

*Wayfaring Lancaster:*  
A LOCAL'S  
GUIDE TO  
EXPLORING  
AUTHENTIC  
LANCASTER  
COUNTY

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## **WELCOME TO LANCASTER COUNTY**

Welcome to Lancaster County, where winding roads, covered bridges, and small-town charm collide in the most beautiful way. This guide is organized by town and includes a curated list of experiences—many off the beaten path—that highlight the heart of Lancaster: family-run shops, peaceful parks, historic corners, and little coffee spots worth lingering in. Each mini-itinerary includes a main activity, a small business stop for coffee or a treat, and one or two charming detours. Most activities are low-cost or free.

# Lititz Day Trip: History, Charm & Treats

🌳 Main Activity: Stroll Through Lititz Springs Park (Free)  
Address: 24 N Broad St, Lititz, PA 17543

This beautifully landscaped park in the heart of town is more than just a peaceful stroll—it's a piece of Lititz history. The Lititz Springs themselves helped shape the town's early development, providing water to the Moravian community as far back as the 1700s. In fact, the Lititz Moravian Church, established in 1749, is just up the street and is one of the oldest continuing Moravian congregations in the U.S.

🐥 Seasonal Note: Spring is duckling season—you'll see plenty of baby ducks waddling around! In the summer, the July 4th Celebration (dating back to 1813) includes a candle-lit float on the spring and live music. Fall brings golden leaves and a peaceful, crisp backdrop. Winter? It's magical with twinkle lights and an old-fashioned feel.

🍞 Small Business Stop: Dosie Dough Bakery & Coffee Shop  
Address: 45 S Broad St, Lititz, PA 17543

A longtime staple of the community, Dosie Dough is warm, casual, and filled with the scent of cinnamon and fresh coffee. It's located in a historic brick building just steps from the park and offers both outdoor and indoor seating. Their sticky buns are legendary—rich, gooey, and made with love. Locals come early for bagels and coffee before work, while visitors often linger over a latte and people-watch.

🍁 Seasonal Note: Try their maple drinks or pumpkin baked goods in the fall. In warmer months, their iced chai is a hidden gem.

🛍️ Charming Detour 1: Main Street Walk & Local Shops

Lititz's downtown is a walkable mix of colonial architecture, art galleries, boutique shops, and quirky finds. Highlights include:

Aaron's Books - Family-run indie bookstore with events and author signings.

Zest! - Unique cooking supplies and food items with occasional cooking demos.

The Savory Gourmet - Try gourmet cheeses, sauces, and snacks.

🏰 Historical Fun Fact: Lititz was a closed religious community until the late 1800s, where only Moravians could live within its bounds. The town's layout still reflects its organized communal roots, and the nearby Lititz Museum (located in the Johannes Mueller House) offers guided tours for deeper insight.

🍌 Charming Detour 2: The Pretzel Hut

Address: 2224 Furnace Hills Pike, Newmanstown, PA 17073

Nestled among tall trees and rolling hills, The Pretzel Hut is a nostalgic stop that's been serving Lancaster families for generations. It's the kind of place where grandparents bring their grandkids for an ice cream cone and to visit the little animal enclosure. They serve up soft pretzels (of course), milkshakes, sundaes, burgers, and even veggie options.

🧊 Seasonal Note: Open seasonally (usually March through November). Perfect for a summer cone or fall foliage outing. In colder months, call ahead or check social media for hours.



# New Holland + Leola + Bareville Day Trip: Nature, Cheese & Quiet Country Roads

 Main Activity: Welsh Mountain Nature Preserve (Free)  
Address: 735 Gault Road, New Holland, PA 17557

Tucked into the edge of the county's eastern hills, Welsh Mountain Nature Preserve offers over 940 acres of wooded trails, quiet ridgelines, and natural beauty. It's an ideal spot for a light hike, a peaceful nature walk, or birdwatching with the kids. The Red Trail leads to a scenic overlook with a surprising view across the valley—especially colorful in fall. Parking is easy, and there are several trailheads to choose from. It's also a great trail to run on.

