

Traveling with Tots

By LIBBY CARTY MCNAMEE

It's a zoo at this resort

Nemacolin Woodlands Resort in southwestern Pennsylvania is a unique place to visit year round. This destination resort sprawls over 2,000 wooded acres and is jam-packed with family-oriented activities as well as wildlife. Where else can you really live in a zoo for a few days?

If your family loves animals, this is the place for you. Even if you don't, it could still turn you into Dr. Dolittle. The exotic animals on display are fascinating – and well secured in wildlife habitats. Of course, we've all visited zoos many times; however, at Nemacolin you can even hear Prince, the white lion, roar during the middle of the night.

Among the six types of accommodations available at Nemacolin, the Links Townhomes allow you to see camels, zebras, and buffalo right from your porch. That's quite a view! Kira the Bengal tiger, wolves, and a cougar live just around the corner. And you've got to meet the black bear trio – Rocky, Sugar, and Boo Boo.

Since the animals live in the open on the resort grounds, you can visit them as often as you want, whenever you want. It's neat to stroll by and observe their changing moods as the day progresses, similar to our own



human rhythm. In the morning they are fresh, perky, and ready for a new day. By mid-afternoon when you'd normally see them at a zoo, they are rather lethargic and ready for a siesta. Then at sunset they are relaxed as they wind down for the evening. Just across the street, there is a great play area for young kids.

This is just the beginning of the animal-related activities coordinated by the Wildlife Academy. On the Nursery Tour, a knowledgeable guide shows you an unusual collection of animals, including badgers, rare lizards and turtles, and an adorable two-toed sloth who hangs from a laundry basket all day. Not surprisingly, the entire resort is pet-friendly, even offering the "Wooflands" Pet Resort and Spa. Pets need their pampering, too!

The Safari Tour includes a comprehensive tour on the Wildlife Academy's safari cart. Families take



Visitors to Nemacolin Woodlands Resort can see plenty of wildlife. Photos by Loretta Sherwood.

in the petting zoo, the wildlife habitats and its five feeding stations, and Millioke Meadows with its bison, camels, and Iranian red sheep.

For winter sports, Nemacolin has Mystic Mountain. Set on 25 acres, there are seven slopes for skiing and snowboarding. In addition, there are lots of cross country skiing and snowshoeing trails, as well as Jamaican dogsledding. After a fire destroyed the ski lodge last season, Mystic's brand-new Sundial Lodge will open in December with bowling lanes and arcade games.

The Adventure Center is geared to thrill-seekers of all ages with its FatBird Canopy Tour which is a high-altitude gym situated 40 feet in the air with swinging tires, cargo nets, log crossings, and zip lines. There is also a climbing wall, a little tykes ropes course, and paintball. Along with babysitting, the Kid Zone has its own indoor pool and a food court geared to kids.

Lake Taylor is a wonderful place to spend the day. Along with its picturesque beach, dock, and marina, it has a fabulous cedar log cabin playhouse as well as the Shell Collection Museum. There are numerous other museums on the resort grounds. The Pride and Joy Airplane Hangar displays historic aircraft, and the Auto Toy Store is filled with antique cars. In addition, the Thames River Racers contains old canoes.

Fort Necessity National Battlefield, a memorable destination, lies just five minutes down the road. Young George Washington came here on his first assignment with the British Army, making the road now known as US 40. Under his leader-

ship, this is the strategic location where the French and Indian War began. The walk down to the gorgeous meadow to see the remains of the original site is well worth every step. Kids revel in the challenge of earning their Junior Ranger patch by completing activities about the battlefield.

Also nearby, Laurel Caverns Geological Park contains Pennsylvania's largest cave. In addition to Girl and Boy Scout activities, there are guided tours, spelunking, rappelling, and gem/fossil mining. For architecture fans, Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpieces of modern architecture known as Falling Water and Kentuck Knob are located within 20 minutes. Last but not least, Ohiopyle State Park has hiking trails including the Great Allegheny Passage connecting Pittsburgh with Washington, D.C. **RPM**

Libby Carty McNamee, writer, lawyer, and mommy, ranks the meadow at Fort Necessity as one of her favorite places in the world.



WANT TO GO?

Nemacolin Woodlands Resort

100 Lafayette Drive
Farmington, PA 15437
www.Nemacolin.com
1-800-422-2736

Fort Necessity National Battlefield

One Washington Parkway
Farmington, PA 15437
www.nps.gov/fone
(724)-329-5512