

TRAVEL ONTARIO

Ontario

Rural B&B welcomes children over eight

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A view of the Stone Cottage at Adam Farm Bed & Breakfast, in Hastings, Ont. (Courtesy Adam Farm Bed & Breakfast)

HASTINGS, Ont. -- My husband and I love staying at bed and breakfasts. We love the special attention, the delectable breakfasts and getting the inside scoop from the hosts on the area we are visiting.

Sadly though, since having our daughter eight years ago, our visits to quiet and quaint B&Bs have been curtailed in favour of cookie-cutter hotels with plenty of family amenities, but none of the personal touches.

Just when we thought we'd never enjoy another B&B stay, we happened upon Adam Farm Bed & Breakfast, in Hastings. This unique place not only allows children over the age of eight on the premises, they encourage it. There's more. The family pooch doesn't have to stay at the kennel while the family is out having fun. This B&B caters to furry family members (and we're not talking about dad) by providing a doggie agility playground.

Just as the name indicates, this B&B is a working farm, making it even more fun for families. Hosts Donna and Bill Adam have been farming for 32 years but decided a few years ago to establish a B&B.

"Bill's got the smarts and I've got the arts," Donna proclaims as she shows us the crown jewel on their property: A heritage cottage she decorated herself. It is truly beautiful with a mix of heritage pieces and modern looks. A fenced backyard is filled with beautiful artwork, toys for the kids and playthings for the dogs.

Donna isn't sure, but she thinks the cottage was built in 1810. Its thick stone walls are typical of the rustic dwellings built by Canadian settlers. The little home remains true to its roots, so expect to use oil lamps and candles to light up the night. There is no indoor plumbing but guests will find a private portable bathroom outside that is world's away from your great-grandparents' outhouse. An outdoor solar heated shower ensures you won't miss having indoor facilities.

If the stone cottage sounds a bit too rustic, there is an alternative. The Adams recently turned an old barn loft into a mini-apartment perfect for longer stays. With a bathroom and kitchenette, visitors will have all the conveniences of a modern home in a beautiful rural area that is largely undiscovered.

There is a lot to do on the farm as well. Visitors can take nature walks through an enchanted wood with spots set up for meditating, or meander through wheat fields that seem to go on forever.

There is also a very friendly pair of equines that are totally kid-proofed. Tiny the donkey and Rocky the horse love human attention, and families will enjoy meeting them as much as the two family dogs that wander all around the property.

THE BASICS

The Stone Cottage can be booked from Friday to Sunday for \$250, including two continental breakfasts. The Barn Loft is also \$250 from Friday to Sunday but you will have to bring your own breakfast (the mini-apartment has a kitchenette). Adam Farm Bed & Breakfast is a two-hour drive east of Toronto in Northumberland County. For more information, see adamfarm.ca. For information on events and attraction in the area, see northumberlandtourism.com.

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