

## AN UNAUTHORIZED TRAVEL GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICA COMPLEX SOCIETIES

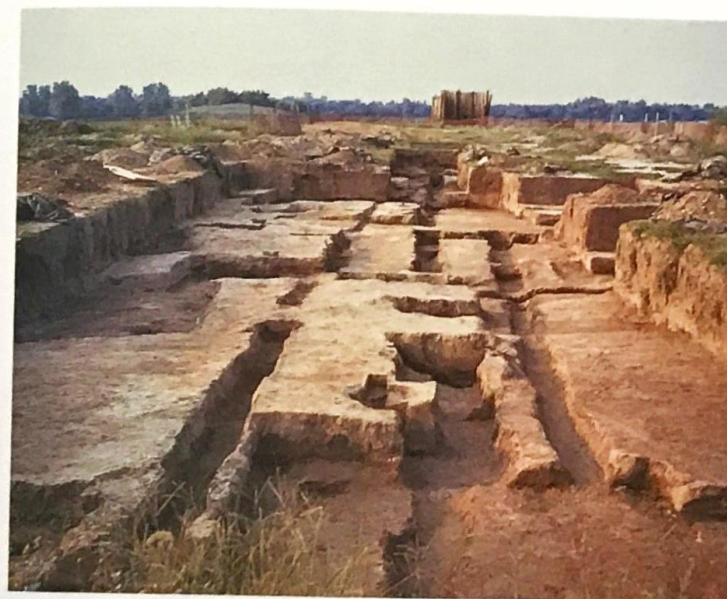
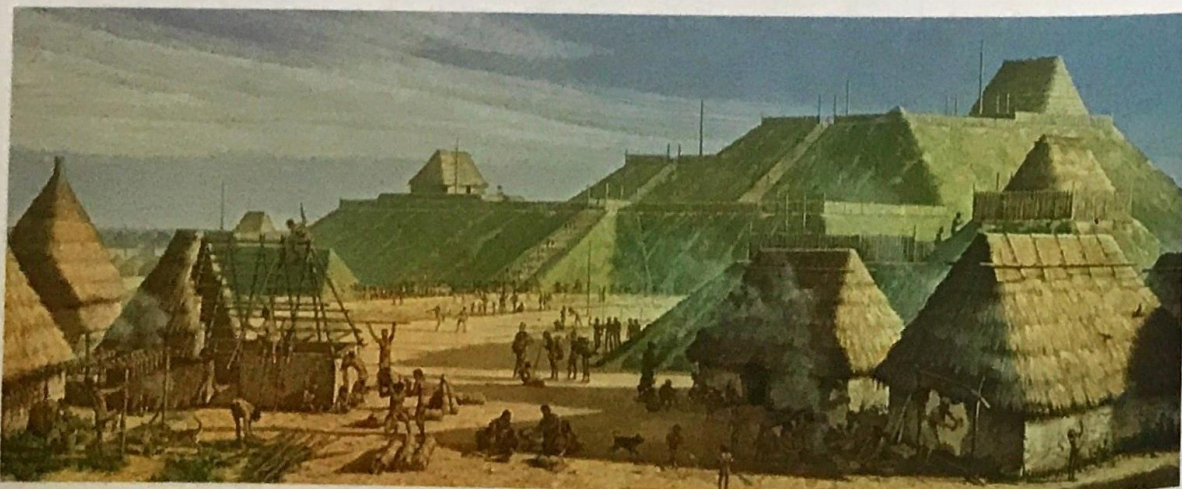
Thinking of getting away from it all? If you were looking for a “happening” vacation destination in North America 1,000 years ago, you would have had a variety of fabulous choices. Which vacation package would you choose?

### Cahokia, Illinois

Visit North America’s largest city where the Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois Rivers come together just eight miles from what will one day be St. Louis. Population 10–15,000 people (we can only guess since no one keeps records yet).

