

total immersion

Delve deep into these experiences: live with the Lakota; cook Indian food; go to the races.



Into the Heart of a Nation

When author Serle Chapman published *The Trail of Many Spirits* in 1996, about his journey through many native Nations in the Northern Plains, it struck a chord with readers hungry for more American Indian history from the perspectives of those who lived it and their descendants. Fans of the book inundated the publisher with requests for how to re-create such an experience themselves. The result was Go Native America, a specialty operator in tours to tribal lands, for whom Chapman—of Kalderas/Cheyenne heritage himself—crafted an itinerary that takes you full circle: from the birth of the Lakota people to their lives today.

Base camp for the first few days is the Black Hills of South Dakota. Chapman opens the trip at Wind Cave, the point at which the Lakota believe they emerged from the world below. Before heading to Montana, you'll hear about the Battle of Little Bighorn from Native American and U.S. Army points-of-view, says Rachel Hamilton, who has traveled with the outfitter. "To be taken and shown the actual

place was soul-stirring. The whole battle came to life and Custer was defeated once more." Later, travel to the sacred Bear Lodge (Devil's Tower in Wyoming) to hear ancient tribal explanations of the rock's creation. Continue north to Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, where Lakota elders and descendants of the great chiefs conjure the events that shaped the life of the visionary leader Sitting Bull.

In the Badlands, Chapman waits for nightfall to tell the tragic story of Wounded Knee, the massacre by U.S. troops that left scores of Lakota Sioux dead. Overlooking the site, Wilmer Stampede Mesteth, a spiritual leader at the Pine Ridge Reservation, sings spirit prayer songs. "It's so evocative, almost like coyotes singing," says Go Native America owner and director Sarah Chapman. • **Go Native America:** "Lakota Moon: Journey to the Seven Council Fires of the Great Sioux Nation," 12 days; \$2,995; 888-800-1876; www.gonativeamerica.com. **C**

VIETNAM BY MOTORCYCLE

As your Honda motorcycle speeds out of Hanoi on Highway 6, tourist traps start to give way to villages populated by Muong and Thai, who welcome you into homes built on stilts with rounded roofs. Later, the route winds through limestone gorges and mountain passes to the old French prison of Bao Tang Son La, famed battleground at Dien Bien Phu, the hill station at Sapa, and finally to Halong Bay. • **Myths and Mountains:** "Vietnam: Motorcycling the Northern Border with Laos and China," 19 days; \$3,995; 800-670-6984; www.mythsandmountains.com. **N**

PERU COOKING CLASS

Get a taste of Peru's rich culinary heritage as you travel from Lima to the Sacred Valley with company founder Jim Kane, meeting organic farmers, visiting area markets, and cooking and eating with local cooks and top chefs. Sample some of Lima's best *ceviche*, savor a coca-leaf-inspired lunch with Slow Food award winner Christo Deneumostier, and learn how to cook with Andean staples such as *quinoa*. • **Culture Xplorers:** "Epicurean Xplorers Peru," 8 days; \$2,590; 866-877-2507; www.cultureexplorers.com. **N**

MOROCCAN ARCHITECTURE

From Casablanca's art deco buildings to the preserved medieval city of Fez to the ancient Roman city of Volubilis and the Moorish medina of Marrakech, Morocco's architecture has been shaped by its location at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. You'll stay in elegantly restored *riads*, *casbahs*, and a traditional Berber encampment with tents made of camel hair and floors of Berber hand-woven rugs. • **Explore Inc.:** "Behind the Walls: An Exploration of Moroccan Architecture," 14 days; \$5,250; 888-596-6377; www.exploreafrica.net.

ARCTIC ASTRO TOUR

Catching a total eclipse of the sun can be tricky. They're rare and can only be viewed from a narrow geographical slice of the planet. The next one—in July 2008—will be even more elusive: Its track crosses one of the cloudiest areas of the globe, from the high Arctic to the Russian islands of Novaya Zemlya. But this special expedition aboard the Russian icebreaker *Yamal* will allow a glimpse in one of the most favorable viewing spots in the Kara Sea. You'll join specialists in astronomy, polar exploration, Arctic birds, and marine life in daytime tours and evening seminars. • **Travel Quest:** "Voyage to Totality

Thematic pursuits: An interpreter at South Dakota's Tatanka museum (upper left); horse and jockey in the Kentucky Derby (top); and the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca (right).