



# SPEND SOME TIME IN PENNSYLVANIA'S OUTDOORS

*Courtesy Cherry Crest Adventure Farm*

BY KRISTY ALPERT

GUESTS ENJOY THE STRAWBALE RACER AT CHERRY CREST ADVENTURE FARM IN RONKS.

From group tours that delve deep into cavernous groves to fishing in the more than 4,000 miles of cold water streams for the state's famous brook trout, outdoor adventures are plentiful across Pennsylvania.

Officially recognized as a commonwealth, Pennsylvania has a rich history that is best explored not in the confines of a museum, but in the sprawling lands across this 46,055-square-mile state. With more than 120 state parks scattered across the land featuring mountains, river valleys, caves and pristine farmlands, each acre tells a story about the state and offers something everyone in the group can enjoy. Here are some of the top spots for sampling and exploring Pennsylvania's expansive outdoor offerings.

## LAUREL HIGHLANDS

The Laurel Highlands region of Pennsylvania is a four-season destination. Encompassing a large part of the western section of the state, this region is packed with outdoor activities, from downhill skiing in the winter to fly-fishing in the spring and even white-water rafting in the summer.

Outdoor enthusiasts can take to the mighty Youghiogheny River for the best-stocked trout streams in the state, visit the highest point in Pennsylvania at Mount Davis or take a leisurely stroll along the historic Allegheny Passage in Ohiopyle State Park.

"We have more than 120,000 acres of preserved state parkland, so given our amount of green space and our topography, we're a great destination for outdoor activities," explained Julie Donovan, a Laurel Highlands

native and current director of marketing and public relations for the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau. "I can't imagine living anywhere else. The region has been able to remain undeveloped, so even though we're close to these major metropolitan areas, when you get here, you can just breathe a sigh of relief because it's just tranquil and beautiful."

[WWW.LAURELHIGHLANDS.ORG](http://WWW.LAURELHIGHLANDS.ORG)

## CHERRY CREST ADVENTURE FARM RONKS

Dating back to 1774, when the records show that Madam Mary Ferree received a land grant from William Penn himself, the Cherry Crest Adventure Farm is located in the heart of Pennsylvania's Dutch Country and is a great way to explore the historic and agricultural side of Lancaster County while having a ton of fun on the farm.

"Cherry Crest Adventure Farm is an outdoor adventure in itself," said Jack Coleman, the farm's owner for the past 25 years. "We are surrounded by beautiful Amish farms and only a few minutes away from the other attractions Lancaster County is famous for. It's great to watch families bond together with activities that educate and create self-fulfillment."

Along with a five-acre corn maze and more than 15 acres of games and rides — check out the giant jump pillows — this farm is also a 300-acre working cattle, poultry and farming operation that gives groups a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to operate a green farm and teaches about the farm's many conservation programs to make sure the land stays unspoiled.

[WWW.CHERRYCRESTFARM.COM](http://WWW.CHERRYCRESTFARM.COM)

# WHISTLE STOPPING IN PENN DUTCH COUNTRY

In the middle of central Pennsylvania's Dutch Country, the town of Strasburg offers groups a chance to experience a piece of railroad history.

Founded in 1832, the Strasburg Railroad was an important part of the Pennsylvania economy for the next 100 years. The railroad was abandoned, however, in the early 20th century until a group of regional train-lovers bought the railroad and re-established passenger service in 1959.

Today, the Strasburg Railroad offers a number of different excursions that make fun-filled experiences for groups. The railroad operates a series of 45-minute excursions from the historic station in Strasburg, taking passengers through scenic Amish countryside. Visitors can enjoy the train's vintage equipment, including its authentic steam engines and luxurious passenger and lounge cars.

In addition to the standard scenic ride, groups can choose from a number of enhanced outings. The Wine and Cheese Train adds drinks and hors d'oeuvres to the experience; a wide range of full meal options includes traditional dining, murder mystery dinners, dessert events and more. Guided behind-the-scenes tours of the station workshop are also available.

If you have railroad buffs in your group, consider combining the train trip with two other local rail experiences. The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania is located right across the street from the train station, and features a collection of more than 100 historic locomotives and railcars. Nearby, the Choo Choo Barn is home to a 1,700-square-foot model train layout.

[WWW.STRASBURGRAILROAD.COM](http://WWW.STRASBURGRAILROAD.COM)



*Courtesy Laurel Highlands CVB*

NEMACOLIN WOODLANDS RESORT OFFERS ZIP-LINE ADVENTURES ABOVE THE LAUREL HIGHLANDS TREETOPS.

