



DAY TRIPS FROM YOUR HOTEL

One-of-a-kind locations are found all around Rapid City and vacationing here isn't complete without experiencing what our area has to offer. With the [Best Western Ramkota](#) in Rapid City serving as your vacation headquarters, you've got easy access to not only an amazing city, but an amazing Black Hills experience. Here's four different day trips that will help you make the most of your trip.

CUSTER STATE PARK

Drive time: 1 hour from the Best Western Ramkota

Expanding 71,000 acres, it's easy to spend multiple days discovering the splendors of [Custer State Park](#). However, if you only have a day to devote to the park here are the best ways to get a little taste of everything it has to offer.

Hiking

Some of the best hikes in our area are found in Custer State Park. Start off your day trip at the crown jewel of the park, Sylvan Lake. This mountain lake is surrounded by stunning rock formations and is a beauty to behold. Get out and stretch your legs with a leisurely stroll around the lake taking in every angle. Then hit the trail behind Sylvan called [Sunday Gulch](#). This 3.9-mile loop offers unique features like a little scramble over some large boulders, beautiful scenic overlooks and stream crossings.

Scenic Drive

Time to drive on a road that was deemed impossible to build, [Needles Highway](#). This 14-mile National Scenic Byway was completed in 1922 and takes you on sharp twists and turns, through narrow tunnels like the Needles Eye, all while you're encompassed by granite spires and top-notch views. Take the drive slow and appreciate the beauty that surrounds you.

Wildlife

Custer State Park is recognized as one of the best wildlife destinations in the world, so you can't visit without meeting some of the locals. The best way – a drive on [Wildlife Loop Road](#). Get stuck in a famous buffalo traffic jam and meet the begging burros who are guaranteed to stick a nose in any open vehicle window in hope of finding snacks.

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Drive Time: 52 Minutes from the Best Western Ramkota

To the east of Rapid City, you'll find the lunar-like landscape of [Badlands National Park](#). Explore 244,000 acres of eroded buttes, pinnacles and spires infused with the largest protected mixed-grass prairie in the United States. Here's how to make the most of your day trip to the Badlands.

Visitor Center

To fully appreciate what's surrounding you plan to stop at the [Ben Reifel Visitor Center](#), which is located a short distance from the Northeast Entrance. Here you'll learn about the creation of this unique landscape and its earliest known residents. Sit in on the 22-minute film, browse the life-size models representing the geological makeup and paleontology of the Badlands.

Scenic Drive

Take a drive through this unforgettable park. Exiting the Ben Reifel Visitor Center you'll cruise along [Badlands Loop Road](#). Keep an eye out for wildlife like Bighorn Sheep and make a pit stop at some of the scenic overlooks like Panorama Point, Homestead Overlook and Yellow Mound Overlook. If you have more time, check out all the scenic drive routes the park offers like Sage Creek Rim Road that skirts along the edge of the Badlands Wilderness Area and look for the bison of the Badlands.

Overlook Sunset

The colors that create the layers of Badlands National Park become more prominent during sunrise and sunset. Get front row seats to one of the best shows around from one of the many scenic overlooks this park has to offer. Trust us, this saturated sunset will top all others. If you stick around for nightfall, you'll also be treated to an unfiltered view of a breathtaking night sky.

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK

Drive time: 1 hour from the Best Western Ramkota

Adventure waits for you above and below ground in [Wind Cave National Park](#). Your day trip to this 28,295-acre park is guaranteed to surprise you and leave you wanting more.

Cave Tour

This cave was the first ever to become a National Park – and for good reasons. Named after the varying wind speeds at its entrance, Wind Cave is among the longest (6th longest in the world) and most complex caves in the world. Select a [ranger-guided tour](#) that fits your exploration level, but be sure to get there early since tour sizes are limited and tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations can be made for the Candlelight and Wild Cave tours.

Beaver Creek Bridge

Wind Cave delivers not only underground beauty, but above ground as well. A feature favored by many is [Beaver Creek Bridge](#). Located two miles north of the Wind Cave Visitor Center on Highway 87, this bridge is built of concrete and steel and spans two streams that flow through the park. The goal, when it was built in 1929, was to create the illusion that its part of the landscape with concrete arches that naturally arise from the rock walls. It is the only bridge with this particular arch type in South Dakota.

Hiking

There is no shortage of hiking options in this park, but a great one to check out is [Rankin Ridge Fire Tower](#). Although it's a short hike (a one-mile loop), the views at the top go on for what seem like forever. Resting on the highest point in the national park, the tower showcases panoramic views of the surrounding hills and plains. It's a stop worth making on your day trip.

SPEARFISH CANYON

Drive time: 42 minutes from the Best Western Ramkota

In our area the drive is an experience in itself, and the 19-mile cruise through the limestone cliffs of [Spearfish Canyon](#) is no exception.

Find The Falls

Sorry TLC, we disagree with you on this one. In [Spearfish Canyon](#) you can plan on chasing waterfalls. Stop to take in the 60ft cascading waters of Bridal Veil Falls, walk next to the multi-tiered waterfalls of Roughlock Falls, and head off the beaten path to witness the heart of Spearfish Canyon – Spearfish Falls. You'll disagree with TLC, too, when you've seen them all.

Scenic Drive

Year-round, a drive through Spearfish Canyon is breathtaking. From the lush greens of spring and summer to the stunning changing colors of fall all the way to the frozen wonders of winter. Immerse yourself in the beauty that surrounds you on this unforgettable drive.

Hiking

With a landscape this exciting you know there are hidden gems galore. Park the car and hit the trail of one of our favorites, [Devils Bathtub](#)! This 1.1-mile hike takes you through the woods and to a one-of-a-kind swimming hole.