

Off the Beaten Path

Interstate 90 is the fastest and most convenient route for travelers in South Dakota, but don't forget that some of the state's most interesting country and people can be found in the places just off I-90's westward path.

Between Sioux Falls and Mitchell are many interesting sites and towns to visit, each offering their own beauty, charm and style.

Madison: Located 25 miles north of I-90 Exit 379, is a beautiful city surrounded by two huge lakes and is home to Dakota State University.

Lake Vermillion: About seven miles south of Exit 374, a quiet, out-of-the-way place to fish and camp.

Yankton: Located 50 miles south of Exit 364, is a town of 13,500 that caters to a tourism industry based on fishing, camping and even sailboating. Lewis and Clark Lake is a huge reservoir along the Missouri River formed by Gavins Point Dam.

Freeman: Located on US Hwy 81, 23 miles south of Exit 363. Home of Schmeckfest or "festival of tasting", which extends over 2 consecutive weekends at the end of March.

Spencer: Just a few miles north of Exit 353, which received nationwide news coverage in 1998 after it was struck broadside by a massive tornado. There isn't much in Spencer in terms of visitor services, but it is a great example of South Dakota's can-do attitude.

De Smet: Located about 50 miles northeast of Exit 350 at the intersection of US Highway 14 and SD Highway 25, is also known as the "Little Town on the Prairie" and made famous by author Laura Ingalls Wilder, also the home of prairie artist, Harvey Dunn, and was the former location of the South Dakota National Guard Unit, Det 1, Co B 153rd, which was deployed to Iraq from December 2003 - March 2005.

Carthage: Approximately 30 miles north of Exit 350 is Carthage, a tiny village that is home to the world's only museum built out of straw bales. It also was a major filming site for the 2007 Hollywood feature "Into the Wild."

Huron: Located about 50 miles northwest of Exit 332 is the site of the South Dakota State Fair and hometown to a handful of celebrities such as Cheryl Ladd from "Charlie's Angels"; Gladys Pyle, the first female member of the House of Representatives and the first Republican woman in the US Senate; Hubert H. Humphrey, the Democratic nominee for President in 1968 and served as Vice President under Lyndon B. Johnson.

Dimock: Just 10 minutes or less south of Exit 332, is the home to the Dimock Dairy. Their cheese is surely one to experience.

