



South Dakota – Custer and Badlands

September 19-24, 2021

(must have completed COVID vaccination to attend)

Few people think of South Dakota as a photography destination, or if they do, they think of Mount Rushmore. But there are other beautiful areas near there, and that's what this trip will focus on. Custer State Park has beautiful geology and wildlife. Badlands National Park contains a unique ecosystem defined by erosion. And, they're both within easy driving distance of each other. This is a small group trip, limited to just six clients, plus myself and an assistant. We'll use two vehicles, which means everyone will have their own door and plenty of room. The trip starts and ends in Rapid City, though if you'd prefer to meet us in Custer (our first location), that's fine as well. Some of the places we'll visit are easy to walk to from the parking areas. There are others where you can choose to walk further, and in Badlands you can wander far and wide. I led one workshop to this area back in 2016, and in [june of this year spent five days scouting for the best locations](#). Sunrise during the workshop is around 7am and sunset around 6:45pm.

The price is \$2050/person. That includes all transportation from Rapid City to Custer, the various locations there, then to Wall and the Badlands locations and finally back to Rapid City. All entry fees are included, as well as planning and instruction and occasional critiques (as requested). It does not include



flights to/from Rapid City, meals or lodging. I've already reserved blocks of rooms for us in Custer and Wall, and you'll pay for those when you get there. The two nights in Custer are approximately \$120/night, and the three nights in Wall are approximately \$135/night. Payment details for the trip are at the bottom of this note.

Here's the itinerary (dates are set, but what we do at what exact times may change based on weather or other changing conditions):

Sunday, Sept. 19

We'll pick everyone up from the Rapid City Airport (RPA) in early afternoon (plan to arrive no later than 2pm, or come in the night before), then drive to Custer (about an hour). After checking into our



hotel (Days Inn Custer), we'll head up to Sylvan Lake for late day light, then move to the Needles Highway to photograph the Needle's Eye at night. Overnight in Custer.

Monday, Sept. 20

We'll get an early start to drive the Wildlife Loop in Custer State Park, looking for the iconic bison, and hoping for pronghorn and any other wildlife we can find. After several hours there, we'll return to Custer for lunch. Next stop will be the Four Mile Old West Town Museum, to explore their collection of old buildings and everything else they've gathered from the late 1800s. Departing there, we'll drive Iron Mountain Road, stopping for views of Mount Rushmore before visiting it. On our way out, we'll stop for the iconic view of Washington in profile. Second and final night in Custer.



Tuesday, Sept. 21

We'll make one more visit to the Wildlife Loop early Tuesday morning before returning to our hotel to check out. After that, depending on time, we'll either have lunch in Custer or drive to Wall for lunch. That afternoon we'll make our first visit to Badlands National Park to shoot through sunset. First of three nights at the Days Inn in Wall.

Wednesday, Sept. 22

We'll devote today to Badlands National Park, starting with an early sunrise shoot. Afterwards we'll return to Wall for the middle part of the day, to rest, have lunch and perhaps explore the iconic Wall Drug. Mid-afternoon we'll head back into the park to visit some locations that will be good in late day light and then shoot through sunset. Our first night shoot there will take us outside the park. Overnight Wall.



Thursday, Sept. 23

We'll return to Badlands early for another sunrise shoot and stay through the early morning light before returning to Wall. After a break to recharge, recover and have lunch, we'll return to the park in the afternoon, or, depending on weather and what we've done so far, perhaps make the trip east to 1880 Town. We'll finish the day with another night shoot, this time in the park. Final night in Wall.



Friday, Sept. 24

Depending on flights out, we might return to the park for one final sunrise shoot before checking out of our hotel and returning to Rapid City airport for flights home. We'll plan on being back at the Rapid City Airport no later than 10am, so plan your return flights accordingly.

Level of difficulty: Moderate.

Weather: Average temperatures in September in that area tend to range from the 70s to the 50s. Of course, check the weather forecast a day or two before leaving and then pack accordingly.

Release: All clients must be fully vaccinated against COVID and sign an assumption of risk form

(https://reedhoffmann.com/PARTICIPANT_AGREEMENT.pdf)

Payment

Send \$550 (check please) now to reserve your spot. That's refundable until August 1 in case you have to cancel. After that, it's refundable if you or I can find someone to take your spot.

The balance of \$1500 is due August 15. After that date, if you have to cancel, I can refund all your money if either you or I can find someone to take your spot. If you're worried that you might have to cancel, I'd suggest looking into trip insurance. Make the check out to me at:

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Questions? Let me know - Reed