

West Fulton, NY:

**The middle of nowhere
or the heart of paradise?
(or both!)**

Welcome to our tiny mountain hamlet. At first it may seem like a down-trodden slice of upstate NY, but West Fulton is actually a magical little place that many visitors never want to leave.

We want to share it with you.

How our worthless town became priceless:

Our hamlet was one of the few places that a family could freely own land as late as the 1800s in New York State. Once a Dutch colony, New York was under the patroon system, where only wealthy elites could hold patents. Commoners were relegated to the status of tenants — clearing the land, farming it, and then paying rent to the Patroons in perpetuity, from generation to generation (hence, the “Anti-Rent Wars” in the 1840’s, that won them some liberties).

But not in West Fulton. That’s because the Patroon Peter Smith, who was granted the patents up here (and who thought he was “marrying up” into a sweet land deal), quickly learned that the land was so worthless, tenants weren’t interested in contracts. It was too mountainous, rocky and hard-scrabble. He turned it over to his son Garrit, who wound up dividing it into smaller tracts and selling it off cheap to two types of buyers: prospectors (or outright thieves) who stripped the forests, sold off the timber and then abandoned the barren ground and continued west; and fiercely-independent (and maybe slightly quirky) families who dug in their heels and made life work in conditions so hostile, not even the Native Americans would settle here (they primarily only traveled through while hunting). It may have been

lousy land for farming or homesteading, but a body could own it free and clear. And that was worth something.

Many of the original settlers' descendants are still in town today, and we feel that the character traits of those founding personalities — independent, scrappy, and resourceful — live on and have come to define this place now.

Folks drawn here tend to be from both sides of the political spectrum; there is a contingent of out-of-the-box artists, actors, theater professionals and musicians, in addition to farmers, craftspeople, contractors, trappers, hunters, and classic “do whatever it takes to keep a roof over my head-ers.” It’s a motley place, where the junk cars, blue tarps, and scrap heaps are as much a part of our local economy and culture as the the waterfalls swimming holes, hiking trails, multi-generational farms, craft beverages, arts festivals, fresh food and live concerts. We like it that way.

We’ve left you a few classic books to peruse during your stay: *Time Wearing Out Memory* is a collection of photographs of the region, many taken within this town’s borders (one, nearly outside your front window - see if you can find it!). *The Golden Age of Homespun* is a first-person account of a commoner’s daily life in this county in the 1800s. We’ve found that it is a wonderful read to help envision the thoughts and daily actions of the people who first called these fields and ridges their forever-home. Also, there is *The Schoharie Valley* with lots of old photos of the 19th century.

While you're here

Groceries, Gas, Etc.

For locally-sourced foods:

Sap Bush Hollow Farm Store & Cafe (downstairs or across the street, depending on which vacation rental you're visiting) has our farm's grassfed lamb & beef and pastured eggs, pork and poultry, all available 24-7 in our Honor Store, the little red shed at the back of the parking lot. Additionally, we stock a variety of basic grocery and dairy items, fresh-roasted direct-trade coffee & locally blended teas and locally produced treats. The store is open 24-7. You can pay with cash, check, Venmo, or write "BILL ME," along with an email address, on your invoice slip.

The Cafe is open Saturdays from 9-2 from April through the last Saturday before Christmas. We bake fresh pastries (regular and gluten-free) each Saturday morning, and we serve hearty farm-to-table breakfasts, lunches & brunch, along with great bloody Mary's and a small selection of wines & beers.

Barbers Farm (3617 State Rte 30, Middleburgh). Situated in the scenic Schoharie Valley, these folks do gorgeous local produce year-round, and they also stock other local grocery necessities that may spare you from having to trek to an actual grocery store. They have a nice collection of handmade crafts and books from our town, too. Many people travel there from as far away as New York City and the capital district to buy their bulk produce for canning, freezing and winter storage. Their prices are EXTREMELY reasonable. Additionally, they produce and bottle *the BEST* potato vodka we've ever tasted - and we've tasted *a lot!* They have a sampling room where you can "try before you buy" (which you undoubtedly will!). Winter hours are Sat-Sun 9-4, Summer hours: open seven days 9-5.

Bohringers' Fruit Farm (3992 State Route 30, Fulton). Open in the summer and fall, Bohringers is the place to go to pick strawberries, blueberries & raspberries while gazing around you at the stunning Schoharie Valley and neighboring Vroman's Nose. If you aren't into U-pick, their road stand has ready-picked produce featuring their fruits, plus some other fruits brought in from the Hudson Valley or purchased through the Albany produce markets.

