



Photo by Carrie Perschint



WAKE UP
CHOW DOWN
GET OUT
DIG IN

to the Hands-on
Experiences in
Butler County, PA



Welcome to Butler County!

You're invited to wake up, chow down,
get out and dig in!

We have over 790 square miles, begging to be explored. With everything from parks, museums, galleries, performing arts and specialty shops, to festivals, farms, wineries, historic sites and golf courses; there's truly something for everyone. Here you can get your hands dirty and learn something new with our unique hands-on experiences.

With so much to do, we suggest spending at least one night in one of our comfortable hotels, cozy bed & breakfasts or scenic campgrounds. The beauty of it all – aside from everything mentioned above – is accessibility. Butler County is easily reached by I-79, I-80, Route 422, Route 19, Route 8 and the PA Turnpike. Plan your getaway any time of the year and enjoy the subtleties brought by each season.

Treasure the Experience!



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Welcome to Butler County, PA

You're invited to **Wake up, Chow down, Get out and Dig in** to our hands-on experiences. Get out and explore scenic, wide open spaces. Dig in to the past by experiencing history. Discover some of our quirky sites – you'll be surprised at by the hands-on experiences that await you! Spend a weekend here to follow the provided itineraries or make your own adventure.



Hands-On

In Butler County, we don't like the rule "you can look, but don't touch." Hands-on opportunities abound, so look forward to a fun, interactive trip, rather than a typical, boring vacation. Where you see the hand symbol, read on to learn about just a few of the hands-on experiences available.

Sample Itinerary

Let's Get Back to Nature

Morning

Take a drive 12 miles north of Butler, PA to Jennings Environmental Education Center where you will discover a "prairie", French for meadow. It provides a home to the magnificent blazing star, which displays four to six foot stalks adorned with bright purple flower clusters that bloom in late July and early August. Other residents of the prairie include a vast array of butterflies, moths and insects and the reclusive endangered massasauga rattlesnake. Jennings' staff is committed to providing a diverse array of environmental education and interpretive programs.

Lunch

For a casual dining experience in the heart of Slippery Rock, enjoy lunch at Ginger Hill Tavern.

Afternoon

Following a hearty lunch, hike on our local section of the North Country Trail, America's longest hiking trail. Just over the county line, investigate McConnell's Mill State Park on your way to the next eco-adventure at Moraine State Park. Upon arrival at the park, introduce yourself to the horses and take a ride on the park's equestrian trails. Take a cruise on Moraine Preservation Fund's Nautical Nature boat to learn about natural history and osprey re-introduction, while enjoying the unique scenery and wildlife of the park. Before leaving the park, play a round of disc golf in the Lakeview Beach Day Use Area for a unique experience.

Note: To gain a better appreciation for the outdoors, plan your travel around one of our events. The Outdoor Extravaganza, over Memorial Day weekend, gives you a chance to experience many outdoor activities like mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, caving, sailing, rock climbing, horseback riding and more. The Regatta at Lake Arthur, in August, includes sailboat races, canoe and kayak events, hot air balloon launches, children's games and whatever floats your boat contest.



Moraine State Park is the ultimate place to "get out." Besides the usual, hiking, biking, swimming, picnicking and boating; try your hand at disc golf. Have you ever gone geocaching? There are around two dozen caches in the park!

Sample Itinerary

History at Its Best

DAY 1

Morning

Start your day by stepping back in time and experiencing the wonderful history Butler County has to offer. Begin your journey at the Cranberry Historical Society's Sample School. See what it was like to attend school 125 years ago. Continue your path to Zelenople and visit the Buhl and Passavant Houses built in the early 1800's. Each home features collections of household items brought from Germany.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch at the Kaufman House in Zelenople, where you will find excellent food in a historic atmosphere.

Afternoon

Then spend time in one of only 50 National Historic Landmark Districts. Harmony was the first home of the Harmony Society and was later resettled by Mennonites. Don't miss the chance to see this little town with big history, from Native Americans and the French and Indian War, to the Oil Era. Take Route 68 to Evans City. Stop at Providence Plantation's Living History Center for 18th century entertainment, storytelling and living historian presentations.

