



The Berkshires is a hilly region in the western-most part of Massachusetts, stretching north to the Vermont border and south to Connecticut. To the west is New York State, and to the east a ridge of hills over which runs the Appalachian Trail. Settled in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the region is, in many ways, classic New England. It embraces 30 mainly rural towns and two small cities, Pittsfield, the Berkshire County seat, and North Adams.

The Berkshires is among the few places on earth where a clash of cultures is celebrated, not lamented – where rich history, in the form of pastoral scenery and inspiring landmarks, is interwoven with cultural sophistication and world-class amenities.

Just a few hours from the population centers of New York and Boston, the Berkshires borrows the best in art and culture from its big city neighbors, while retaining the same scenic country ambiance that has inspired artists and writers for more than a century. Summer is indeed the most inspiring time of year in the Berkshires. Shimmering mountain lakes reflect clear blue skies and majestic hillsides, beckoning hikers, bikers and casual outdoor adventurers to explore lush forests and meadows of brilliant wildflowers.

It was these tranquil scenes that drew such literary and artistic giants as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edith Wharton, Herman Melville and Norman Rockwell. Their legacy lives on in the Berkshires today, from historic homes and museums to the outstanding cultural events that fill the summer calendar.

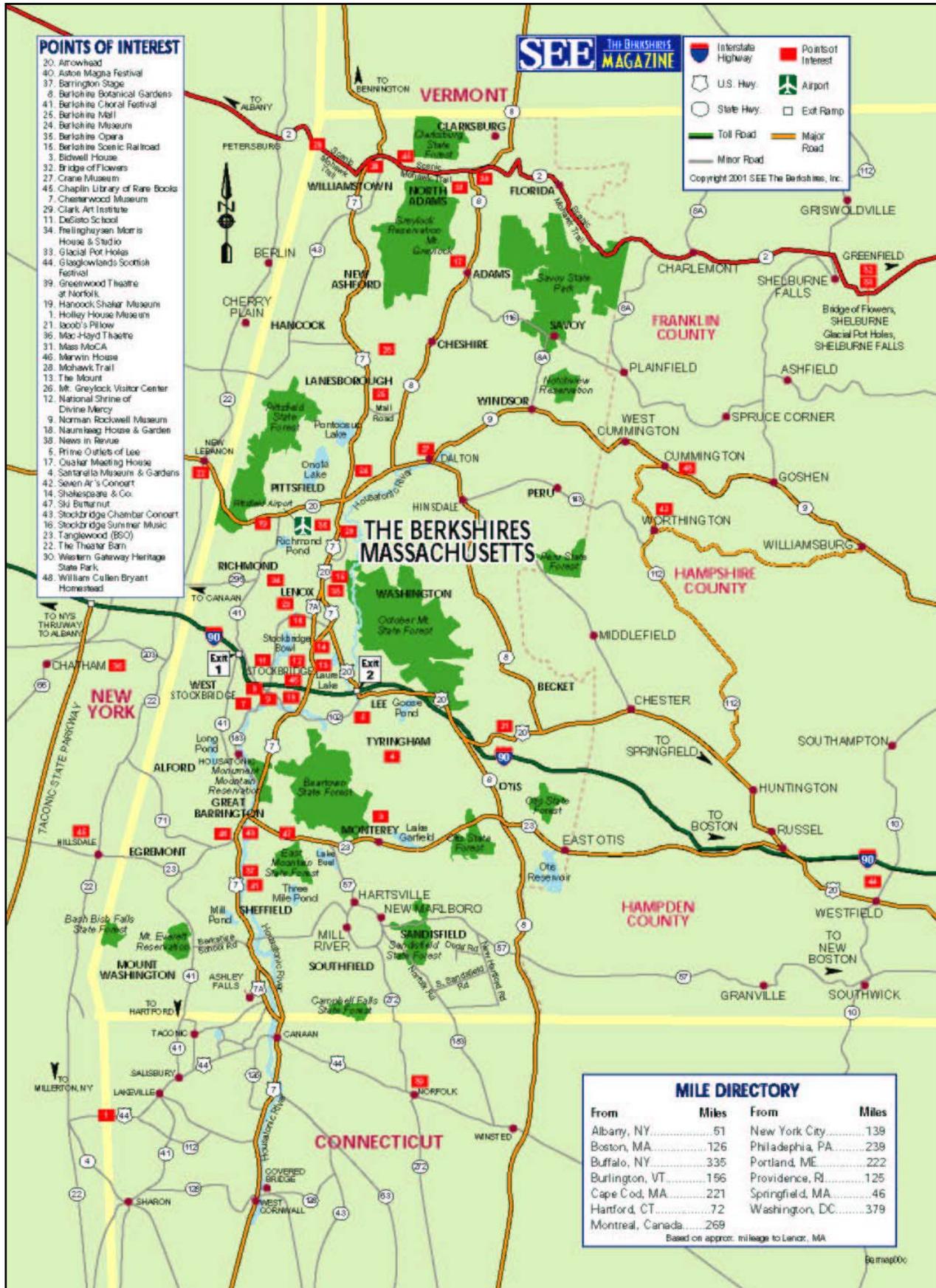
Visitors are invited to relax under a star-lit sky at Tanglewood, while the Boston Symphony Orchestra fills the night air with majestic arrangements. MASS MoCA presents an array of thought-provoking exhibits and performances, while at Jacob's Pillow the world's leading-edge dance troupes perform for intimate audiences all summer.