Valley Market (4448 NY-30, Middleburgh) is a modest grocery store located in Middleburgh and offers your basic grocery items. Open daily 8am to 8 pm. There's a Barbeque take-out place next door as well (highonthehogbbqco.com)

Honest Weight Food Coop (100 Watervliet Ave, Albany). If you're here for a longer stay and you need some specific natural/organic food items, Honest Weight is an

amazing resource. Open every day 8-10, it's about 50 minutes from here. They have a vast array of organic, special-diet, and gourmet foods. They have a gourmet cheese counter that puts the best NYC gourmet shops to shame. They also have cosmetics, supplements and local farm products, a bakery, prepared foods and a hot food buffet if you need to grab a meal while you're there.

For 24 hour grocery needs:

Price Chopper: 105 Plaza Lane, Cobleskill

Wal-Mart: 139 Merchant place, Cobleskill

both also have a pharmacy; also

Walgreens 735 E Main, (8a-9p), and

CVS, 726 E Main (8a-9p) Cobleskill

Kindling and firewood:

Agway: 239 W. Main Street, Cobleskill

Middleburgh Hardware: 316 Main Street, Middleburgh

Gas:

Gas stations can be found by heading over the mountain to Cobleskill, or down the mountain and through the valley into Middleburgh. You have a 15-20 minute drive to stations in either direction, so be mindful of this if you're running low!

Massage Therapists

Our favorites are:

Sarah Attanasio at The Still Point Studio 513 W Main Street in Cobleskill. You can visit www.TheStillPointStudio.com to book online.

Larry Rockwell of Fireside Massage. Larry does massage out of his house (about 12 minutes from here), or will come to the apartment. He's very good and specializes in therapeutic massage work. You can email him at Larry-Rockwell@nycap.rr.com. If he doesn't answer immediately, he may have lost your message (he's somewhat new to email). Just write to him again. You can also call him at (518) 657-9923. While this is a cell phone, the last time we spoke, Larry was unsure how to text...So it is probably best to ring him and wait for him to pick up, rather than text!

Nearest Restaurants (besides ours, of course!)

This is a *partial* list; please Google “restaurants near me” for a more complete listing (plus there’s all the usual fast food on E Main St, Cobleskill). Listed below are some of the independent restaurants we know.

Check the websites listed for menus, reviews and hours.

Cobleskill:

(First four are near the movie theatre and park!)

The Cowboy’s Taqueria 549 Main St
Mexican Street Food and drinks

Bull’s Head Inn 105 Park Pl
Traditional American
bullsheadinncobleskill.com

Chieftains 584 Main St
Irish-style Pub
(518) 823-4208, facebook

Pizza Shack 558 Main St
Pizza and Italian-American dine-in and take-out
pizzashackcobleskill.com

Cobleskill Diner 117 Granite St
Classic diner faire
thecobleskilldiner.com

Middleburgh:

Hubies Pizza 325 Main St
Pizza to go
(518) 827-5955, facebook

Middle Village Pasta & Grill 334 Main St
middlevillagepastaandgrill.com

Under The Nose 207 Mill Valley Rd
Sandwiches etc. and bakery goodies
underthenose.com

High on the Hog 174 Marjorie Ln
St. Louis Style BBQ, sandwiches, burgers
highonthehogbbqco.com

Schoharie:

The Farmers Beef and Brew 305 Main St
Farm-to-Table Dine-in
thefarmersbeefandbrew.com

El Taco Shack 307 Main St
Mexican Dine-in and Take-out
el-taco-shack.edan.io

PLEASE NOTE: *Due to the Covid 19 Virus restrictions, all of these businesses are sure to have altered access and availability. Please be sure to consult the websites provided or call the business before making your visit!*

