



Destination Tour Options in Reading, PA

Updated 6/5/25 Subject to change.

WEDNESDAY

Wednesday FAM 1: Savoring the Past in Kutztown: Food and Art of the PA Germans

Themes: Cultural Heritage, Folk Art, Culinary Traditions

Travel Time: Longest stretch on bus: 30 minutes

Step into the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch Country and experience the traditions, tastes, and creative spirit of Kutztown, PA. The journey begins at the **Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center**, where living history demonstrations, folklife exhibits, and traditional crafts provide a vivid introduction to the region's roots. You'll gain an authentic perspective on the customs that have shaped this community for generations.

Next, we'll make a quick stop at **Kutztown Park** to view *Untitled (Figure Balancing on Dog)*, a vibrant sculpture by iconic pop artist and Kutztown native Keith Haring. This striking piece offers a glimpse into Haring's creative legacy and the enduring imprint of his art on his hometown.

We'll finish the trip at **Dietrich's Meats**, a family-owned market known for its old-world butchering techniques and unique PA Dutch delicacies. This is your chance to sample scrapple, smoked sausages, and other heritage foods rarely found outside the region.

We will then head straight to the Rodale Institute for our evening meal. *Please note that this trip does not return to the hotel until after 9 p.m. so bring what you need with you. A snack will be provided on the bus around 5 p.m.*

Wednesday FAM 2: Free to Explore: West Reading Your Way

Themes: Shopping, Culinary Exploration, Public Art, Local Culture

Travel Time: Longest stretch on bus: 15 minutes

Discover the vibrant energy of **West Reading**, a walkable small-town neighborhood bursting with creativity, charm, and culinary delights. Once you're dropped off on the lively Penn Avenue corridor, you'll have two hours of free time to make West Reading your own. Stroll through colorful alleys filled with murals, browse locally owned shops offering everything from fashion to home goods, or settle in at a café, brewery, or artisan bakery.

Art lovers can opt to visit the nearby **Reading Public Museum**, home to impressive collections of art, science, and cultural history, set within beautifully landscaped arboretum grounds. For those who want a little more flavor, there's also an optional visit to the **iconic Peanut Bar**, a century-old local favorite known for its quirky charm, classic pub fare, and floor-covered peanut shells.

Whether you're in the mood to shop, sip, or soak in the local art scene, this laid-back visit to West Reading is a perfect way to experience one of Pennsylvania's most unexpectedly cool neighborhoods.

Wednesday FAM 3: Trails & Tales: History and Nature in Berks County

Themes: History, Outdoor Recreation, Birding, Aviation

Travel Time: Longest stretch on bus: 20 minutes

This afternoon experience blends the charm of Berks County's historic past with the beauty of riverside trails, with an optional detour into the skies at the nearby Air Museum.

Explore the **Berks County Heritage Center** at your own pace, where historic buildings — including a working waterwheel, canal-era structures, and more — are brought to life by knowledgeable interpreters. Whether you're a history buff, casual explorer, or storyteller in search of local flavor, you'll find inspiration in the lives and legacies preserved here.

Just beyond the historic buildings, the **Union Canal Towpath Trail** invites you to stretch your legs along its serene five-mile riverside route. A favorite among birders and hikers, this peaceful path offers the chance to spot wildlife, enjoy the fresh air, and take in the natural beauty of Berks County. Don't forget your binoculars!

For those looking to add a high-flying finish, an optional trip to the **Mid-Atlantic Air Museum** offers a dramatic shift in perspective. Located just minutes away, this impressive collection of vintage aircraft and aviation history provides a fascinating complement to the day's exploration.

Whether your interests lie in canal locks or cockpit controls, this FAM offers a rewarding blend of heritage and outdoor discovery.

THURSDAY

Thursday FAM 1: Foundations of Freedom: PA's Colonial Past

Themes: Early American History, Cultural Heritage, Outdoor Recreation

Travel Time: Longest stretch on bus: 30 minutes

Step into the landscapes that shaped early America—where the stories of industry, frontier life, and natural beauty converge. This trip blends early American history with outdoor exploration, offering rich interpretation alongside scenic trails.

Start your morning at **Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site**, a beautifully preserved 18th-century iron plantation set amid forested trails and farmland. In addition to exploring the village's restored buildings and iron-making history, visitors can enjoy short walks on trails that wind through **French Creek State Park**, offering glimpses of wildlife and the surrounding woodlands that once supported the iron industry.

Next, journey to the **Daniel Boone Homestead**, the birthplace of the iconic frontiersman. The site showcases colonial life through original structures and interpreters, but it also invites visitors to stretch their legs on walking paths that weave through the 579-acre property, including wooded areas, pastures, and a picturesque lake, perfect for birdwatching or simply soaking in the historic setting.

Whether you're drawn to stories of independence or just looking for fresh air and scenic strolls, this experience offers the best of both worlds: a walk through history and through nature.

Thursday FAM 2: Soar into Nature at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

Themes: Conservation & Wildlife, Outdoor Recreation

Travel Time: Longest stretch on bus: 60 minutes

Spend your morning at **Hawk Mountain Sanctuary**, the world's first refuge for birds of prey. Founded in 1934, this globally recognized site has grown into a premier conservation training center, an active wildlife sanctuary, and one of the top locations in North America to witness the awe-inspiring fall raptor migration.

During your visit, Hawk Mountain's expert staff will provide an inside look at their conservation efforts and introduce you to one of their incredible raptor ambassadors, a rare chance to see these majestic birds up close.

Of course, no visit would be complete without a short hike along the sanctuary's scenic trails. Perched on the **Kittatinny Ridge** along the **Appalachian Flyway**, the trail leads to panoramic overlooks offering breathtaking views and a powerful connection to the landscape that draws raptors from around the world.

Thursday FAM 3: Go Underground: Natural Wonder at Crystal Cave

Themes: Natural Wonders, Geology, Family Fun

Travel Time: Longest stretch on bus: 45 minutes

Descend into a world of natural beauty and ancient geology at **Crystal Cave**, Pennsylvania's first show cave and a beloved attraction since 1871. This guided experience takes you beneath the surface to explore stunning crystal formations, dramatic rock chambers, and striking stalactites and stalagmites that have been forming for millions of years.

As you explore the cool, dimly lit cavern—a constant 54 degrees year-round—you'll hear stories of the cave's discovery, its role in local lore, and the science behind its breathtaking formations. Whether you're a geology enthusiast or simply love an otherworldly experience, Crystal Cave offers a memorable look at what lies beneath Berks County.

Above ground, enjoy the surrounding grounds, museum, and gift shop, or take a moment to reflect on the contrast between the lush countryside and the dramatic subterranean world just below your feet.

Please note: Bring a sweater or jacket for this trip.