Accommodations: Live with the elite in five-star accommodations inside the city barricade. Don’t let those scalps on the fence posts alarm you as you enter the city. As long as you keep the many layers of chiefs in Cahokia happy, you have nothing to worry about. Take up residence in any one of the clusters of small houses in and around the city. These

*Downtown Cahokia’s main attraction is Monk’s Mound, the tallest prehistoric structure in what would one day become the United States. This reconstruction shows the thatchy roofed houses that were built inside and outside the town walls.*



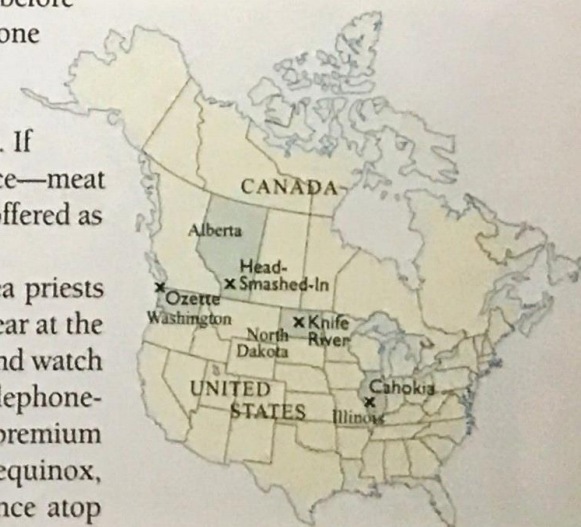
Building foundations, Cahokia, Illinois, United States, 1,000 years ago

*Excavations at Cahokia reveal the dirt foundations of rectangular houses. These single-family homes were built in a well-planned formation around the central plaza.*

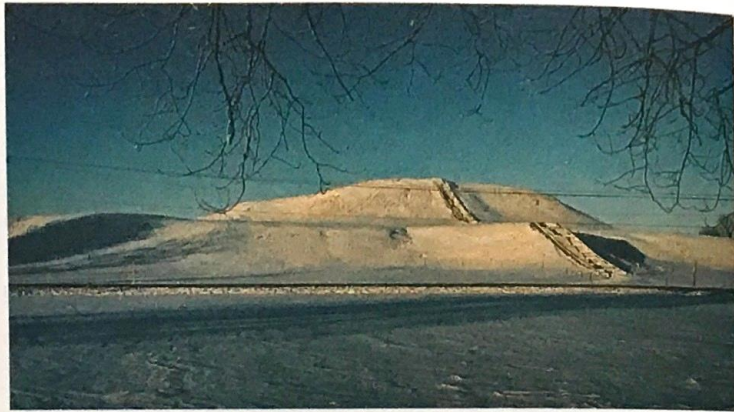
family neighborhoods each have all the amenities—granary to store food, meetinghouse for those hard-to-make decisions, and, of course, the sweat lodge to help you chill out after your stressful day of carrying 70-pound baskets of dirt up the 10-story, flat-topped Monk’s Mound built for the great chief of Cahokia. Nothing but the best for the town’s most revered. (Traveler’s Tip: The more tattoos the more important the chief.) Please be sure to extinguish all smoking materials before entering the city. The grass-thatched roofs are prone to burning, making everyone’s stay less enjoyable.

What to eat: Don’t miss the wide variety of corn dishes served up along with squash and beans. If you are a vegetarian, you’ve come to the right place—meat is not often on the menu. Brains are almost never offered as they are reserved to soften hides for clothing.

Things to do while in Cahokia: Come join area priests at Woodhenge to celebrate the longest day of the year at the Summer Solstice Sunrise Observance. Arrive early and watch astronomers tinker with the circle of red-cedar, telephone-pole-sized posts to get the alignments just right for premium sunrise viewing. If your visit coincides with an equinox, the sun rises directly over the head chief’s residence atop

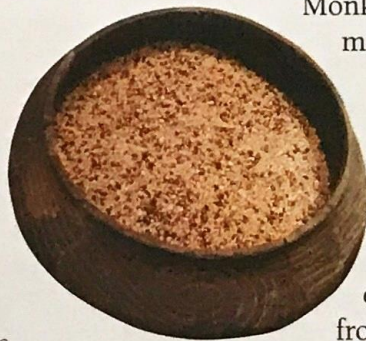


- 66 Monk's Mound, Cahokia, Illinois, United States, about 1,000 years ago



Monk's Mound, instilling awe and wonder... much oohing and ahing. Free.

- 66 Storage pot, Cahokia, Illinois, United States, about 1,000 years ago



Shopping: Be sure to visit one of Cahokia's potters and watch distinctive pots being made. Area artisans kneeling on reed mats coil ropes of clay into pleasing shapes then smooth out the seams with round stones or chunks of gourd. Clay is gathered locally from streambeds, cleaned, then mixed with crushed mussel shell, limestone, and pieces of old crumbled pots.

