

WESTERN SPIRIT

Cycling Adventures



Maah Daah Hey 5 days/4 nights

DAY 1



After meeting in Bismarck, we will shuttle west and north to the heart of the North Dakota Badlands. Here we will unload our bikes and hop on some singletrack to get our Maah Daah Hey Trail trip started. The badlands were formed by the cutting action of thousands of small streams and rivulets over millions of years. The water travels through layers of fine grain clays and silts of every imaginable color. The name of the trail comes from a Mandan Indian phrase that means “an area that has been or will be around for a long time,” and it has also been interpreted to mean “grandfather” in the Mandan language. The trail is marked with large posts emblazoned with a turtle, symbolizing firm determination, steadfastness, patience, long life and fortitude— all good qualities that will come in handy along the way. After each small granny gear grunt we are rewarded by an equally twisty downhill. We’ll camp tonight at Magpie Camp and enjoy a delicious dinner.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 15 miles

DAY 2



Today is a big day and we’ll start with a hearty breakfast and breaking down camp. We ride over the famous Devil’s Pass, an eye-widening ride across a narrow wall of clay dropping away sharply on both sides. From Devil’s Pass, the Maah Daah Hey Trail is carved tightly into the hillside. Through many turns and switchbacks, the trail eventually leads us right to the banks of the Little Missouri River. The river is usually just a trickle at this point, but it’s still a little too deep to ride, so a refreshing wade

across cools us off before we climb back up through the riverside bluffs. We’ll have a hawk’s eye view of Theodore Roosevelt’s Elkhorn Ranch site, established in 1884. The ranching efforts failed when harsh winters doomed the cattle and the ranch was converted to a hunting lodge. As we descend, the trail is etched into the off camber bluff, reinforcing the “look where you want to go” technique. We’ll have lunch in a shady grove and fuel up for more great singletrack this afternoon. Today’s cumulative climbing is about 1,200 feet. Tonight’s camp is in a beautiful canyon where we’ll relax after a big day and enjoy a yummy dinner.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 19 miles

DAY 3



Today brings us the best section of the Maah Daah Hey. We’ll ride south through prickly peared valleys and more badlands landscape. We’ll climb some steep switchbacks and get a great view of the colors of sediment. 70 million years ago, this region was a vast inland sea which deposited sediment and laid down the many colored layers visible in the landscape. Wind, water and erosion have created the jagged buttes, rolling hillsides and rugged rock formations. The red sediment, called scoria, that we see from our vantage point is the result of underground coal fires. After lunch we continue south on the trail until we are just north of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. We’ll also pass impressive chunks of petrified wood. We’ll camp at Wannagan Camp that has scenic views of massive buttes.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 21 miles

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Altitude: 1,000 - 2,500 feet

Travel Logistics

DAY 4



Today we say goodbye to the Maah Daah Hey and hop on the Buffalo Gap Trail to circumnavigate the park. Some of the formations are like giant sandcastles with the trail swooping right around them. On occasion, we have seen whole herds of antelope blasting through this area at break neck speeds. With full trail grins on our faces we'll ride a few road miles right into the historic town of Medora. It is funny to think of what Teddy and his Rough Riders would have thought of the likes of us. Tonight's camp is at Sully Creek Camp and we'll likely hear coyotes howling from the adjacent ridge.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 25 miles

DAY 5



Our last day takes us further south to ride the Deuce Trail. We'll fuel up on a yummy breakfast and shuttle out to Plumely Draw. This really fun section of riding is more of the Badlands up-down-up-down. We'll continue riding through intermittent sections of grasslands and exposed rock formations as we make our way up and over the short but challenging climbs. We'll be rewarded with a fun downhill section that takes us back to Medora. We'll have lunch there and say our goodbyes.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 15 miles

RIDE NOTES

This tour contains riding on narrow technical trails. Singletrack experience is highly recommended. We will be without vehicle support during all of the singletrack sections of the ride. Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road conditions, rider safety and other factors which may affect the logistics of the adventure.

Road Surface: Rough singletrack through grass and clay.

Overall Rating: Intermediate/Advanced

Technical Difficulty: Moderate with advanced moments.

Physical Difficulty: Moderate to difficult.

MEETING PLACE AND TIME

Bismarck, ND

This trip meets at 8:00 AM CST at Expressway Inn & Suites, 200 Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 701-222-2900. We will load the van and drive 2 1/2 hours to the trailhead. You will need to spend the night before in Bismarck and we suggest you stay right at the Expressway.

