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Lakeside glamping, a presidential home, and international eats in Lancaster | Field Trip

Tour a president's mansion, chill at a lakeside cabin, and groove inside a Japanese listening lounge in Amish country — here's how to spend a weekend in Lancaster, Pa., just 90 minutes from Philly.



Road trip to Lancaster

The Inquirer/ Getty Images

by Beatrice Forman

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Lancaster, Pa., is technically a city, but it's packed with the charm of a Hallmark movie town: strollable streets lined with boutiques, Instagram-worthy late-fall foliage, and — yes — even the occasional Amish couple riding horse and buggy just beyond city limits.

Located about 70 miles west of Philadelphia, Lancaster is where centuries of [Amish and Mennonite farm traditions](#) meet (and often support) an [up-and-coming restaurant scene](#) with some of the best [farm-to-table food](#) and [cocktails](#) in the U.S. It's a place where tourists can learn how to churn butter the old-fashioned way and then end the night at [a Brooklyn-cool listening bar](#). That's exactly what an Inquirer reporter did when she took a last minute trip to Lancaster.

To get your weekend started, take a 90-minute drive past picturesque farms on I-76 and US Route-222, or hop on the Amtrak's Keystone line, which drops you at the edge of downtown.

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📍 Lancaster, PA is so much more than horse and buggies. Downtown Lancaster is so one of my favorite cities to walk, wine and dine, especially during the holidays. 🎄 🎅 🎉 @Discover Lancaster COMMENT your favorite place to visit in Downtown Lancaster and TAG who you're bringing along on your next LancLanc getaway. 🎉 🎈 Places featured in video 🎊 C'est La Vie 🎊 Ream Jewelers 🎊 Shot and Bottle 🎊 The Belvedere Inn 🎊 Lancaster Central Market 🎊 Details 🎊 Plough Don't forget to follow me for all things Pennsylvania travel, adventure and lifestyle.



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Stay: Red Run Resort or Lancaster Arts Hotel

Hear us out: This upscale campground is 30 minutes outside of Lancaster by car, but it has the vibe of an all-year summer camp for adults. [Red Run Resort](#)'s 21 lakeside A-frame studios and cabins are homey yet luxurious, with spa-style bathrooms with soaking tubs, plush king-sized beds, and private fire pits. The campground also has an on-site pumpkin patch and occasional line dancing and bingo pop-ups, so guests don't have to go far for a bit of countryside flair.

If you're looking to stay in the city, the boutique [Lancaster Arts Hotel](#) transformed an 1800s [tobacco warehouse](#) into a living art gallery, displaying \$300,000 worth of art from local artists across its 63 guest rooms. It's walking distance from downtown and earns bonus points for free parking and complimentary bikes to explore the city

📍 877 Martin Church Road New Holland, Pa. 17557 (Red Run Resort) ; 300 Harrisburg Avenue, Lancaster, Pa. 17603 (Lancaster Arts Hotel)

Caffeinate: Square One Coffee

After checking in, fuel up at [Square One Coffee](#), a local micro-roastery whose Ethiopian blend beat out more than 2,000 entries to [win a Good Food Award for best coffee](#). Their flagship Duke Street cafe is a solid pick for both coffee snobs and "little treat" connoisseurs, specializing in single-origin espressos and aromatic lattes in flavors like orange blossom honey or Blue Zen, a sky-colored concoction of butterfly pea powder, jasmine syrup, and chamomile tea.

Home baristas can detour to Square One's Elizabeth Avenue warehouse for [public tastings](#) or an [Espresso 101 class](#).

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📍 145 N. Duke Street, Lancaster, Pa. 17602

Thrift: Basura, Space, BUiLDiNG CHARACTER

Take your coffee to go and spend the afternoon exploring a trio of downtown Lancaster's curated thrift and vintage boutiques. This reporter's advice is to pack light, because it's easy to bring an outfit (or two) and a suitcase full of tchotchkes home.