DAY 2

Morning

After breakfast, you are off to the wonderful history-filled atmosphere of Butler. Begin your day at the Lowrie/Shaw House, home of the Butler County Historical Society. This house was once the home of Butler County's only senator, Walter Lowrie. Exit the Lowrie/Shaw house and march toward East Jefferson Street to Little Red School House. This school was the first public school in Butler, constructed in 1838. Proceed to West New Castle Street. At the Butler County Heritage Center, you will find an original Bantam "jeep" that was manufactured in Butler and a miniature, hand-crafted 3-ring circus.

Lunch

Have lunch in downtown Butler at Natil's Restaurant and Lounge for a casual and friendly dining experience.

Afternoon

Experience a collector's journey at the Maridon Museum. More than 800 art objects span some 3,000 years of Asian culture, with jade and ivory sculptures, German Meissen porcelains and much more. Then spend some time strolling down the Main Street of Butler where you will find shops of all sorts including antique stores, coffee shops, candy stores and many more.

Note: To make your history adventure even more exciting, plan your travel around one of our many events: Penn's Colony in September, Antique Gun Show in August, German dinners at Harmony Museum, evening programs at Providence Plantation, or classes at the Heritage School at Succop Conservancy.



Slippery Rock University's Old Stone House is another great historical stop. The building is a reconstructed 1822 inn, tavern and stagecoach stop. Be sure to check for special programs.



Want to learn a new trade or craft? Check out the Heritage School at Succop Conservancy, which offers relaxed learning for adults, in a tranquil native environment. Learn anything from bagpiping or blacksmithing to knifemaking and basketweaving!

Sample Itinerary

The Quirky Side of Butler County

Morning

Begin your day in Harmony at the Harmony Inn. A man named Louie was killed on the front steps and is supposedly haunting the inn to try to spread his idea of linking the past, present and future. Also in Harmony, visit the Harmony Society Cemetery and try moving the one-ton stone gate!

Head East on Route 68 to Butler. At the Butler County Airport, Amelia Earhart had long-range fuel tanks installed on her "Little Red Bus" and prepared for her record-breaking solo Atlantic crossing.

Lunch

In the parking lot of the airport's Runway Restaurant is an elevated cobra helicopter! Enjoy some lunch at this facility and check out the aviation memorabilia.

Afternoon

After lunch, scope out the Maridon Museum in Butler. Here they have netsukes, which are sculptures formed from wood or bone, used for tying a kimono or sash. They were based on people, plants or animals and can be rather humorous.

After Butler, travel East on Route 356 to Saxonburg. In Roebling Park, they have a replica of the Brooklyn Bridge. Seem odd? Well, John Roebling founded Saxonburg and was the designer of the Brooklyn Bridge. The model in the park stands in homage to him.

Dinner

Relax with a fine dinner at the Saxonburg Hotel. The hotel was built in 1832 and is perhaps haunted?!

Post-dinner, take Route 228 West to Mars. Didn't know you could get to Mars on the highway? Well, you can! While you're there, visit the spaceship for a one-of-a-kind photo opportunity. Why not send your friend some mail from Mars – bet he/she will be surprised! Remember the 1996 movie "Kingpin," starring Woody Harrelson? The opening scene says "Ocelot, Iowa 1969," well that's actually Mars, Pennsylvania!

Another Notable Stop

Haven't had enough quirks for one day? Along Route 8, between Butler and Slippery Rock is a Stealth Bomber! Actually, this enormous silver building is Playthings Etc., a toy store, but it is definitely worth a visit!

Note: To make your adventure even more quirky, plan your visit around one of our unique events. Visit Saxonburg in June to view the largest fireman's parade east of the Mississippi. The Pennsylvania Simply Sweet Onion Festival features an onion eating contest. Bring in the New Year at 6 p.m. on Dec. 31 at Harmony's Silvester Celebration because it's midnight in Germany. You have three chances to witness a vintage village that runs on steam in Portersville: May, August and October.



Visit Playthings Etc. on Route 8 – this toy store actually invites you to play! Adults and kids alike will have fun. The staff will even do demonstrations with pogo sticks and other neat gadgets.