Things to do

Right outside your door

1. **Sap Bush Cafe:** If you happen to be here on a Saturday morning from 9-2 c'mon in and see us. This is the local hang out. The coffee is considered some of the best you'll find in all of upstate, there's a weekly prix fixe farm-to-table luncheon special, plus fresh-baked pastries and a hearty breakfast/brunch/lunch menu. Oh, and we have great local beer, wine, cider and mead, and specialty cocktails too. We are known for being very GF-friendly, but we're also serious about our croissants.
2. **Panther Creek:** Walk into the back yard behind the cafe and follow the path down to Panther Creek. Have a seat and groove on the cool air and running water, or put on a pair of creek stompers and wade around. You'll eventually come to some pools that are deep enough to plunge in for a cooling dip. Please wear shoes into the water to protect your feet!
3. **The Park:** When you turn to walk toward the crossroads in the Hamlet, about a few hundred feet you come upon our tiny park, on the right hand side (2 houses up), at 858 W. Fulton Rd. It's simple, but there are cool shade trees, creek access for exploring, swings, a slide, a picnic bench and a tiny **Schoolhouse Museum**. There's also a **Little Free Library** there, where you can choose a book to read. No need to return it! Interested in leaving books behind? This is the place to do it. Our neighbors & future guests will enjoy them!
4. **The Long Path:** The Long Path stretches from NYC all the way to the Adirondacks. Here in West Fulton, we're on corridor 7B of this hiking trail, and you can pick up a section of it by walking past the park to the crossroads, and turning right onto Patria Road. Walk up Patria until you cross the little bridge. The trail head has been re-located .8 mi up Patria Road, just opposite Green Briar Farm. (A couple of dozen yards further on the road is Patria Spring - see #8). The trailhead starts off in an old pasture, then wanders uphill and into the woods and over the mountain, and eventually, down into Middleburgh and Vroman's Nose- follow green trail blazes. It's a really pretty woodland hike, cool in the summer with lots of shade cover, and you can disappear for a few blissful hours.
5. **Rooted Movement:** Walk up to the crossroads, cross the bridge and go up a few houses to number 885 West Fulton Road, and you'll encounter one of the best yoga and pilates instructors you'll ever meet. Rebecca Brown & her husband Boris have been slowly restoring this property to create a studio for yoga, pilates, breath work & meditation. See the class schedule and make a reservation at www.rootedmovementny.com.

6. **Panther Creek Arts:** While you're here, be sure to walk up to the crossroads and visit the big old white building on the corner of Sawyer Hollow and West Fulton Road. If there's an upcoming concert, it will be announced there (you can also visit www.panthercreekarts.com to scan for upcoming events). If you see a bunch of people milling around, it could be a gathering of neighbors working at restoring the building, or just having a pot-luck. They are extremely welcoming to strangers, especially if you're the kind to pitch in and help. Stop to say "hi," and you might find yourself working, feasting and partying with the locals.
7. **Bite Me Café:** On Saturdays, Cornelia, the matron of Panther Creek Arts, also prepares a small specialty take-out food service, known as Bite Me Café, offering quiches, soups and the like. Check panthercreekarts.com/tickets for availability and menu.
8. **Scrumpy Ewe Cider Tasting Room:** Opened in May 2018, Ryan McGiver, a really cool local guy who happens to be a stone mason and highly accomplished Irish musician in addition to a cider maker, has taken this old cabin and converted it to a tasting room for his gorgeous dry ciders made in the French and Old English tradition with local apples. Go to the crossroads and turn left onto Sawyer Hollow, and walk up the road maybe a half mile. It is the first building on the right (a little white cabin) after you pass the church house. Check his hours first by visiting scrumpyewecider.com. In the summer months, he often has live music.
9. **Patria Spring:** Folks from all over the county come to this spring to collect the water. If you go to the crossroads, turn right and walk (or drive) one mile up Patria Road. Where the paved road turns to dirt road, the spring will be a white pipe on your left, across from a breathtaking view of mountains and valleys. If you use any containers from your vacation rental to retrieve water, we do ask that you leave the jars behind when you check out, so that our next guests can use them. (Of course, if you're filling all those jars, you might prefer to drive or ride a bike, rather than walk!!).
10. **West Fulton Ashtray Museum:** Yup. It's quirky. And memorable. Walk up the street and turn left at the crossroads. Our neighbor Paul Wilson's labor of love, The West Fulton Ashtray Museum, is two doors up, in the little gray shed next to his house. He's typically open Saturday and Sunday afternoons in spring, summer and fall, but he'll also just let you in if he happens to be home. Email him at WFATmuseum@gmail.com to schedule a visit.

Five Minutes' Drive From Your Door

Boucks Falls Hike (hiking, swimming)

Moderately strenuous, 2 miles round-trip.

