

Take a Whirl at the Windmill
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The Windmill is huge farm and craft market located near Penn Yan on Keuka Lake that is a perfect place to spend some TogetherTime. It is open Saturdays, 8-4:30, late April to December (315-531-8214). Take the NYS Thruway east to exit 42 (Geneva), about one hour from the Williamsville toll. Follow the signs to Route 14A south and then follow Route 14A south for about 15 minutes to the Windmill. Keep your eyes peeled for Amish homes and buggies as you drive through the Finger Lakes farmland (remember not to take photos of the Amish). Consider picking up a book about the Amish and Mennonites to read together as you drive on the thruway. Plan on spending a few hours at the Windmill.

You won't be able to miss the flags, cars and activity of the Windmill. Park in a field and head in. The Windmill is made up of three large buildings, an outdoor street and a covered farmer's market. Stroll along the outdoor street and you will pass clothing shops, a blacksmith, flea market style offerings, collectibles, many kinds of art, jewelry shops, a woodworking shop, a china shop and so much more. There are things for adults and children alike. My favorite shop is Nice Stuff. Marge Gorsky grows beautiful flowers and plants and her husband Tom preserves them as jewelry. There are gold and silverplated leaves and pine cones and gorgeous earrings and pendants with miniature flowers perfectly preserved inside a clear resin, in a gold or silver setting. These pieces are beautiful and reasonably priced. There is a petting zoo (for a small fee) in the middle of the street that children will love. Once you smell them, you won't be able to resist buying a plate piled high with Grandma's Butterfled Potatoes (which are like hot, fresh potato chips) to share with the whole family.

Head over to the buildings and in the center area you are likely to find some free entertainment, such as an accordion player, a clown, or a guitar player. There are some benches, but none are in the shade.

The buildings house wonderful surprises. One shop offers aromatic slices of homemade soap. There are shops with small, inexpensive trinkets and toys, leather goods (they will take orders for custom made items - my husband ordered a wallet with a snap closure and received it in the mail in a couple weeks), antiques, many types of collectibles and dried and silk flower arrangements. There are a few special spots you shouldn't miss. In one corner there is a quilt shop where you can see Mennonite women quilting. Their quilts and other handmade items are gorgeous and expensive. Several shops offer buckwheat pillows, which are supposed to do wonders for neck pain. Ask how to care for the pillow for an interesting explanation!

One shop sells candles and honey made from their own bees (ask for directions to their home store near Watkins Glen where you can see the bees in action). Another shop offers mead (an alcoholic beverage made from honey). Be sure to stop at Martin's Bulk Foods where a large variety of jams, jellies, pickles, condiments and relishes are sold. Martin's brand is homemade by the Martin family in the Finger Lakes. Other brands brought in from the Pennsylvania Dutch country are available. There is always a sample waiting.

Other shops you will see have t-shirts, wicker, wood items, and many different handcrafts. You will not leave the Windmill empty handed. I buy many Christmas gifts here each summer.

With all the walking, hunger is sure to set in. Fortunately, you are at the right place. Head over to Auntie Anne's where Mennonite women roll, twist and cook fragrant pretzels before your eyes. Many toppings are available for these sweet and salty pretzels. Be sure to stop by the baked good stands run by Amish and Mennonite families. They offer a variety of breads, cakes, pies and

cookies. Buy some to take home and freeze. Look for the hard to find apple dumplings (peeled whole apples smothered in cinnamon and sugar and covered with dough and baked). They are fabulous.

There are shops that sell cheeses and meats and snack shops that offer hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza, sausage, etc. Beverages are available at many stands.

The farmer's market offers in season produce, fresh flowers and houseplants (try the air plants, mine is still growing well).

The bathrooms are located behind one of the buildings and although they are chemical toilets, they are unoffensive. Pets are welcome at the Windmill and a curbing area is located near the bathrooms. A few picnic tables are located in the shade nearby.

After leaving the Windmill, leave some time for two more stops. Stop at the Mennonite bulk shop on the right hand side of the road after exiting the Windmill. All sorts of items are sold at bulk prices. They sell wonderful meats, cheeses and condiments (I highly recommend the smoked pork chops and white cheddar).

Farther up the road, two miles north of the town of Penn Yan on Route 14A, on the left hand side, is Miller's Essenhaus, a Mennonite restaurant where everything is homemade, delicious and fantastically filling. Upstairs is a great little gift shop. Casual dress is ok and they serve lunch and dinner and have some take out baked goods for sale. Reservations are a good idea on Saturdays (315-531-8260).

Nobody in your family is going to complain after this great day in the country!