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PLAY HARD, REST EASY™ NEW ENGLAND

Title Information:

This unique soft-adventure travel guidebook provides everything the reader needs to explore and enjoy one of 11 four-season vacation destinations or regions in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. The guidebook reviews select accommodations, dining establishments, local points of interest and provides a rundown of the best hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing and other active pursuits in each of the destinations. Digitally drawn maps and compelling black and white photographs complement the straightforward and occasionally witty editorial.

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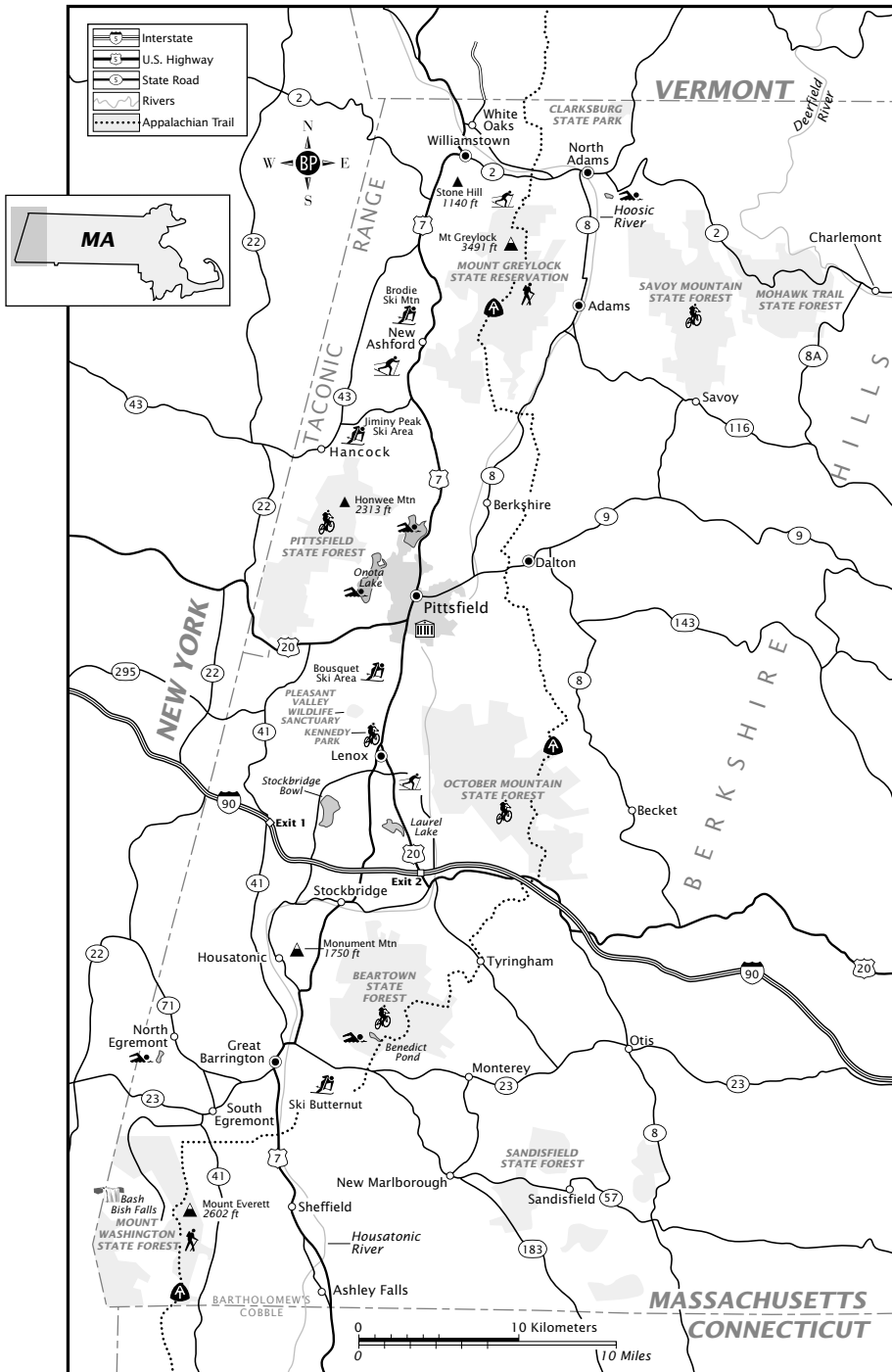
The Ultimate Active Getaway Guide

by Malcolm W. Campbell

What you'll find in the New England edition:

1. The Litchfield Hills, Connecticut
2. The Berkshires, Massachusetts
3. The Southern Green Mountains, Vermont
4. Woodstock, Vermont
5. Middlebury & Addison County, Vermont
6. The Mad River Valley, Vermont
7. Stowe, Vermont
8. The Monadnock Region, New Hampshire
9. The White Mountains, New Hampshire
10. Camden, Maine
11. Bar Harbor & Mount Desert Island, Maine





The Berkshires, Massachusetts

Including Lenox, Stockbridge,
Great Barrington, and Williamstown

Tucked into Massachusetts' westernmost reaches, Berkshire County is a green spread of hills and valleys that borders Connecticut to the south, Vermont to the north, and New York to the west. As if folded into the earth, the county is pressed low against New York's Taconic Mountains to the west and sheltered from the east by the Hoosacs and the high Berkshire plateau—as if some great vacation-maker in the sky foresaw your need to feel truly away from it all. Here, skyscrapers, stultified city air, and the pressing daily grind exist only as memories from a distant land. Travel to Berkshire County and what you're coming to is lush, rolling hills, dense calming forests, and fast moving streams with picturesque waterfalls.

But first, let's put a name to it all. To clarify—the Berkshires, Berkshire County, and the Berkshire Hills, all refer to the same place. The Berkshire Hills are actually foothills to New York's Taconic Mountains—though try telling hikers atop 2,602-foot Mount Everett that they've just climbed a *hill*. The region is scattered with historic industrial towns, resort villages, and farms—all along the Housatonic River, which snakes through the center of the county from the flanks of 3,491-foot Mount Greylock in the northwest corner of the state through Connecticut to the Long Island Sound.

The forests of Berkshire County bear little resemblance to the bearded, old-growth that first greeted Europeans when they settled southern Berkshire County in the 1730s. As settlement spread northward along the Housatonic River, so too did industry. Iron smelters, paper mills, and the railroads cut into the old-growth forests, using the wood for fuel and the pulp for paper. By 1900, more than 80 percent of the county's land was bare, and paper and textile mill waste flowed freely down the Housatonic. Without the forests as a natural

resource, industry moved westward, leaving numerous mills and warehouses abandoned. (Many of those buildings now house art galleries, restaurants, museums, and Internet start-ups.) With the aid of governmental protection, Mother Nature stepped in to clean up the mess. Today, second-growth hardwoods comprise nearly 85 percent of Berkshire County.

It was in the mid 1800s that the Berkshires saw the first significant influx of what would come to define the region—summer travelers. Drawn by the cool, clear mountain air and the incredible countryside views, artists and writers—Hudson River School painter Thomas Cole and writers Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, and Herman Melville among them—settled in the Berkshires to paint and write. In the poem “Lines on Revisiting the Country,” William Cullen Bryant wrote:

*Here I have 'scaped the city's stifling heat,
Its horrid sounds, and its polluted air;
And where the season's milder fervors beat,
And gales, that sweep the forest borders, bear
The song of bird, and sound of running stream,
Am come awhile to wander and to dream.*

Unwittingly, the artists were writing the region's first tourism ad copy. In no time, the Berkshires became the talk of the well-to-do in New York and Boston. The stage was set for the massive summer migrations of blue-bloods.

By 1900, Lenox had earned the nickname *inland Newport* because of an extensive social calendar and the growing number of mansions, each with sprawling estates. The nation's wealthiest families—the Vanderbilts, Carnegies, Westinghouses, and Proctors, to name a few—packed their china, linens, and servants to spend summers in their *cottages*.



*The view from the summit of Mount Everett
in south Berkshire County*

But the grand party was headed for an Alka Seltzer. The Great Depression, World War I, and the initiation of the federal income tax levied a sobering toll on the wealth that fueled Lenox's good times. Though the fête fizzled, many of the mansions remain as lavish party favors. Some are preserved today as historic sites (Edith Wharton's palatial The Mount and Joseph Hodges Choates' Naumkeag), as spas (Bellafontaine, now Canyon Ranch), and as hotels or inns (Blantyre, Wheatleigh, and the Gateways Inn). For a look inside many of these homes, look for Carole Owens' *The Berkshire Cottages, A Vanishing Era* in any Berkshire County bookstore.

Today, the same characteristics that drew 19th-century artists and upper-crust society to the Berkshires—clean mountain air, breathtaking countryside vistas, and numerous outdoor recreation opportunities—continue to attract active travelers year round. With more than 100,000 acres preserved in state forests or parks, you can hike, bike, canoe, ski, or snowshoe your way through the splendor. And if you like your outdoor fun served with a healthy side of classical music, modern dance, literary history, or theater—get thee to the Berkshires. Short of traveling to New York or Boston, you can't beat the Berkshire Hills for live music, theater, and dance.

Every July and August, the international spotlight shines on Lenox and the 200-acre estate of Tanglewood, where the Boston Symphony Orchestra plays outdoors before festive crowds of picnickers, people-watchers, and celebrities. On par with such international arts festivals as New Orleans' Jazz Fest or the Cannes Film Festival, the Tanglewood Music Festival attracts more than 300,000 music lovers, all jamming to the tunes of Mozart, Bach, and other wig-wearing musical wunderkinds over the festival's eight-week stretch. For culture seekers, Tanglewood is just the beginning. The festival is but one of six annual summer arts festivals for theatre, dance, chamber music, and more.

In the Berkshires, playing hard and resting easy exist in symbiotic balance. The destination invites active travelers to sweat and wash clean, build an appetite and sumptuously satisfy it, hear truth in Mozart only to celebrate the echo in nature's silence.

The Way Around

Southern Berkshire County, bordered by Connecticut's Litchfield Hills to the south and New York's Taconic Mountains to the west, is a dense tangle of forest and winding country roads with townships so small and discreet you'll pass through them and never know you did. Many seasoned Berkshire travelers choose to stay in the southwest corner of the state to avoid the Tanglewood season fanfare. The commercial center of the region, **Great Barrington**, is too large to be described as quaint, but the town's natural beauty and convenient location have made it a favorite summer-home spot for more than 100 years. A former mill town built on the banks of the Housatonic River, Great Barrington has its blemishes—strip shopping centers and fast food restaurants—but they're juxtaposed with stately homes, a bustling business district on Main Street, and numerous trendy restaurants and upscale accommodations.

The remaining prominent villages include **Sheffield**, the region's oldest town and epicenter for antique shopping, and **North** and **South Egremont**, in the western reaches of the county. All three villages have preserved much of their historic gentility and quiet country atmosphere, yet lure travelers with fine dining, inns, and B&Bs.



Williamstown's Spring Street

Moving north into central Berkshire County, **Lenox** takes center stage as the busiest of the resort villages. Its historic village is set off from the heavily trafficked main artery of Route 7 and consists of wide streets with grand houses shaded by old-growth trees. This was the epicenter of the mansion-building era, and you can tour the streets of Lenox and find many of the grand summer cottages set back across expansive front lawns. True to its primary economy, most of these houses have elegantly painted signs identifying them as inns, B&Bs, or restaurants. • **Stockbridge** shares many of Lenox's qualities, on a smaller scale. Its broad main street is Norman Rockwell country, the scene for his painting

Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas. The famous Red Lion Inn, immortalized in the painting, sits graciously on the corner of Main Street and Route 7. In general, Stockbridge is quieter than Lenox—except, of course, when the Norman Rockwell Museum is open.

On the northern end of central Berkshire County, **Pittsfield** is an industrial and commercial city with shopping malls, Wal-Mart, and a complete array of fast food and chain restaurants. • **Williamstown**, in the northwest corner of Berkshire County, promotes itself as *the village beautiful*, and the moniker is right on. The small town is home to distinguished Williams College, a private school founded in 1793, and its 450-acre campus that encompasses much of the village. The perfectly manicured grounds and stately buildings along Main Street invite exploring by foot. Spring Street is the primary retail street, filled

with coffee shops, restaurants, and retailers catering to students who flood the sidewalks between classes. There's also plenty of upscale dining and lodging within and on the out-

The Muse in Mother Nature

American literary history owes much to the tranquil lakes and mountains of Berkshire County, where the unspoiled beauty nurtured the literary imaginations of many great writers. Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote *The House of Seven Gables* while living in a small red cabin in Stockbridge, Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick* in Pittsfield, and Edith Wharton wrote *The House of Mirth* in Lenox. Other writers who took creative inspiration from the Berkshires include Oliver Wendell Holmes, William Cullen Bryant, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.



Mount Greylock's shape inspired Melville to write *Moby Dick*.

skirts of town. Natural beauty, including Mount Greylock, which towers above the area, surrounds Williamstown in every direction. • Just east of Williamstown, **North Adams**, a.k.a. *the gateway to Mount Greylock*, is Massachusetts' smallest city and is undergoing a renaissance. Once a thriving textile mill and factory town, the city suffered setbacks when the textile industry moved south and several large employers shut down operations. Until recently, factory and mill buildings sat vacant, but the opening in 1999 of the largest contemporary art museum in the world, the **Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art**, in what was a former factory complex, is building tourism as an industry and encouraging the opening of lodging and dining businesses.

The roadway spine of the region is **Route 7**, which runs through the center of Berkshire County from Connecticut to Vermont. Ever expedient, the highway is not always scenic, especially between Lenox and Pittsfield where Route 7/20 widens to four lanes. Route 7 provides access to most of the activities listed in this chapter. • **Route 23** runs east to west in southern Berkshire County from South Egremont through Great Barrington to Monterey. From Pittsfield, **Route 9** runs east to Dalton and **Route 20** runs west to New York State. • In the northwest corner, **Route 2**, also known as **the Mohawk Trail**, runs east from Williamstown through North Adams, over the Hoosac Mountains and all the way across the state to Boston.

