Painted Canyon Visitor Center in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park! It's so pretty (another Junior Ranger Badge!) and right on your way.

Lodging: We stayed at Holiday Inn Express. The location on 19th avenue has an awesome pool slide!

WEDNESDAY 6/7

Travel Plan: Drive from Fargo, North Dakota to **Minneapolis, Minnesota**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 3.5-4.0 Hours

Notes: Minneapolis is great!!! I loved this city. The kids made us go to Mall of America (reluctantly) but I'm glad they did. A cheap indoor amusement park with no lines! We enjoyed lunch at Cov in Wayzata which is on Lake Minnetonka. I would have liked to see more of the city if time had allowed.

Lodging: We spent the night at the downtown Holiday Inn Express.

THURSDAY 6/8 - SUNDAY 6/11

Travel Plan: Drive from Minneapolis, Minnesota to **Bay Harbor, Michigan**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 9.5 hours

Notes: Bay Harbor is super close to Mackinaw Island, a must see for this part of the country!

Lodging: We stayed with friends in Bay Harbor, Michigan.

MONDAY 6/12

Travel Plan: Drive from Bay Harbor, Michigan to **Louisville, Kentucky**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 8.5 hours

Notes: We had a nice leg stretch in Columbus, Indiana – a great town with lots of architectural significance.

Lodging: We stayed with friends in Louisville, KY

TUESDAY 6/13

Travel Plan: Drive from Louisville, Kentucky to **Nashville, Tennessee!**

GPS Estimated Drive Time: 2.5 hours

Lodging: HOME IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE!!!