You may meet us in Medora, ND if this is more suitable to your travel plans. We need to arrange a special shuttle so it is critical that you let us know in advance if you plan to be in Medora. Meet at Dakota Cyclery, 365 Main Street, Medora, ND 701-623-4808 at 9:00 AM MST. There is a one hour time difference between Medora and Bismarck. Parking is available.

ENDING TIME

We will return to Bismarck between 4:00-5:00 PM on the last day.

SHIPPING YOUR BIKE

If you are shipping your bike, send it to:

Dakota Cyclery Inc.
365 Main Street
Medora, ND 58645
701-623-4808

It is critical that you include your name, "Western Spirit Cycling" and tour date on the outside of the box. If you choose this service, you must get this organized through our office. It is imperative to have your bike finely tuned and cleaned before your tour so you know it is in top running condition.

GETTING TO BISMARCK, ND

Driving

Bismarck is located at the intersection of Route 83 and Interstate 94. There is parking available at the

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C y c l i n g A d v e n t u r e s

hotel where the trip meets.

Flying into Bismarck

Airport Code: BIS

LODGING BEFORE YOUR TRIP

It is a good idea to book your rooms in advance if possible; here are a few recommendations:

Expressway Inn & Suites

701-222-2900

This is where the trip meets and they've offered you a special rate. Call them directly and ask for the special Western Spirit Rate. They also have a van service for airport shuttles.

Radisson Inn

701-255-6000, 800-333-3333

They have a van service for airport shuttles.

Super 8

701-255-1314, 800-800-8000

In Medora:

Badlands Motel

701-623-4444, 800-633-6721

TAXI SERVICE

Taxi 9000: 701-223-9000



Packing for your trip

Be sure to bring everything on this list. We have carefully developed this list to insure your comfort on the tour regardless of the weather. If you are prepared for extreme weather, it is an adventure. If you are not prepared it can be a serious problem. We recommend the layering system, including a wicking or long underwear layer, an insulating layer and a weather barrier for wind and rain. This list reflects that philosophy. Weather in the mountains can be unpredictable so be sure to bring all the warm clothing and rain gear listed!

HOW TO PACK: When you arrive for your tour, we will give you a dry bag in which to pack your gear. This will be much easier for you to use if your clothing and gear are packed in a duffle bag rather than a suitcase.

The bulk of your gear and clothing will ride in the Western Spirit support vehicle and will **not** generally be accessible during the day. Your small daypack will be used to store things needed during the day such as rain gear, prescription drugs and sunscreen. This will be in the vehicle and be accessible throughout the day.

BRINGING OR RENTING

- mountain bike (Our rentals come with flat pedals. You are welcome to bring your own if you prefer.)
- helmet (gratis w/rental bike)
- tent
- sleeping bag
- sleeping pad

CYCLING CLOTHING

- cycling shoes
- 3 - 5 pair cycling shorts
- 3 - 5 cycling shirts
- long sleeve cycling shirt
- long sleeve cotton shirt or solar sleeves
- cycling socks
- windbreaker
- tights or leg warmers
- 2 pair cycling gloves
- rain jacket (Gore-Tex or similar)
- rain pants (Gore-Tex or similar)

CAMP CLOTHING

- 2 pair shorts
- shirts
- wool socks
- long underwear, top and bottom (wicking layer, not cotton)
- 2 pair warm long pants
- long sleeve fleece or sweater
- pile or down jacket (insulating layer)
- warm gloves and hat
- bathing suit
- hiking shoes
- sandals
- cheap plastic rain gear (to wear in camp)

PERSONAL

- sunscreen & lip balm
- medication (epi pen, inhaler)
- towel
- insect repellent
- biodegradable soap
- personal items
- wet-wipes
- cash for souvenirs
- cash for tipping guides: your guides work as a team and share all of their gratuities. A tip of 5-15% of the price of your trip given to either one of your guides when you return to civilization is a great way to say thanks for a job well done.

GEAR

- flashlight or headlamp (w/ extra batteries)
- sunglasses
- brimmed hat or visor
- 2 large water bottles (provided by WSC)
- hydration pack large enough to carry extra water, lunch, warm layers and rain gear
- day pack (see HOW TO PACK, above)

OPTIONAL

- camera, extra batteries
- binoculars
- alcoholic beverages (your guides will pack these)
- books or maps
- solar charger for your mobile phone/digital devices (we recommend that you turn them off, but if you cannot, please bring a way to power them).