



The Falls

South Dakota is known as “The Land of Infinite Variety” and Sioux Falls epitomizes that slogan perhaps more than any other city in the state. Founded along the banks of the Big Sioux River, Sioux Falls got its name from the mighty falls that crash down on the city’s north end.

Falls Park: First-time visitors to Sioux Falls would be remiss to not stop and see the city’s namesake, located along North Phillips Avenue, near the downtown area. A century ago, the three-tiered falls were used to power a mill and, later, a hydroelectric plant. Foundations of these buildings still are visible. The real attraction of Falls Park is a five-story observation tower, an information center and plenty of viewing areas. At night the Falls Park Sound and Light Show is shown at approximately 9:30 each evening, weather permitting, during the tourist season.

History: From its agrarian beginnings in 1856, Sioux Falls has exploded in population, from 100,000 in 1990 to 160,000 today. That growth has come thanks to Sioux Falls’ ability to constantly change with the times. For years, Sioux Falls was known as a cattle and meat-packing town, yet it has morphed into a banking business community, a destination for health care, and a departure point for outward travel, thanks to its regional airport.

Wild Water West: Sioux Falls is home to one of the region’s top water parks, Wild Water West. The park features water slides, a lazy river, children’s water features, a wave pool, and a wide array of non-water-related recreational options including mini golf, batting cages and paintball.

Shopping: It also is a shopping destination, with the Empire Mall (and its 180 stores) anchoring the city’s southwest side. While visiting the downtown area, take in a few of the numerous shops in Sioux Falls’ quaint downtown shopping neighborhood.

Sports: Minor-league and semi-professional sports teams play year-round in Sioux Falls, bringing fans to excellent sports facilities like the Sioux Falls Arena, Sioux Falls Stadium and Howard Wood Field.

Concerts: Sioux Falls has fabulous entertainment options at the Arena, Washington Pavilion and Orpheum Theatre. With big-name concerts, children’s shows, plays and instrumental performances, there’s something to please everyone.

Battleship Memorial: For a leg-stretching break or a picnic spot, check out the USS South Dakota Battleship Memorial, which consists



of a one-foot-high concrete barrier in the outline of the ship and some salvaged pieces from the vessel, all contained within Sherman Park.

Festivals & Fairs: Sioux Falls is home to such events as Sioux Empire Fair, Jazz Fest, and LifeLight Christian Music Festival.

Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum: Spend a morning, afternoon or whole day roaming the grounds of this great zoo, with everything from bison to penguins. The museum contains a fun display about dinosaurs and a gift shop.

Washington Pavilion of Arts and Science: Includes the Kirby Science Discovery Center. Located downtown, the Pavilion also is host to top-notch entertainment, ranging from I-Max type movies to musical productions.

Sertoma Butterfly House and Outdoor Campus: Young and old alike will wonder at the Sertoma Butterfly House, an indoor oasis filled with butterflies. Visitors can walk through the greenhouse-like structure and observe a dizzying array of butterfly species. Right next door is the Outdoor Campus, where families can learn camping and other outdoor-related skills.

Bike trails and parks: Sioux Falls is home to over 70 public parks. The centrally located Falls Park is the hub of the park system and connected to many of the city’s other parks via the bike trail corridor, which encircles the city and includes long stretches alongside the Big Sioux River.

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