

Catskills Overview

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The Gorgeous Wilds -- and Culture -- of the Catskills Are Just a Short Drive from Big City Lights

There's a little piece of wilderness less than a day's drive from New York City and Philadelphia known for its beauty as well as its history.

The Catskill Mountains area to the northwest of the Big Apple offers visitors incredible vistas, hiking trails for the novice as well as the expert, modern as well as rustic lodging, skiing in the winter, sailing and swimming in the summer, fishing all year round (yes, even in winter for the hardy), farmer's markets, art galleries, as well as restaurants for every palate, from down-home cooking to international cuisine.

Washington Irving made the area famous with his tale of Rip Van Winkle. The Hudson River School of painters reveled in the area's natural beauty and created some of America's most iconic landscape paintings. Comedians traveling the "Borscht Belt" circuit honed their skills in the middle of the last century as they performed at the many summer resorts that once catered to folks wishing to escape the heat and grime of the city.

Hanker for history? It's all around you. Native Americans (remember *Last of the Mohicans*?) have been here for centuries. The Dutch arrived in the 17th century and their influence is still felt hundreds of years later. The wealthy -- think Rockefellers, Ghearys and Goulds -- built fabulous vacation homes (mansions, really) in the early part of the 1900s and several of those structures still stand. And let's not forget the aforementioned Borscht Belt: Not a few of the fabulous resorts of that era still welcome guests -- the Friar Tuck Inn included among them.

Looking for outdoor activities? Grab your skis (winter), your swimsuit (summer), your golf clubs (spring), your hiking boots (fall) -- this area. Get ready for some incredible pampering at the many resorts and spas in the area (all year 'round).

The Catskills are such a short drive from the big city. Won't you bring your family to the beauty that will surround here? Come for a weekend. Stay for a week. Or two. Or three. Or more! Just come. You won't be sorry.

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