Weather

Summer temperatures in the Berkshires linger in the mid 70s on average, though it's not unusual to hit a stretch of 90°F days in August; nor is it unusual for the passing thunderstorm to drop torrents without much warning. (On a mountain, after a drenching rain, you can cool off in a hurry, so always carry a synthetic or natural fiber like Patagonia's Capilene® or wool that retains warmth when wet.) Summer evenings are often cool enough to wear a sweater. Winter temperatures average in the lower 20s during the day, and there's typically some snow cover from New Year's to March. The best hiking and biking weather comes each fall, between September and late October, when crisp, clear days accentuate the brilliance of the foliage.



A surprise April snow shower at Petersburgh Pass

Getting to the Berkshires

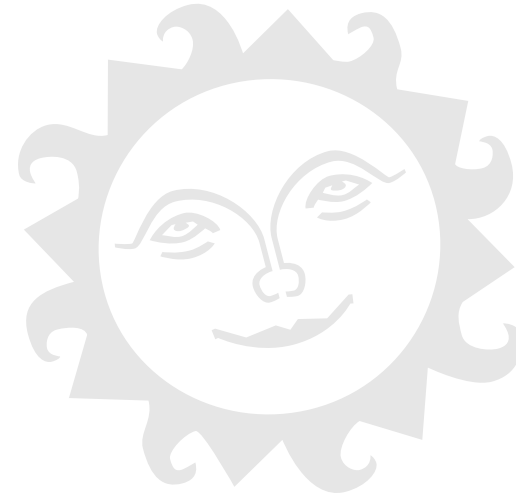
✈ **By Air:** Air travelers use either Albany, NY's **Albany County Airport** (518) 869-3154, the closest major airport to Berkshire County; or Hartford, CT's **Bradley International Airport** (860) 292-2000. Both airports offer rental cars and ground transportation.

- By Train:** **AMTRAK** serves Pittsfield from Boston and provides connecting service from New York City's Penn Station. **Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)** train/bus service runs weekend on the Harlem Line from New York's Grand Central Station to Wassaic Station, connecting with bus service to Great Barrington.
- By Bus:** **Bonanza Bus Lines**, 1-888-751-8800, operates regularly scheduled passenger service from New York City and Boston to Lenox, Lee, and Pittsfield, seven days a week. For schedules, rates, and ticket information, visit www.bonanzabus.com. **Peter Pan Bus Lines**, 1-800-343-9999, also operates regular passenger service from New York City and Boston to the Berkshires. Visit www.peterpan-bus.com to view schedules, rate, and ticket information.
- By Car:** **From Boston**, take Interstate 90 (Mass Pike) west to Exit 2 at Lee, then follow signs south to Great Barrington. **From New York City**, take the Henry Hudson Parkway to the Saw Mill River Parkway north to the Taconic River Parkway north. Take the Southern Berkshire/Route 23 exit and follow Route 23 east to Great Barrington and Route 7.

Happiness in this world, if it comes at all, comes indirectly as a dividend. Make it the object of pursuit, and it leads us on a wild-goose chase and is never attained.

– Nathaniel Hawthorne

P l a y H a r d



W i d e O p e n

With development at a minimum and much of the land in south Berkshire County preserved by the state, outdoor opportunities await at every turn, far away from two-lane blacktops. Multi-sport meccas include the rugged land in **Mount Washington State Forest**, Mount Washington (413) 528-0330, home of Mount Everett and **Bash Bish Falls**, a much-photographed waterfall that plunges 200 feet down a gorge into a deep, clear pool. • **Beartown State Forest**, Monterey, (413) 528-0904, hosts sections of the **Appalachian Trail** on its 11,000 acres, as well as refreshing **Benedict Pond**. • Near Lenox off Route 20, **October Mountain State Forest**, Lee, (413) 243-1178, sports 15,710 acres of forest, ponds, and peaks. • **Pittsfield State Forest**, Pittsfield, (413) 442- 8992, features the highest natural water body in Massachusetts, **Berry Pond**, at 2,150 feet. State parks and forests typically have trail maps available at the park entrance or headquarters. • Right in Lenox off Route 7A, **Kennedy Park** offers miles of

biking, hiking, and skiing trails within its 500 acres. The park once served as the grounds of the grand Aspinwall Hotel, built in 1902. The hotel burned to the ground in 1931, and the property sat unused until the town of Lenox acquired it in 1957. You can enter the park off Main Street in Lenox or park behind **The Arcadian Shop** (see *Local Outdoor Advice*) on Route 7 and access the trails there. The Arcadian Shop provides free maps of Kennedy Park.

In north Berkshire County, the major, multi-sport playgrounds include 12,500-acre **Mount Greylock State Reservation**, Lanesborough, (413) 499-4262, home to the state's highest peak, 3,491-foot **Mount Greylock**, and 45 miles of excellent hiking, Nordic skiing, and snowshoeing trails • 11,000-acre **Savoy Mountain State Forest**, North Adams, (413) 663-8469, with two rugged peaks—2,566-foot Spruce Hill and 2,506-foot Borden Mountain—and **North Pond** and **South Pond**, twin lakes perfect for swimming and paddling • **Clarksburg State Forest**, North Adams, (413) 663-8469, with 3,400-heavily forested acres beside the Hoosic River, ideal for hiking, skiing, swimming, and canoeing • **Hopkins Memorial Forest**, Williamstown, (413) 597-2346, with 2,425 acres and 15 miles

of hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing trails popular with Williams students.

Dayhiking

Hiking is the signature summer activity in the Berkshires, despite the low elevations. Mount Everett, the tallest peak in the central and southern Berkshires, stands at a

mere 2,602 feet and Mount Greylock, a bit of an anomaly, reaches to a locally impressive 3,491 feet. Even so, you can still find climbs that will have your thighs crying *no más*. In general, expect forested climbs along or over rocky streambeds to open summits for views. Between spring and late summer, count on black flies and mosquitoes keeping you company—plan to keep moving or wear bug dope.

Monument Mountain, just 3.5 miles north of Great Barrington on Route 7, has an easy 2.6-mile loop to the rock and pine summit where you can spread a picnic and take in the excellent views for minimal effort. Follow the white-blazed North Trail to the right from the parking area and continue to the intersection with the summit trail. Return to the white-blazes to complete the loop, keeping left at each junction.

Another easy hike is around **Benedict Pond** in **Beartown State Forest**. This 2.2-mile loop rounds the peaceful, 35-acre pond over a rock- and root-strewn path. You'll pass beaver dams and have the option of climbing the Appalachian Trail (AT) for a half mile to bag some views—the AT adds one mile to the hike. From the parking area, head right around the pond on the well-worn path. The white-blazed AT joins the path before parting to the right and climbing the hill to a ridge where there's a rocky overlook with excellent views of the surrounding peaks, including Mount Everett. From the overlook, backtrack on

the AT to the path around Benedict Pond, turn right and continue around the lake. Keep left at each intersection. Just short of the parking area, you'll pass the swimming beach, a welcome opportunity to wash away sweat and bug spray. To get to the trailhead, take Route 23 east from Great Barrington for five miles and then turn left on Blue Hill Road. Continue on Blue Hill Road for a couple miles to Benedict Pond Road, on the right, marked with a sign to Beartown State Forest. Take Benedict Pond Road for a half mile to the day-use parking area. In the summer, the state forest charges a nominal day-use fee.

Mount Washington State Forest is the site of one of the prettiest summer hikes in the Berkshires: the moderate, 4.5-mile out-and-back to the summit of **Alander Mountain**. Set aside roughly four hours and pack a picnic for this hike through stunning flower-filled meadows, endless stands of pink-flowering mountain laurel, various woodlands, and past streams and rapids. Alander's summit (2,239 feet) affords some of the Berkshire's finest views, including the Catskills to the west, the Adirondacks to the northwest, and Mount Greylock due north. To get to the trailhead, take Route 23 south from South Egremont to Route 41. Take Route 41 south for 0.1 miles and then take a right onto Mount Washington Road. Follow the paved road at each intersection for 9.1 miles to the Mount Washington State Forest headquarters. Park beyond the building. (Note the street name change. Mount Washington Road becomes Earl Street.) Follow the blue-blazed trail west from the parking lot to the white-blazed summit trail, located just after passing a small cabin. Return by the same route.

If you're looking for a hike that requires preparing both mentally (your mantra: *I think I can*) and physically (eat breakfast, stretch, and tote plenty of water), head to **Mount Everett State Reservation** to hike 2,602-foot **Mount Everett**. This strenuous 5.4-mile out-and-back to the Berkshire's second-highest summit rewards you with handsome views of New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. To get to the trailhead, take Route 23 south from Great Barrington to Route 41, and then take Route 41 south for approximately five miles. Watch for a small parking lot on the right—just short of Salisbury Road—where you'll find a kiosk and the trailhead. From the parking lot, follow the blue-blazed trail to the white-blazed AT, which leads to the summit. Return by retracing your steps.

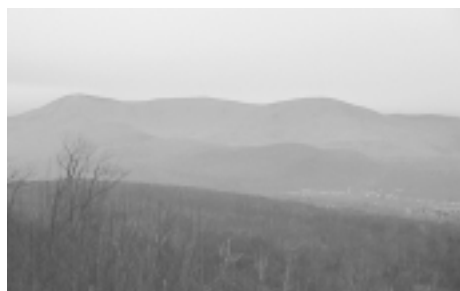
Push the envelope even further and tackle Massachusetts's highest peak, 3,491-foot **Mount Greylock**, via the 8.0-mile (roundtrip) **Hopper Trail** for views of up to 100 miles on a clear day. Every notable mountain has its quintessential route to the top, and this 4.0-mile

A Monumental Encounter

Monument Mountain has the distinction of being the place where American literary heavyweights Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville first met. In 1850, a publisher arranged a dayhike with Hawthorne, Melville and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Though not as romantically rugged as you might imagine—the outing required servants and a wagonload of champagne and food—the hike ignited a friendship that would profoundly affect both men's writings. Melville eventually dedicated his masterpiece *Moby Dick* to Hawthorne.



Summit of 1,735-foot Monument Mountain



At 3,491 feet, Mount Greylock is the state's highest peak.

climb through hardwood forest is Greylock's. To get to the trailhead from Williamstown, take Water Street off Main Street (Route 2) and drive 2.5 miles to Mount Hope Park and Hopper Road. Go left on Hopper and stay left at the intersection with Potter Road. The road turns to gravel and ends at a small farm. Park here and walk through the gates. The sign-

marked trailhead is beyond the gate. Follow the blue blazes until just below the summit where the trail joins the white-blazed AT, which you take to the summit. Because Greylock's peak is accessible by car, expect to share your views with tourists, who'll look at you and wonder what all the sweat is about.

Fortunately, euphoria from your endorphin rush—or the refreshments available at Bascom Lodge—will keep any resentment of automobile-climbers at bay. If your legs are willing, climb the steps of the 92-foot-high War Veteran's Memorial Tower. Built in 1932 and restored in 1975, the tower is open daily during the summer and fall. Retrace your steps to return to your car, seemingly another world away—though thankfully downhill.

Other excellent hikes include the two-mile trail at **Tyringham Cobble**, in Tyringham, which loops to the summit of Cobble Hill, 400 feet above the valley floor, and offers excellent photo opportunities of rural Massachusetts and tiny Tyringham Village below. From Great Barrington, take Route 7 north to Route 102 east to Lee. Just short of I-90 (the Mass Pike), turn right onto Tyringham Road. This narrow road passes through Tyringham Village. At the center of town, take a right on Jerusalem Road. Park in the parking area just after the barn marked by The Trustees of Reservations sign. A number of well-marked trails wind through **Bartholomew's Cobble**, a National Natural Landmark area of limestone hills that jut out along the Housatonic River. An incredible variety of

ferns and over 500 species of wildflowers grow here. You can combine your hike with a trip to the adjacent, historic Colonel John Ashley home. From Great Barrington, head south on Route 7 to Sheffield and Route 7A where you'll continue south for 0.5 miles. Turn right on Rannapo Road and then right on unpaved Weatogue Road. Parking is 0.1 miles on the left. The Trustees of the Reservations charge a nominal admission fee.

Want a great place to chill out after visiting the Norman Rockwell Museum? Head to Stockbridge's natural wonder, **Ice Glen**. Named for the microclimate that exists in this ravine—which sometimes lasts well into summer—Ice Glen is testament to glacial carving. Here, you'll find moss-strewn boulders as large as houses perched atop one another—the place feels like a movie set. From the Red Lion in the center of Stockbridge, take Route 7 south to



A Rorschach Rock at Tyringham Cobble

Park Street, on the left. There's a small parking area at the end of Park Street. From the parking area, cross the bridge over the Housatonic River, cross the train tracks and head up into the woods. When you come to an intersection, the trail to the right is the half-mile route to Ice Glen; the trail to the left is a 0.7-mile route to a fire tower.

Don't miss **Bash Bish Falls** in **Mount Washington State Forest**, where water from Bash Bish Brook tumbles 200 feet, ending in a *Fantasy Island*-like pool at the bottom. A steep, quarter-mile descent from the Upper Falls parking area builds excitement as the sound of the plunging water gets closer. Though tempting, swimming in Bash Bish Falls is forbidden. Instead, position yourself on a rock to cool off in the falls' water spray.



Look but don't swim at Bash Bish Falls.

From South Egremont, take Route 23 south to Route 41. Take Route 41 south for 0.1 miles, then a right turn onto Mount Washington Road. Follow the paved road to the tiny town of Mount Washington. At the church, take a right onto Falls Road. This winding road will bring you to the Upper Parking Lot on the left.

