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It's hard to improve somewhere as lovely as The Homestead, but Omni has managed to do just that since taking ownership. If you haven't been there recently, get thee to Hot Springs! With over \$24 million in renovations over the last several years, this historic resort has blossomed into an ideal location for a family getaway. After our visit earlier this summer, we joked it was like a cruise ship on land, only with large, lavish guest rooms and balconies instead of portholes. Even better, there is no chance of hitting an iceberg!

Dating back to 1766, The Homestead offers many diverse recreational activities. Spread over its 2,000-acre setting, they are easily accessible by efficient shuttle busses with stellar service. Regardless of the season or weather, you'll never find yourself without something to do. Of the myriad of options, there's mountain biking, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, paintball, falconry, Segway tours, archery, horseback riding, carriage rides, shooting, miniature golf, as well as their world-class golf and tennis. On the back lawn, families love to play badminton, croquet, bocce, and shuffleboard with an incredible view of the surrounding Allegheny Mountains. Afterwards, homemade s'mores over an open fire are always a hit. Inside activities include the magnificent indoor pool as well as the history tour, chess and checkers, afternoon tea, and nightly movies.



Now is an ideal time to enjoy some late summer fun at "Allegheny Springs," the new two-acre water park. This sprawling attraction is filled with waters from the native springs. The "Mountain Rush" area offers lots of thrills and spills with two 100-foot water slides guaranteed to make a splash. They feed right into the 400-foot lazy river that meanders along past gazebos, geyser-like fountains, and under

bridges. The water runs three feet deep throughout and is remarkably well patrolled. So grab an inner tube and jump in! Make sure to check out the daily rubber ducky races, too. Never fear, for younger tykes there is a special water play zone with a sandy beach, huge kiddie pool, and sprinklers galore.

The large outdoor family pool is now open year-round, another fabulous new feature. Its spring-fed waters are heated to balmy temperatures, adding a decadent and steamy aura to an already gorgeous setting. In addition, there is a cozy all-season whirlpool with warm mineral-rich waters to soak in as well. To make the experience complete, the stone-face deck is also heated with chaise lounges for yet more relaxation in the fresh mountain air.

Aah, the new Spa at The Omni Homestead offers sublime pampering! Its luxurious Aqua Thermal Suite is a spectacular place to unwind before and after a signature treatment. The adjoining Spa Garden is the ultimate outdoor haven – and for adults only.



Lush and secluded, its various pools incorporate the “taking the waters” tradition that Thomas Jefferson enjoyed so much. This ultimate sanctuary is available year-round with heated walkways during the colder months. Other spectacular additions are the Great Hall’s dapper new Lobby Bar as well as the elegantly modern Jefferson’s Restaurant and Bar, replacing the Presidents’ Lounge and 1766 Grille. Families enjoy this comfortable new area with wood paneling, wide- screen televisions, and electronic entertainment. Just downstairs is “DownTime,” the amazing new family game area with mini-bowling, pool tables, shuffleboard, and arcade games.

Never fear, when the cold hits, The Omni Homestead transforms into a winter wonderland! There is downhill skiing and snowboarding right on the grounds. The resort also offers ice-skating, snow tubing, and snowmobiling.

For kids between the ages of 3 to 12, The Omni Homestead’s KidsClub is brimming with activities. Kids love their time there just as much as their parents, if not more. In fact, our son always asks if he can go back again! Children must be potty-trained with pre-registration recommended.

By Libby McNamee

Check out her blog “Libby With a Y” at www.LibbyMcNamee.com



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