Bouck's Falls is just 2.9 miles down the road from where you are standing. Turn left when you pull out of the cafe parking lot (the opposite direction of the hamlet's crossroads), and head toward Route 30. Drive exactly 2.9 miles (passing Rossman Fly road, and then Bear Ladder Road on your right). 0.2 miles after you pass Bear Ladder Rd, you will see a nondescript pull-off on the left side of the road, across from a fluorescent yellow school bus sign. That pull off is your stop. Look around in the weeds and the scrub on the side of the road and you will see the start of the unmarked trail.

About the trail: This trail is on private property and is made available through the generosity of the neighbors who own the land. Please honor their care and stewardship by treating this special place as you would your own back yard! As you head down the ravine, you'll notice that the trail seems to switch back and forth a bit. Don't worry. It will lead you to the water! Stay on the path! When you get down to the stream, be prepared for a little creek stomping. We recommend you choose shoes that you can wear into the water. Turn left and head upstream. You'll know when you have arrived, because it is a gorgeous natural cathedral. Bring your bathing suit!

The owners have requested that you NOT post pictures of the place on social media sites to help minimize visitation.

NOT A HIKE SUITABLE IN WINTER - beautiful, but hazardous!

Sawyer Hollow to Looking Glass Pond Hike (hiking, snowshoeing)

Moderately strenuous, 2 miles round-trip

This is another section of The Long Path, and it's a beautiful day hike, showcasing a gorgeous Catskill mountain stream with numerous little waterfalls. While they are not as dramatic as Bouck Falls, they are no less stunning, and the trail is much less visited.

To get to the trail head: At the crossroads, turn left onto Sawyer Hollow Road, and drive approximately 1.5 miles. Parking for the trail will be on a grassy pull out area on your left. It is marked by a state land sign that reads "Burnt-Rossman Hills." Once you park, walk about 50 yards back down Sawyer Hollow, and you'll find the trail head on your right. It is marked with a fishing access sign and green paint trail markers. It meanders along Panther Creek, then ascends the hill and ends at the top, on a dirt road. At that point, you can turn around and go back down, or, if you turn right and walk a short distance, you will come to **Looking Glass Pond**, which has a nice trail, fishing access, and lovely birding and picnic sites.

Looking Glass Pond (hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, fishing)
2 miles, easy-moderate; Handicap accessible gravel/boardwalk trails

Turn left out of the cafe parking lot (again, you're going in the opposite direction of the crossroads) and drive 1.5 miles and turn right onto Rossman Hill Road. Follow the road for 2.8 miles and the parking lot for Looking Glass will be on your left. As you leave your car and approach the pond, the start of the trail will be to your left (the terminus is on your right. If you do it in reverse, it's easy to miss parts of it). This is a fabulous, un-groomed cross country ski or snowshoe route through the woods and around the pond, and a pleasant walk at any other time of the year. Toward the end, by the turn-off for the old Jones Cemetery, the trail brings you out onto the dirt road. Go right, and it will lead you to the last section of trail on the right.

If want to put in a few more miles, keep your skis on after you finish this trail and go a few hundred feet up to the seasonal dirt road on your right. (You can also access this road from a trailhead about a half mile in the trail, traveling clockwise.) These roads are maintained for snowmobiles, but x-c skiers, cyclists and hikers are also welcome. You can journey for hours here! There's also a number of old cemeteries along these roads.

Mallet Pond State Forest (natural site swimming, hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, sledding fishing)

1 mile round-trip, easy-moderate; handicap accessible: Note: this actually about a mile and a half longer if you ski or snowshoe in, because you'll have to park farther out in winter.

At the crossroads, turn left onto Sawyer Hollow Road, then drive approximately 3.1 miles, until you reach Rossman Valley Road. There is a large green farmhouse on the corner. Go one mile up the road to the next crossroad. If it is winter, pull over someplace here and take to the unplowed roads! Snowmobilers typically pack a path on this section, so it's a great long and safe run if you want to go sledding. If you're skiing or snowshoeing, the unplowed road goes for miles and the light and woods are just beautiful.

If you're here in the warmer months, turn right at this crossroad and venture down the dirt road maybe a mile or so. After you come up a hill around a bend, there will be a turn on the right for Mallet Pond. Drive down that lane and you will find the public parking area. Leave your car there, then hike about 1/5 mile down the dirt lane to Mallet Pond for a secret swim or picnic. Please: if you carry it in, carry it out!

