



TAKE A BUGGY RIDE



GO SHOPPING



LITITZ AND STURGIS PRETZELS



VISIT ONE OF THE MANY FARM MARKETS



TAKE IN A SHOW

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is home to a large contingent of Amish and a wonderful place to explore, shop and dine. We've been visiting the area for years and find something new every time we go. Our pro tip: Get a Lancaster County Visitors Guide (available at most rest areas in Pennsylvania) and keep the enclosed detailed map handy. You'll need it for number 10.

10 Where else can you experience riding in a horse-drawn buggy? Several tour options are available, depending on what you want. All take you to see a working Amish farm, the beautiful farmland and explain Amish life. There's also a van tour option; however, it's open only to those staying at one of five Bird-in-Hand properties. We did the van tour when we stayed at Country Acres Campground. It's complimentary, so check out if you're staying at one of their properties. Take the map with you and mark places where you'd like to return.

9 Whether looking for Amish-made furniture for your home, home décor, crafts, or a quilter looking for that perfect fabric for your latest project, Lancaster County has a store for you. While many are along the three main east-west roads of U.S. 30, Old Philadelphia Pike and U.S. 23, be sure to check those side roads. There are lots of great shops located on the Amish farms, as well.

8 Head north on Route 501 to the small town of Lititz. This small historic village in the middle of Pennsylvania Dutch Country is home to Julius Sturgis Pretzel Bakery. Founded in 1861, Sturgis is the first commercial pretzel bakery in America. The Sturgis family is proud to tell you that they're the oldest pretzel-baking family in America, and they love sharing how they roll each pretzel by hand. You're encouraged to try hand-rolling your own pretzel while learning this unique location's history. You can make reservations for tours on their website. After you've made your pretzel, take a walk down to Wilbur Chocolates retail store. Get a taste of chocolates made right in central Pennsylvania.

7 Lancaster County in the summer and fall has some of the best markets we've seen. Whether you're looking for plants, fresh produce, baked goods, cheese, or jams and jellies, the markets in Lancaster County have what you're looking for. Don't forget to check out many Amish families' roadside stands on their property. Some sell fresh eggs, honey, butter and ice cream.

6 Lancaster County has something for you if theater is your thing. Small venues, like Bird-in-Hand Stage, are home to Amish-themed musicals and plays. Before the show, you can add dinner at the Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant & Smorgasbord. If you like something much grander, the magnificent Sight & Sound Theatres is for you. It features incredible sets, large casts and live animals telling a different biblical story every season. This venue sells out night after night, so be sure to plan. Closer to Lancaster, there's the Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre, the Fulton Theatre, a professional regional theatre, and several live performance venues for various musical, comedy and variety acts.



VISIT STRASBURG



TAKE A DRIVE IN AMISH COUNTRY



VISIT KITCHEN KETTLE VILLAGE



CYCLING LANCASTER COUNTY



SAMPLE DELICIOUS FOOD

5 If you love trains, drive to Strasburg. If toy trains are your thing, take advantage of the National Toy Train Museum and the Choo Choo Barn at Traintown, U.S.A. The National Toy Train Museum opened in 1977 and features trains and accessories dating back to the mid-1800s. The Choo Choo Barn is more than 1,700 square feet of scenes from around Lancaster County. It's continuously evolving and has been owned and operated by the same family for more than 70 years. If big boy trains are more your jam, then the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania and the Strasburg Rail Road are for you. You can climb aboard locomotives and rail cars to your heart's content as you learn the history of the railroad in Pennsylvania. The Strasburg Rail Road is America's oldest short-line railroad and invites visitors to take the 45-minute ride along the Amish countryside aboard a vintage steam train.

4 While finding the farm markets, drive through the countryside and see sights you'll never see in the city. Horse-drawn farm equipment work the fields, women and children tend to their perfectly manicured gardens (both vegetable and flower) and the landscape from some of the higher elevations looks like a sea of crops waiting to be harvested. Be careful as you drive, though, because the Amish have joined the e-bike craze to help them get around along with the traditional horse and buggy. While they don't have electricity, some have solar and generators to charge the batteries.

3 The village of Intercourse is home to Kitchen Kettle Village. This location is excellent for looking for exciting gifts, clothing and food. With more than 40 shops and restaurants, you're sure to find the perfect item. Our favorites are the peach salsa at Kitchen Kettle, meats and cheeses at Aged and Cured, and Life is Good shirts at Good Vibes. However, there's also a shop just for pets, a candle shop, an art gallery and so much more.

2 We love riding our bicycles in Lancaster County. Whether going for a ride along the country roads on a Sunday morning when the only other vehicles are pulled by horses or riding on one of the many rail trails through Lancaster and neighboring York County, there's a distance and skill level for every rider. This is a great way to see things you miss riding in a car. While riding our bicycles, we even found Lapp Valley Farm Creamery, which sells ice cream from its dairy cattle. They were closed on Sunday, but we remembered where they were and drove back in our car the following day.

1 After all that exercise, you won't feel guilty with our Number 1. There's so much delicious food in Lancaster County. Along with all-American diners and local breweries, Lancaster County is home to excellent homestyle Amish restaurants, many of which are buffets. And if you're looking for something sweet, the bakeries are some of the best. Our favorites? Shady Maple Smorgasbord has one of the most extensive buffets ever seen. Bird-in-Hand Bake Shop features great bread and pies. And Sweet Shenanigans Cupcakery in Intercourse has impressive cupcakes. Bring your appetite when you visit Lancaster County.

As you can see, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has so much to do, and I didn't mention the campgrounds. There are many good RV parks depending on your rig's size and how close you want to be to all the attractions. Remember to plan; they fill up quickly in the summer and fall.