 Seasonal Note: Best visited in mid-to-late October for peak foliage. In spring, look out for trillium and native wildflowers. Cooler months offer a quiet, mossy stillness that feels almost untouched.

 Historical Fun Fact: The Welsh Mountain area was once home to freed formerly enslaved people and a tight-knit African American and Amish community. This mountain historically offered refuge and was associated with Underground Railroad activity. Today, it's one of Lancaster County's most overlooked but significant natural areas.

 Small Business Stop: New Holland Coffee Co.  
Address: 832 W Main St, New Holland, PA 17557

This friendly, laid-back café is everything you'd want in a small-town coffee shop. Housed in a converted bank building, the vibe is warm and rustic, and the menu includes artisan coffees, seasonal lattes, and locally made pastries. Seating inside and out makes it a great place to relax after your hike—or grab something to go before heading out to the preserve.

 Seasonal Note: Their autumn drinks are fantastic (think maple or brown sugar cinnamon), and the café often features live local music or small events. In December, it becomes a cozy winter hideaway.

 Charming Detour 1: Covered Bridge Drive

Take a scenic loop along Peters Road, Cocalico Road, or Pool Forge Road, where you'll encounter Weaver's Mill Covered Bridge, a bright red, classic single-span structure still used today. Slow down, open the windows, and enjoy the rhythm of old Lancaster: fields, silos, and the occasional buggy.

 Tip: The best light for photos is mid-morning or just before sunset when the bridge glows in golden tones against green fields.

 Charming Detour 2: September Farm Cheese

Address: 5287 Horseshoe Pike, Honey Brook, PA 19344

A short drive southeast from New Holland, this destination cheese shop and market is a must-stop. Watch cheese being made through large viewing windows, sample a wide selection, and grab a sandwich or soup from their café. The market also features jams, fresh-baked bread, and Pennsylvania Dutch pantry items. Perfect for picnic supplies or gifts.

 Seasonal Note: In summer and fall, the outdoor patio is a great place to sit and enjoy the view. Try the smoked cheddar or cheese curds with a cold apple cider. Around the holidays, the market becomes beautifully decorated and stocked with seasonal gift boxes.

 Historical Fun Fact: Though just across the county line, this area of Chester County shares Lancaster's agricultural roots and Mennonite history. Many of the same family-run dairy farms have been working the land for generations.

## Strasburg + Paradise Day Trip: Quiet Towns & Rolling Farmland

 **Main Activity: Strasburg Jaycee Park (Free)**  
Address: 218 Miller St, Strasburg, PA 17579

A peaceful community park with views of surrounding farms and regular sightings of Amish buggies. Pack a lunch and enjoy the walking paths or shaded benches.

 **Seasonal Note:** Wildflowers in spring and fall colors in October make this park especially charming. Great spot for a picnic.

 **Small Business Stop: Speckled Hen Coffee**  
Address: 141 E Main St, Strasburg, PA 17579

This stylish café offers fresh pastries, locally roasted coffee, and a cozy environment with both indoor and outdoor seating.

 **Charming Detour: Scenic Drive through Paradise Township**  
Follow Route 741 east into Paradise for wide farmland views, silos, and glimpses of daily Amish life. It's a perfect route for slow Sunday drives.

 **Historical Fun Fact:** Strasburg is home to the oldest continuously operating railroad in the Western Hemisphere—the Strasburg Rail Road. Even if you skip the train, watching the steam engines roll by is a treat.



# Ephrata Day Trip: Rail Trails & Colonial Quiet

🏛️ Main Activity: Ephrata Cloister  
Address: 632 W Main St, Ephrata, PA 17522

A National Historic Landmark, this 18th-century religious commune offers peaceful gardens and intriguing architecture. Great for history lovers and peaceful wandering.

🕒 Historical Fun Fact: Ephrata Cloister members practiced celibacy, wore white robes, and were known for their music and early printing presses.

☕ Small Business Stop: Griddle & Grind Café  
Address: 248 N Reading Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522  
A casual café with good coffee and breakfast food—great for a post-Cloister stop or before hopping on the trail.