Sap Bush Hollow Farm

As our guest, you are invited to make an appointment to visit Sap Bush Hollow Farm, where we raise grassfed and pastured livestock. The farm is nationally recognized as a leader in the sustainable agriculture movement, but also happens to be one of the prettiest spots in the region. Since we are a production farm, we need to schedule time to

accommodate you. We generally offer pre-arranged tours at 2pm on Saturdays. We meet up at the cafe at closing time. You can email shannon@sapbush.com to make a reservation. If you're here mid-week, we will make an exception if our schedule permits. To get to the farm, head toward the crossroads and drive 2.5 miles up West Fulton Road. Sap Bush Hollow will be the long driveway on your right, mailbox number 1314.

10 minutes' Drive from your door

Schoharie Creek Swimming Hole

Heading in the opposite direction of the crossroads, take Co Route 4 all the way down the mountain to where it T's at NY Route 30. Turn left. Drive 0.8 miles and the entrance to the swimming hole will be on your left, across from Readling Road. There are some well-worn easy-to-walk paths down to the water, and we recommend you stay on them, as there's a bit of poison ivy down there. But the swimming is gorgeous!

Breakabeen Waterfall and Swimming Hole

Nearly as majestic as Boucks' Falls, it's a fantastic swimming hole with a less strenuous hike in. You'll still need to scramble a bit, but the path down is clearer, there are no stream crossings, and a few ropes have been strung along the steepest parts to help keep you on your feet. The falls are just a quarter mile hike from the road. To get there, head in the opposite direction from the crossroads, down the mountain, all the way to where Route 4 T's at Route 30. Turn right. Drive 1.3 miles on Route 30, then turn left on Clauverwie Rd. You'll come in to the hamlet of Breakabeen. There's a nice general store on the left if you need to pick up some beer or ice cream (and the best car mechanic in the county is just down Wahalla Rd on the right). Otherwise, drive 0.8 miles on Clauverwie until you see the cemetery on your left. On the outside of the cemetery is a mausoleum with steps leading down to the road. The trail head is across the road, almost directly across from those steps. It is not marked, but it well worn and easy to identify. Be mindful not to park your car on the turn in the road (cars come through there fast), and not to park in the cemetery. There's a small pull off just below the trail head where you can leave your car.

Vroman's Nose Hike

1.7 miles to top Trailhead located at 207 Mill Valley Rd, Middleburgh, NY.
Hiking, April-November

This is probably the most-visited trail in all of Schoharie County. It starts along the forest floor, then climbs the only prominent (hill? mountain? peak? escarpment?) that sits along the Schoharie Valley floor, and leads visitors up to what we locals call "the dance floor," a flat rocky ledge that was once an 1800s-era party spot. It's a stunning place for a picnic, to gaze out at the Schoharie Valley and imagine the Revolutionary War unfolding, forage for wild blueberries, or study the dance floor for the names that were carved there centuries ago. A little café/bakeshop called Under The Nose is near the trailhead.

1857 Spirits Tasting Room @ Barbers' Farm

If you like vodka...HECK... Even if you DON'T like vodka, this is an extraordinary tasting experience. Elias Barber takes the potatoes his family grows in the fields around the distillery and converts them into world-class vodka. This is The. Best. Vodka. You will ever taste. We are certain of it (we've tasted a LOT of vodka. Trust us.). Check hours at 1857spirits.com.

15-25 minutes' Drive

Buck Hill Farm

185 Fuller Road, Jefferson
<http://buckhillfarm.com>

20 minutes over the mountain in the town of Jefferson is our favorite sugar shack, Buck Hill Farm. They serve a hearty breakfast on Sunday mornings, featuring their own maple syrup served at their sap house. If you're here in early spring, you can watch the maple sugaring in process!

Middleburgh Winery

2636 State Highway 145, Middleburgh, NY
middleburghwinery.com

Cozy indoor/outdoor space, gorgeous views of the vineyards and surrounding hills, outdoor games & amusements and truly lovely wines to boot. You won't go wrong here!

Helderberg Meadworks

6144 State Highway 30, Esperence (Delanson), NY
helderbergmeadworks.com

Okay, wow. We never really liked meads. Until we came here a'tasting. These guys are making truly exceptional meads, and they market them with the Viking drinking horns and heavy metal music to boot (we didn't know that's what Vikings listened to?!). Okay, playlist aside, this is an exceptional tasting experience, and we recommend them highly.

Downtown Middleburgh

Green Wolf Tap Room

If we were going to have a night out after dark, we'd start by visiting the Green Wolf tap room (<http://www.greenwolfales.com>) for their local craft beers (they also carry all the other local spirits as well, of which there are several). They regularly have live music as well. If you want to stay in but still sip these fine brews, we offer "growlers" of Green Wolf ale and stout to take out from our café taps downstairs.

