



Discover Cumberland Valley, PA – A Guide to Nature, History, and Family Fun

Description

While exploring the world far from home, don't forget to seek the beauty in your own "backyard"
Wanderers Compass

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Downtown Carlisle with Molly Pitcher mural in the background

The tourism office of Cumberland Valley, Pennsylvania, extended a warm invitation to us, encouraging us to explore the charms of the region. Initially, we were hesitant, considering that Ryan lived not far from there and had already extensively explored the area. He was sure that he had uncovered most of what I had to offer. However, our three-day visit proved him wrong. We were astounded by the multitude of captivating activities that we had never experienced before, a delightful surprise that taught us that, despite our familiarity with our surroundings, there is always more to discover in our own backyard.

Cumberland Valley, nestled in the heart of Pennsylvania, is not just another destination. It offers a distinctive blend of natural beauty, history, and outdoor recreation that is unique to this region. With its rolling hills, calm waterways, and vibrant towns, this region invites exploration. Whether you're interested in hiking, uncovering historical sites, or simply enjoying a quiet retreat, Cumberland Valley

has something unique to offer every traveler.

Where is Cumberland Valley?



Fly fisherman at Allenberry Resort.

The Cumberland Valley is a picturesque region in south-central Pennsylvania. It stretches approximately 30 miles from Shippensburg in the west to Harrisburg in the east. Conveniently located, the Cumberland Valley is just 18 miles southwest of Harrisburg, the state capital. It's about 115 miles west of Philadelphia, 90 miles north of Baltimore, and 140 miles southwest of New York City, making it an accessible destination for visitors from these major metropolitan areas. The Valley is also easily reached from Washington, D.C., about 100 miles to the south, offering a peaceful retreat within driving distance of the nation's capital.

