

The Poconos: Not Just For Honeymooners

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

Surely you've heard of the Pocono Mountains, nestled in the heart of Northeast Pennsylvania? A beautiful and scenic area, the Poconos gained a reputation in the 50s and 60s as the "Honeymoon Capital of the World." And the resorts that peppered the green and tranquil landscape bore out that identity; from heart-shaped hot tubs to champagne glass-shaped spas, from signs proclaiming "Dears Crossing" to the entrance proclaiming, "Welcome to the Land of Love." As the years went by, the honeymoon glow faded, and the resorts that were once the heartbeat of the Poconos' tourist industry took on a faded and slightly antiquated look. The resorts needed to adapt and change with the times. Some became family resorts, like Caesar's Brookdale, others became housing developments, like Penn Estates, and some, like Echo Lake Farms and Birchwood Resort, closed their doors forever.

The Poconos were in serious need of a makeover. The 80s brought a multitude of changes, including the sale of large chunks of land to be turned into housing developments. The Poconos of the 80s and 90s became little more than a suburb of larger cities like New York and Philadelphia. It was time for the Poconos, much like Orlando in the 70s, to reinvent itself in order to survive!

As with any change, it brought, and still brings, challenges and resistance. But what started out as pure destruction of the landscape for the reason of profit has slowly evolved into a thriving and growing community.

The Poconos still has a lot of scenic, natural beauty. In addition to the beautiful open spaces, many protected by legislation and history, we offer Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. This is a National Park, offering hiking, boating, biking, camping and relaxing, all along the beautiful Delaware River. Spend a lovely afternoon at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, or enjoying the trails at Bushkill Falls. You can pack a picnic lunch and go to any of these places for a look at nature's beauty!

How about a little history? Take a step back in time at Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm. This living, working farm depicts life as it was in the early 19th century in Pennsylvania. Or take a trip to The Pocono Indian Museum and learn how it all got started in the Poconos! Take a relaxing drive up Route 191 into beautiful Barrett Township, where small

town life is still abundant!

Maybe you're looking for something a little more urbane? Do you like shopping? Well, the Poconos has come a long way from the little Mom and Pop stores that sold a little of everything. Oh don't worry, we still have those! Try East Stroudsburg Hardware Store for a slice of Americana, or Gary's Meat Market for the freshest cuts of meat. For a really local shopping experience, you can't beat our candle shops, Pocono Candle Shop and American Candle Company. These stores provide rooms and rooms full of ... no, not just candles! Pocono Candle has a huge selection of decorations for every room in your house, as well as a large variety of collectibles. And American Candle has a whole room devoted to ... CANDY! You can buy it by the bag, by the pound or just a few pieces to eat right there.

Still want more to do? How about the ever-growing Stroud Mall? You can shop at Sears, Bon Ton, JC Penney, New York and Company, Deb Shop, Foot Locker...; in fact there are over 50 stores to choose from. And you'll notice that small town hospitality in a big town mall. If outlet shopping is your thing, you've got to try The Crossings Premium Outlets. Set against the backdrop of Camelback Mountain, you can get anything from shoes to clothes to china to chocolate. Bring your walking shoes and prepare for a day of fun!

So, maybe you're the adventurous type? In the late 60s, the Pocono's began to evolve in yet another direction -- as a ski area. It started when a group of businessmen purchased a mountain, and a dream was born. Now Camelback Ski Area is one of the biggest ski resorts in the area, followed closely by Shawnee Mountain Ski Area. You can play, stay and have winter fun and in the summer, Camelback is open as Camelbeach Waterpark, a fun filled family water park.

So, is all of this activity making you hungry? There is no shortage of good restaurants here, catering to every taste and palate. Italian? Try Peppe's. Irish? Try Siamsa Irish Pub. Good old-fashioned cooking? Try Mollie's! Best diner food in the area? Try the LandMark Restaurant! Steak? Try Bailey's Steakhouse! Of course, there are several of the usual chains - Friendly's, Garfield's, Ruby Tuesdays, Perkins and KFC, to name a few. You will never go hungry in the Poconos!

The change from a sleepy little honeymoon resort area to a full-scale vacation destination and year round thriving community is still a work in progress. But with each new chapter, progress and the environment are learning to work side by side, and the result is a new and wonderful Poconos. Drop by and see us... we'd love to have you!

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About The Author: Sue Kulick is a resident of the Pocono Mountains and an avid Disney fan. She and her husband, Steve, live in a log home with their Golden Retrievers, Cody and Belle and their cat Tigger.

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