- 66 Serpent Mound, Peebles, Ohio, United States, about 930 years ago



Nearby attractions: Don't miss Serpent Mound. This quarter-mile-long serpent built from stones and clay slithers along a bluff in Ohio. What were the architects thinking? There are no human burials or artifacts in the mound. A work of art? Or a ceremonial center? You be the judge.

#### Knife River, North Dakota

Accommodations: Spacious summer accommodations that sleep 30 are located on terraces just above the Knife River. These



This earth lodge has been reconstructed at Knife River National Historic Site in North Dakota. Earth lodges are spacious homes—40 to 50 feet in diameter. People set up their living spaces along the inside walls; some lodges even had canopy beds.

earth lodges (owned and run by women) are built for comfort, with recessed dirt floors for warmth. The older units are rectangular, but recent renovations completed 500 years ago have domed roofs covered in turf. All views are southwest and outstanding. Locals love sitting on top of their houses, hanging out, and shooting the breeze. For your personal safety, smoke holes are covered to keep small children and dogs from falling through. Smaller winter accommodations are available on the low-lying forest, where they are shielded from icy winter winds.

Amenities: Available without extra cost is the use of the sweat lodge. This four-foot-high dome is constructed of bent willow branches and covered in bison hides. For your relaxation, hot stones are carried in on deer antlers and dropped into a hole dug in the center of the room. Sprinkling water on the stones provides a lovely steam-room atmosphere. While chanting and praying, sit naked on plump cushions stuffed with sweet smelling sage. The pipe is passed to all participants.

Getting around: Dogs do the heavy lifting around Knife River. Travois are harnessed to the dogs. These stick platforms are shaped like an A with the two ends dragging on the

- 66 Travois trails, Stanton, North Dakota, United States, about 500 years ago



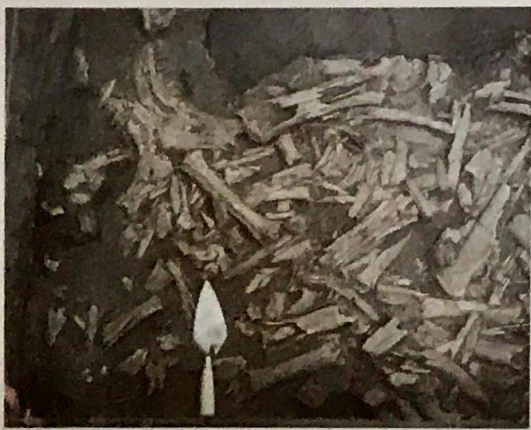
ground. Travois tracks, like roadways, meander through the village. No tipping necessary.

By boat: Fishing is a must on your Knife River vacation. The river is loaded with walleyes, catfish, and sturgeon. Cup-shaped boats can be rented for a nominal fee. They are made from bison hides stretched over willow branches. (Everything here seems to be made from bison hide and willow branches. In fact, the name of the local tribe, the Hidatsa, means People of the Willows.)

What to wear: Casual attire for most occasions. Women, be sure to bring your dresses of deerskin and leggings that run from ankles to knees. Comfortable deerskin moccasins for walking (remove deer fur first, please) are a must. Don't forget your necklace of mussel shells and you are ready to go anywhere.

Nearby attractions: In Alberta, Canada, join the party at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. Here you can see a waterfall of bellowing brown bison leap to their deaths as hundreds of local hunters stampede them over cliffs. The flies and the stench are unforgettable as the butchering continues for days. Take home pemmican as a souvenir. Not unlike beef jerky, this tasty mashed and dried

*A pile of smashed-up bison bones at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. Native Americans hunted bison here for about 5,500 years. We often call these animals buffalo, but their proper name is American bison (Bison bison).*



- 66 Bison bones, Alberta, Canada, 5,500 to 200 years ago

meat treat will stay fresh for months (also available in chokeberry flavor).

Before you go: When planning your trip to the Great Plains region it's wise to check ahead to find out who is currently in charge. Chiefs change often. Each village has its own all-purpose chief, but there is also a chief of the hunt, a war chief, a peacetime chief, and so on. Be sure to fill out your customer satisfaction survey on departure. Chiefs are rated according to popularity and your opinion is important.

### Ozette, Washington

Enjoy sea breezes from this cape that juts out into the Pacific Ocean. Shorelines protected by a barrier reef make putting in your canoe simple here, unlike other areas along the coast. Great for the whole family.

Accommodations: No frills armylike barracks are the only accommodations available in this seacoast town. Houses are the size of tennis courts, sleeping many families. The shed-roofed buildings are made from cedar planks, surrounded by whale bones to redirect the rain water.

