

Bed and breakfasts are for kids, too

By Colleen Lanin, TODAY.com contributor
July 25, 2012, 6:55 pm

NBCNews.com



Jumping Rocks The Inn at Westwynd Farm in Hershey, Pa., welcomes children.

Most bed and breakfasts would prefer children stay far away from their cozy retreats. Many others, however, welcome families by providing toys and games, cribs, kids' menus and more.

Breakfasts are almost always included, but B&Bs also often provide free snacks, afternoon teas or happy hours plus free Wi-Fi — making this type of accommodation an affordable option for traveling families. Some inns also offer suites or connecting rooms, allowing privacy for mom and dad as well as restful sleep for the whole family.

One of the main reasons to forgo a hotel in favor of a B&B is the friendships forged with inn owners and other guests. Tom Jendrock, a father of two from Westport, Conn., says, "I like the personal touch,

knowing the staff on a personal basis, having them know me by name and knowing my preferences, and feeling like I am at a home-away-from-home rather than an anonymous traveler in an anonymous hotel."

Marti Mayne, a mother of two who promotes bed and breakfast tourism through her company, Maynely Marketing, says, "When is the last time a front desk person or manager of a hotel took an interest in your kids, personally took them by the hand to introduce them to the llamas and sent them on their way at the end of the stay with a bag of home-baked goodies?"

Convinced? Check out these five kid-friendly bed and breakfasts:

The Inn at Westwynd Farm - Hershey, Pa.

This 32-acre horse farm is a serene retreat after a day of amusements at nearby Hersheypark. In addition to horses, there are goats and alpacas to feed. Breakfast fare varies from season to season with options like zucchini frittata and local melon slices in the summer to gingerbread muffins with cinnamon butter in winter. A bottomless cookie jar and afternoon delights like shoofly cake guarantee guests won't go hungry. Complimentary sodas, lemonade, beer and wine ensure they won't go thirsty, either. (10 rooms plus a carriage house. Nightly rate: \$60-\$275)

Sweet Biscuit Inn - Asheville, N.C.

Owners Claudia and Christian Hickl welcome children. "Their presence adds humor and vitality to our casually unpretentious and most delightful B&B," their website says. This 1915 Colonial Revival home is situated just one and half miles from downtown Asheville. The highlight for young guests is a make-believe morning critter hunt; rubber frogs, lizards and snakes are hidden in the yard for children to find. Meanwhile, parents take their time enjoying breakfast treats like four-grain pecan pancakes, baked eggs, and, of course, biscuits. (Seven rooms plus a carriage house. Nightly rate: \$139-\$259)

Allen Harbor Breeze Inn & Gardens - Harwich Port, Mass.

This Cape Cod inn is located on a quiet country road across from a scenic harbor, within walking distance of the beach. It offers family suites, an in-ground swimming pool, picnic area and rentable cribs. The property's extensive gardens are home to beautiful flowers, hopping bunnies, and colorful birds like goldfinches and cardinals. Families enjoy continental breakfasts of homemade baked goods, yogurt parfaits and fresh fruit. (10 rooms including suites/connecting rooms. Nightly rate: \$99-\$350.)

Coppertoppe Inn & Retreat Center - Hebron, N.H.

Owned by baby-loving grandparents Bill Powers and Sheila Oranch, this inn is fully-equipped to host young ones with portable cribs, child dishes, toys, books, movies, puzzles, games and craft supplies. Kids of all ages love to explore the two on-site ponds filled with tadpoles, frogs and other creatures. Children can even take cooking classes here free of charge. In the morning, encourage kids to expand their culinary horizons with the house specialty “weedwhacker omelet” — made with young dandelion greens, clover, scallions and chive blossoms plucked from the inn’s herb garden. (Two rooms and two suites. Nightly rate: \$149-\$279.)

Hideaway Ranch & Retreat - Bluffdale, Tex.

Voted the most family-friendly B&B for two years in a row by BedandBreakfast.com, Hideaway Ranch & Retreat offers cabins in the midst of tall oaks on a 155-acre property. Each cabin offers a private hot tub, a fully furnished kitchen, grill and picnic table. Activities include: scavenger hunts, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, swimming and archery. (10 cabins. Nightly rate: \$139-\$179.)

Every bed and breakfast has its own décor, feel and activities, so each stay is a distinct adventure. To find additional kid-friendly bed and breakfasts, visit BnBfinder.com and BedandBreakfast.com.

Colleen Lanin is the founder/editor of TravelMamas.com, a site for anyone who wants to travel with (or without) children...and stay sane!

More on TODAY Travel