In Williamstown, you can score a great view of downtown along the 1.5-mile loop through a hardwood forest up **Stone Hill**. From town, take South Street to the Clark Art Institute on the right and park behind the white marble building on the far-left side of the lot. The trail—used by people and horses, so watch where you step—starts from the south side of the parking lot, climbs and then crosses a gravel road to a trail intersection, where you turn right. Just over a short bump, you'll encounter a memorial—a stone seat—erected in honor of Williams College professor George Wahl, whom local townspeople suspected was a German spy during World War I. The suspicions were unfounded, and the town built the seat as an apologetic gesture. The views used to be spectacular here, but trees obstruct them now. To catch the vistas, head straight from the seat, across the field ahead, into a shallow stand of woods, and back through open fields. Follow the trail down and then up to a ridge with rewarding views. You'll see the Clark Art Institute, downtown Williamstown, and the surrounding countryside, including the Dome, a granite summit in Vermont. The path continues to the parking area.



The stone seat on Stone Hill in Williamstown

Also, check out **Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary**, Lenox, (413) 637-0320, with seven miles of exceptionally well-marked trails through 1,300 acres. **Pittsfield State Forest**, Pittsfield, (413) 442-8992, offers up the 3.5-mile **Honwee Mountain Loop** and the 4.5-mile **Parker Brook Loop**. In Williamstown, **Hopkins Memorial Forest** prints a free map to its 2,425 acres and includes trail mileage and descriptions. Pick up a copy at the entrance, reached by taking Route 7 north to Buckley Street, on the left, which you take to the visitor center. Also in Williamstown, the 3.2-mile out-and-back up **Pine Cobble** is popular with Williams students because it offers a broad view of the Hoosic River Valley from an overlook of exposed quartzite bedrock. From town, take Cole Avenue over the Hoosic River, right onto North Hoosac Road, and then left onto Pine Cobble Road to the parking area on the left. Swing by the Mountain Goat (see *Local Outdoor Advice*) on Water Street in Williamstown to ask about the various hikes along the **Taconic Crest Trail**. Finally, the **Appalachian Trail** works its way through the southwest corner of Massachusetts en route to Vermont, and many spur trails allow you to create loops along sections of the trail.

Mountain Biking

Mountain bikers can set out from the minuscule town of **Mount Washington** south on East Street and find several trails crisscrossing the area. A much greater variety of singletrack and forest roads awaits in the nearly 11,000 acres of **Beartown State Forest**, Monterey, (413) 528-0904. Well-marked trails, like **The Bridle Path** and the **Beebe Trail**, allow you to explore without much dismounting or confusion. Similarly, Lenox's 500-acre **Kennedy Park** offers screaming singletracks and wide, well-groomed paths that are easily navigated by using the trail signs and the complimentary map from **The Arcadian Shop** (see *Local Outdoor Advice*). Access the park by riding out Main Street from the center of town and turning left into the park, or from the parking area behind The Arcadian Shop on Route 7. For an easy-going ride, follow the **Main Trail** (also called the T.F. Coakley Trail) in Kennedy Park toward the Reservoir to connect with Reservoir Road and a circuit of dirt roads around the base of **Lenox Mountain** and the **Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary**. These dirt roads are safe and fun to explore. You can also stay within Kennedy Park, leaving the wide Main Trail to sample some of the more challenging trails—and then simply back-track or ride a loop back to the Main Trail. **Pittsfield State Forest**, Pittsfield, (413) 442-8992, affords mountain bikers some exhilarating and challenging rides along the Taconic Ridge via the **Taconic Skyline Trail**. If you're not interested in leaving the paved path, you can get a thigh-crunching workout riding the park's **Circuit Road** up to and around Berry Pond (2,150 feet). To get to the park from Lenox, take Route 7/20 north and then turn left (west) onto Route 20; follow signs to the state forest. The park charges a nominal day-use fee in season. Gargantuan **October Mountain State Forest**, Lee, (413) 243-1778, puts the "mountain" in mountain biking with steep elevation changes on many of the bike trails through its 16,000 acres. Check with a local bike store on current trail con-



ditions because the paths can get quite wet. Once there, pick up a park map at the forest's entrance. To get there from Lenox, take Walker Street south to Willow Hill Road and turn left to drive to the park headquarters.

In north Berkshire County, numerous dirt roads provide miles of great mountain biking. One of the better rides is on **White Oaks Road**, which turns to dirt after crossing into Vermont and provides access to an extensive area of mountain bike routes known to local riders as **White Oaks**. (Note that much of this area is on private land, so be respectful and be sure to heed posted signs.) From Williamstown, take Cole Avenue across the Hoosic River and railroad tracks, and then turn left on North Hoosac Road. Veer right onto Bridges Road, and then turn right onto White Oaks Road. To build your quads, head up **Bee Hill Road** from Route 2/7. The dirt road passes pretty homes and farmland to reconnect with Route 2. The road used to continue across Route 2 to connect with Berlin Mountain Road, but it's closed to automobiles—which makes it great for you! To get started, ride Route 2/7 south from Williamstown and look for Bee Hill Road on the right. **Northwest Hill Road** is another great ride just outside of Williamstown. Take Route 7 north to Buckley Street on the left and ride to the end, bear right past the Hopkins Memorial Forest and continue for great pedaling through stunning countryside.

Mountain bikers can also ride through the pastures at **Stone Hill** high above the Clark Art Institute, reached by taking South Street from town to the museum and riding to the back of the parking lot. You're not allowed to ride the trails in the woods here, but you're welcome to ride **Stone Hill Road**. The **Taconic Crest Trail**, a hiking trail that passes west of Williamstown and skirts the New York/Massachusetts border, is open to mountain bikers. To get there, follow Route 2 from town (it veers off from Route 7) to the parking area marked by a sign. Follow signs to ride south on the trail, since mountain bikes are not allowed on the trail to the north. A number of trails are open to mountain

bikes in the **Mount Greylock State Reservation**, Lanesborough, (413) 499-4262, including the steep **Stony Ledge Trail**, the **Bellows Pipe Trail** and **Bellows Pipe Extension**, and the **Cheshire Harbor Trail**. (Note that no bikes are allowed on the Appalachian Trail.) Call the park for a trail map.

🚲 You can also head to **Savoy Mountain State Forest**, North Adams, (413) 663-8469, where there are trailheads off Central Shaft Road and off New State Road, as well as an extensive network of unpaved roads and horse trails to follow. Call the state park for a trail map. You can also ascend a series of steep switchbacks to **Balanced Rock**, a huge glacial erratic that sits on the edge of a ledge, and continue along the ridge on doubletrack, past ponds and a cemetery until you reach a fire tower. 🚲 If you're looking for a commercial mountain biking option, purchase an all-day lift and trail pass to ride roughly 15 trails at **Jiminy Peak**, (413) 738-5500, a downhill ski area in Hancock off Route 43.

Bike Rentals

The Arcadian Shop 91 Pittsfield-Lenox Road (Route 7/20), Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-3010 or 1-800-239-3391, www.arcadian.com; **Berkshire Bike & Blade**, 326 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington, ☎ (413) 528-5555, www.bikeandblade.com; **Mean Wheels Bike Shop**, 57A Housatonic Street, Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-0644; **The Mountain Goat**, 130 Water Street, Williamstown, ☎ (413) 458-8445, www.allureoutfitters.com; **Plaine's Bike Ski Snowboard**, 55 West Housatonic Street, Pittsfield, ☎ (413) 499-0294, www.plaines.com.

Road Biking

🚲 The roads of south Berkshire County offer great pedaling through dense forests, along country pastures, and past beautiful old farms. Traffic, for the most part, is sparse and easy going, but you should always be on the lookout for drivers who aren't expecting you. Remember where you are: the Berkshire Hills. In the southwest corner of the county, you'll encounter roads named **Hillsdale**, **Breezy Hill**, **Baldwin Hill**, and **Locust Hill**. If it's been some time since you've mounted a bike, consider selecting your sauna location prior to heading out, for motivation. (See *Kick Back*.) You'll enjoy just about any road other than **Route 7**. 🗺 For suggested routes, pick up a copy of the **Western Massachusetts Bicycle and Road Map** published by Rubel BikeMaps. Available at most bike and book stores, this handy map lists recommended cycling roads and paths, mountain biking trails, swimming holes, picnic spots, and much more. There are also good roads to ride in the central portion of Berkshire County (see the map), but in general, automobile traffic is more intense and the pace less enjoyable for rolling along.

🚲 Farther north, the roads are once again less crowded. Great rides include the 10-mile **Five Corners loop** around Williamstown, which follows Route 2 east from Field Park,



turns right on Water Street/Route 43 and comes to the intersection with Route 7, which you ride north back into Williamstown. 🚲 Not for the lily-livered (nor jelly-bellied), the ascent up **Mount Greylock** is a serious climb and wicked descent, but well worth the effort. This 35-mile loop starts east on Route 2 from Williamstown. Turn right on Luce Road and keep to the left as the road becomes Pattison Road. You'll ride beside a lake to the intersection with Notch Road. Turn right and start the serious climb into the Mount Greylock State Reservation. Just below the summit, you'll intersect Rockwell Road, which you'll ride to the left to reach the peak. You can refill your water bottles and purchase a snack at Bascom Lodge. The descent follows Rockwell Road all the way to Route 7 in Lanesborough, where you turn right and ride north back to Williamstown.

Paddling

To see the beauty of the Berkshires from another angle and provide a workout for your back, arms, and shoulders, glide the peaceful waters of south Berkshire County. 🚣 Along this stretch, the **Housatonic River** doesn't offer much in the way of whitewater, but quiet-water paddlers will find the view and peace along the river banks pleasing. A popular put-in point is at the town of Housatonic, a small, former mill village turned artist colony. The trip downstream to Sheffield, or farther to Rannapo Road near Bartholomews Cobble, offers a few Class I rapids (progressing to Class II just upstream from Great Barrington,



Benedict Pond in Beartown State Forest

Boat Rentals

Appalachian Mountain Gear, 684 South Main Street, Great Barrington, ☎ (413) 528-8811, www.amggear.com, rents canoes and flatwater kayaks. • **Berkshire Outfitters**, Grove Street/Route 8, Adams, ☎ (413) 743-5900, www.berkshireoutfitters.com, rents canoes and kayaks. • **Zoar Outdoor**, 7 Main Street/Route 2, Charlemont, ☎ 1-800-532-7483, www.zoaroutdoor.com, rents canoes and sit-on-top kayaks.

depending on the water level) and plenty of rural scenery as it twists and turns through farmland in the lower reaches.

🛶 Thirty-five-acre **Benedict Pond** in Beartown State Forest is also an ideal place to capture the calm that comes from floating silently across still water. To reach the boat launch, go five miles east from Great Barrington on Route 23 and turn left on Blue Hill Road. Continue on Blue Hill Road for a couple miles to Benedict Pond Road, on the right, marked with a sign to Beartown State Forest. Take Benedict Pond Road for 0.5 miles to the day-use parking area. In the summer, the state forest charges a nominal day-use fee.

🛶 In northern Berkshire County, the **Hoosic River** provides ample whitewater (Class I and II) in the spring and early summer along a nine-mile stretch from North Adams to Pownal, Vermont. You can put in at the small parking area off Ashton Road, between North Adams and Williamstown. (The pull-off is on the left just after crossing Mount Williams Brook if you're traveling east from Williamstown.) Take out at Williams College's athletic fields (2.5 miles downstream); at Simonds Road in Williamstown (four miles downstream); or in Pownal, Vermont (nine miles downstream). 🛶 Flatwater paddling in the northern Berkshires includes **Windsor Lake**, off Windsor Road in North Adams, and **North Pond** and **South Pond** in the **Savoy Mountain State Forest**, North Adams, (413) 663-8469.

🛶 Commercial outfitter **Zoar Outdoor**, on Route 2, east of North Adams in Charlemont, offers guided whitewater rafting, canoeing, and kayaking on the **Deerfield River** and other southern New England rivers. Zoar also rents canoes or sit-on-top kayaks for nine-mile, self-guided tours on the Deerfield, with free shuttle service.

Horseback Riding

🐎 Saddle up at **Undermountain Farm**, 400 Undermountain Road, Lenox, (413) 637-3365, www.sprague.com/umf, to see the beauty of the Berkshires from atop a horse. This year-round equestrian facility offers guided trail rides and lessons for all levels. Undermountain Farm even has one-upped Mother Nature with an indoor arena for rainy days. 🐎 In Williamstown, **Bonnie Lea Farm**, 511 North Street, (413) 458-3149, offers instruction and guided trail rides.

Rainy Day Workout

🏊 With an extensive array of strength equipment, cardio machines, and free weights, the **Lenox Fitness Center**, 68 Main Street, Lenox, (413) 637-9893, is your key to the endorphin high when the rain falleth too much. After the workout, drain yourself further in the sauna, and then replenish your energy at the juice bar. Spa services and day memberships are available.

Swimming

From hidden swimming holes off country roads to large lakes in state forests, the south Berkshire County offers many places to plunge into a cool lake or river and then let the sun warm you. 🏊 The southern end of Berkshire County offers loads of places to swim. Benedict Pond in **Beartown State Forest**, Monterey, (413) 528-0904, has a sand beach and changing facilities. The forest charges a nominal parking fee. 🏊 **Lake Mansfield**, off Lake Mansfield Road in Great Barrington, is popular with local residents. 🏊 You'll find more rustic swimming holes in the **Green River** off **Maple Road** in Great Barrington. To get to the Green River, take Route 7 south from Great Barrington, and then turn right onto Maple Avenue. At the first bridge over the river, park and head down on the left side for a refreshing dip. 🏊 Also, check out **Prospect Lake** in Prospect Lake Park in North Egremont. From North Egremont, take Hillsdale Road to the park.