Getting around: Boating is a must while at Ozette. Sit with seven others in canoes made from giant hollowed-out cedar logs. Watch boatbuilders craft these canoes right on the beach. They begin by carving the bottom, then flip them over to hollow out the inside. To soften the wood and force the sides wider, they flood the canoe and heat the water by adding hot rocks. Finally the canoe is sanded smooth with sharkskin.

What to wear: Skirts of shredded cedar bark are all the rage. Men, be sure to pack your robes made from sea otter skins. Footwear optional. Accessorize with rings through your nose, necklaces, headbands, and bracelets (both men and women). Be sure to pack powdered hemlock to kill head lice.

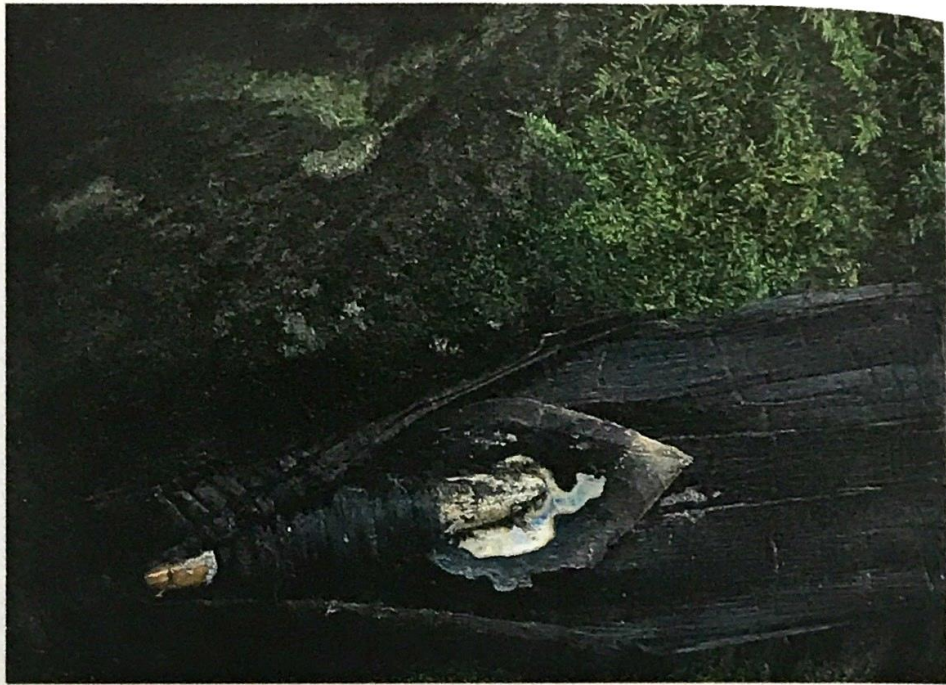
Things to do while in Ozette: Book your whaling adventure early. Limited availability. Traditionally, whale hunts are restricted to the wealthiest families who have inherited whaling privileges. Come early as lengthy spiritual preparation is a must. Getting ready for one of these hunts makes training for a triathlon look easy. Join the fun while whalers

### MUD PACK

A mudslide encased Ozette in an airtight, waterproof seal, preserving items that would normally rot in the moist air. In 1970 a winter storm eroded the banks, revealing the ancient village.

- “ Harpoon, Ozette,  
Washington, United States,  
500 years ago

*Fishermen used this harpoon head to hunt whales in Ozette, Washington. The harpoon blade is made from a mussel shell.*



paddle with the humpbacks. When a whaler harpoons one, hold on for dear life. Keep those fingers crossed that the whale does not head out to sea. Sealskin floats are tied to the harpoons in hopes of tiring the whale. Once the whale has sufficiently tired, the canoe is pulled alongside where a boatman cuts the tendons of the flukes so the whale can't swim. One lucky individual gets to jump in the water with the whale and sew its mouth shut so that trapped gasses will keep it floating until they can tow it into shore. One sure way to book your reservation is to volunteer for this great opportunity to swim with the whales. Warning to wives of whalers: plan on spending your vacation napping. Whale hunting is taken *very* seriously in Ozette, and wives of whalers are not allowed out of bed until their husbands return with a whale.

Travel tip: While in Ozette, be sure to attend a potlatch dinner. Local chiefs pass out presents in celebration of their place in the community. Great place to get free stuff.

Bon voyage!