



# DAY TRIP TO FORT ROBINSON

From Chadron · Dawes County, Nebraska



RAILROAD AND  
ROAD



Photo: Ammodramus, Wikimedia Commons, CC0

## STATE PARK

Run by Nebraska Game and Parks, with the History Center run by History Nebraska and the Trailside Museum by the University of Nebraska. Park entry permit required.

From Chadron, Fort Robinson is a 35-minute drive west on US 20 and an easy day. In the off-season, from October, plan around the History Center's Wednesday-to-Saturday hours. Pack a lunch: the park restaurant serves only from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.

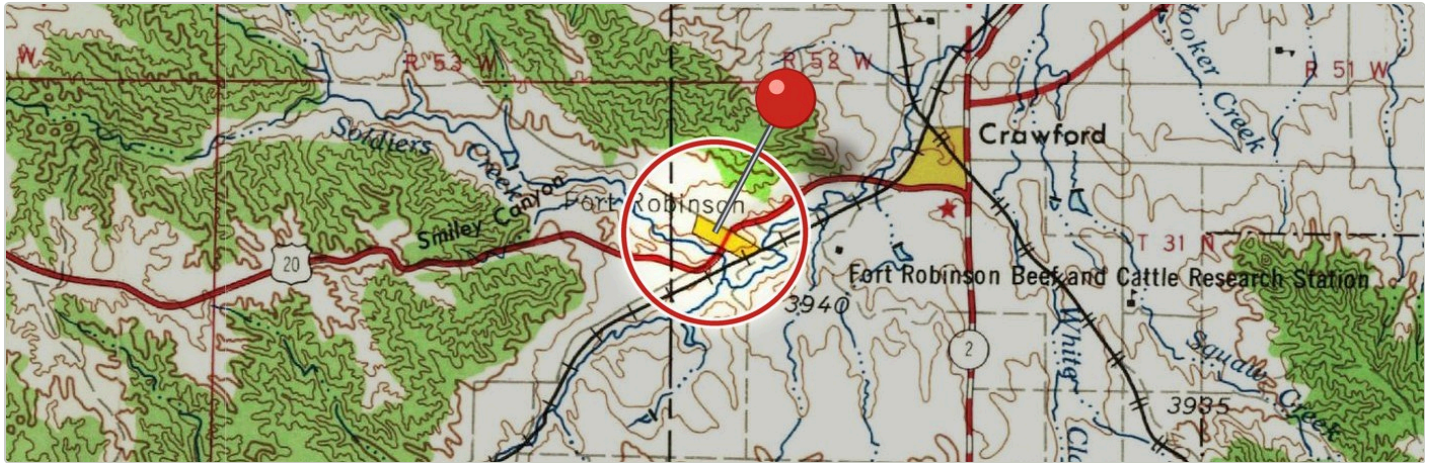
## A SAMPLE DAY

- ☐ 9 a.m. Leave Chadron and drive west on US 20 through Crawford, about 35 minutes.
- ☐ 9:45 a.m. Walk the 1874 parade ground: the reconstructed Cheyenne Outbreak barracks, the guardhouse and the adjutant's office where Crazy Horse died.
- ☐ 10:30 a.m. Fort Robinson History Center in the 1905 post headquarters, Wednesday to Saturday in the off-season.
- ☐ 12 p.m. Packed lunch on the grounds. The restaurant is open only in summer.
- ☐ 1 p.m. Trailside Museum in the old Army theater, Wednesday to Sunday through October 31.
- ☐ 2:30 p.m. Drive the officers' row and past the brick stables and Comanche Hall, or walk a trail into the buttes.

Coming in summer? The restaurant, jeep tours of the buttes and the Post Playhouse are summer offerings; check Game and Parks for dates.

## WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The 1874 parade ground.** Shoot the row of log buildings from across the grass to show how small the first fort was.
- **The officers' row.** The white quarters under old trees line a long curve; a longer lens compresses the row.
- **Post headquarters.** The 1905 building faces a stone monument on the lawn; stand back to fit both.
- **The stables.** The long brick riding stables make a strong horizontal frame.
- **Drones.** Not without a special occasion permit: Game and Parks bans drones in state parks otherwise.



USGS topographic map, 1955 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

## DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DRIVE          | 28 mi, about 35 min each way from downtown Chadron. From Rapid City: 123 mi, about 2 h 24 min.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| OPEN           | History Center: from October 1, Wednesday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mountain Time. Trailside Museum: Wednesday to Sunday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; its page gives October 31 as the last day of the season. Lodging runs mid-April to mid-November. Game and Parks gives no hours for the grounds. |
| ADMISSION      | Park entry permit: \$7 a day for Nebraska vehicles, \$14 for others; annual \$35 and \$70. History Center: \$5 adults, \$3 ages 5 to 18, plus tax; free 4 and under. Trailside: \$4 adults, \$2 ages 3 to 18, plus tax.                                                                               |
| TIME ON SITE   | Neither Game and Parks nor the museums suggest a figure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| RESTROOMS      | This fall and winter the lodge's public restrooms are closed for renovation; use the Soldier Creek shower house. Trailside's restrooms are on its main floor.                                                                                                                                         |
| FOOD AND WATER | The restaurant at park headquarters serves breakfast, lunch and dinner daily from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Snacks are sold at the Sutler's Store in the Activities Center; its season isn't stated.                                                                                    |
| ON FOOT        | The park has 60 miles of hiking trails, reopened on July 1, 2026, after the fire. Stay on established trails and away from burned trees.                                                                                                                                                              |
| PHOTOGRAPHY    | Recreational photography needs no permit. Game and Parks doesn't allow drones in state parks unless a special occasion permit has been approved, and commercial photography also needs one.                                                                                                           |
| WEBSITE        | <a href="https://outdoornebraska.gov/location/fort-robinson">outdoornebraska.gov/location/fort-robinson</a>                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Keep out of unstable buildings and off fenced ruins.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

**Coordinates** 42.66862, -103.46807 • 42°40'07"N  
103°28'05"W

**Full guide** [abandonedtowns.com/nebraska/fort-robinson/](https://abandonedtowns.com/nebraska/fort-robinson/)

**Directions** [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.