Start at [Basura](#) for racks of salvaged denim and leather, colorful sweaters, and quirky tees before heading over to [Space](#), which specializes in mid-century modern wares that feel like they were ripped from a *Mad Men* set. Then, close out your shopping spree by heading to [BUiLDiNG CHARACTER](#), a vintage and artisan marketplace with 80-plus vendors selling everything from [butterflies preserved in glass](#) and the [occasional fossil](#) to [old school suits](#) and [antique jewelry](#).

📍 106 E. King Street, Lancaster, Pa. 17602 (Basura); 24 W. Walnut Street, Lancaster, Pa. 17603 (Space); 342 N. Queen Street, Lancaster, Pa. 17603 (BUiLDiNG CHARACTER)

Pick-and-mix: Sweetish Candy

Lancaster's Sweetish Candy was importing Scandinavian sweets long before pick-and-mix bags [were all the rage](#). Sweetish Candy owner Tyler Graybeal started selling Swedish treats [in 2019](#) and now stocks more than 70 colorful candies for shoppers to dump into customizable bags and buckets. Graybeal's selection includes still hard-to-find [BUBS gummies](#), plus varieties of licorice tubes, pastel marshmallows, and chocolate eggs. This sugar rush doesn't come cheap, though: Two pounds of candy cost an Inquirer reporter \$47.

For snacks that don't cause a toothache, [Lancaster Pickle Company](#) is across the street with barrels of assorted pickle chips, dill pretzels, and — yes — even half-sour lip balm.

📍 301 N. Queen Street Lancaster, Pa. 17603

Stroll: Conestoga Greenway Trail

This [2.6 mile out-and-back trail](#) wraps a horseshoe around the scenic Conestoga River and has three access points with parking lots at Duke Street, Broad Street, and Conestoga Drive. The greenway winds its way around the water and through the trees, so it's perfect for late-fall leaf peeping and serene nature walks. The river is a favorite of duck flocks, turtles, and deers stopping for a drink.

Learn: James Buchanan's Wheatland

Built in 1828 as a prominent lawyer's mansion, Wheatland changed hands several times before landing in 1848 with James Buchanan — then secretary of state and later, by many historians' accounts, [one of America's worst presidents](#). Buchanan lived here until his death in 1868.

Preserved by the nonprofit LancasterHistory, the home offers guided tours of Buchanan's original furnishings and 19th-century décor. From Nov. 16 through Dec. 20, the [tours](#) take on a festive twist for Yuletide at Wheatland, exploring the family's holiday traditions.

📍 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, Pa. 17603

Imbibe: Hi-Fi Izakaya

Tucked in the back of noodle bar Issei is [Hi-Fi Izakaya](#), a speakeasy-esque listening lounge where DJs spin vinyl jazz, soul, and pop records until last call. The space is sleek and sexy, with a cocktail menu that adds Asian flair to standard drinks, like a gimlet mixed with matcha syrup, a Thai iced tea infused espresso martini, and an old fashioned made with aged Japanese whiskey.

📍 40 W. Orange Street, Lancaster, PA 17603

Dine: Quips Pub

Tourists dine at [Passerine](#), the French-inspired farm-to-table brasserie that landed on the New York Times' [best restaurant lists in 2024](#). Locals head to [Quips Pub](#).

The cozy British watering hole has been serving oversized platters of crispy fish and chips and traditional bangers and mash since 1984. Regulars come by often, bartenders said, for hefty burgers and sarnies (British slang for sandwich), plus an extensive list of imported beers German, Irish, and English beers.

📍 457 New Holland Avenue, Lancaster, Pa. 17602

Indulge: Fox Meadow Creamery

Fox Meadow Creamery's Leola location is exactly halfway between Quip's Pub and your cabin at Red Run, making it the perfect place to cap off a day of galavanting in the city. Fox Meadow churns its ice cream on-site with milk from cows raised on the creamery's dairy farm in nearby Ephrata, resulting in ultra-thick and rich scoops.

Fox Meadow's flavors changes with the seasons, so the late fall comes with vats of apple cream pie, pumpkin patch cheesecake, and venetian tiramisu ice creams, among others. And — before you ask — yes, they carry pints for you to take on the road.

📍 193 E. Main Street, Leola, Pa. 17540

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