🚲 Charming Detour: Warwick to Ephrata Rail Trail (Free)  
Accessible just a few blocks away, this paved trail offers a smooth ride or walk with lovely rural views.

🍏 Seasonal Note: Visit on a Friday and make time for Green Dragon Farmers Market, a Lancaster institution full of local produce and hidden gems.



## Columbia + Marietta Day Trip: River Views & Antiques

🌞 Main Activity: Chickies Rock Overlook Trail (Free)  
Address: 880 Chickies Hill Rd, Columbia, PA 17512

A short, rewarding hike with panoramic views of the Susquehanna River. It's one of the best quick hikes in the county.

🍂 Seasonal Note: Best in fall for foliage and river views. Watch for hawks during migration.

☕ Small Business Stop: Coffee Cream & Dreams  
Address: 100 W Market St, Marietta, PA 17547  
Charming small-town shop offering ice cream, coffee, and light bites.

🛍️ Charming Detour: Northwest River Trail + Antique Shops  
Walk or bike a section of the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail and browse Columbia's antique shops and vintage boutiques.

🕒 Historical Fun Fact: Columbia was a stop on the Underground Railroad and once considered as the nation's capital. Its riverfront heritage runs deep.





## Downtown Lancaster Day Trip: Art, History & Coffee

🎨 Main Activity: Musser Park + Lancaster Museum of Art (Free/donation encouraged)  
Address: 135 N Lime St, Lancaster, PA 17602

This small but lovely art museum is set in a historic mansion, adjacent to a peaceful park with benches and greenery.

☕ Small Business Stop: Prince Street Café  
Address: 15 N Prince St, Lancaster, PA 17603

Hip and inviting, this café is great for people-watching or meeting up with friends. Excellent coffee and light fare.

📍 Charming Detour: Gallery Row + Central Market

Stroll downtown's Gallery Row and visit Lancaster Central Market (open Tue, Fri, Sat) for local treats and crafts.

👤 Historical Fun Fact: Lancaster was once the capital of Pennsylvania and is home to President James Buchanan's historic estate, Wheatland.

☀️ Seasonal Note: First Fridays are buzzing with live music, open galleries, and food trucks.



## Quarryville + Southern Lancaster Day Trip: Forest Trails & Farm Stands

🌲 Main Activity: Tucquan Glen or Kelly's Run Nature Preserve (Free)

### Addresses:

Tucquan Glen: 857 River Rd, Holtwood, PA 17532

Kelly's Run: 78 Street Rd, Holtwood, PA 17532

Choose between two gorgeous preserves with woodland trails, waterfalls, and creeks. More rugged, but worth it.

🌿 Seasonal Note: Beautiful in early spring and late October. Bring good shoes and water.

