

Fun on the Farm and Much, Much More

York, Pennsylvania Offers Something for Everyone

By Sharon Tabor Warren



Built by a man in the shoe business, The Shoe House is a great stop for photos and ice cream.

York County, Pennsylvania, bills itself as The Factory Tour Capital of the World but don't let the title fool you. There's much more to the area than tours of assembly lines and the taste of fresh hot potato chips.

One can see cows milked, calves fed and milk bottled at the Perrydell Farm Dairy. A self-guided free tour allows visitors to the family-owned dairy to see all this and children may pet the calves. Perrydell also sells fresh produce, deli items, candy, baked goods and dairy products.

Hope Acres Farm offers a 90-minute guided tour for a small admission. There you'll see the farm's processing facilities and their famous automated robotic milking. At the conclusion of the tour you'll receive a free cone of homemade ice cream. Hope Acres is home to the Brown Cow Country Market, a unique shop that includes a bakery, deli and farm-raised meat market plus preserves, gourmet cooking products and unusual gifts. Light meals are available.

Hikes and bikes are popular family activities and Heritage Rail Trail, the newest of York County's nine parks, offers 21 miles of a compacted stone trail that stretches from York City south to the Maryland line at New Freedom. Amenities include the Howard Tunnel, Hanover Junction and New Freedom

Train Stations. They are set up as comfort stations and are in various stages of development as museums commemorating the rail corridor.

Limited food is available in villages along the trail. The county parks don't offer camping but it's available at two nearby state parks plus several private

Especially for History Buffs

For those interested in history, our first constitution was signed in York at the Colonial Courthouse. The Continental Congress fled the British in Philadelphia in 1777 and spent nine months in York. While there, in addition to the adoption of the Articles of Confederation, our first national Thanksgiving was declared and celebrated on December 18th.

The Colonial Courthouse has been replicated where Pershing Avenue crosses Market Street. Across Pershing from the courthouse is the Golden Plough Tavern built in 1741, the city's oldest building. Next door, General Gates spent his time in York in a more genteel establishment built a decade later. On the rear of the same property, the Bobb Log House, built with squared timbers, depicts family life in the 1830s. The "First Cap" Pub is nearby and offers a wide variety of unusual sandwiches in low-ceiling rooms with uneven floors.

If your interest lies in architecture, York offers a surfeit. It's filled with fine examples of architectural styles. East of the Gates House on Market Street at the Visitor's Bureau, purchase the Walking Tour of Historic York and stroll the downtown area. The preservation of old buildings may not keep the children's attention for long so weave a stop at the Central Market and the Murals of York into your journey.

The Visitor's Bureau has a guide to the murals also. There are over 20 individual paintings that depict subjects from manufacturing to history to a medical milestone. It's a work in progress as new subjects and locations continue to be added.

Route 30, The Lincoln Highway, traverses York County east to west. Today it changes numbers and routes but Market Street in downtown York is the original highway that in 1913 was little more than a vision and today is only a reminder of a bygone era. Although our children cannot relate to days of travel before the Interstates, it is still a novelty to travel the route and look at some of the roadside vintage architecture.

Several of the chrome exterior diners still operate along Route 30. It's a giant step back in time to eat lunch perched on a stool at a Formica counter trimmed with a metal strip, listen to the music of an old fashioned jukebox, and watch a waitress spin a revolving case to find a diner's dessert choice. Lee's Diner, established over 50 years ago, offers timeless charm and good food. The Starlite Diner, also on Route 30, is a replica but will stir memories, if only of old movies, and appeal to those with hearty

appetites.

Youngsters will enjoy a stop at The Shoe House which doubles as an ice cream stand during warm months. Built in 1948 by a man in the shoe business, an example of programmatic architecture, it looks like something in a fairy tale theme park. It's a good place to stretch legs and grab a cone.

Fun Factories

If schedules permit and your visit to York includes some weekdays, factory tours are both entertaining and educational. If you plan to include tours, it's best to call ahead to check on availability and restrictions. Check www.york-pa.org/explore_factory.asp or call the Visitor's Bureau toll free at 1-888-858-YORK for more information.

We all love potato chips and Martin's, just west of York on Route 30, offers an informative tour that includes a heaping helping of fresh from the cooker hot chips. The tour allows you to follow the potato from the truck; through it's washing, sorting and slicing; into the fryer and along the various conveyor belts where the chips are salted, checked for quality.

At Harley Davidson, children under 12 aren't permitted in the plant but there's a tour center that includes over half a dozen current inventory Hogs. The huge bikes make great props for picture taking; adults love sitting astride them as much, or maybe more, than the kids do!

Where to Stay

The Yorktowne Hotel in downtown York offers an unparalleled experience. Construction began in 1924 and the hotel opened a year later. It has never closed in spite of America's financial crash, subsequent depression and, more recently, the complete renovation of the hotel itself. It's a tourist site in its own right. Call 1-800-233-9324 or visit www.yorktowne.com. Two eateries offer tasty and gourmet food.

Accommodations in the York area are limitless and rated as bargains. Many packages are also available: www.york-pa.org/stayinyork.asp. If someone wants to sneak in a game of golf, the Heritage Hills Golf Resort & Conference Center is an attractive possibility with one of the county's 21 gold courses. Telephone 1-877-STAY PLAY or go online at www.hhgr.com.

Spend a few days in York; you'll have to return for more. ■



Rolling country views interfere with the golfer's concentration at this York County golf course.



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