Map

Natural Beauty



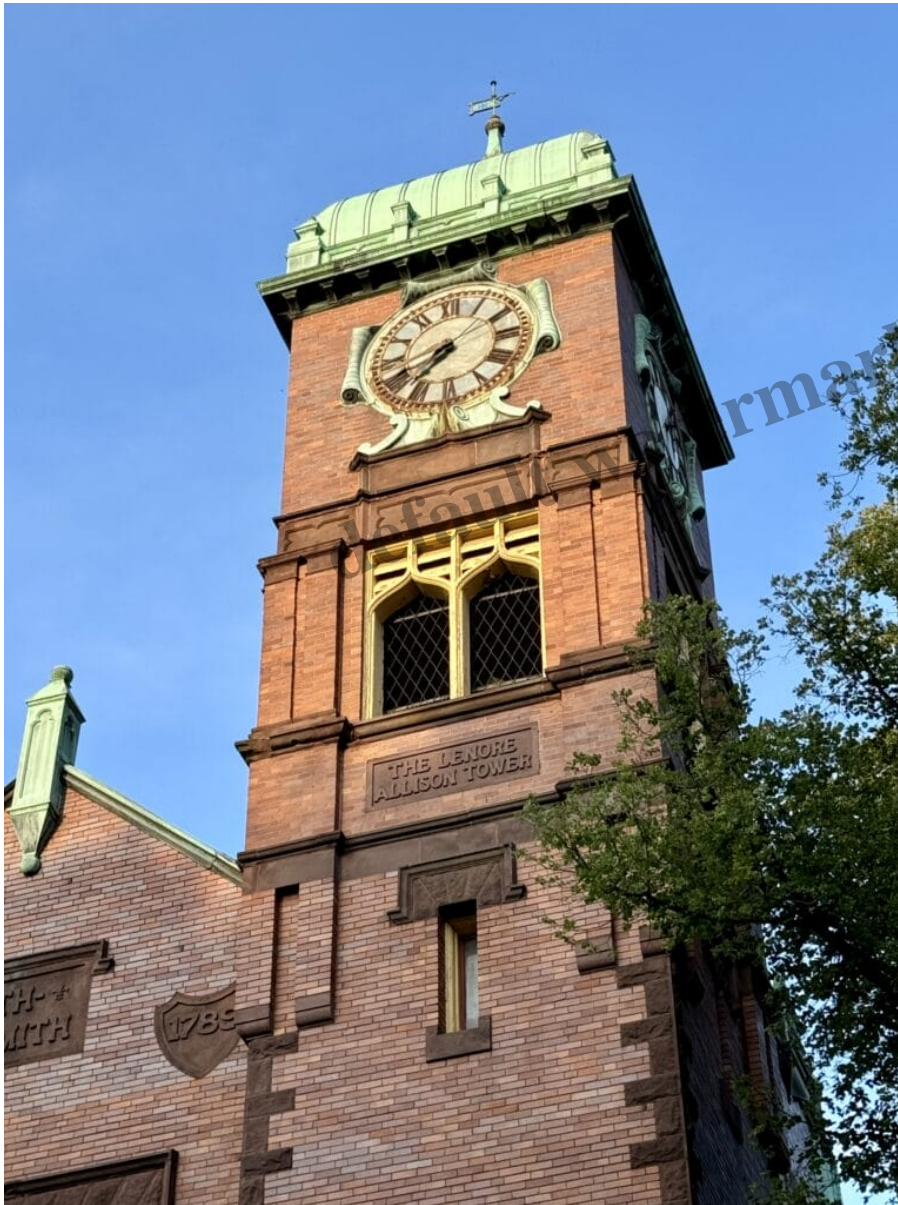
Natural beauty in Cumberland Valley

First and foremost, it is renowned for its stunning natural scenery. The landscape is dominated by the Appalachian Mountains, which provide a breathtaking backdrop for the region's lush forests, meandering streams, and tranquil farmlands. The area is lovely in the fall when the foliage turns vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow, creating a picturesque panorama that attracts visitors from far and wide.

For those who love the great outdoors, Cumberland Valley offers a plethora of activities to enjoy. Hiking and biking are especially popular, with numerous trails crisscrossing the area; hikers and bikers can explore the Appalachian Trail, Kings Gap Environmental Education Center, and Pine Grove Furnace State Park. Each of these locations offers trails ranging from easy walks to challenging hikes, ensuring there's something for every skill level. Suppose you love to be on the water. In that case, the Valley's waterways, including Yellow Breeches Creek and Conodoguinet Creek, are popular spots for

fishing, kayaking, and canoeing. Anglers can try their luck catching trout, while paddlers can enjoy the serene waters and the chance to spot local wildlife. Camping options abound for a true immersion in nature. Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Colonel Denning State Park, and other nearby sites provide beautiful settings for camping, from tent sites to cozy cabins.

Historical attractions



Downtown Carlisle

Cumberland Valley is steeped in history, with roots dating back to the colonial era. The region played a significant role in early American history, and its historic sites and museums offer a fascinating glimpse into the past. In our view, the city of Carlisle is the historical heart of the Valley. Carlisle, Pennsylvania, founded in 1751, is a town steeped in rich history and charm. Carlisle played a significant role in early American history. It served as a frontier town during the French and Indian War. It was a key supply

center for the Revolutionary War, with George Washington himself visiting the town. Carlisle is also known for its connection to the Civil War, where it was occupied by Confederate forces in 1863. The city is home to the prestigious Dickinson College, founded in 1773, one of the oldest colleges in the United States.

The Cumberland County Historical Society and other local museums offer exhibits on the area's rich history, including Native American heritage, colonial settlements, and the Civil War. We especially enjoyed our visit to the Historical Society Museum in downtown Carlisle—and it is FREE to boot!

The United States Army Heritage and Education Center is located in Carlisle. This center is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the history of the U.S. Army. Visitors can explore exhibits, artifacts, and outdoor displays, including a mile-long Army Heritage Trail featuring tanks, helicopters, and other military equipment. This was not Ryan's first visit, but it was his first time going inside. Considering he is in the Army, he has missed out. His son loved our time there as there were so many hands-on exhibits.

