

Who says camp is for kids? Adults can milk cows, canoe

Remember going away to camp? The new friends, campfire cookouts, afternoons swimming in the lake, the gazillion stars in the night sky?

Why should kids have all the fun? With school back in session, it's a perfect time to go off to adult camp to learn something new, try something out or do something you've never done before.

Like milking a cow.

Be a Farmer's Apprentice

Ginny and Don Ranck live on a 118-acre dairy farm in Lancaster County where they've run a bed and breakfast for 42 years. It's nothing for Ginny to serve a full farm breakfast (including pie) to 30-40 people around their old farm table or al fresco on a farm wagon pulled up behind their 1896 farmhouse.

Now you can spend a half-day on the Rancks' farm as an apprentice to learn what life's like down on the farm.

Your chores can range from grooming a calf to feeding goats to quilting a hot pad or digging potatoes and making (and eating) homemade ice cream.

"We ask people what they want to do when they call to reserve a date," Ginny said.

If you arrive early (or stay over in one of their nine rooms, all equipped with alarm clocks), you can help milk the cows at 7: 30 a.m. and then have breakfast. At 9: 30 there's a tour of the farm on a tractor-pulled wagon. Then you get to your chores.

For late risers, there's a similar afternoon option.

When: Any day but Sunday, call to schedule.

Where: Verdant View Farm, 429 Strasburg Rd., Paradise, one mile east of Strasburg on Route 741

Cost: Milking, tour, breakfast, apprenticeship: \$32

Apprenticeship only: \$15

B&B stay (optional) \$79-135/night

Information/reservations: 888-321-8119 www.farmlandfun.com

Paddle Your Own Canoe

The Susquehanna River runs through our lives. But have you ever been on it?

Two daylong Adult Adventure Camps this fall will include cycling, picnicking on the beach and a float down the river from Fort Hunter.

Every Wednesday night through October, you can try your hand at a sunset paddle around City Island or upstream islands.

"We provide the boats, paddles, lifejackets, instructors and the water," says Steve Oliphant, co-owner of Susquehanna Outfitters, which sponsors the camp and tours. They'll also teach novices how to paddle.

"You never know what you'll see out there -- beaver dams, mink, bald eagles, snapping turtles. That's part of what's cool," Oliphant said.

Adult Adventure Camps

When: 9: 30-4: 30, Sept. 17 and Oct. 9

Cost: \$75

Wednesday Night Paddles

When: 6-sunset, Wednesday nights

Cost: \$24 (4 people for \$19 each)

Where: Susquehanna Outfitters, west side of the main parking lot on City Island.

Information/reservations: 503-0066; www.susquehannaoutfitters.com

Cannin' and Jammin'

Preserving fresh, local foods is once again in fashion as people harvest home gardens and shop the area's bountiful farmers markets.

During Kitchen Kettle Village's new hourlong Cannin' and Jammin' tour, you'll don an apron and hairnet and join local farm women in the kitchen to make apple raspberry jelly. You'll go home with a jarful and the know-how to make some in your kitchen.

While you're there, you can taste everything in the Jam and Relish Kitchen shop and decorate one of the 33,000 gingerbread men they bake each year.

When: 3 p.m. Wednesdays

Where: Kitchen Kettle Village, Intercourse

Cost: \$20/person for Cannin' and Jammin', \$1 for the gingerbread man and all the icing you want.

Information/reservations: 800-732-3538 www.kitchenkettle.com

Go for the Speed, Feel the Rush

The fastest creatures on earth are falcons. Master falconer Jack Hubley puts them through their paces during a new 90-minute Hershey program called The Falconry Experience.

Hubley, who many people know as the naturalist on WGAL-TV, takes small groups of visitors out to the falconry field to learn about the birds and the unique sport of falconry (hunting wild game with trained birds of prey).

This is a hands-on (with gloves) experience and you'll learn how to call the birds to your glove. You'll marvel at their speed and agility as they fly fast and low in pursuit of a leather squirrel. And you'll feel the rush.

When: 9 and 11: 30 a.m. and 2 p.m., Saturday and Sunday through October

Where: Meet at ZooAmerica in Hershey.

Cost: \$85

Information/reservations: 533-3900

www.hersheypa.com/things_to_do/falconry.php

Meet the Neighbors

A new VIP -- visit in person -- tour in Lancaster is a good way to meet and get to know some of our Amish neighbors.

Traveling with a small group of up to 14 people, you'll visit an Amish farm at milking time and stop at one of their cottage industries. Then you'll go to an Amish home to sit and chat awhile.

"These tours let people talk with each other as fellow human beings," said Brad Igou, president of the Amish Experience.

"They show the Amish as people, not just an attraction," said one visitor after spending an evening talking about families, jobs and lives with the Eshes and the Fishers.

You might go early. Jacob's Choice, a 40-minute multi-media production about an Amish family's effort to preserve a lifestyle and a culture, is touchingly told in the Amish Experience F/X Theater. There are also tours through an Amish house.

When: VIP Tours, 5-8 p.m., Monday through Friday through October.

Jacob's Choice presented hourly.

Where: Amish Experience, 3121 Old Philadelphia Pike, Route 340), Bird-in-Hand, 17505-0414

Cost: VIP Tour \$44, F/X Theater \$10, Theater/Amish house combination \$16

Information/reservations: 768-3600, ext. 210,

www.amishexperience.com

Get to Know the Grape

If you've always wanted to know more about wine, consider Wine Camp, the brainchild of two Lancaster County innkeepers, Carl Kosko and Jan Garrabrandt.

Over three days, you'll explore vineyards, learn what to taste for, understand how to pair foods with wines and visit eight wineries in eastern and central Pennsylvania, each of which looks at a different aspect of the business.

If it's too late to arrange for this year's wine camp, mark your calendar; the dates are set for next year.

Kosko and Garrabrandt, both foodies with a passion to share, hold other culinary tours as well. On Nov. 14, they'll have a daylong Wine and Cheese Tour to a cheesemaker and wineries, followed by dinner in a Lancaster restaurant.

When: Sept. 13-16 (and Sept. 12-14, 2010)

Where: Harvest Moon B&B (New Holland) and Artist's Inn (Terre Hill)

Cost: Three-day Wine Camp, \$395. One-day Wine and Cheese Tour, \$175. B&B stay is additional.

Reservations/information: 888-824-3763 or 888-999-4479

www.lancastercountytours.com

Segue to **Segway**

A good way to prolong summer is to hop on a two-wheeled, self-balancing vehicle called a **Segway**. They are easy to learn and fun to ride.

Red Rose Seg Tours takes you on an entertaining hour-long glide down downtown Lancaster's alleys and sidewalks, listening to tales of the city's colorful past.

Segway of Hershey's tour tells Milton Hershey's story while gliding around Hotel Hershey, then sets off into the woods on Segways equipped with all-terrain tires.

Both companies provide ample time for training and practice before their tours. Both take six people at a time and require sneakers, no flip-flops.

Red Rose Seg Tours

When: 10: 30, 1: 30 & 5: 30 Wednesday-Sunday through October

Where: 305 N. Queen Street Lancaster

Cost: \$65 for 90-minute tour

Information/reservations: 877-393-8345, www.redrosegstours.com

Segway of Hershey

When: 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Where: Sports complex behind Hotel Hershey

Cost: \$90 for 2-hour tour

Information/reservations: 668-1641, www.segwayofhershey.com

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