Middleburgh Library (www.middleburghlibrary.org). It may seem unusual to put a library into a tour guide, but you should know about this place if you are a folk music lover. Sonny Ochs (sister of the late Phil Ochs) has a passion for the folk music scene, and has taken it upon herself to bring it to our community. She finds folk musicians traveling through the area on tours and offers them food and lodging in exchange for coming to our local library for an intimate evening performance. Tickets are sold at the door, and are usually very cheap. Check the library's website for the performance schedule.

The Everything Shoppe: 333 Main Street, Middleburgh: Walk around the beautiful village of Middleburgh and take in the quaint little shops, cafes, diners and the library. You might notice something interesting. It's a thriving village...all built around a working-class population. Many of the shops contain thrift sections. Buying "used" (as well as buying direct from the farm at Barbers, Schoharie Valley Farms, or Shauls or Cypress Hill) has always been a way of life around here. It's not an upscale trend. It's simply our economic reality. And the Everything Shoppe, run by our local senior citizens' council, epitomizes that. This used clothing and home goods store serves a powerful community need with great prices in a beautiful space. It's lovely just to walk in and feel the love and spirit of the place...Or to pick up a bargain!

Middleburgh Coffee Company: 320 Main Street, Middleburgh: Yes. We like to believe we have the best coffee and pastries in the WORLD. But hey. We're running a farm, and our cafe is only open 30 Saturdays per year. SO. Check these folks out. The coffee is yummy, and the baked goods are all homemade and DELICIOUS.

Cobleskill and area

Arts in the Park

The center park on main street in Cobleskill is home to a lovely summer concert series. Bring some lawn chairs and a picnic and hear live music Thursdays evenings at 7 pm. Visit www.cobleskillpartnership.com for the schedule and updates, especially if there are thunderstorms in the area.

The Park Theatre

www.parktheatre.net

This is the local movie house which has been showing "talkies" since 1922 (actually, its first screening was a silent film, "*The First Born.*") Now they show current release films, usually in the "family" genre. Get this: all tickets, only \$5.00!

Howe Caverns

www.howecaverns.com

255 Discovery Drive, Howes Cave, NY

This cave, discovered long ago by a farmer searching for a lost cow, is arguably the county's most-visited tourist attraction. The underground tour is a cool 52 degrees in summer, and even has a little underground boat ride that kids love. They also have outdoor activities there, including a zip line, rock climbing wall, H2Ogo balls, ropes course and air jumpers.

Gobblers Knob

www.gobblersknob.us

Rt 145, Cobleskill

These folks have a pretty neat miniature golf course based on local landmarks, as well as an ice cream parlor, driving range and go-kart track.

Iroquois Indian Museum

www.iroquoismuseum.org

Open in the spring, summer and fall, this museum introduces visitors to the native people of this region with a collection of art and artifacts. They maintain a gallery of works from contemporary Iroquois artists, have programming throughout the season, and have a gift shop featuring native crafts.

Studio for Art and Craft & Cat Nap Books

www.thestudioforartandcraft.com

Located on Main Street in Cobleskill, this local business has been a boon to Cobleskill's down town. More than just a typical paint-your-own pottery studio, these folks are set up to help you do lots of different crafts, from jewelry making, to painting, fused glass and lots more. They are always finding something new that families like to do. Our kids like to settle in at a table to work on something while we slip across the street to the newly opened **La Taqueria** for a margarita (or walk down to the **Brick House Bakery** or **Tagua Nut Café** to grab a tea or coffee). Then we walk back in and settle in for some great hang-out time. Once we're finished, *they* handle the clean-up while we enjoy walking next door to **Cat Nap Used Book Store**. Among other things, they have a great collection of local history, children's books, agricultural history, and cookbooks.

Schoharie Valley Kayak Rentals

Located at 213 Bridge St, Schoharie Phone: 518-337-8145.

As you meander around Schoharie County, you'll notice that the Schoharie Creek figures prominently into our psyche; whether it's her placid beauty that soothes the spirit as we drive along the valley floor, her swimming holes that urge us to ditch work and take a plunge, or her raging waters in winter and spring that have been known to wipe out our villages. We love and fear our Schoharie, but if you're here in Summer or Fall, she's docile and lazy, welcoming exploration. That's the time to get out on her waters. Spend a day, and bring a swim suit and a picnic lunch.