Family Activities

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Carlisle Sports Emporium

The Cumberland Valley offers a variety of family-friendly activities that cater to different interests. Outdoor enthusiasts can explore numerous trails, such as the Appalachian Trail, which runs through the Valley, or enjoy a more relaxed experience at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, where hiking, swimming, and picnicking await. The Cumberland Valley Rail Trail, a 13-mile path perfect for walking, biking, or horseback riding, provides beautiful views of the countryside and is suitable for all ages. For nature lovers, Wildwood Park near Harrisburg features easy walking trails, a boardwalk, and opportunities for birdwatching, offering an educational outing with a chance to spot local wildlife.

For more interactive fun, the Carlisle Sports Emporium, known as “The Place to Play,” offers go-karts, laser tag, mini-golf, batting cages, and an arcade, ensuring entertainment for the entire family. Families can also dive into history at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, which features interactive exhibits and a walking trail with life-sized military displays, or visit the Cumberland County Historical Society to explore hands-on exhibits and historical artifacts. Additionally, local farms like Paulus Farm Market or Ashcombe Farm and Greenhouses provide opportunities to pick your produce, enjoy farm animals, and participate in seasonal activities like corn mazes and pumpkin picking. For a peaceful retreat, Boiling Springs offers a serene lake perfect for paddle boating, fishing, or simply enjoying a relaxing day by the water.

Festivals and Events

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Corvette Show Visit Cumberland Valley Website Photo

This area offers so many fun and local events year-round. Gather your family and friends and head out to explore their unique collection of events, from car shows to musical events. Whether it's [Ice Art Fest](#) to celebrate the winter months, an Earth Day festival in the spring, music festivals throughout the summer months, a ton of [Fall Festivals](#), or [Carlisle's Wonderland Weekend](#) to welcome the holiday season, you'll be celebrating all year long.

Visit Cumberland County Passports



Fun prizes you can win using the various Passport Trails

The Visit Cumberland Valley Passport program enhances your exploration of the region by turning your visits into a rewarding adventure. Whether you're enjoying craft beers, indulging in ice cream, or embarking on family adventures, the passport adds an element of fun. It encourages you to discover more of what Cumberland Valley has to offer. So grab your passport, start collecting virtual stamps, and enjoy the journey through this beautiful and diverse region!

We have to admit we found this idea brilliant because we wanted to get more stamps on our passports. Ryan will no doubt continue to gather stamps when he is close to the area.

How it works

We made efforts to hit several spots on each of the three FREE passport programs available. Many of the passport stops provide discounts or freebies. In one of our ice cream stops, two ice cream cones were the price of one. Passport stamps are virtual. They are mobile-exclusive and do not require an app.

When visiting a participating business, present your phone to the attendant or staff member to redeem available discounts. You will also earn points that can be used to purchase fun prizes. We were impressed with these prizes, which we were able to sample.

[Visit Cumberland Valley Tourism Office](#), which has a great website on which to plan your visit.

The Three Cumberland Valley Passport Programs



Ice Crem Trail



Beer Trail



Family Adventure Trail

[Cumberland Valley Adventure Trail](#)



Military Display at the Army Heritage Center

Learn, explore, and create memories this weekend along the Cumberland Valley Family Adventure Trail! Cumberland Valley is home to many attractions that are perfect for a day out with your children. Visit hands-on and educational experiences as you make memories with your family!

This trail has 16 locations. Its activities are diverse, including military and historic museums, railroad museums, sports emporiums, bowling, farm visits, golf, water adventures, and science and arts centers.

