



# Loess Hills

## NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

Group Travel Itinerary

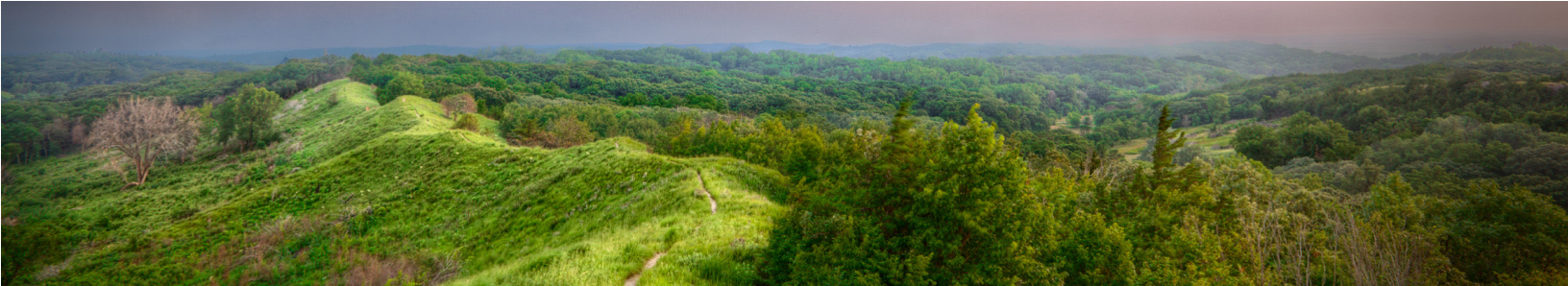


Along the Loess Hills in Western Iowa

The ultimate route for majestic views along one of the most unique landforms in the Western Hemisphere







## LHNSB

### Group Travel Itinerary

The 220 mile Loess Hills National Scenic Byway (plus an additional 185 miles of optional excursion loops) provides a visual treat of the fertile Missouri River Valley. These hills were formed by deposits of very fine, windblown soil, also known as loess, at the end of the last ice age. You'd have to travel to China to see any taller loess formations.

### Unique Adventures

The **Loess Hills Lavender Farm** provides a peaceful experience centered around the mystical and magical herb, lavender. Tour the beautiful lavender fields, cut your own lavender bouquet, and visit the gift shop to purchase lotions and bath products, allowing you to bring a piece of the farm into your home. Tea party events can be reserved, with finger sandwiches, yummy desserts, and of course lavender lemonade and tea!

The **Union Pacific Railroad Museum & RailsWest Railroad Museum** in Council Bluffs aren't just for train fanatics. These two museums provide amazing insight into the railroad and its influence on Iowa and the United States. Experience Railroad Days, typically the second weekend in July, for a guided tour to five museums with a shuttle between stops.

After working up an appetite out on the road, visit **The Sugar Makery** in Glenwood. This nostalgic candy store has all the classics - hand crafted chocolates, gourmet sodas, fresh handmade butter and cream fudge. There are always 12 fudge varieties to sample and buy! And don't forget the popcorn - delicious caramel, cheese and candy flavors featuring real butter and real cane sugar.

For some country cowboy entertainment, attend the award-winning **Sidney, Iowa Championship Rodeo**. The rodeo is Iowa's oldest continuous outdoor rodeo, and is typically held the first week of August. If you can't make it for the Rodeo itself, visit **Iowa's Championship Rodeo Museum**.

### Scenic Spots

For the best view the Loess Hills have to offer stop at:

**Broken Kettle Grassland** on Highway 12 south of Westfield in Plymouth County is not only The Nature Conservancy's largest preserve in Iowa, but it also contains the largest contiguous tract of native prairie left in the state. In 1999, the Conservancy found the prairie rattlesnake, an extremely rare species, at this site, making Broken Kettle even more important to the region. In the fall of 2008 TNC welcomed a herd of 28 bison at Broken Kettle Grasslands preserve. The extensive prairie ridgetops feature a variety of plants and animals typically found further west in the Great Plains, and also provide a critical habitat for many species of prairie butterflies. You'll love how wild it seems here!

**Loess Hills Scenic Overlook** at the Preparation Canyon Unit of the Loess Hills State Forest provides one of the most iconic photo opportunities in the Loess Hills. Ridgetop trails are available for those who want to venture out, but there is also a large wooden deck with interpretive panels for those who prefer to just relax and take in the view. This is located on Oak Avenue (a gravel road) southwest of Moorhead.

**Murray Hill Scenic Overlook**, located on F20 west of Pisgah, offers a panoramic view of the Missouri River Valley. Yucca plants and native flowers dominate the Loess Hill prairie landscape. Interpretive signs are located at multiple levels of the overlook that explain the significance and history of the Loess Hills. This is one of the most picturesque locations in the Loess Hills. It is located in the Loess Hills Bird Conservation Area designated by the Iowa DNR and is the northern terminal for Brent's Trail, a newly designated 13-mile hiking trail. This scenic and rugged trail traverses steep slopes and ridgetops through Murray Hill, Loess Hills State Forest and Gleason-Hubel Wildlife Area.