☕ Small Business Stop: Daily Grind Quarryville

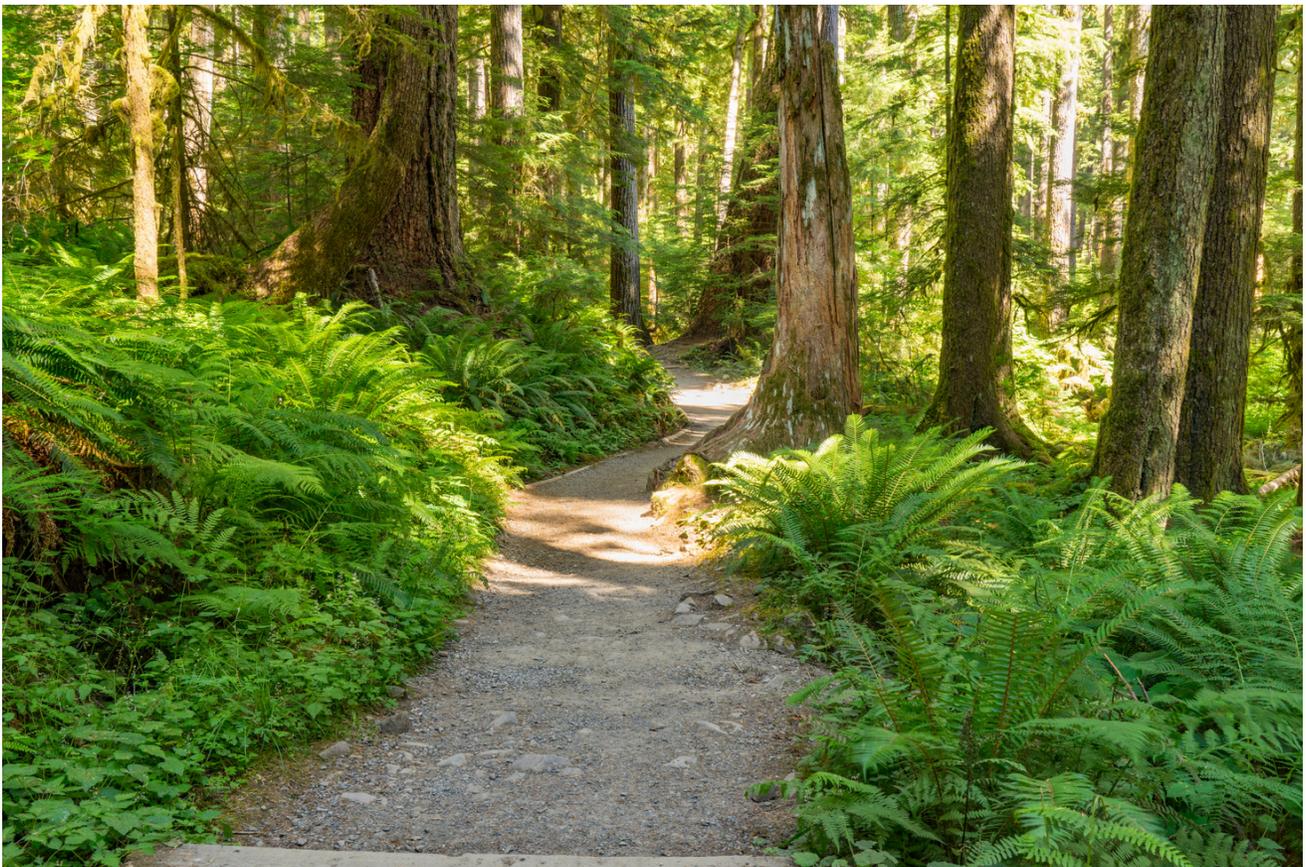
Address: 221 W 4th St, Quarryville, PA 17566

Cozy café with great coffee and breakfast sandwiches. A local favorite and a nice reward after a hike.

🌻 Charming Detour: Roadside Markets + Scenic Backroads

Cruise along Route 372 or nearby farm lanes to find produce stands, greenhouses, and wildflower views.

🕒 Historical Fun Fact: Southern Lancaster remains deeply agricultural and less touristy, with large Amish communities preserving traditional ways of life.



# Local Hot Spots Owned by Small Businesses

Lancaster County is rich with family-owned and locally operated gems that embody the charm and authenticity visitors love. Here are a few standout spots worth weaving into your journey:

## Downtown Lancaster

The Scarlet Willow (320 N Queen St, Lancaster): A treasure trove of vintage finds, artisan jewelry, and quirky décor.

The Fridge (534 N Mulberry St, Lancaster): Craft beer and gourmet flatbreads in a laid-back atmosphere.

Passenger Coffee & The Commons (7 W King St, Lancaster): Bright, modern coffee shop with ethically sourced beans and fresh-baked goods.

## Lititz

Slate Café (43 E Main St, Lititz): Trendy café with scratch-made food and stylish vibes.

Tiger's Eye Boutique (49 E Main St, Lititz): A go-to for upscale women's clothing and accessories.

Wilbur Chocolate Store (45 N Broad St, Lititz): Iconic for a reason—stock up on Wilbur Buds and seasonal sweets.

