

## Celebrate Spring in Ulster County

Savor the season's first blooms over local wines and whiskey and choose from an abundance of outdoor activities just 90 minutes from the city.



[1. Where to Stay](#)   [2. Where to Eat](#)   [3. What to Do](#)   [4. Insider's Tip](#)   [5. An Oddball Day](#)

### 1. Where to Stay



Buttermilk Falls Inn + Spa sits on a working farm with peacocks, chickens, and alpacas.  
(Photo: Courtesy of Buttermilk Falls Inn + Spa)

Roam 70 bucolic acres overlooking the Hudson at Milton's [Buttermilk Falls Inn + Spa](#) (from \$250), where a small working farm provides organic fruit, vegetables, and eggs for the property's new restaurant, [Henry's](#). Ten rooms, three suites, and four guest houses all feature unique decors, ranging from nautical antiques to contemporary art.

Find urbane style at the new [Diamond Mills Hotel & Tavern](#) (from \$250), a 30-room boutique hotel that sits on the Esopus Creek in Saugerties. Since its opening in January, the hotel's farm-to-table dining room has earned praise from the *Wall Street Journal* and *Robb Report*, and all of its understated guest rooms come with private balconies or patios overlooking a waterfall.

Get the best of old and new at the [1850 House & Tavern](#) (from \$149), a historic inn that reopened this month following a \$1.5 million renovation. Inside, you'll find the standard range of modern amenities alongside nostalgia-tinged furnishings like antique kaleidoscopes and compasses. Located on the main street of increasingly bohemian Rosendale, it's walking distance to galleries and boutiques, and just across the street from film screenings and a variety of live events at the Rosendale Theatre.

## 2. Where to Eat



The Village TeaRoom is housed in a 200-year-old landmarked building.  
(Photo: Courtesy of The Village TeaRoom Restaurant & Bake Shop)

Save room for dessert at the [Village TeaRoom](#), where locals head for slices of chocolate buttermilk cake, honey bee cake, and shaker lemon pie (\$5-\$6). Don't ignore the regular menu, though, which includes homemade soups like potato-leek or white bean and kale (\$5 each), as well lamb pies with pickles and mustard (\$14). The restaurant sources most of its vegetables from a variety of nearby farms including [Sorbello's](#), while its dairy comes from [Ronnybrook Farm](#).

Head to historic Huguenot Street in New Paltz for dinner at cozy newcomer [Rock and Rye](#), a traditional-looking tavern serving a menu of sophisticated takes on comfort food. Standouts include the grilled pork chop from [Rykowski Livestock](#) over bacon-and-potato ragout (\$26) and the house-made spaghetti with oxtail (\$23). A recent salmon special featured some of spring's first locally grown vegetables: watercress from [Taliaferro Farm](#).

Enjoy a meal and a concert at [Market Market Café](#), a friendly neighborhood meeting place where local musicians often perform on the weekends. Run by a couple who previously lived in Williamsburg, the menu is a hodgepodge of the foods—ranging from tacos (\$8.50) to banh mi (\$9.50)—that they missed from Brooklyn. The wine list is modest but well-priced, with most bottles under \$25.

### 3. What to Do



The view from the top of Mohonk Mountain House's Labyrinth rock scramble.  
(Photo: Courtesy of Jim Smith Photography)

Throw on your hiking shoes and conquer the [Shawangunk Ridge](#), better known as the “Gunks.” Discover one of the area’s best springtime views by heading to the Spring Farm entrance of the [Mohonk Preserve](#) and go east from the parking lot to travel a three-mile loop to Bonticou Crag, which overlooks a green valley with blooming wildflowers and wild cherry and dogwood trees. This moderate hike winds through hardwood forests and glens before ending at a high point from which you can see the Hudson Valley and the Catskill Mountains.

Challenge your inner daredevil by attempting the Labyrinth rock scramble at the [Mohonk Mountain House](#). Get a day pass (\$25) and then take on the one-mile trek filled with boulders, narrow cave-like crevices, and wooden ladders. The strenuous obstacles are worth it for the vistas from the top of the trail’s tower, which extend to six states on clear days. Reward yourself afterward at the resort’s day spa, where you can choose from a dozen massage therapies (\$75–\$185).

Spot birds and see the first leaves of spring during a bike ride on the [Wallkill Valley Rail Trail](#), a 12.2-mile course that passes through woods, open fields, and farmland. For a standard self-guided ride, get a rental from the [Bicycle Depot](#) (\$35/day); for adventures deeper in the countryside, arrange a bike tour with guides from [Favata's Table Rock Tours and Bicycles](#) (\$45 per hour) or head down on horseback at [Payne Farm Too](#) (\$30 per hour).

### 4. Insider’s Tip



Behind the scenes of whiskey production at Tuthilltown Spirits.  
(Photo: Courtesy of Tuthilltown Spirits)

Wineries abound in Ulster County, but [Tuthilltown Spirits](#), in Gardiner, is the only whiskey distillery. Book your spot in advance for a one-hour tour of the facility (\$15; Saturday and Sunday at 12 p.m., 2 p.m., and 4 p.m.) followed by a stop in the tasting room. Pick up your favorite bottle along with the **Tuthilltown Cassis** (\$24), a unique liqueur that’s made from black currants grown by Fishkill Farms, then aged in the distillery's whiskey barrels. Only 500 bottles were produced and they’re not sold anywhere else.



## 5. Oddball Day



Many animals freely roam the grounds at Catskill Animal Sanctuary.  
(Photo: Courtesy of Catskill Animal Sanctuary)

Take a break from being active to explore the best farms, butchers, cheesemakers and wineries in the region. Start out in Gardiner for coffee and freshly baked cider doughnuts (\$2.99 for half a dozen) at [Wrights Farm](#), which also sells a wide selection of bedding plants and hanging baskets. From there, meander along Rte. 9W where you can follow signs for the [Meet Me in Marlborough Farm Trail](#), including stops where you can pick your own produce; alternatively, arrange a custom tour in advance with MMiM's Sheila Mannese (845-616-7824).

Be sure to stop at [Overlook Farm](#), where you can purchase early crops like spinach, strawberries, and radishes. Next, make a stop at [Fleisher's Grass-Fed & Organic Meats](#) (closed Sunday and Monday), which only carries meat from animals raised on strictly vegetarian diets on small, sustainable farms within 100 miles of its shop in Kingston.

For lunch, check out the new [B3 Burger](#), set in an Empire-era building with twelve-foot aged-copper ceilings and exposed brick walls, where the house specialty is a customized burger (from \$8.95) starting with a veggie, beef, or fish patty. Then indulge your sweet tooth with hard-to-find goat-milk fudge (\$15 per pound) at [Acorn Hill Farmstead](#) (call 845-800-4239 in advance to arrange a visit).

Afterward, drive to the [Catskill Animal Sanctuary](#) to see previously neglected horses, sheep, cows, and goats freely roaming 110 acres; tours (\$10) are offered every half-hour between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. starting in April.

Follow that with a flight of wines at the [Stoutridge Vineyard](#) or [Benmarl Winery](#) on the [Shawangunk Wine Trail](#). Drop your farm finds off at your hotel before winding down with dinner and evening entertainment. The best spot for live music near New Paltz is [The Falcon](#) (no cover charge, but donations welcome), an intimate venue that showcases jazz, rock, and blues Thursday–Sunday along with an eclectic range of dishes including pappardelle bolognese (made with pasta from [La Bella Pasta](#) in Kingston) and a curry coconut stew (\$17) with vegetables from nearby farms.