[Cumberland Valley Beer Trail](#)



Wolf Brewing

Now, anyone who follows us knows how much we love visiting craft breweries. Ryan frequently does this when out and about in this area. He thought he knew all the options in the area. He was surprised to discover that there are 30 breweries, cideries, distilleries, and wineries on the Cumberland Valley Beer Trail. Of course, it would not be safe to visit much more than a few a day. Well, the Visit Cumberland Website has links to transportation services and local lodging.

They even have a [Bikes and Brews](#) option on their website. Whether you are starting in Shippensburg, Carlisle, West Shore, or Mechanicsburg, they provide information on where to rent a bike and where to stop for brews.

Of the 30 places offered, we definitely have our favorites. We look forward to trying more soon!

- Ever Grain in Camp Hill
- Wolf Brewing Company Mechanicsburg
- Als of Hampden with Pizza Boy Brewing in Enola
- Desperate Times in Carlisle
- Molly Pitcher Brewing Company Carlisle
- Maxies Brewhouse Shippensburg

[Cumberland Valley Ice Cream Trail](#)



Ice cream at the Destinay Dairy Bar

Who doesn't like ice cream on a hot summer day? Even in the winter, kids adore it. The Ice Cream Trail has 19 individual locations. We stopped by the Destinay Dairy Bar, which is also a working farm you can tour. The ice cream was so yummy! Our second ice cream stop was Exquisite Chocolates of Carlisle, which offered fantastic sorbet. Oh, and the gourmet chocolates they offer will make your mouth water.

In the colder months, some of these locations may be closed or have limited hours, so call before you go.

There are some culinary delights to be enjoyed.



Valley Bistro Image from Visit Cumberland Valley Website

Cumberland County, PA, is home to a diverse culinary scene with options that cater to a variety of tastes. For an upscale experience, check out The Barn, nestled in the scenic Allenberry Resort. The Barn offers a farm-to-table dining experience with a menu that emphasizes locally sourced ingredients. We ate here during our stay at the resort.



One13 Social

A popular place in Carlisle is One13 Social, a modern eatery offering a mix of creative American dishes and craft cocktails in a stylish setting. This is where we had dinner in Carlisle this evening, and the food was delicious.