## New Holland / Leola

September Farm Cheese (5287 Horseshoe Pike, Honey Brook): Handcrafted cheeses and a full deli/bakery experience.

New Holland Coffee Co. (832 W Main St, New Holland): Cozy, welcoming spot with a loyal local following.

## Strasburg / Paradise

Caboose Tavern (312 Paradise Ln, Ronks): Craft food and brews with Amish countryside views.

Old Mill Antiques (15 Vintage Dr, Paradise): Eclectic collection of vintage treasures.

## Columbia / Marietta

Burning Bridge Antiques (304 Walnut St, Columbia): Huge antique mall with curated vendor booths.

Meraki Juice Kitchen (17 E Market St, Marietta): Organic smoothies, açai bowls, and clean eats in a calm space.

## Ephrata

Ten Thousand Villages (240 N Reading Rd, Ephrata): Fair trade handmade goods supporting global artisans.

The Pressed Plate (560 E Main St, Ephrata): Sandwiches, paninis, and espresso made with love.

## Quarryville / Southern End

Maplehofe Dairy Store (807 Georgetown Rd, Quarryville): Locally made ice cream, milk, and snacks.

The Daily Grind (221 W 4th St, Quarryville): A warm and friendly spot for coffee and breakfast.

# Active & Inspired: Great Places for Retirees to Explore in Lancaster County

Retirement doesn't mean slowing down—it's the perfect time to explore new places, try fresh experiences, and soak in the beauty of local culture. Whether you're visiting Lancaster County or living here full-time, there's no shortage of meaningful ways to stay active and inspired. From scenic walks to lively markets, here's a curated list of active-but-enjoyable places that retirees love—without the tourist trap crowds.

1. **Chickies Rock Overlook (Columbia)** – Why it's great: A short, easy hike with a wow view of the Susquehanna River. Bring a camera—sunsets here are spectacular.

Tip: Park at the Breezyview lot and walk less than half a mile to the overlook.

2. **Lititz Springs Park + Main Street Lititz**

Why it's great: Flat walking paths, historic charm, and ducks to feed. Follow it with boutique shopping and lunch at a cozy café.

Must-Try Stop: Dosie Dough Bakery or Slate Café for a casual bite.

3. **Northwest River Trail (Columbia to Marietta)**

Why it's great: Paved and scenic, this trail runs along the river with benches, art installations, and peaceful views.

Accessibility: Several trailheads have parking and smooth access, ideal for low-impact walking or biking.

4. **Long's Park (Lancaster)**

Why it's great: Gentle paved paths loop around a pond with swans, plus shaded picnic spots and summer concerts.

Seasonal Bonus: The Long's Park Art Festival every Labor Day weekend draws amazing artists and food vendors.

5. **Downtown Lancaster: Central Market + Gallery Row**

Why it's great: Explore one of the oldest farmers markets in the country, then stroll Gallery Row to view local art and architecture.

Good to Know: Visit Tuesday, Friday, or Saturday mornings for the freshest experience.

6. **Ephrata Cloister & Rail Trail**

Why it's great: Learn about early American history at this peaceful historic site, then walk or bike the nearby Warwick-to-Ephrata Rail Trail.

Tip: Stop by Griddle & Grind Café afterward for coffee or a snack.

7. **Kitchen Kettle Village (Intercourse)**

Why it's great: Walkable and well-kept village of shops and bakeries. Watch jam being made, listen to live folk music, and browse hand-crafted goods.

Insider Tip: Arrive early to beat the midday crowds and enjoy the quiet charm.

8. **Garden of the Five Senses (East Hempfield Twp.)**

Why it's great: A hidden gem designed with sensory detail in mind—perfect for a relaxing stroll through flowers, textures, and sounds.

Accessibility: Flat, easy walking with benches and shaded areas.

9. **Apple Picking at Brecknock Orchard (Fall only)**

Why it's great: Stay active with gentle walking while picking your own fruit, then enjoy cider and fresh donuts from the market.

Seasonal Highlight: Late September through early October is peak apple season.