🏊 In central Berkshire County, head to **Pittsfield State Forest**, Pittsfield, (413) 442-8992, to swim in **Lulu Brook**. 🏊 The town of Pittsfield operates two free municipal beaches, one on **Lake Pontoosuc** and the other on **Onota Lake**. To get to Lake Pontoosuc from Pittsfield, take Route 7 north to Hancock Road and turn left. The beach is ahead across the dam. To get to Onota Lake, take Route 7 north through Pittsfield, then turn left onto Pecks Road. Turn left onto Lakeway Drive to access the beach. 🏊 South of Lenox, **Laurel Lake**, in Lee, is a popular swimming hole. From Lenox, take Walker Street to Route 7/20 south, and then take Route 20 south to Laurel Street, on the right (a Best Western sits at this intersection). The road leads to a public beach and parking area.

🏊 In north Berkshire County, you can swim in the mineral waters that originally made Williamstown a tourist destination in the mid 18th Century at **Sand Springs Pool & Spa**, 158 Sand Springs Road, (413) 458-5205. The seasonal business (open Memorial Day to Labor Day) features an Olympic-sized swimming pool and indoor and outdoor hot tubs, all fed continuously from a 74°F mineral spring. 🏊 You can swim in North Pond, off Central Shaft Road in **Savoy Mountain State Forest** in North Adams, and in **Windsor Lake**, off Windsor Road in North Adams. The beach at Windsor Lake charges a nominal use fee in the summer.

Cross-Country Skiing

While Berkshire County doesn't get the plentiful snowfall that higher elevations in northern New England do, it typically gets enough for Nordic skiing—which doesn't require a great deal of snow. If your main vacation activity will be cross-country skiing, be sure to call the Berkshire Visitors Bureau, 1-800-237-5747, the week before leaving, or monitor the Weather Channel to avoid disappointment.

🛷 You can forget worrying about snow if you ski on the nine miles of groomed trails at **Cranwell Resort**, 55 Lee Road, Lenox, (413) 637-1364 or 1-800-272-6935, www.cranwell.com. A new snowmaking system supports the ski center's 380 acres, and there are trails here for all skill levels. There's a rental shop for Nordic skis and snowshoes. The resort is open daily from 8 A.M.–5 P.M.

Nordic Ski Rentals

In addition to the ski rentals available at Butternut, Canterbury Farm, and Brodie Ski Mountain, as well as the ski and snowshoe rentals at Cranwell Resort, you can rent snowshoes and cross-country skis and get outstanding trail advice from: **The Arcadian Shop**, 91 Pittsfield-Lenox Road (Route 7/20), Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-3010 or 1-800-239-3391, www.arcadian.com; **Berkshire Outfitters**, Grove Street/Route 8, Adams, ☎ (413) 743-5900, www.berkshireoutfitters.com; **The Mountain Goat**, 130 Water Street, Williamstown, ☎ (413) 458-8445, www.allureoutfitters.com; **Kenver Ltd.**, Route 23, South Egremont, ☎ (413) 528-2330 or 1-800-342-7547, www.kenverltd.com; **Plaine's Bike Ski Snowboard**, 55 West Housatonic Street, Pittsfield, ☎ (413) 499-0294, www.plaines.com.

🛷 Just east of October Mountain State Forest, **Canterbury Farm**, Fred Snow Road, Becket, (413) 623-0100, sports 12 miles of tracked trails, including novice, intermediate, and expert. Canterbury Farm offers ski rentals and lessons. 🛷 Lenox's 500-acre **Kennedy Park** offers numerous trails that let you create loops of varying lengths. Signs at each trailhead clearly mark the trail name and difficulty level.

🛷 Private ski touring centers in the southern end of the county include the downhill mountain **Ski Butternut**, Route 23, Great Barrington, (413) 528-2000, www.butternutbasin.com, which operates a five-mile cross-country center and offers rentals and lessons. 🛷 **Bucksteep Manor**, 885 Washington Mountain Road, Washington, (413) 623-5535 or 1-800-645-BUCK has 15 miles of groomed trails that wind through fields and snow-covered pines.

🛷 In north Berkshire County, **Brodie Ski Mountain**, on Route 7 in New Ashford, midway between Pittsfield and Williamstown, (413) 443-4752, www.skibrodie.com, offers Nordic skiing on 15 miles of groomed trails that connect to an adjoining trail system that leads into Mount Greylock State Reservation.

🛷 Other popular cross-country spots include: **Hopkins Memorial Forest**, Williamstown, (413) 597-2346, with trails through 2,425 acres; **Stone Hill**, in Williamstown, above the Clark Art

Institute; the **Taconic Golf Course**, bordering the Williams College campus in Williamstown; and the 294-acre country estate **Field Farm**, off Sloan Road in Williamstown, (413) 458-3144.

🛷 Backcountry skiing in the Berkshires is wide open when there's adequate snowfall across the 100,000 acres of state forest and park land. Best bets include **Mount Washington State Forest** and **Beartown State Forest** in southern Berkshire county; **October Mountain State Forest** and **Pittsfield State Forest**, in central Berkshire County; and **Mount Greylock State Reservation** and **Savoy Mountain State Forest** in northern Berkshire County.

Downhill Skiing

Between December and March, you need not drive far to satisfy the hankering to ski or snowboard the day away. Three southern and central Berkshire ski areas—Ski Butternut, Catamount, and Bousquet—provide all the ingredients necessary for a great time on the slopes.

🛷 Straddling the New York/Massachusetts line, **Catamount Ski Area**, Route 23, South Egremont, (413) 528-1262 or 1-800-342-1840 (for trail conditions), www.catamountski.com, features six lifts and 26 trails, including *Catapult*, the steepest and arguably toughest trail in the Berkshires. Skiers and snowboarders alike will delight in the great views from the peak of this 1,000-foot-vertical-drop resort. The mountain also houses a ski shop with rentals. 🛷 **Ski Butternut**, Route 23, Great Barrington MA, (413) 528-2000 or 1-800-438-7669 (for trail conditions), www.butternutbasin.com, also features a 1,000-foot vertical drop and welcomes skiers and snowboarders on its 22 trails serviced by six lifts. A ski and snowboard shop rents equipment. 🛷 **Bousquet Ski Area**, Dan Fox Drive, Pittsfield, (413) 442-8316, www.bousquets.com, is the Berkshire's oldest resort (opened in 1932) and is ideal for beginner and intermediate skiers. Bousquet has a 750-foot vertical drop and 21 trails serviced by two double chairlifts and three rope tows. Skiers and snowboarders alike share the trails, and the resort has a ski shop with rentals. 🛷 In New Ashford, midway between Pittsfield and Williamstown on Route 7, **Brodie Ski Mountain**, (413) 443-4752, www.skibrodie.com, features 40 trails totaling 18 miles with snowmaking coverage over 95 percent. The 1,250-foot

Ski & Snowboard Rentals

In addition to renting equipment from the resorts, you can rent snowboards or purchase ski equipment from **Kenver LTD**, Route 23, South Egremont, ☎ (413) 528-2330 or 1-800-342-7547, www.kenverltd.com, a world-class ski shop housed in a 250-year-old former inn. (Kenver doesn't rent downhill skis.) • **Plaine's Bike Ski Snowboard**, 55 West Housatonic Street, Pittsfield, ☎ (413) 499-0294, www.plaines.com, rents downhill ski equipment and snowboards. • **Ski Fanatics**, 20 Williamstown Road/Route 7, Lanesboro, ☎ (413) 443-3023, www.skifanatics.com, is a full-service ski and snowboard shop owned and run in part by former United States National Aerial Champion John Kirby.

vertical drop mountain has two rope tows and four chairlifts. Snowboarders and skiers ski day and night, seven days a week. Equipment rentals and lessons are available. 🏔️ **Jiminy Peak**, off Route 43 in Hancock, (413) 738-5500 or 1-888-454-6469 (snow report), www.jiminypeak.com,

has 33 trails, a 1,140-foot vertical drop, and eight lifts—including the Berkshire Express, a new six-passenger high-speed lift. Ski or snowboard well after the sun goes down on the mountain's 16 lighted trails. Rentals and instruction are available on the mountain.



Summit lodge at Jiminy Peak

Snowshoeing

When the snow falls in southern and central Berkshire County, you have your choice of hundreds of trails to explore on snowshoes. Start with the suggested hikes under *Dayhiking*. Because conditions vary greatly from trail to trail, check at one of the rental stores below for their current suggestions.

🏔️ Best bets in southern Berkshire County often include the myriad of trails in **Beartown State Forest**—including the 1.5-mile loop trail around Benedict Pond—or **Mount Washington State Forest**.

🏔️ In central Berkshire County, snowshoeing is an excellent way to discover the bounty in **Pittsfield State Forest**, **October Mountain State Forest**, and Lenox's in-town treasure, 500-acre **Kennedy Park**. Numerous trails crisscross and loop all three areas with options for various skill levels. 🏔️ Another beautiful venue for winter hiking or snowshoeing is **Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary**, 472 West Mountain Road, Lenox (413) 637-0320, www.massaudubon.org. Open dawn to dusk, this Massachusetts Audubon property has 1,500 acres of forest, brooks, beaver ponds, meadows, and mountains. The place is surreal when covered in snow! To get to the sanctuary, take Route 7/20 north to West Dugway Road, turn left, and drive 1.6 miles to the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary. The property charges a nominal entrance fee.

🏔️ In northern Berkshire County, head to the **Mount Greylock State Reservation** to climb the auto roads or foot trails to the summit of 3,491 Mount Greylock. 🏔️ You can also snowshoe your way through **Hopkins Memorial Forest** in Williamstown and **Savoy**

Snowshoe Rentals

The Arcadian Shop, 91 Pittsfield-Lenox Road (Route 7/20), Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-3010 or 1-800-239-3391, www.arcadian.com • **Berkshire Outfitters**, Grove Street/Route 8, Adams, ☎ (413) 743-5900, www.berkshireoutfitters.com • **Cranwell Resort**, 55 Lee Road, Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-1364 or 1-800-272-6935 • **The Mountain Goat**, 130 Water Street, Williamstown, ☎ (413) 458-8445, www.allureoutfitters.com • **Kenver Ltd.**, Route 23, South Egremont, ☎ (413) 528-2330 or 1-800-342-7547, www.kenverltd.com • **Plaine's Bike Ski Snowboard**, 55 West Housatonic Street, Pittsfield, ☎ (413) 499-0294, www.plaines.com.

Mountain State Forest in North Adams. 🏔️ The **Taconic Crest Trail**, which meanders along the New York State border west of Williamstown, is an excellent high-altitude place to snowshoe. Follow Route 2 from Williamstown and park at the Petersburg Pass to set out. 🏔️ Also in Williamstown, trails up **Stone Hill** and across the pastures above the Clark Art Institute make for excellent snowshoeing. Look out for your Nordic skiing comrades and take care not to step on well-formed cross-country ski tracks.

Local Outdoor Advice

Appalachian Mountain Gear • AMG owner Rick Donovan knows the outdoors. A former U.S. Forest Service ranger and Appalachian Mountain Club employee, Donovan's passion for everything outside drives his business. His specialty outdoor recreation store sells hiking, camping, and climbing gear; rents equipment; and provides free trail maps and information about area hikes. In addition, the store sponsors free hikes on Sundays throughout the year, enabling people who are interested in hiking to explore the outdoors with an experienced leader • 684 South Main Street, Great Barrington, ☎ (413) 528-8811, www.amggear.com.

The Arcadian Shop • Part outdoor store, part architectural quilt, the Arcadian Shop occupies one of the oldest homes in Lenox and at least two modern additions. (In the old section of the store, check out the original wide pine floor and the original fireplaces on each side of the building.) You get only the latest and most up-to-date advice on trails and outdoor equipment here. In addition to ski, snowshoe, and mountain bike sales and rentals, the Arcadian Shop sells everything from bug dope to fashionable outdoor apparel. Out back, you can test ride a mountain bike or leave your car to hike, bike or ski Kennedy Park. • 91 Pittsfield-Lenox Road (Route 7/20), Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-3010 or 1-800-239-3391, www.arcadian.com.

Berkshire Outfitters • A big retail center for canoes, kayaks, and cross-country skis since 1978, Berkshire Outfitters also sells snowshoes, mountain bikes, and outdoor apparel (including footwear). Rentals include kayaks, canoes, snowshoes, and cross-country skis. The state of Massachusetts is constructing a bike riding trail across the street from the store on a

Higher Education

Upon visiting **Williams College** and climbing Mount Greylock in 1844, Henry David Thoreau said, "It would be no small advantage if every college were thus located at the base of a mountain...Some will remember, no doubt, not only that they went to the college, but that they went to the mountain." The prestigious liberal arts college in Williamstown has always understood the power of nature to instruct and has encouraged its students to get outside and explore the northern Berkshires. Williams has one of the most active collegiate outdoor clubs in the country, the Williams Outing Club, whose publication, the **North Berkshire Outdoor Guide**, is a must for anyone planning to spend a lot of time in the area. Now in its ninth edition, the book is the most comprehensive guide to hiking, mountain and road biking, cross-country and downhill skiing, and snowshoeing in north Berkshire County. Pick up a copy from The Mountain Goat in Williamstown or any local bookstore.

former railroad bed, and Berkshire Outfitters plans to add mountain bike rentals when it's complete (expected by mid 2001). • *Grove Street/Route 8, Adams*, ☎ (413) 743-5900, www.berkshireoutfitters.com.

The Mountain Goat • Energetic owners John Bryan and Jay Merselis and their knowledgeable staff are expanding this full-service outdoor gear and apparel store into one of the premier Berkshire tour operator businesses for fly fishing and other outdoor excursions. They live the outdoors and sell and rent snowshoes, cross-country skis, and mountain bikes. • *130 Water Street, Williamstown*, ☎ (413) 458-8445, www.allureoutfitters.com.

