

In your backyard: Hocking Hills

Lodging choices run the gamut

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From castles to campgrounds, a wide variety of accommodations are available for the thousands of visitors who travel into southeast Ohio every year to enjoy the natural beauty and attractions of the Hocking Hills region.

But this month's colorful fall foliage season will be a major draw for tourists, according to Karen Raymore, executive director of the Hocking Hills Tourism Association.

"This year the fall colors promise to be even more vibrant than during the last couple of years, thanks to plenty of rain over the summer months," Raymore said.

She said visitors to the region will find lodging facilities to suit every taste.

"They pretty much run the gamut-from small cottages ideal for couples to cabins for families, and lodges with up to 12 bedrooms that can accommodate multiple families," Raymore said. "And all have amenities that modern kitchens and bath facilities."

Several traditional hotels and motels are also located in the Hocking Hills area, as well as rustic cabins and fully-equipped campgrounds.

"Many families are choosing to travel together now, and when the price of a cabin or lodge is divided among several families or friends, the accommodation costs can be very reasonable," Raymore said.

Luxury cabins in the Hocking Hills region are available for around \$150 a night and up, and special discount pricing is also often available.

"Midweek is usually the time to get the best pricing," Raymore said. "And weekends are often already booked up during October. But members of our association often post specials on our Web site, so that's a good place to check if you're planning a trip to Hocking Hills."

The Inn and Spa at Cedar Falls is surrounded on three sides by the Hocking Hills State Park, says Helen Grinsfelder, co-innkeeper with husband Terry Lingo.

"We're located between Old Man's Cave and Cedar Falls, and are within a couple miles of Ash Cave," Grinsfelder said.

The inn opened in 1987, and features nine antique-furnished rooms each with its own private bath, and 1840s log houses contain the inn's gourmet kitchen, dining rooms and a tavern.

Guests can also stay in renovated, fully-equipped 19th Century log cabins and cozy cottages, and they may want to take advantage of the inn's spa facilities.

"No matter where they stay, guests receive a full breakfast," Grinsfelder added, noting that lunch and dinner are available at the inn's restaurant.

"It's all casual fine dining," she said. "Guests are welcome in blue jeans and tennis shoes."

Lodging prices for The Inn and Spa at Cedar Falls range between \$99 and \$279 per night.

For more secluded lodgings in a smaller setting, Old Man's Haven offers four cabins on 150 acres, just a half-mile off Ohio 664, a main route into the Hocking Hills region.

"We're about four miles from Old Man's Cave and we're open all year," said Old Man's Haven owner Cindy Saving.

"Our cabins are like little houses with kitchen appliances, beds and linens," she said. "Guests just have to bring their food, clothing and toiletries."

Saving said the haven is a popular location due to its proximity to hiking trails, horseback riding, canoeing and kayaking facilities.

Old Man's Haven rates vary between \$70 and \$185 per night.

Those looking for more unique accommodations in the Hocking Hills area may want to consider staying at Ravenwood Castle and Medieval Village Cottages on Bethel Road in New Plymouth.

Visitors can spend the night in themed castle guest rooms, cottages, fairytale cabins, or camp in gypsy wagons.

Prices range from \$50 to \$250 a night.

Raymore said rustic cabins and camping facilities are also available throughout the Hocking Hills region.

"It just depends on what your needs are," she said. "But coming to Hocking Hills is really a great way to disconnect and spend some time in Ohio's outdoors."