## POCONO MOUNTAINS

The Pocono Mountain region of Pennsylvania is one of the top areas for outdoor recreation in the United States and encompasses Carbon, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties. Adventurous groups can discover the region's more than 2,400 square miles of rivers, lakes, mountains, forests and waterfalls.

"The Pocono Mountains have exciting attractions, recreational activities, historic sites and natural wonders year-round that make for a great tour of the region," said Alicia Quinn, director of public relations and communications for the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, and 10-year resident of the region. "One of my most favorite activities is actually participating in the Big Day Out on Saturdays with Pocono Whitewater."

The Big Day Out is an event that challenges locals and visitors alike to bike, hike and raft the Lehigh Gorge in one day. The event runs every Saturday from April to October and is a great way for groups to challenge themselves while connecting with the magnificent countryside. Among the other activities in the area are skydiving, kayaking, fishing, skiing and camping.

[WWW.800POCONOS.COM](http://WWW.800POCONOS.COM)

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Courtesy Cherry Crest Adventure Farm



Courtesy Penn's Cave and Wildlife Park

## PENN'S CAVE AND WILDLIFE PARK CENTRE HALL

Penn's Cave and Wildlife Park is a gem for adventure-seeking groups. The facility can accommodate groups of from 20 to 200 members and features a fully stocked cafe, picnic facilities and a pavilion, gemstone panning, a large gift shop and a permanent maze that will open this summer.

"We are situated on 1,500 acres and are also still a working farm operation," explained Terri Schleiden, marketing director and group tour coordinator of Penn's Cave and Wildlife Park.

"We are considered a natural attraction mainly because our cave, beautiful mountains and pastures were not man-made. That makes us appeal to people of all ages and walks of life."

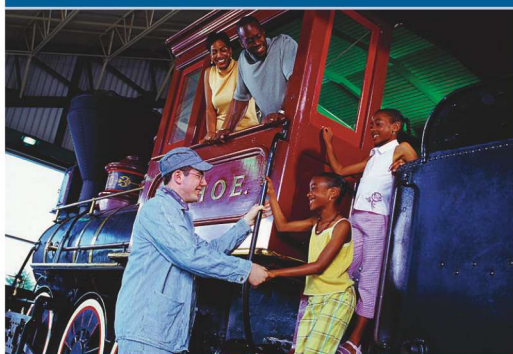
The only cave in Pennsylvania on the National Register of Historic Places, Penn's Cave offers two separate tours of the property: a 50-minute all-water cavern tour that is given entirely by boat and a 90-minute wildlife, farm and nature tour. Groups can take the 90-minute tour in one of the park's tour buses or on tractor trams, where they'll see everything from mustangs and timber wolves to bison and bears.

[WWW.PENNSCAVE.COM](http://WWW.PENNSCAVE.COM)

TOP: THE FIVE-ACRE CORN MAZE AT CHERRY CREST ADVENTURE FARM.  
BOTTOM: A WILD WOLF AT PENN'S CAVE AND WILDLIFE PARK.

# Trains. Trains. Trains.

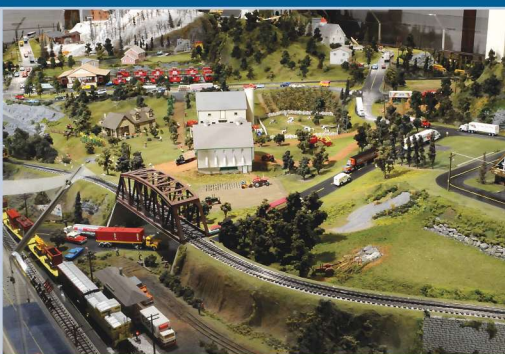
## One town, three incredible train attractions!



### Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

Experience the awe-inspiring power of more than 100 historic locomotives and railroad cars, fun and challenging hands-on activities and unique special events.

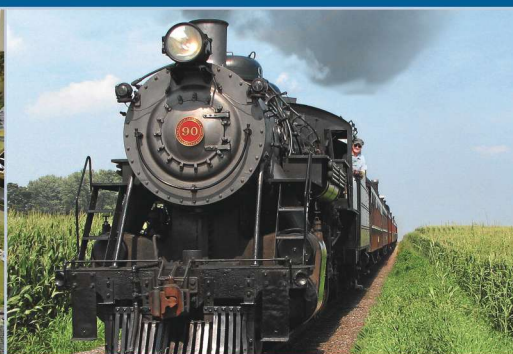
[RRMuseumPA.org](http://RRMuseumPA.org) | 717-687-8628  



### Choo Choo Barn

Explore a work of art in this gigantic model train layout, hand-crafted by one family for 50+ years. See 150 animated people and scenes on a display that is much more than "just trains".

[ChooChooBarn.com](http://ChooChooBarn.com) | 717-687-7911 



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