Plaine's Bike Ski Snowboard • Opened in 1945, this family owned and operated business sells bicycles, downhill skis, snowboards, and cross-country skis, plus apparel and accessories. The store also rents mountain bikes, downhill and cross-country skis, snowboards, and snowshoes. • *55 West Housatonic Street, Pittsfield*, ☎ (413) 499-0294 or 1-888-216-7122, www.plaines.com.

Kick Back

When the weather conspires to wreck your search for the perfect outdoor adventure, or when you've pushed yourself to the point of exhaustion, the Berkshires offer a tiring list of ways to take it easy. Of course, the cultural pursuits take top billing, but you'll be pleased to find the area is also an excellent place to shop or take a drive without a destination in mind.

Antiquing

Antiquing in the southern end of Berkshire County is more than a pastime; it's a professional sport. So many antique dealers line Route 7 between Great Barrington and the Connecticut state line that pundits call the stretch of road **Antique Alley**. ↑ The town of **Sheffield** serves as the hostess with the mostest: roughly 20 antique dealers sit within the town limits. Don't let the rural surroundings fool you; these dealers lack nothing in the way of world savvy. You'll find an amazing assortment of American and European furniture, art and china, as well as prices that reflect the dealers' sophisticated clientele.

☞ The **Berkshire County Antiques Dealer's Association** promotes the efforts of more than 70 shops and three antique centers across Berkshire County and publishes a free pamphlet, *Antiques: Berkshire County, Massachusetts*. It's available at all the dealerships as well as through the staffed office of the **Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce**, (413) 528-1510, on Route 7 in Great Barrington. Visit <http://bmark.com/bcada> for an online map. By mail, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to BCADA Directory, P.O. Box 95, Sheffield, MA 01257. Another useful flier, entitled *Lenox: The Place for Art and Antiques*, sits in most tourism brochure stands in the lobbies of area hotels and restaurants.

Art Galleries

When your legs tire from exploring the great outdoors, give your eyes the workout in the many art galleries and studios of southern and central Berkshire County. You'll find them in every nook and cranny, but there are several areas with greater concentrations.

■ The village of **Housatonic**, a former textile mill village on Route 183 just northwest of Great Barrington, features an eclectic array of galleries, open on the weekends or by appointment. The **S.A.S Gallery**, 1100 Main Street, Housatonic, (413) 274-0175, is a cooperative gallery featuring fine art, some sculpture, and an extensive selection of original fine art photography, including a wide assortment of Berkshire landscape photographs. ■ Formerly touted as the smallest art gallery in the world, **Le Petit Musée**, at Jack's Grill on Main Street, Housatonic, (413) 274-9913, has expanded just enough to have a fine collection of paintings, drawings, prints, and mixed media from contemporary Berkshire artists. A dozen or so more studios display and sell work in Housatonic. ■ Artist studios and galleries also abound in **South Egremont**, especially along Route 23, and in **Great Barrington**.

Back Roads Touring

One of the restful ways to enjoy all of Berkshire County—and especially the southern region—is by fueling up the car and touring your cares away. Give yourself permission to get lost—a roadmap or friendly local resident will easily get you back to your inn. The sights seen by taking the area's less-traveled roads will produce pictures more vivid and meaningful than all the postcards you could buy.

🚗 If you're simply not comfortable exploring any road that looks inviting, grab a local roadmap and head west from Route 7 along Route 23 toward tiny **Mount Washington** and the **Egremonts**. Drive along **Baldwin Hill Road**. 🚗 Or head east



Pond along New Marlborough-Monterey Road

from Route 7 on Route 57 toward **New Marlborough** and drive **New Marlborough Road** north toward **Monterey**. Enjoy the rural roads, but don't get carried away. If a road is marked "Private," please choose another route.

🚗 In north Berkshire County, be sure to drive to the summit of 3,491-foot **Mount Greylock**, the state's highest peak. Two roads climb to the summit. From Route 7 in Lanesborough, you can take Rockwell Road (starts as Main Street from Route 7) up the south flank of the mountain to the summit. From Route 2 between Williamstown and North Adams, you can ascend the north side of Greylock by taking Luce Road, bearing left when it becomes Pattison Road, and then turning right onto Notch Road. Just below the summit, Notch Road dead-ends into Rockwell Road, which you take to the left for the summit.

🚗 Another popular drive is along Route 2 east from North Adams along the **Mohawk Trail**, the oldest motor road in America. Opened in 1914, the road runs from Williamstown east to Greenfield, Massachusetts, through small villages, The Mohawk Trail State Forest, and past dozens of farms. After traversing the rugged and wild Hoosac Mountains, the road parallels the Deerfield River for much of the route. Take this drive when you feel like enjoying the slow lane. It's two-lane all the way, and the road was not built for speed. As you leave North Adams driving east, you'll climb a steep grade and come upon a famous hairpin turn, which on the return provides a killer view of the valley and Mount Greylock in the distance.

Cool Moviehouses

🌟 To see a current film in an historic theater, head to Great Barrington's **Mahaiwe Theater**, 14 Castle Street, (413) 528-0100. Built in 1905 and designed by noted theater architect James McArthur Vance, the Mahaiwe, with its ornate marble and gilt trim interior, is as much the show as what's on the marquee. 🌟 In Williamstown, the promotional tag for **Images Cinema**, 50 Spring Street, (413) 458-5612, www.imagescinema.org, is "independent film for independent minds." In other words, forget *The Terminator V* or *Revenge of the Nerds IX*; we're talking *Citizen Kane* and *A Clockwork Orange*. This non-profit theater shows a mixture of classics and current releases.

Dance

🎭 Set atop a boulder-strewn farm and recognized internationally for diverse programming, the **Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival**, George Carter Road, Becket, (413) 243-0745 (box office), www.jacobs-pillow.org, presents ten weeks of summer dance performances including ballet, modern, jazz, and ethnic. Modern dance pioneer Ted Shawn purchased the hilltop farm in 1930 as a retreat, and by 1933, Shawn and his dancers began performing "Tea Lecture Demonstrations" to small audiences. From those informal presentations to the 1942 opening of the **Ted Shawn Theatre**—the first theater in the United States designed specifically for dance—the Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival has evolved to become what *Time*

magazine called, "The Hub & Mecca of Dancing in North America." Arrive early for a performance to wander the grounds, where you may encounter impromptu performances, rehearsals in session, or dancers doing whatever they do when not dancing. You can also dine on-site in the tent-covered **Pillow Café**.

🎭 Dance in the Berkshires is a year-round activity thanks to Pittsfield's professional resident dance company, **Albany Berkshire Ballet**, 51 North Street, Pittsfield, (413) 445-5382. The troupe performs classical, full-length ballets and contemporary dance programming throughout the year in the Koussevitzky Arts Center at Berkshire Community College.

Day Spas

If the first thing that comes to mind after a tough hike is being wrapped in seaweed or dipped in paraffin, you're vacationing in the right place. Lenox stands as the day spa capital of New England. Here, no self-respecting active traveler hobbles about with sore feet, back, or leg muscles. They get the aches worked out! 🌟 With treatment names like *Hot Rock Massage*, *Body Buffing*, or *Body Bliss*, **Essentials Day Spa**, 439 Pittsfield/Lenox Road (Route 7), Lenox, (413) 443-6260, www.berkshirespas.com, promises rejuvenation and relaxation.

🌟 Similarly, **The Healing Place**, 1 West Street, Lenox, (413) 637-1980, www.thehealing-place.com, offers more than five types of massage, many spa treatments, and additional services like meditation, energy work, and yoga, just to name a few. 🌟 Relax, heal, and rejuvenate at **Body & Soul**, 42 Railroad Street, Great Barrington, (413) 528-6465, a day-spa sanctuary in downtown Great Barrington with a full range of services, including a Sports Massage designed to loosen up your legs, feet, arms, and shoulders.

🌟 Lenox is also home to the mother of all yoga centers in the United States, the **Kripula Center for Yoga & Health**, Route 183, Lenox, 1-800-741-7353, www.kripula.org. Kripula welcomes day-guests to participate in yoga and meditation classes. You can make a day of it with several classes and meals included, or make an appointment for a single service, like bodywork, skincare, or acupuncture.

Historic Homes

🏠 The Trustees of Reservations owns and keeps open the oldest house in Berkshire County, the **Colonel John Ashley House**, Cooper Hill Road (follow signs from Route 7A), Ashley Falls, (413) 229-8600. Built in 1735 by young lawyer John Ashley, the home served as the drafting site of the Sheffield Declaration of 1773, which denounced British sovereignty three years before Jefferson did so in the Declaration of Independence. The home witnessed another declaration of independence when an Ashley family slave named Elizabeth Freeman (called "Mum Bet") became the first slave to sue for and win her freedom. This was the first legal freeing of a slave in the nation. Today, the house displays a collection of American furnishings, kitchen utensils, and tools. Open June

through Labor Day, Wednesday–Sunday, 1 P.M.–5 P.M.; then, weekends and holidays, Memorial Day weekend through Columbus Day.

🏡 During the 13 years that Herman Melville lived, farmed, and worked at **Arrowhead**, 780 Holmes Road, Pittsfield, (413) 442-1793, www.mobydick.org, the author wrote short stories, magazine articles, some poetry, and four novels, including *Moby Dick*—arguably the greatest American novel yet written.

The country quiet stimulated my creative zeal.

– Edith Wharton on the Berkshires

Today, the Berkshire County Historical Society owns and operates Arrowhead as a house museum, and you can visit the grounds and the house, including the small study where Melville looked toward Mount Greylock and first conceived the idea of a great, white whale. Open daily from 9 A.M.–5 P.M., Memorial Day to Halloween. Nominal admission fee.

🏡 **Chesterwood**, 4 Williamsville Road, Stockbridge, (413) 298-3579, www.chesterwood.net, the home of sculptor Daniel Chester French, allows visitors to tour the studio, gardens, and 122-acre grounds of one of America's most famous sculptors. French, who sculpted Honest Abe for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington and the MinuteMan statue in Concord, split his time between Chesterwood and a studio in New York City. In addition to wandering this grand estate, the coolest things to see here are French's sculpting tools and hundreds of pieces of sculpture, including several working models of the seated Lincoln. Open May to October, daily from 10 A.M.–5 P.M. Nominal admission fee.

🏡 Restored and moved in 1929 to its current site on Main Street in Stockbridge, **The Mission House**, (413) 298-3239, www.thetrustees.org, was the home of missionary John Sergeant from 1739 until his death in 1749. Sergeant built the home for his wife, Abigail, high atop Prospect Hill, where the few white settlers lived. Sergeant, a Yale graduate, came to the Berkshires to convert the Mahican Indians to Christianity. His legacy includes the first account written in English of the Indians tapping maple trees for sugar. Restored to include 18th-century furnishings, the Mission House catapults you into the realities of early woods living. Open Memorial Day through Columbus Day, 10 A.M.–5 P.M. Nominal admission fee.

🏡 Modeled after the grand, 17th-century English country houses, **The Mount**, 2 Plunkett Street, Lenox, (413) 637-1899 or 1-888-637-1902, www.edithwharton.org, stands as testament to Edith Wharton's remarkable creative versatility. Wharton designed the gardens herself and had an enormous role in the architectural design of the home. Repulsed by Newport's blue-blood summer society in which she'd



Naumkeag is Native American for "the place of rest."

grown up, Wharton and her husband—along with her servants and pets—made tracks for Lenox in 1899. Constructed in less than three years, the classical American home with painted white stucco and green shutters had marble floors and fireplaces throughout. It took twelve live-in servants to manage the affairs of the house. Currently undergoing an extensive, long-term restoration—to be completed in summer 2002 for a centennial celebration—the Mount is open to the public from May through October. Self-guided tours combine literary, historical, biographical, and design aspects of Edith Wharton's life and writings. Nominal admission fee.

🏡 As one of the cottages built during the Berkshires' golden era, **Naumkeag**, Prospect Hill Road, Stockbridge, (413) 298-3239, www.thetrustees.org, presents a picture of life after the lottery. The place is swanky! Completed in 1886, this 26-room mansion and its surrounding gardens served as the summer abode for Joseph Choate, a noted New York City attorney and ambassador to England. Fortunately, the home has most of its original furnishings, including furniture, china, and artwork. Gardening gurus consider Naumkeag's gardens, designed in part by landscape architect Fletcher Steele, to be some of the finest in the country. Today, the Trustees of Reservations manage the property, keeping it open daily, Memorial Day to Columbus Day, 10 A.M.–5 P.M. Nominal admission fee.



The blue steps/birch walk at Naumkeag

Historic Wanderings

⚔️ Sheffield's active historical society has preserved much of the town's past, including the region's oldest house, the Colonel Ashley House (1735), and the region's first church, the Old Parish Church (1760). To explore life as it was, take the **Sheffield Walking Tour**, a guided tour of the Berkshire's oldest town. With a brochure available from the **Sheffield Historical Society**, P.O. Box 747, Sheffield, MA 01257, you can stroll through the village armed with historical information about 30 points of interest. (Write for the brochure, or visit the historical society, housed in the **1770 Dan Raymond House** on Main Street, on Friday afternoons in the summer from 1:30 P.M.–4 P.M.)

⚔️ In downtown North Adams on a former railroad yard, you can learn the fascinating history of the building of the 4.75-mile Hoosac Tunnel through the Hoosac Mountain at the **Western Gateway Heritage State Park**, 9 Furnace Street/Route 8, (413) 663-6312. Two hundred men lost their lives between 1850 and 1875 constructing the tunnel, which was one of the greatest engineering feats of the 19th Century. The tunnel connected Albany, New York, with Massachusetts and secured Boston's future as a viable port. There are exhibits and an audio-visual presentation with the sounds of dripping water, pickaxes against stone, and explosions to re-create the atmosphere of the tunnel's construction. Open daily, 10 A.M.–5 P.M.