**Waubonsie State Park Overlook** located on the southeast side of Hwy 2/Bluff Road north of Hamburg is not only located on the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway, but also the Lewis & Clark Historical Trail. The scenic overlook provides one of the rarest and greatest vistas of Iowa's unique Loess Hills and the Missouri River bottom. Multiple trails and picnic areas are available to stretch your legs and take in the scenery.

## Points of Discovery

For exceptional hands-on learning of the natural environment, tour the **Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center**. The Center features a great interactive exhibit about the Loess Hills geological formation and native plants and animals. There are live Birds of Prey exhibits and a Discovery Forest nature playscape.

The Loess Hills have hosted some pretty famous explorers! The **Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and Betty Strong Encounter Center** showcases permanent exhibits about the Corps of Discovery's time in the present-day Sioux City area from late July to early September 1804. The expedition comes to life in exhibits that use interactive devices, including animatronic mannequins, computers, flip books, stamping stations, text-and-graphic panels, lift-and-drop panels, handpainted murals, a brass-rubbing station, and reproductions of military equipment. The Betty Strong Encounter Center connects to the Sioux City Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center to serve a permanent mission of "commemorating a history of encounters" that occurred before and after the expedition. It hosts free photo and art exhibitions, and offers free programs, events and activities that explore themes of the land, rivers and people of the region. Themes are as diverse as agriculture, Mighty Mo fishing, heritage food and music, and Native Games days.

The **Hitchcock Nature Center** is the perfect place to begin your Loess Hills exploration. Outside you will find an interpretive garden of native prairie plants, a patio area for picnicking and relaxing, 10 miles of trails, and a handicap-accessible boardwalk to an observation desk that offers beautiful views of the park and the surrounding flora and fauna. Climb the 45-foot observation tower for a unique bird's-eye view of the Loess Hills and adjacent landforms. Inside, experience a unique exhibit gallery featuring a variety of hands-on activities for visitors of all ages.

Looking for a bit of history? Iowa's landscape, location and natural resources made it historically significant in the development of the United States of America. During the Civil War, Iowa's location with slave states to the south and free states to the north and east made it an important link in the Underground Railroad. In the town of Tabor, Iowa, a group of citizens with like-minded sympathies worked together to help those "traveling" through Iowa to free states and territories. **The Todd House** was a station on the Underground Railroad and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Local Flavors

**Dave's Old Home Cafe** in Pisgah. Yes, this is the place from CW McCall's famous 1970s ballad...The comfort food lives up to the legend!

For a hometown brewery with a great selection of high-quality beer, the **Keg Creek Brewery** in Glenwood is a must-stop! The brewery has an open and comfortable environment that enhances craft beer education, enjoyment, and experimentation – no matter what your experience level. They promote craft beer education through discussion and tours, welcoming free thought and conversation. 'A little upscale with a bit of down-home.'

**Bodega Victoriana**, outside of Glenwood, is the largest vineyard in Western Iowa. This family-owned business is unique in that it is made from grapes grown in the Loess Hills. The winery is located in a beautiful century-old Victorian farm.

Located on the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway between Hamburg and Tabor, you'll want to be sure to make a pit stop at **Whiskey Springs**. Rustic charm meets excellent food and drink. From their patio you can enjoy views of the Missouri River valley towards the front and the scenic Loess Hills backing up to the property. Whiskey Springs features weekly specials, live music, and event hosting.

## Lodging Locales

Consider the **Hole N' The Wall Lodge** for your group's travel accommodations (but don't let the name scare you)! Located in Akron, the Main Lodge is a 3-story "built new to look old", state-of-the-art high-tech facility. Framed in by an 1890's vintage notch and peg style barn, the Grand Hall features a 40-foot stone stacked wood burning fireplace and cozy furniture for relaxation. On top of that, the Lodge has a fully-loaded gaming room and several authentic Native American teepees. Your group will have the whole place to yourselves, as they only rent out the entire facility as a venue.

The **Hard Rock Casino & Hotel in Sioux City**, a boutique 54-room property in downtown Sioux City, is housed in the totally re-imagined historic Battery Building. Upon entering the hotel you'll find what was once a drop-off station for trains is now the Lobby Bar. Before heading to the attached Hard Rock Casino for dining, entertainment and gaming, guests can settle into their rock 'n' roll inspired rooms. Each room features an eclectic mix of historical architecture mingled with modern amenities and design elements.

**Harrah's, Ameristar, or Horseshoe Casinos** in Council Bluffs will offer gaming and dining in close proximity to your room.

**Holiday Inn Express & Suites (Council Bluffs)**

**Hotel Arthur (Glenwood)**



## For More Group Tour Options

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