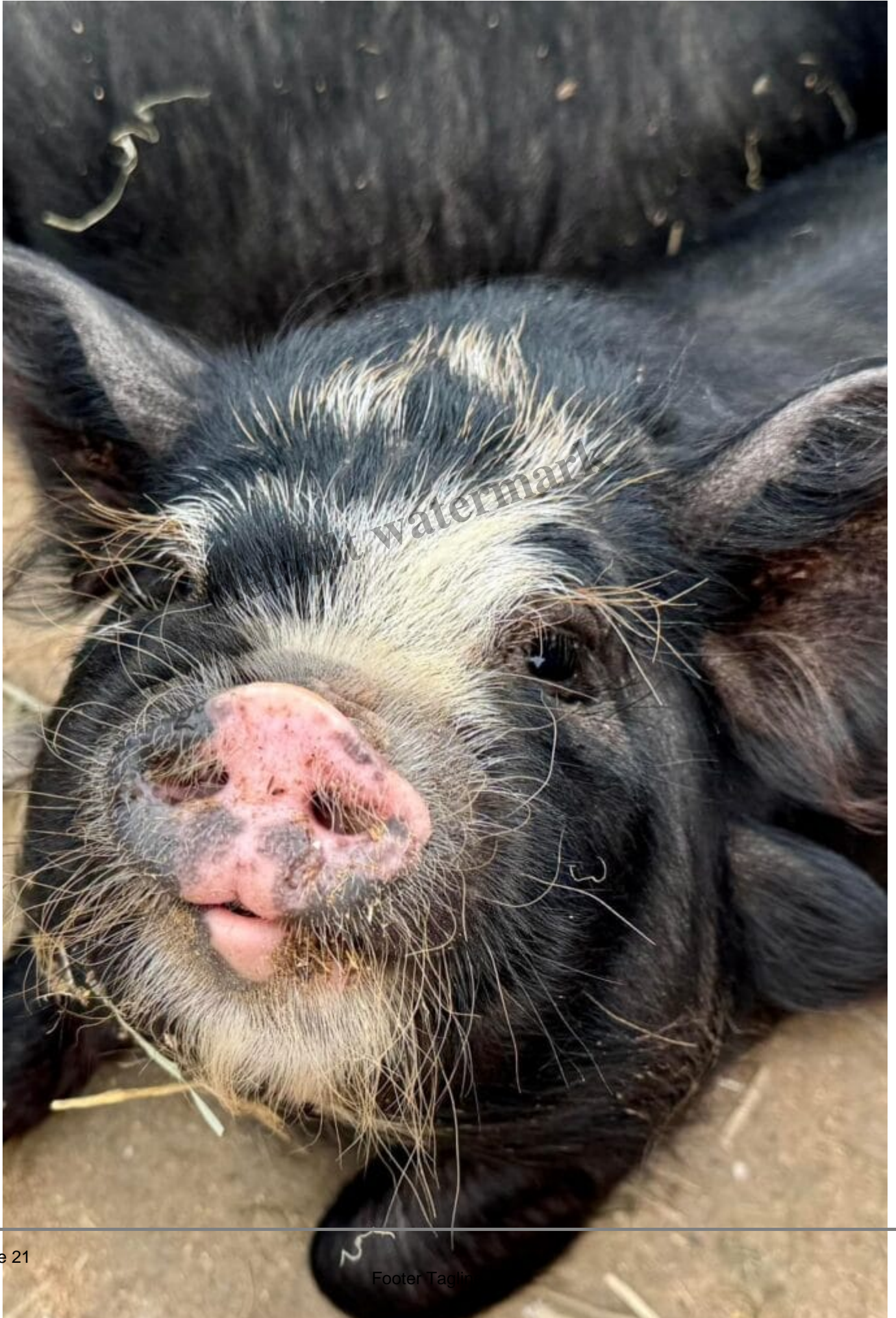
Many of the breweries have excellent pub fare. Ryan is especially fond of the food at Molly Pitcher Brewing, Wolf Brewing, and Pizza-Boy Brewing.

What were our favorites during our visit?

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Welcome to the Army Heritage Trail

"Telling the Army's story,

one Soldier at a time."

Distance: Approximately 3/4 mile





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- The United States Army Heritage and Education Center was likely the highlight of our visit. It was absolutely top-notch and so much fun. They also had an Old Timers baseball game, which was a nice bonus.
- The historic town of Boiling Springs, along with Medical Lake, was beautiful. It also is where the Appalachian Trail passes through
- Wandering downtown Carlisle and exploring its historical buildings
- We enjoyed the Destiny Dairy Bar. The working farm lets you get up close and personal with the working on the farm. They have lots of farm babies, and the piglets are so cute!
- Carlisle Sports Emporium was a massive hit with our kid reporter. There are tons of arcades, miniature golf, batting cages, laser tag, bumper cars, and so much more.
- The Allenberry Resort was simply a beautiful setting. Lots of fly fishermen in the river added to its charm. They had a unique medical spa on the property!
- Cumberland Country Historical Museum in downtown Carlisle was so well done

Get your visitor guide.

Discover the ultimate planning tool for creating an unforgettable escape with the Cumberland Valley Visitors Guide. This comprehensive resource is filled with a treasure trove of information featuring top attractions, local highlights, shopping destinations, culinary experiences, diverse outdoor activities, and so much more! [Follow this link to get your FREE 2024 guide.](#) Plus, stay informed about upcoming events and festivals by subscribing to their newsletter.

If you are already in the area, make your first stop at the Cumberland Valley Visitors Center. Located adjacent to [History on High-The Shop](#) in historic downtown Carlisle, the Visitors Center offers brochures, maps, and guides to help you uncover the exciting, charming, and authentic experiences that Cumberland Valley has to offer.