Museums

With natural history, art, science, and cultural displays, plus an aquarium and ongoing series of films, lectures, classes, and concerts, **The Berkshire Museum**, 39 South Street, Route 7, Pittsfield, (413) 443-7171, www.berkshireremuseum.org, is your one-stop knowledge wonderland. The museum is ambitious in collecting everything from Hudson River School art to sea urchins for the *Touch Tank*, but they pull it off nicely and you leave rewarded for your visit. Open daily in July and August, 10 A.M.–5 P.M.; closed Mondays all other months with Sunday hours of 1 P.M.–5 P.M.

Commonplaces never become tiresome. It is we who become tired when we cease to be curious and appreciative.

– Norman Rockwell

Bordering Tanglewood, the **Frelinghuysen Morris House & Studio**, 92 Hawthorne Street, Lenox, (413) 637-0166, www.frelinghuysen.org, presents the former home and work space of abstract artists George L. K. Morris and Suzy Frelinghuysen, founders of the American abstract movement. Morris and Frelinghuysen both created and collected art. The modern home, set on 46 acres, displays their work, as well as the work of such colleagues as Picasso, in an extensive collection of American and European Cubist Art. Open 10 A.M.–4 P.M. Thursday–Sunday in the summer; 10 A.M.–4 P.M., Thursday–Saturday in the fall.

Over nearly seven decades of the 20th Century, Norman Rockwell painted America as he saw it. His depictions reached deep into our nation's collective psyche with their simple but powerful truths. So it stands to reason that **The Norman Rockwell Museum**, Route 183, Stockbridge, (413) 298-4100, www.nrm.org, is a heavy tourist draw in the summer. Busloads of people file through the grand, spotless museum to view the world's largest collection of Rockwell's work, plus changing exhibits of other illustrators' work. In addition to more than 550 original paintings and

drawings on display, Rockwell's Stockbridge studio sits on the museum grounds and is open May to October. Rockwell spent the last 25 years of his life in Stockbridge, and much of his subject material arose from the community and local residents. For example, you may enjoy comparing his "Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas" to today's view as seen across the street from the Red Lion Inn. The museum's grounds—36 acres overlooking the Housatonic River Valley—make for a pleasant picnic. Open daily, May to October, 10 A.M.–5 P.M.; November to April, 11 A.M.–4 P.M. weekdays; 10 A.M.–5 P.M. weekends.

In north Berkshire County, three outstanding art museums are destinations themselves. **The Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute**, 225 South Street, Williamstown, (413) 458-2303, www.clark.williams.edu, is world-renowned for having one of the finest collections of French Impressionist paintings held by a small museum. You'll find paintings by Impressionists Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Edgar Degas, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, as well as works by such masters as Francisco Goya and Jean-Honoré Fragonard. The collection of paintings, sculpture, and illustrated books ranges from the Medieval Period through the Renaissance to the 20th Century. There's also an outstanding collection of work by American painters, including Winslow Homer, Frederic Remington, and John Singer Sargent. Open Tuesday–Sunday, 10 A.M.–5 P.M. (open Mondays, July & August), the museum offers free tours in the summer at 3 P.M. Nominal admission fee. Also in Williamstown, the **Williams College Museum of Art**, Main Street between Spring and Water Streets, (413) 597-2429, is among the finest college art museums in the country. The museum houses roughly 12,000 pieces of work from a wide range of historical periods and cultures. There is a special emphasis on contemporary and modern art, including American art from the late 18th Century to the present. The building itself is part of the display. A stunning three-story addition designed by internationally acclaimed architect Charles Moore complements the original structure, a two-story brick octagonal building constructed in 1846 to house the college's first library. Open Tuesday–Saturday, 10 A.M.–5 P.M.; Sunday, 1 P.M.–5 P.M. Free admission.

In North Adams, the **Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art** (MASS MoCA), 87 Marshall Street, (413) 662-2111, www.massmoca.org, sits on a 13-acre campus of renovated 19th-century factory buildings occupying nearly one-third of the downtown business district. MASS MoCA, which opened in 1999, is the largest contemporary art museum in the world. The complex occupies nearly one-third of the downtown business district. Nineteen galleries—one as long as a football field—provide more than 100,000 square feet

DON'T Shake Your Booty

Shakers, a sect of Christianity that formed in New England, believe that men and women are equal but should live separately to promote celibacy outside of procreation. They formed isolated communities, where property was held in common and everyone labored hard to please God. Proponents of simple design, Shaker communities produced amazingly functional tools, furniture, architecture, and clothing. As an active communitarian society from 1790 to 1960, **Hancock Shaker Village**, junction of routes 20 and 41, Pittsfield, (413) 443-0188, www.hancockshakervillage.org, contains the largest collection of Shaker artifacts available to the public at an original Shaker site. You can view furniture, tools and equipment, household objects, textiles, and other objects used by the Shakers in 20 historic buildings and more than 90 room settings throughout the village. In 2000, the village opened the new Center for Shaker Studies, a \$2.5 million visitor and research center. Open daily from April through November, 9:30 A.M.–5 P.M. Admission fee. You can combine a visit to the village with a 6.5-mile hike along the first National Historic Trail in Massachusetts. The trail starts across Route 20 from the village parking area, climbs two small peaks—Shaker Mountain (1,845 feet) and Holy Mount (1,927 feet)—and covers ground the Shakers considered sacred. Ask for details in the visitor center.



Photo by Gary Gunderson

Built in 1942 for the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Ted Shawn Theatre was the first theater in the U.S. built specifically for dance.

of exhibition space and are joined by two theaters, an outdoor cinema, two outdoor courtyards and loads of workshop space. Popular music acts, classical musicians, art films, performance artists, and theatrical productions regularly fill the museum's active schedule. The museum is open daily, 10 A.M.–6 P.M.

Music

♪ You know those rare moments in life when past and future entanglements let go, and you feel, hear, taste, and see only the pleasure of the moment? It is for those moments that many attend the **Tanglewood Music Festival**, at the Tanglewood estate in Lenox, (413) 637-1600, www.bso.org. With classical music performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) outdoors in a mountain meadow with views of stunning Stockbridge Bowl, Tanglewood is deservedly the Berkshires' preeminent cultural event. Imagine finishing a gourmet meal you've brought in a basket, and then lying on your blanket to look deep into the blue sky. You watch as the setting sun turns the underside of an expanding white cloud yellow, gold, red, and then pink as if in tune with the playful Mozart filling the air. Seating options range from seats under roofed, open-sided pavilions to blankets on the manicured lawns. The festival runs each July and August. The BSO, under the leadership of music director Seiji Ozawa, performs Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons. The Boston Pops, students at Tanglewood's summer music school, and other professional musicians also perform a variety of music, including jazz, chamber music, and opera, daily during the season.

♪ The **Berkshire Opera Company**, 297 North Street, Pittsfield, (413) 443-7400, www.berkop.org, presents fully staged, professional productions of classic and modern operas in different venues including Tanglewood's Ozawa Hall and the Koussevitzky Arts Center in Pittsfield.

♪ In south Berkshire County, check out the **Aston Magna Festival**, (413) 528-3595, the nation's oldest summer music festival devoted to music performed on period instruments. Performances of baroque, classical, and early romantic pieces take place on Saturdays in July and August at the stone St. James Church on the corner of Main Street (Route 7) and Taconic Avenue in Great Barrington. ♪ What's the sound of 200 voices accompanied by the Springfield Symphony? It's the **Berkshire Choral Festival**, held on five successive Saturdays each summer at Berkshire School, 245 Undermountain Road, Sheffield. For ticket information, call (413) 229-8526 in the winter and (413) 229-3522 in the summer. ♪ The **Stockbridge Chamber Concerts** bring players from the Boston Symphony Orchestra down from Lenox to join the New York Clarinet Quartet and other featured artists for the annual series of July and August concerts. Held in the grand, 1880s **Searles Castle**, which today houses the John Dewey Academy for boys, the Stockbridge Chamber Concerts include a pre-performance tour of the 45-room, French chateau castle. Tours begin at 7:15 P.M. and the concerts at 8 P.M. at the John Dewey Academy, 389 Main Street, Great Barrington, (413) 528-7728.

Theater

🎭 If you like Shakespeare, catch the Bard while you can in the unique performance setting on the grounds of **The Mount**, Edith Wharton's grand country cottage. In 2003, the **Shakespeare & Company**, 70 Kemble Street, Lenox, (413) 637-3353, www.shakespeare.org, will cease performing at The Mount when their lease runs out. Shakespeare & Co. fashioned several theaters out of the buildings and grounds of The Mount, including the 600-seat outdoor Main Stage. Set beneath towering white pines, the Main Stage showcases the house, a stream, and the surrounding woods as the perfect backdrop. (Bring bug spray and a blanket if you'd rather avoid the metal chairs.) Each season, from May to October, the company performs a thrilling lineup of Shakespearean comedies and tragedies, as well as works by other classic and modern playwrights. As to the future of Shakespeare & Company, all's well that ends well. The company recently purchased the former National Music Foundation at 70 Kemble Street and will be gradually moving all of its productions to the new home.

🎭 One of the oldest summer theater festivals in the country, the **Berkshire Theatre Festival**, East Main Street, Stockbridge, (413) 298-5536, www.berkshiretheatre.org, touts more than 70 years of showcasing top-notch American playwrights and actors—many of whom are famous. Consider that James Cagney, Katharine Hepburn, Al Pacino, and Dustin Hoffman performed here, and you get a sense of the tradition. Moreover, the theater is in a building designed by noted, 19th-century architect Stanford White and is on the National Register of Historic Buildings. 🎭 The **Barrington Stage Company** presents compelling dramas, lavish musicals, and uproarious comedies each summer and fall in Sheffield. This young troupe (formed in 1995) consistently draws good reviews from the *Boston Globe* and the *Berkshire Eagle*. Performances are in the Consolati Performing Arts Center, 91 Berkshire Road, Sheffield. Call (413) 528-8888 for show and ticket information, or visit them online at www.barringtonstageco.org.

🎭 In the northern Berkshires, the **Williamstown Theatre Festival**, Adams Memorial Theatre, Main Street, Williamstown, (413) 597-3400, www.wtfestival.org, produces a mix of new and classic plays from the end of June through August every summer. Perhaps the best-known summer theater in the country, the Williamstown Theatre Festival began in 1954 and continues its tradition of casting excellent (and often famous) acting talent. (Last season alone, Gwyneth Paltrow, Ethan Hawke, and Eric Stoltz starred in separate productions.) Needless to say, if you wish to attend, make your reservations well in advance.

Wildlife Sanctuaries

🦋 The Massachusetts Audubon Society operates two scenic wildlife sanctuaries in the Berkshires: Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Lenox and the Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary in Pittsfield. Open dawn to dusk, the **Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary**, 472 West Mountain Road, Lenox, (413) 637-0320, www.massaudubon.org, has 1,500 acres of for-

est, brooks, beaver ponds, meadows, and 2,126-foot Lenox Mountain. To get to the sanctuary, take Route 7/20 north to West Dugway Road. Turn left and drive 1.6 miles to the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary. The property is open Tuesday–Sunday and charges a nominal entrance fee. 🐾 Pittsfield’s **Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary**, Holmes Road, Pittsfield, (413) 637–0320, features 262 acres of fields, wetlands, and woods bordered by the Housatonic River. Open dawn to dusk, Tuesdays–Sundays, Canoe Meadows charges a nominal admission fee.

Say (Goat) Cheese

If you’re looking for pristine, rural photo subjects and your country wandering failed to bring you by **Rawson Brook Farm** in Monterey, get back in your car and drive north on the serene, unpaved New Marlborough-Monterey Road from the center of New Marlborough. From Route 57, in front of the Old Inn on the Green, take New Marlborough Road, passing the Inn on your right. Bear right at the first fork, and then bear left at the second fork. Just ahead on the right (185 New Marlborough Road) sits Rawson Brook Farm, the renowned producer of gourmet goat cheeses. Owner Susan Sellew—whose sense of humor and cheerful disposition set the tone for the farm—invites people to stop in and see the operation, including the daily 5 p.m. milking of the goats. Make no mistake: Rawson Brook Farm is a working farm and not a tourist destination. You won’t find restrooms or a soda machine. Sellew and her staff produce more than 350 pounds of cheese each week, selling it throughout the Berkshires as well as through upscale gourmet retailers in Manhattan and Boston.



R e s t E a s y



S l e e p W e l l

You’ll find numerous elegant B&Bs, country inns, and large resorts spread throughout Berkshire County, including blow-your-budget bastions of indulgence. (Five of Lenox’s grand cottages are now first-class resorts where you can drop between \$300–700 a night.) Of course, many comfortable inns and B&Bs post more prudent rates. Here is a sampling representing a healthy range. All of the inns listed here regularly host active travelers and provide numerous resources to help you find the right trail or lake to suit your mood and the weather.

Accommodations Pricing

Under \$100	Inexpensive	\$
\$100-150	Moderate	\$\$
\$151-200	Expensive	\$\$\$
More than \$200	Very Expensive	\$\$\$\$

Prices are per room, per night, based on double occupancy during peak seasons. Note that B&Bs and most country inns include breakfast in the rate.