10. **Volunteer or Take a Class**

Where: Lancaster History, Landis Valley Village & Farm Museum, or a local library.

Why it's great: Stay connected and mentally sharp while engaging with the community.

Many locations offer programs for adults 55+.

## Final Thoughts:

Lancaster is more than rolling farmland and horse-drawn buggies—it's a community where people of all ages stay active, social, and inspired. Whether you're walking tree-lined streets, exploring local art, or simply enjoying a cup of coffee at a slow pace, there's something here for every stage of life.

Especially retirement.

Want more trip ideas or thinking about relocating? Visit [WayfaringLancaster.com](http://WayfaringLancaster.com) for guides, real estate tips, and local stories!



 **Weekend in Lancaster, PA**  
Historic charm, peaceful countryside, and fresh local flavor

 **Friday evening - Sunday at 5:00 PM**

 **Friday Night - Arrival & Welcome**

6:00 PM - **Arrive in Lancaster**

Check into a downtown boutique hotel like Lancaster Arts Hotel or The Wilbur Lititz (15 min outside city, super cute)

7:30 PM - **Dinner at Luca** (wood-fired Italian, romantic vibe)

Or grab casual bites at Decades, a retro bowling alley-meets-gastropub

9:00 PM - **Stroll through Gallery Row** or stop for dessert at The Baker's Table

 **Saturday - Rural Beauty & Local Flavor**

8:00 AM - **Breakfast at On Orange** (great gluten-free options)

9:30 AM - **Head out to Bird-in-Hand Farmers Market** (20 min drive)  
- Sample homemade soft pretzels, jams, and fresh produce

11:00 AM - **Scenic Drive through Amish Country**

- Route 772 through Intercourse, Strasburg, and Paradise is a must  
- Stop for photos at a covered bridge (Red or Hunsecker's Mill)

12:30 PM - **Lunch at Katie's Kitchen** (authentic Amish comfort food)

2:00 PM - **Tour the Strasburg Railroad** (vintage steam train ride, 45 min loop)  
- Kid-friendly and nostalgic for adults too

3:30 PM - **Stop at Lapp Valley Farm** for hand-dipped ice cream and meet the  
cows

5:00 PM - **Return to hotel to rest** or explore Central Market (if open)

6:30 PM - **Dinner at The Belvedere Inn** (historic, upscale American)

8:30 PM - **Drinks at Shot & Bottle** or walk the Lititz Springs Park if staying  
nearby

 **Sunday - Local Gems Before You Go**

9:00 AM - **Brunch at Rachel's Café & Creperie**

10:30 AM - **Stroll Downtown Lititz** (named "Coolest Small Town in America")  
- Browse local boutiques, antique shops, and Julius Sturgis Pretzel Bakery  
(oldest in the U.S.)

12:30 PM - **Light hike or walk at Chickies Rock Overlook** or Speedwell Forge

2:00 PM - **Final snack** or coffee stop at Passenger Coffee

3:00 PM - **Optional stop** at Wilbur Chocolate Store for gifts to take home

5:00 PM - **Depart Lancaster**

# Specialty Sections

## For Grade-School Kids (Ages 5-12)

- Cherry Crest Adventure Farm (Ronks): Seasonal fun with giant slides, animals, and the famous corn maze.
- North Museum of Nature & Science (Lancaster): Dinosaurs, hands-on exhibits, and a planetarium. Great for rainy days.
- Lititz Springs Park (Lititz): Feed ducks, play on the playground, and walk the bridges.
- Pretzel Hut (outside Lititz): Pretzels and ice cream plus a mini petting zoo.
- Strasburg Rail Road: Take a short ride on a historic steam train—pure kid delight.

## For Families with Teens

- Sickman's Mill Tubing (Pequea): Tubing adventure on the Pequea Creek.
- Chickies Rock Overlook (Columbia): Short hike with scenic views.
- Antique Shopping in Columbia or Ephrata: Fun for vintage-loving teens.
- Downtown Lancaster Coffee Crawl: Try cool cafés like Passenger or Mean Cup.
- Bike the Northwest River Trail: Smooth and scenic ride.