Village of Margaretville

Margaretville is a pleasant Catskill town that has had a bit of a rebirth in recent years. Featuring a nice little cluster of boutique shops, creative dining, and local art galleries and theaters. En route, you'll pass the Blenheim Covered Bridge, the Pakatakan Farmers Market in the historic round barn (Seasonal, Saturdays), Minekill State Park and Falls Overlook. Take Rt. 4 down to NYS Rt. 30, turn right (south) and keep on going till you're there, about 40 miles.

Day Trips

Cooperstown

About 45 minutes from here, Cooperstown is usually best-known for **The Baseball Hall of Fame**, making it EXTREMELY crowded in July (especially Hall of Fame induction weekend, the last weekend in July). But even if you don't like baseball, it's worth the trip to this picturesque town that sits on the edge of Otsego Lake. We like to go over early in the morning in the summer on a weekday, so we can find a parking space down by the water. Parking gets tough if you arrive after 9am, and is impossible on weekends. When we get there early, we slip our kayaks into the water, or walk around the village. Then we walk over to the **Otesaga** for the buffet lunch in The Glimmerglass Dining room overlooking the water. The food is decent, and the dessert buffet is eye-popping. But the real treat is the shimmering water of lake Otsego. In nice weather, you can dine on the porch. In bad weather, you can sit in the dining room beside the windows overlooking the water and imagine you're on the Titanic - (well, imagine it *before...* you know...)

Throughout the year we bring the kids to Cooperstown for **The Farmers Museum**, a wonderful living history museum that focuses on agrarian life during the Golden Age of Homespun in New York State (see the book we left for you!). They also have the world's coolest carousel, featuring hand-carved New York State animals and figures by New York State artists. Across the street is **The Fenimore Museum**, a beautiful building overlooking the lake that is worth visiting, even if you aren't interested in art! This museum hosts traveling exhibits of world-class art, providing us local folks with an opportunity to view works that we might never see otherwise. See what they're featuring at fenimoreartmuseum.org. They also have a world class collection of Native American and folk art.

If you crave a beach, pack a picnic when you go and head over to **Glimmerglass State Park** for a day of swimming (you can also bring canoes and kayaks in there). There are also lots of smaller "pocket parks" around the lake (check www.thisiscooperstown.com/subcategory/outdoors/parks); we've enjoyed Brookwood Point, just north of the village on Hwy 80 - usually nice and quiet, Italianate gardens, and they have kayak and paddleboard rentals as well. And if you like the opera, **Glimmerglass Opera** brings in world class shows every summer (www.glimmerglass.org).

Hudson

Once a whaling town known for its prostitutes, then for down-and-out drug addicts, Hudson (45 minutes' drive from here) has now become a beautiful village with lots of antique stores, mid-range & upscale restaurants (we're rather fond of **Baba Louie's Pizza**, and coffee at **Moto's**), patisseries, and upscale thrift stores. Just outside of Hudson is one of our favorite places to visit: **Olana**, a New York State historical

treasure, Frederic Church's masterpiece home. Learn more at www.olana.org. The region also has many other historic estates open to the public.

Rensselaerville

Huyck Preserve

<http://www.huyckpreserve.org>

Rensselaerville is a classic upstate New York community nestled between mountain peaks, and the Huyck preserve offers a great way to experience it. The easy 3.5 mile Myosotis Lake trail leads hikers to some glorious waterfalls, then around the lake with lots of pristine views, and lots of shady walking for hot summer days. The coolest thing about this hike, we think, is that it links over to Kuhar Family Farm's little cafe. Like our family cafe, it has limited hours of operation, however. They are open Tuesday evenings and Saturdays from 10am until 2pm. They serve GREAT grassfed burgers. We like to plan our hikes over there to pop over from the trail right around lunch or supper time!

Albany

New York State Museum

<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov>

About 1 hour from here.

We're extremely proud of our state museum, and find ourselves taking day trips there throughout the year. Among many other treasures, they have the BEST exhibit we've ever seen about the first people of New York, and how their way of life evolved. The exhibit ends with this FANTASTIC walk-in immersive diorama of an Iroquois Long house. Kids LOVE it. They also have a free carousel on the top floor of the museum that overlooks a panoramic view of the capital city. We like to go there, then drive up Madison Avenue for lunch at **El Locos Mexican Cafe** (www.ellocomexicancafe.com), then wander down to **Stacks Espresso Bar** (260 Lark Street) for a perfectly-executed latte. Then we "walk it off" in beautiful **Washington Park**. Or, we skip the restaurant/cafe scene, head over to Honest Weight Food Coop for some wholesome takeout foods and picnic in the park.