Where to stay when visiting Cumberland Valley



Allenberry Resort

Cumberland Valley offers a variety of accommodations to suit different preferences and budgets, from charming inns and historic resorts to modern hotels. We recommend one night in Carlisle, as it is a fun city to walk through. For a more peaceful, nature-oriented stay, you can stay at Allenberry Resort or the Fallen Tree Farm Bed and Breakfast.

During our visit, we spent our first night at the Allenberry Resort. This historic resort offers a unique blend of rustic charm and modern amenities that we adored. Set on a picturesque property along the Yellow Breeches Creek, Allenberry features a variety of lodging options, including cottages, lodges, and luxury suites. It's an ideal spot for those looking to relax and enjoy the scenic beauty of the Valley, with on-site dining at The Barn, a spa, and outdoor activities.

The Comfort Suites in downtown Carlisle is located at the heart of the city. The hotel offers spacious suites with modern amenities, including a fitness center and a complimentary breakfast. Its convenient downtown location provides easy access to local restaurants, shops, and attractions. Our stay was

comfortable, and we loved how close it was to everything.

Booking your stay

If you need accommodations in the area, we suggest checking out the links below. To be more centrally located, you can put Carlisle or Mechanicsburg in the search field. For a more rural resort experience, check out the Allenberry Resort in Boiling Springs.

It is important to price out accommodations on various sites. [Expedia](#) is a US-based company, whereas [Booking.com](#) is Europe-based. Not all properties appear on both, so it is ideal to check both out. Our personal first choice is [Booking.com](#). If the establishment has a website, check the price there as well. Click the link below to check out hotels and vacation homes in the area. It may be just the motivation you need to start planning that next grand adventure.

[BOOK NOW](#)

Final Thoughts

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Boiling Springs

Cumberland Valley is a destination that truly has it all. Its natural beauty, outdoor activities, historical significance, and vibrant cultural scene make it a perfect getaway for travelers of all interests. Whether you're seeking adventure, relaxation, or a journey through history, Cumberland Valley promises an unforgettable experience. Pack your bags and get ready to explore this enchanting region—you're sure to fall in love with its charm and allure as we did.

Transparency

We were not paid for our visit, but our hotel rooms and some food costs were covered. Visit Cumberland Valley did provide us with a detailed list of all the places to visit and a suggested itinerary. We controlled our schedule, and no one accompanied or met up with us during our visit. Since Ryan's son was with him at this time, so he came along during our adventure. Since many of the activities were family-focused, we made him an "official kid reporter," and he had a blast giving input.

Want to travel for free? [Check out our blog post on how you can travel for free.](#)

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Cumberland Valley Photo Gallery





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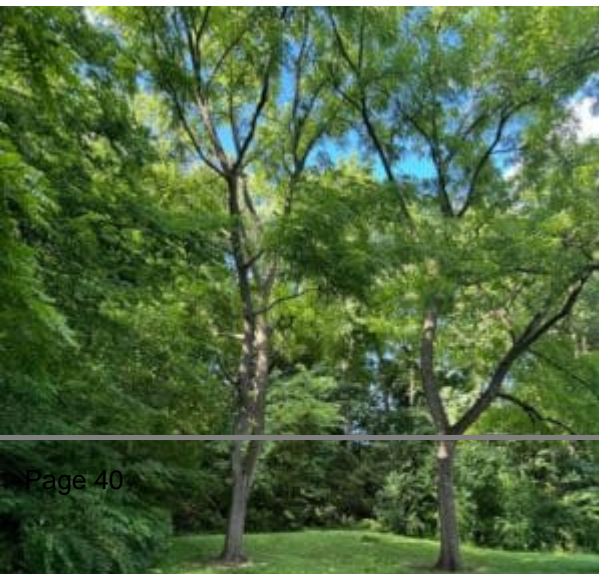
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Wolf Brewing

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