## ADA Accessible / Easy Walks

- Lancaster Central Market: Flat, sensory-filled shopping experience.
- Lititz Springs Park: Paved paths and shaded benches.
- \*\*Welsh Mountain Nature Preserve: Some trails are gentle and accessible.
- Long's Park: Loop paths, playgrounds, and ducks.
- Northwest River Trail: Flat sections near Columbia and Marietta.

## For the Outdoorsy Crew

- Sickman's Mill Tubing: Float and relax creekside.
- Tucquan Glen or Kelly's Run: More rugged trails with water features.
- Money Rocks County Park: Boulders, views, and secluded trails.
- Speedwell Forge Lake: Fishing, kayaking, trails.
- Horse-Shoe Trail: Long-distance hiking route.

## Fall Excursions

- Cherry Crest Adventure Farm: Corn maze, pumpkins, harvest fun.
- Apple Picking at Brecknock Orchard or Cherry Hill Orchard: Scenic, family-run farms with pick-your-own apples, cider, and donuts.
- Covered Bridge Drives: Best in mid-late October.
- Ephrata's Rail Trail: Gorgeous with autumn leaves.

## Christmas Time Outings

- Lititz at Christmas: Tree lighting, lights, and carriage rides.
- Kitchen Kettle Village: Holiday shopping and carolers.
- Strasburg Rail Road Christmas Train: Santa on board!
- National Christmas Center (if reopened): Pure Christmas nostalgia.
- Lancaster's Tree Lighting: Community caroling and cocoa.

## Rainy Weekend Ideas

- Lancaster Science Factory: Hands-on STEM exhibits perfect for curious kids and adults.
- The Shack (Manheim): Indoor mini golf and retro games with a funky atmosphere.
- Lancaster Art Museum or Demuth Museum: Small but engaging art spaces to wander and think.
- Escape Rooms in Downtown Lancaster: Group fun with a mental twist—great for all ages.
- Antique Trails: Explore the massive Cackleberry Farm Antique Mall or Antique Village in Columbia.
- Coffee Shop Hop: Rainy days are made for café-hopping—try Passenger, New Holland Coffee Co., Café One Eight, or Slate Café.
- Live Theater: From Fulton Theatre's professional shows to local playhouses like Servant Stage or Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre.
- LancasterHistory.org: Indoor exhibits including President Buchanan's home, Wheatland.
-  Why it matters: Lancaster offers more than just a movie or mall when it rains. With unique museums, historic homes, hands-on science, and cozy cafes, rainy weekends become memorable—not wasted.

This is just a taste of what Lancaster County has to offer. Explore slowly, take the back roads, talk to the locals, and savor the authenticity of this special place. For more ideas, visit [WayfaringLancaster.com](http://WayfaringLancaster.com).

## ✨ About Lancaster:

Lancaster County is one of the oldest inland cities in the U.S., founded in 1729. Known for its Amish communities, covered bridges, and rolling farmland, it offers a rare blend of quiet rural life and creative urban energy. Think horse-drawn buggies sharing the road with Teslas, and heirloom tomatoes beside gourmet coffee shops.

## 🚗 Travel Tips

- Lancaster is approx. 1.5 hours from Philadelphia, 2.5 from NYC, and 2 hours from Baltimore/DC
- Amtrak runs direct from Philly and NYC to Lancaster Station
- Bring comfortable walking shoes and layers—it can be breezy in the mornings
- If you're driving, expect slow-moving buggies on rural roads (enjoy the scenery!)

## Note About Budget

I always joke with my real estate clients that house hunting is easy for me—because I'm not the one spending the money. You know your comfort level better than I ever could. The same idea applies here with these Lancaster day-trip ideas. I designed them to be fun, flexible outings, not tied to any specific budget.

Most of these trips include at least one free activity, along with options to spend a little more if you want to elevate the experience. Because at the end of the day, your budget matters—and I want you to enjoy these outings in a way that fits your season and your wallet.

**Sandra Burkholder**  
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