In southern and central Berkshire County

Baldwin Hill Farm Bed & Breakfast • On a clear night outside Dick and Priscilla Burdsall's Victorian farmhouse on Baldwin Hill, stars puncture the sky with planetarium-like brilliance. In daylight, the 360-degree views extend miles across beautiful, pastoral Berkshire land. Here, even the most cluttered mind must pause and appreciate the development-empty expanse. The Burdsalls—both former schoolteachers—encourage guests to lose themselves on their farmland or in the surrounding hills, and they cheerfully provide directions for any desired excursion. Dick and Priscilla maintain filing cabinets of brochures and

road and topographical maps to help you plan your days. In the winter, you can hike or cross-country ski right from the front door; and, in the summer months, you can cool off in the pool overlooking the farm's fields and orchards. • 121 Baldwin Hill Road North/South, Great Barrington, MA 01230, ☎ (413) 528-4092 • \$\$

Blantyre • Whatever the lodging quality designation—stars, diamonds, smiley faces—you can slap the maximum number on this Tudor-style mansion set upon 100 acres of immaculately kept grounds. As a member of the distinguished Relais &



Baldwin Hill Farm B&B

Chateaux lodging association, Blantyre has it all: impeccable service, excellent dining, four tennis courts, two championship croquet lawns, an outdoor heated swimming pool, a Jacuzzi, sauna, exercise equipment, and a serious atmosphere of wealth. Needless to say, rates reflect this. If you're looking to go all out for a weekend, Blantyre beckons. Closed from early November to early May. • 16 Blantyre Road, Lenox, MA 01240, ☎ (413) 637-3556, www.blantyre.com • \$\$\$\$

Brook Farm Inn • If you're a poet, but don't know it, you may be in for an epiphany during a stay at Brook Farm Inn, where you'd have to be illiterate not to appreciate innkeepers Anne and Joe Miller's passion for verse. From their toll-free number (1-800-285-POET) to the more than 1,500 book adorning the shelves of the living room, it's apparent that the Millers encourage all things literary. The inn has 12 guestrooms, five of which have wood-burning fireplaces. The Millers serve a breakfast buffet. • 15 Hawthorne Street, Lenox, MA 02140, ☎ (413) 637-3013 or 1-800-285-7638, www.brookfarm.com • \$\$-\$\$\$

Christine's Bed & Breakfast Inn • Set midway between Great Barrington and West Stockbridge on Route 41, this 220-year-old home sits on 2.5 acres of land with manicured flowerbeds and stands of maple and pine trees. Much of its original character remains intact, including wide pine floors, open beam ceilings, and the Rumford fireplace in the main house. There are three rooms, each with a private bath, and a full breakfast is included. True locals, innkeepers Christine and Steve Kelsey grew up within 50 miles and know the area and

its attractions as well as anyone. • 325 North Plain Road, Route 41, Housatonic, MA 01236, ☎ (413) 274-6149 or 1-800-536-1186, www.christinesinn.com • \$\$-\$\$\$

The Egremont Inn • Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Egremont Inn exudes history, with part of the property dating to 1780 and serving as a colonial stagecoach stop. The past remains in low-ceilinged rooms and large sitting areas with wood-burning fireplaces. Amenities added over the years include a wraparound porch, air conditioning, tennis courts, and an outdoor pool. The property features 19 guestrooms and is a stone's throw from the Catamount ski resort. • 10 Old Sheffield Road, South Egremont, MA 01258, ☎ (413) 528-2111 or 1-800-859-1780, www.egremontinn.com • \$\$

Frog Pond Hill • To add an international flavor to your next long-weekend vacation, stay at this secluded, 60-acre country retreat with multi-lingual (we're talking five languages here) host Gabriele Van Zon. Four bedroom suites in this contemporary redwood home with a beautiful stone gazebo all provide views of the gorgeous surroundings. Van Zon serves a breakfast buffet beside the indoor pool. Additional property features include a sauna, spa, tennis court, art gallery, and library. • 28 Warner Road (off Route 41), South Egremont, MA 01258, ☎ (413) 528-0906 • \$\$-\$\$\$

The Gables Inn • Where would Edith Wharton see fit to live while awaiting completion of her own summer cottage? Here, of course. This Queen Anne-style cottage housed the New York socialite and rising literary star during construction of The

Mount. Today, it houses guests who appreciate the authentic period furnishings, indoor heated pool, private tennis court, and lovely, quiet garden. Inn owners Mary and Frank Newton also proudly display their impressive art collection, which spans five centuries and includes fine art and rare documents and books. The Gables Inn has 19 lavishly decorated rooms and suites with private baths and serves a full breakfast. • *81 Walker Street, Lenox, MA 01240*, ☎ (413) 637-3416 or 1-800-382-9401, www.gableslenox.com • \$\$-\$\$\$\$

Lenox on the cheap

Consider that Lenox's year-round population of 5,000 swells to more than 35,000 in the summer, and you can see how the high demand for lodging drives up the peak-season rates. During the Tanglewood season (mid June through August), expect to pay a premium price for your accommodations, along with two- to three-night minimum stay rules on the weekends. Weekend rates—Thursday through Sunday—are generally 15 to 20 percent higher than weekday rates. Of course, you should secure a room months in advance in your preferred inn or B&B. While it's hard to beat the excitement of Lenox in the summer, the reality is that many attractions are open year round, and you can enjoy them without the crowds and with a fuller wallet. In general, off-season accommodation rates (November to April) are *half* the peak-season rates.

Gateways Inn • Affectionately referred to as the “house that Ivory Soap built”—Harley Procter of Procter & Gamble built the mansion in 1912 as a private summer residence—the spotlessly clean Gateways Inn sits in the center of Lenox and serves as a gracious host for the town. Owners/Innkeepers Fabrizio &

Rosemary Chiariello read their guests perfectly—offering help with directions or suggestions when you want it and leaving you alone when you prefer to find your own way. The inn has 11 rooms with private baths plus the expansive Fiedler Suite, a favorite of the late Boston Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler. You'll not soon forget Rosemary's award-winning baked breads, cakes, and scones served with the full breakfast. • *51 Walker Street, Lenox, MA 01240*, ☎ (413) 637-2532 or 1-888-492-9466, www.gatewayinn.com • \$\$-\$\$\$\$

The Old Inn on the Green & Gedney Farm

• East of Route 7, life is a little less *touristed*, and perhaps less rehearsed. Most roadside businesses cater more to locals than to the itinerant traveler. So when you discover New Marlborough's Old Inn on the Green and Gedney Farm, you'll feel away from it all, and yet not have to sacrifice anything in comfort or culture. Surrounded by rolling fields and meadows, the main inn sits on New Marlborough's village green and was once an 18th-century stagecoach inn. Immaculately restored, 18th-century guestrooms sit atop elegant dining rooms lit solely by candlelight transporting guests to an earlier, simpler time. A few hundred yards away, Gedney Farm also houses guests in handsomely appointed rooms in one of two restored, Normandy-style (read HUGE) dairy barns. Architectural aficionados will dig these digs. • *Route 57, New Marlborough, MA 01230*, ☎ (413) 229-3131 or 1-800-286-3139, www.oldinn.com • \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Race Brook Lodge • If Victorian teacups or rooms named *Tiffany* excite you about as much as a tax form, the Race Brook Lodge

is for you. Housed in a timber barn more than two centuries old, this rustic yet comfortable mountain lodge promotes itself as free from the decorative antiques and knick-knacks that clutter some B&Bs or country inns. Instead what you find is a lot of beautiful wood—from the wide-planked wooden floors to exposed-beam ceilings and walls. Race Brook Lodge also promotes itself as a *hiker's heaven*. You can walk out the front door—after the hearty breakfast buffet—and take the 1.5-mile Race Brook Trail past Race Brook Falls to the Appalachian Trail and the summit of Mount Race. • *864 South Undermountain Road, Sheffield, MA 01257*, ☎ (413) 229-2916 or 1-888-RBLODGE, www.rblodge.com • \$\$-\$\$\$

Red Lion Inn • The Colonial Red Lion Inn's large front porch and numerous comfortable rocking chairs will forever identify the corner of Main Street and Route 7 in Stockbridge, thanks to being immortalized in Norman Rockwell's painting *Main Street Stockbridge at Christmastime*. A bustling center of tourist activity (stopping by the inn is an “in” thing to do), the venerable Red Lion weathers the attention beautifully. The atmosphere inside is elegant, with period furnishings including

Staffordshire china and colonial pewter; and the service is exceptionally attentive. In addition to the renowned front porch, the inn features a formal dining room, tavern, swimming pool, and exercise room. Plan well ahead—the inn's 108 rooms book early. • *Main Street, Stockbridge, MA 01262*, ☎ (413) 298-5545, www.redlioninn.com • \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Whistler's Inn • Seemingly painted into a gorgeous stand of trees and surrounded by the kind of cool summer-green lawn you want to roll around on, this gracious English Tudor manor is one of the long-standing guesthouses in Lenox. For close to 30 years, innkeepers Joan and Richard Mears have welcomed guests to their inn, the former summer estate of railroad baron Ross Whistler. The 12 bedrooms have private baths, and common areas include a ballroom, a music room with a Steinway, and a 3,000-volume library in which complimentary afternoon tea, port, and sherry are served. The seven-acre property of lawn, gardens, and woodland invites you to stroll and quiet your mind after the full breakfast. • *5 Greenwood Street, Lenox, MA 01240*, ☎ (413) 637-0975, www.whistlersinnlenox.com • \$\$-\$\$\$

In northern Berkshire County

Blackinton Manor • Built in 1849 as a residence for a wealthy textile manufacturer, Blackinton Manor currently belongs to two classical musicians, pianist Dan Epstein and cantor Betsey Peters-Epstein, and thanks to these hosts, the home is the site of numerous musical concerts. There are five individually decorated rooms, each with private

bath. Rates include a sumptuous gourmet breakfast. • *1391 Massachusetts Avenue, North Adams, MA 01247*, ☎ (413) 663-5795, www.blackinton-manor.com • \$\$

Field Farm Guest House • Set on a 296-acre country estate at the foot of the Taconic Mountains, Field Farm Guest House

is an American Modern-style house built in 1948 by Lawrence Bloedel, a wealthy graduate of Williams College. The home accommodates 14 guests in five rooms, each with private bath. Three rooms feature private decks, two have fireplaces, and the living room has several pieces from Bloedel's collection of American Modern art. A full breakfast is served each morning, after which you can walk out the front door to explore the property's four-mile hiking trail system, play on the tennis court, or swim in the pool. • 554 Sloan Road, Williamstown, MA 01267-3059, ☎ (413) 458-3135, www.thetrustees.org • \$\$

The Orchards • At first glance, you may be tempted to drive past the beige stucco exterior of this hotel set next to a shopping complex thinking, "Surely this isn't one of the nicest places to stay in town." But it is. Inside, the Orchards is a small elegant country inn filled with antiques and tended by an attentive staff. There are 49 unique guestrooms, each decorated in the style of an English country

estate with antique furniture and subtle tones. Every room also has individual climate control, dual sinks, two phones, and a television tucked into a decorative armoire. Many of the rooms look out on a garden courtyard, which in the warm months has a goldfish-filled reflecting pool surrounded by fragrant blooms. The property also has an exercise room and outstanding restaurant. • 222 Adams Road, Williamstown, MA 01267, ☎ (413) 458-9611 or 1-800-225-1517, www.orchardshotel.com • \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Williamstown Bed & Breakfast • Set on nearly an acre near the center of Williamstown, this B&B has the perfect wide front porch on which to relax after a hike or bike ride. There are three individually decorated rooms, each with a private bath. Breakfast includes home-baked breads, scones, muffins, coffeecakes, and a hot entrée. • 30 Cold Spring Road, Williamstown, MA 01267-2751, ☎ (413) 458-9202, www.williamstownbandb.com • \$-\$\$

Dine Well

So many good restaurants line the streets of Lenox, Stockbridge, Great Barrington, Williamstown, and the quiet country roads in Berkshire County that an exhaustive list would overwhelm. In general, thanks to the palate of the cultured traveler and the summer influx of Manhattanites, cuisine in Berkshire County is as good as in any big city, and in many cases, better. Dining here can be an indulgent, elaborate affair at a premium price, or you can find delightful, romantic bistros and cafés without the jaw-dropping bill after dessert. Here are some of the best options.

In southern and central Berkshire County

Bizen Restaurant & Sushi Bar • To step inside Bizen is to enter an authentic Japanese restaurant. Decorated with Bizen pottery—created and fired by owner Michael Marcus who studied the 1,000-year-old pottery tradition in Bizen, Japan—this restaurant serves up what the *Boston Globe* called "the best Sushi outside Japan." Bizen uses fresh, organic, in-season ingredients and houses a non-smoking saki lounge. • 17 Railroad Street, Great Barrington, ☎ (413) 528-9419

Blantyre • Situated in a magnificent Tudor-style mansion, Blantyre is perhaps the area's fanciest restaurant—the dining room typically features a harpist to complement the seasonal menu of French cuisine. Select from more than 450 vintage wines—with the help of a sommelier, of course—to accompany appetizers like wild mushroom bisque with warm Monterey goat cheese Crostini and crispy shallots, or entrées such as pan-roasted sea bass with grilled eggplant and broccoli parcel with warm Oregon truffle vinaigrette. Reservations are required for the prix fixe meal. (Blantyre closes from early November to early May.) • 16 Blantyre Road, Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-3556

Café Lucia • Set in an attractive home that was once an art gallery, Café Lucia counts a number of Tanglewood musicians, including Maestro Ozawa, as regular customers. The restaurant is approaching 20 years of serving fine Italian cuisine in Lenox. An award-winning wine list accompanies the seasonal menus, which may include such items as grilled calamari salad to start and ossobuco (braised veal shank) with risotto as an entrée. Open for dinner only Tuesday-Saturday, November to June; and Tuesday-Sunday, June to October. • 80 Church Street, Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-2640

Castle Street Café • Set downtown next to the Mahaiwe Theatre, this easy-going café and wine bar gets the nod from *The New York Times* for "where to eat in Great Barrington." If your party is having trouble deciding upon a cuisine, Castle Street is a good bet because it serves a variety of dishes, including creative takes on pasta, grilled fish, and meat. You may choose to start with the Berkshire mesclun salad with goat cheese and move on to the pistachio-crusting brook trout with ginger and orange sauce. Desserts include Castle Street Café's signature choco-

late mouse. Closed on Tuesdays. • *10 Castle Street, Great Barrington*, ☎ (413) 528-5244

Church Street Café • Promising a “spirited approach to regional American cooking,” Church Street Café does just that with an innovative menu offered in a warm, comfortable atmosphere. Serving both lunch and dinner outside on the deck or inside in one of three dining rooms, Church Street serves diverse, creative pasta and vegetarian selections, great salads, and tasty meat selections like grilled cider and maple-glazed porterhouse pork chop with sweet potato fries. • *65 Church Street, Lenox*, ☎ (413) 637-2745