Albany Institute of History & Art

<https://www.albanyinstitute.org>

About 1 hour from here.

This is a fabulous little museum with some extraordinary exhibits. Not to be missed! See the restaurant/food recommendations under the state museum.

Schenectady

Proctors Theater,

www.proctorstheater.org

This theater, less than an hour from here, brings world-class performances to upstate New York. Our kids love visiting it for the architecture alone, but all year long we take time off to attend shows here that we'd never be able to afford in NYC. Right around the corner is **Mexican Radio**, a funky ambiance-rich Mexican restaurant that they *plead* with us to bring them to every time we visit. (You may have gathered that our family likes Mexican food...)

Via Aquarium,

<https://viaaquarium.com>

All right. What do you do with a dead shopping mall? These folks came up with a novel concept. They put an aquarium in it. It has a depressing down-and-out feel as you approach, but if you have little kids, this is worth it. Our kids love this aquarium because it's accessible and not overwhelming. They can't get lost, and the exhibits are really well done. We are especially fond of the exhibit on local fish. Across the way in this revived-dead-mall, for those who like seizure-inducing journeys back to the eighties, is a video arcade. Anthropologically speaking, this is a fascinating trip for those of us who ever wondered, if we killed all the malls, what might become of them...Once we leave the aquarium, our favorite place for lunch is to drive to **Stuyvesant Plaza** in Albany/Guilderland (stuyvesantplaza.com) to find lunch in one of the *slightly* but not too upscale restaurants there; among the many interesting shops, there also happens to be yet another great independent bookstore, **The Bookhouse**, a local Albany institution.

Plotter Kill Nature Preserve

<https://digthefalls.com>

3938 Mariaville Rd., Schenectady NY

If you like waterfalls, this place is heaven. Within a short hike from the parking lot you'll see two magnificent waterfalls, easily accessed. For the more adventurous, the "red trail" leads you on a wild (moderately difficult) hike with a few water crossings up, over, through and around this astounding ravine, on a tour of over twelve waterfalls, with the best site at the farthest point out (a great picnic spot, we've found). We recommend using the downloadable maps available through the Alltrails app if you tackle this adventure, as the "red" trail is not well marked. It is reportedly a 5.3 mile hike, but if you take the side hikes that lead you down to the edges of the different falls, you are likely to trek closer to eight miles; so pack lots of water, keep your GPS handy, bring lunch and prepare to make a day of it. It's worth the adventure!!! You'll only be about 15 minutes outside

downtown Schenectady, so if you feel like grabbing dinner when you come off the trail, **Mexican Radio** can cool you off with a great margarita.

Saratoga

Saratoga is a little farther afield, but we often go for a grand day out. It's about a 90 minute drive, 40 minutes north of Albany. And while it is generally known for its race track (open in August, when the city is jammed with tourists), we actually think it's worth the trip for the dog-watching alone. The people in Saratoga LOVE their dogs, and every variety can be seen prancing down the street. Saratoga is home to the famous folk music venue, **Caffe Lena** (caffelena.org), where we've seen some world class concerts in their renowned intimate setting. For fine dining, you can't beat **The Mouzon House** restaurant (mouzonhouse.net) for farm-to-table Creole food. We've *never* had a meal there that wasn't exceptional (conveniently, they also feature Sap Bush Hollow meats!!). We also love to while away the hours in **Northshire Bookstore**, an immense independent bookstore set up to let customers comfortably disappear into the stacks. If we're hitting a show at Caffe Lena on a summer's night, we love to wander the main street after, as the place really comes alive. We always wander in to **Kilwins** confectionary for enormous portions of homemade ice cream on waffle cones, homemade chocolate and candy-dipped marshmallows or apples on a stick, and other sundry diabetes-inducing delights.

Saratoga is, of course, the site of many important battles of the American Revolution and there are several interpretive venues to visit including the **Saratoga National Historic Park** (www.nps.gov/sara/index) and National Cemetery.

PLEASE NOTE: *Due to the Covid 19 Virus restrictions, all of these businesses are sure to have altered access and availability. **Please be sure to consult the websites provided or call the business before making your visit!***