

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a must for any tourist in the Black Hills.

Crazy Horse Memorial is another.

Yet some of the greatest fun in South Dakota's quiet mountain range happens off the beaten path. Within the Black Hills National Forest are 11 water reservoirs, 450 miles of hiking trails, dozens of campgrounds and some 1,300 miles of clear, cold-water streams.

The Black Hills take their name from a Sioux Indian word: paha sapa, meaning "hills black." From a distance, the Black

Hills look exactly like that – dark, misty hills rising from the otherwise flat prairie.

But the name "Hills" is misleading. Eighteen of the Black Hills' peaks surpass 7,000 feet, including Harney Peak, which at 7,242 feet is the tallest of them all.

It's ironic. The Black Hills can be viewed from as far away as 60 miles on a clear day. But to truly enjoy and understand the Black Hills requires visitors to get close, to reach out and actually touch Paha Sapa, these "hills black" that have beckoned to travelers and adventure-seekers for centuries.