When the day is done, dine at one of our many fine restaurants then retreat to charming lodgings. Experience the Berkshires, where a world of sophistication is wrapped in a centuries-old tradition of small town warmth and hospitality.

Directions from Hunter : Rt 23A East to Rt 23. Take Rt 23 East into the heart of the Berkshires. You can return by using I 90 West to I 87 South to Exit 21, for Rt 23 back to Windham and Hunter.



Berkshires Area Map

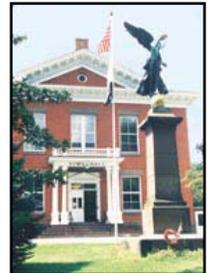


Great Barrington

Southern Berkshire's largest town is one of natural beauty, cultural wealth and historical "firsts." Combined with its convenient location, fashionable shopping district, fine restaurants and recreational opportunities, Great Barrington is and has been a favorite holiday haven for more than 100 years.



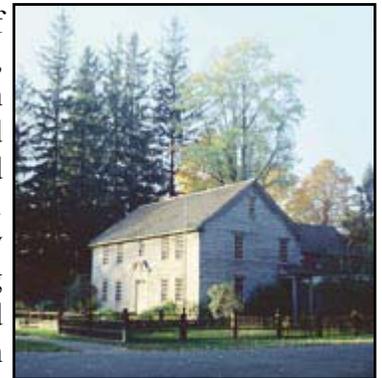
Great Barrington's vibrant downtown invites a stroll along its charming tree-lined avenues. Main Street was the first in the United States to have electric lights. Railroad Street is one of the oldest streets in the country, and it offers a bit of "SoHo" in the Berkshires. Just past town hall you'll discover the monument commemorating the site of the first armed resistance against the British, two years before the Revolutionary War. This was also the site of the first slave being freed.



Extend your stroll to include the riverwalk along the Housatonic River. The public footpath begins at a wooden gate between Brooks Pharmacy and the Riverbank House. Great Barrington also includes the village of Housatonic, with a beautiful old paper mill and a collection of interesting art galleries and studios. Home of the Berkshire Bach Society, the Berkshire Opera Company and the Searles Mansion, there's plenty here to satisfy your cultural appetite.

Stockbridge

Stockbridge was Norman Rockwell's long-time residence and home of what he called his "best studio yet." Through his depiction of small towns, America's favorite illustrator gave us images of memorable moments from childhood to old age, portraying a remarkable history of everyday life and ordinary people. The Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge has preserved his memory and his work with the world's largest collection of his original art. The legacy of Main Street-and Stockbridge-lives on, as this quaint New England village remains largely unchanged, rich in history and ever-glowing with small town warmth and hospitality. Visitors often stay at the famous Red Lion Inn, a 200 year-old Berkshire icon, where they are welcomed with consummate Colonial charm. History buffs will enjoy exploring the past at other landmarks. Stockbridge also offers a unique combination of shops, restaurants, galleries, theaters and museums. Spend an afternoon strolling the charming streets of downtown and then stop in for a sumptuous meal at a local bistro.