Gateways Inn • This popular restaurant changes its menu often, but in general the focus is New American cuisine with some strong Italian influences. Dishes that consistently roll over from menu to menu include escargot as an appetizer and the signature dish, rack of lamb. Owners Fabrizio and Rosemary Chiariello serve breakfast and dinner year round and lunch on the weekends in the summer. Outdoor dining on a romantic, canopied terrace in season. • *51 Walker Street, Lenox*, ☎ (413) 637-2532 or 1-888-492-9466

John Andrew’s • Ask local residents for the nice restaurants in the area and invariably John Andrew’s makes the list. Set in an attractive old New England house in sedate South Egremont, John Andrew’s serves creative New American cuisine with entrée selections like pan-roasted sea bass or grilled quail. But you’ll be lucky to get that far due to the incredible appetizer list and the medley of warm bread brought to your table. The menu also features a variety of pizza

and pasta dishes and a respectable wine list. Closed Wednesdays except in July and August. • *Route 23, South Egremont*, ☎ (413) 528-3469

The Old Inn on the Green • Take a step back in time and dine in one of the most romantic restaurants in the Berkshires. On the main floor of this 1760 inn, small, cozy dining rooms lit entirely by candles recall the days when the inn served as a stage-coach stop. The experience borders on surreal as the sky darkens outside. But soon your attention is focused entirely on the plate in front of you. The Old Inn’s restaurant serves classic French cuisine mixed with New American fare. The menu changes but recent appetizers included saffron risotto with spring vegetables, grilled shrimp, prosciutto, and crispy leeks; and entrées like sautéed red mullet with fennel-leek broth, manzilla olive tapenade, and aromatic couscous. Reservations are required for Saturday night dinners, which are prix fixe. • *Route 57, New Marlborough*, ☎ (413) 229-3131, www.oldinn.com

Red Lion Inn • Serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the Red Lion Inn is a great place to eat any time of the day, but to get the full effect, make reservations for dinner in the formal dining room and take a step back in time. (Jacket and tie strongly suggested.) The ambiance set by soft candlelight, crystal chandeliers, and colonial pewter adds to the elegance of the menu. Expect traditional New England cuisine, including a plentiful lineup of fish and meat dishes. The Red Lion also serves tavern-fare for dinner in The Lion’s Den. • *Main Street, Stockbridge*, ☎ (413) 298-5545

Spigalina • For the coolest Gazpacho in town, you’d do well to dine at this innovative Mediterranean restaurant where the dishes reflect flavors from Italy, Spain, Southern France, Greece, and Morocco. Appetizers ranging from grilled vegetable timbale to a shrimp and tomato tartelette lead delicately to a selection of great salads, pastas, and entrées like grilled Atlantic salmon over Israeli couscous, mixed with zucchini, summer squash, sugar snap peas, cherry tomatoes, mint, and basil with saffron sauce. Don’t ask for the check until you’ve had the tiramisu. Spigalina serves dinner only, Wednesday–Monday, except in July and August when it’s open daily for dinner. • *80 Main Street, Lenox*, ☎ (413) 637-4455

Union Bar & Grill • A trendy restaurant that beats with energy from lunch through dinner, Union Bar & Grill offers something for everyone. The cuisine is eclectic New American, meaning roasted salmon comes atop mashed potatoes, or barbecue duck arrives with blue corn tortillas. Reasonable prices will encourage you to order from their

extensive appetizer and dessert selections. • *293 Main Street, Great Barrington*, ☎ (413) 528-6228

Wheatleigh • Along with Blantyre, Wheatleigh’s restaurant forms the pinnacle of fine dining in the Berkshires. Housed in a 19th-century Palladian villa that serves as a luxury country house hotel, the dining room is appropriately elegant with stunning mahogany doors, fine English wool carpeting, hand-carved Chippendale chairs, antique Waterford crystal chandeliers, and rare ceramic tile wall plaques. The prix fixe, four-course menu changes nightly but typically adheres to contemporary American interpretations of classic French cuisine. What does that mean? Try game consommé with roasted breast of squab as a first course or grilled loin of veal with lentils and caramelized shallot sauce as the main course. Similarly, desserts carry long names but the end result is the same: they’re outstanding. A true special-treat dining experience. • *West Hawthorne Road, Lenox*, ☎ (413) 637-0610

Cafés and Picnic Packing

With picnicking at Tanglewood such a popular pastime, numerous businesses specialize in putting together custom gourmet picnics, ideal for either a blanket spread on the lawn or a makeshift granite table on a mountain summit. Here are a few good bets: **Church Street Deli**, 37 Church Street, Lenox, (413) 637-0979 • **Great Lenox Diner**, 30 Church Street, Lenox, (413) 637-3204 • and **Perfect Picnics**, 72 Church Street, Lenox, (413) 637-3015. • For an excellent place to piece together your own meal, visit **Gorham Norton**, 278 Main Street, Great Barrington, (413) 528-0900. In addition to a great selection of beer and wine, this old-fashioned food shop packs picnic items galore, including fresh produce, fruit, Boar’s Head cold cuts, and sandwiches. The store also carries local bakery **Daily Bread’s** fresh baguettes.

Just Desserts

After an exhilarating day of hiking, you're entitled to a stop at **Bev's Homemade Ice Cream**, 5 Railroad Street, Great Barrington, (413) 528-6645, www.bevsicecream.com, where they serve homemade ice cream, gelato, smoothies, and all manner of baked goods, including cookies, cake, and brownies. If the sugar doesn't pick you up, order a gourmet coffee, tea, or espresso. • **Catherine's Chocolates**, 260 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington, 1-800-345-2462, grew from a small, homemade chocolate business at the turn of the century to the global catalog retailer it is today. Stop by the Great Barrington headquarters to pick up some hand-dipped chocolate energy for your next hike.

In northern Berkshire County

Le Jardin Country Inn • Chef-owned and operated for nearly 30 years, Le Jardin is a Williamstown tradition for fine French dining. Housed in a 130-year-old hilltop country manor, the restaurant features traditional French fare like Escargots Bourguignonne (snails) and Coquilles St. Jacques (fish) served by soft candlelight. The onion soup au gratin warms the soul, and the broiled filet mignon can be cut with a fork. With apologies to proud grandmothers everywhere, this restaurant makes the best pecan pie. • 777 Cold Spring Road, Routes 2 & 7, two miles south of Williamstown, ☎ (413) 458-8032 or 458-3929

Mezze Bistro & Bar • Housed in a former art gallery along the Green River, this restaurant features a deck overlooking the river and a contemporary curved interior. It's a trendy bistro and watering spot for the Williams College community, as well as the chic Williamstown Theatre Festival attendees in the summer. The menu is creative American cuisine, with delicious takes on

steak, fish, and chicken. • 84 Water Street, Williamstown, ☎ (413) 458-0123

Wild Amber Grill • This excellent restaurant has the feel of a Californian bistro with its trendy menu, upscale clientele and lively scene, especially on weekend nights when there's live music in the lounge. The cuisine is contemporary American and includes the popular entrée, sesame-seared tuna with a soy-ginger vinaigrette. • 101 North Street/Route 7, Williamstown, ☎ (413) 458-4000

The Orchards • Classically trained chefs prepare outstanding appetizers and entrées served on fine china in the hotel's main dining room. The Orchards' seafood dishes are especially good, including the seared pepper tuna served with a crispy noodle salad and sesame-soy vinaigrette for an appetizer, and the Chilean sea bass entrée served with roasted potato balls. • 222 Adams Road, Williamstown, MA 01267, ☎ (413) 458-9611 or 1-800-225-1517

Cafés and Picnic Packing

A delightfully casual coffeehouse, **Cold Spring Coffee Roasters**, 47 Spring Street, Williamstown, (413) 458-5010, serves cappuccino, espresso, fresh decaf, and regular brews, as well as baked goods and bagels. You can score one of the comfortable armchairs or couches if you hit the joint in between classes at Williams College when students pack up and rush to campus. Cold Spring roasts their coffee beans in a shiny fire-engine-red roaster in the middle of the café.

• **Store at Five Corners**, (413) 458-3176 or 1-888-745-1770, www.thestoreatfivecorners.com, is set at the picturesque, rural crossroads of routes 7 and 43 south of Williamstown. This mail-order and retail store is the Orvis catalog of cheeses, breads, coffees, gourmet foods, gift baskets, fine wines, beers, fudges, candies, books, and cards. It's decidedly upscale, yet also an old-fashioned country store to the surrounding community. The site has a commercial history that stretches back to 1770, when Samuel Sloan operated a tavern that served as a gathering point for colonial troops. During the Revolution, George Washington stopped here.



Williams College students hit the books at Cold Spring Roasters.

Long-Weekend Itineraries

In south and central Berkshire County

Day One

After breakfast at your inn or B&B, head to **Mount Washington State Forest** for the short hike to **Bash Bish Falls** from the Upper Falls parking area (page 61). Return to your car and drive to Lenox to rent bikes and a car rack at **The Arcadian Shop** (page 71). Pick up a picnic lunch at **Church Street Deli** (page 91) and head to **Beartown State Forest** (page 62) to ride the various logging roads and circuits of singletrack. Then take a dip in Beartown's **Benedict Pond** (page 67) and enjoy your picnic by the water. Drive south to Sheffield to spend the rest of the afternoon **antiquing** (page 72). Return to your inn to change for drinks and dinner at the historic, candlelit dining room at the **Old Inn on the Green** in New Marlborough (page 90).

Day Two

Linger over breakfast to soak in your vacation, then pick up a picnic lunch at **Gorham Norton** in Great Barrington (page 91) en route to **Mount Everett State Reservation** to hike 2,602-foot **Mount Everett** (page 59). After a solid climb, enjoy your picnic and the views atop Connecticut's second-highest mountain, then return to your car and drive to Stockbridge to visit the **Norman Rockwell Museum** (page 78). As the sun fades, visit Stockbridge's historic **Red Lion Inn** (page 87) for late afternoon drinks on the porch before returning to your inn to prepare for dinner at **The Gateways Inn** in Lenox (page 90).

Day Three

Eat a light breakfast before arriving for your mid-morning massage appointment at **Kripula** (page 75) to work out the acid built up in your muscles. Afterward, enjoy a hearty lunch at **Church Street Café** (page 91) in Lenox, then drive to Lenox's **Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary** (page 81) to wander the trails, work off the meal and soak up a final bit of Berkshire bliss before packing up and returning home.

In central and north Berkshire County

Day One

After breakfast at your inn or B&B, head to the **Store at Five Corners** (page 93) to pack a bodacious picnic lunch for your rigorous climb up **Mount Greylock** (page 59). Enjoy the views from the highest peak in Massachusetts, then descend and drive to Williamstown to rent a mountain bike and lock from **The Mountain Goat** (page 72). Use your bike to explore this stunning college town, including a stop at **The Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute** (page 72). After touring the museum, ride up into the pastures of **Stone Hill** (page 79) behind the museum for spectacular, late afternoon views of Williamstown and the surrounding hills. Return to town for a coffee fix at **Cold Spring Coffee Roasters** (page 93), then return to your inn to prepare for dinner at **Wild Amber Grill** (page 92).

Day Two

After breakfast at your inn, head to Williamstown's **Bonnie Lea Farm** (page 66) for a trail ride on horseback through north Berkshire County. Afterward, drive south for a tour of the Berkshire's historic homes, including **Arrowhead** (page 76) in Pittsfield, **Chesterwood** (page 76), **The Mission House** (page 76), and **Naumkeag** (page 77) in Stockbridge, as well as Edith Wharton's home, **The Mount** (page 76), in Lenox. When your appetite calls, stop for lunch at the **Red Lion Inn** (page 90) in Stockbridge. In Lenox, swing by **Perfect Picnics** (page 91) to purchase a gourmet meal for the evening's performance at **Tanglewood** (page 80). Enjoy your picnic on the wide lawn at Tanglewood as you listen to classical music performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Day Three

After breakfast at your inn, head to **Pine Cobble** (page 62) outside Williamstown for the rewarding hike and views of the village below, then head to **The Orchards** (page 92) in Williamstown for a hearty brunch. Finally, drive to **Field Farm** (page 69) to wander the estate, work off the meal and prepare yourself for parting with the Berkshire Hills.

Additional Information

For additional dining, accommodations, and sightseeing information including the dates of special events, contact the following organizations:

Berkshire Visitors Bureau, ☎ (413) 443-9186, or from outside Massachusetts, 1-800-237-5747. The Berkshire Visitors Bureau prints an extensive free guide to the county, listing activities, restaurants, and accommodations. Address queries to: Berkshire Visitors Bureau, Berkshire Common, Pittsfield, MA 01201—or visit them online at www.berkshires.org.

Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, ☎ (413) 528-1510 or (413) 528-4006. The organization operates a friendly, year-round office on Route 7 in Great Barrington. For postal queries, write them at 362 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230; or visit them online at www.greatbarrington.org.

The South County Lodging Association operates a useful website at www.berkshirelodging.com.

Lenox Chamber of Commerce, 65 Main Street, Lenox, ☎ (413) 637-3646 or 1-800-25-LENOX, www.lenox.org, operates a walk-in center loaded with useful maps and brochures.

Stockbridge Chamber of Commerce, ☎ (413) 298-5200, www.stockbridgechamber.org. The Stockbridge Chamber operates an information booth on Main Street diagonally across from the Red Lion Inn.

The Williamstown Chamber of Commerce, 31 North Street, Williamstown, ☎ (413) 458-9077 or 1-800-214-3799, www.williamstownchamber.com, operates an information booth at the corner of routes 2 and 7.

The Berkshire Web operates a useful website at www.berkshireweb.com.

If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

– Henry David Thoreau