Originally named Wnahktakook, the Mohican word for great meadow, Stockbridge is also a place of great natural beauty. Nestled in the majestic Berkshire Hills, outdoor enthusiasts are close to skiing, hiking and other recreational pursuits. See for yourself why this village was and is divinely inspiring to so many. Experience a bit of Americana in Stockbridge, a lovely village in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts, is peacefully situated in the heart of a quiet valley. God has been good to this town for its beauty is a natural gift. Visitors are impressed with the charm of the town and those who live here are proud of her role in history, science, and the arts.

Stockbridge has grown from an Indian mission to a quiet village of wealth and gracious living to a resort town and world-famous music center. This has been accomplished without giving up the essential distinguishing character that makes Stockbridge unique. Those who love this village are nostalgic for the past, happy in the present, and hopeful for the future.

West Stockbridge

The historic village of West Stockbridge is a tiny, eclectic arts community set along-side the peaceful Williams River. It is an easy, pleasant stroll around the square block town, and it is filled with treasures. This charming New England hamlet is easily reached by taking Route 102 west from Stockbridge, or Exit 1 off Mass Pike, heading west, or the B3 exit off I-90 heading east.

Once you arrive, you'll want to stroll the town, a quaint square block filled with small shops, unique craft galleries and a number of excellent restaurants. Your first stop should be the Kiwanis Club Tourist Information Booth, at the corner of Depot and Route 102, where you can gather all kinds of information. West Stockbridge's speed limit is 25 MPH (please observe it). Drive through the town then take a left immediately after the bridge and continue to the Berkshire Center of Contemporary Glass. The Center offers tours, demonstrations of live glass blowing and the Glass Café. Next, cross the "walking bridge" to Main Street, and just to the right of the walking bridge is Rathbun's Village Variety. Proceed west of Main Street to the Berkshire Hills Candle Company, which manufactures original candles and features Berkshire crafts.

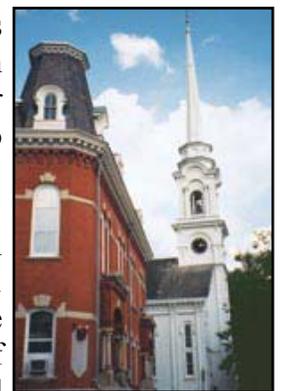
From Main Street, turn onto Center Street and you'll encounter Charles Baldwin & Son, manufacturers of Extracts. Next door is New England Stained Glass, then Artifacts. Back to Main Street, continuing west, step back into yesterday at the public market. The next stop is Ebenezer II Gifts and Antiques, which features antiques, a great copper collection and unusual oriental rugs at great prices. As you cross Center Street you'll see two unique studios: Hotchkiss Mobile Studio, featuring original indoor and outdoor mobiles of museum quality and factory prices; and Vortex/New England Stained Glass, which combines the talents of two special artists. Both galleries are worth a visit. Do make this charming, hidden town one of your stops in the Berkshires.

Lee

Named after prominent revolutionary patriot and commander General Charles Lee, the town of Lee has been in existence since the 1760s. Several historic buildings are worthy of attention, including the Congregational Church - a Romanesque-design building with a 150-foot steeple and a Seth Thomas Clock (one of only two of its kind ever made). The Lee Library and the Civil War Memorial Hall were both made from local marble, and Victorian homes with architectural and historical significance abound.

Although Lee continues its hard-working traditions, it has also turned its attention to revitalization projects. Besides its charming downtown area that's listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Lee now has an outlet shopping center (Berkshire Outlet Village on Rt. 20) and a business park. The revitalization has also brought a fine assortment of restaurants, shops and other service businesses.

Several historic buildings in town are worthy of attention. The beautiful Congregational Church with its 150-foot steeple is the tallest building in town. The St. George Episcopal Church on Franklin Street has a slate steeple pitched gable roof. The Lee Library and Memorial Hall are made from local marble. Other buildings of architectural interest include Victorian homes, one of which was a stagecoach inn and several are now bed and breakfast inns.



In tribute to its rich heritage, Lee has turned its attention to revitalization projects. Besides the charming downtown area that's listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Lee now has an outlet center and a business park as well as an assortment of restaurants and shops.

Bash Bish Falls State Park

In the extreme southwest corner of Massachusetts is a cluster of parks particularly notable for their spectacular scenery and breathtaking views. Bash Bish Falls is the state's most dramatic waterfall. Cascading water tumbles through a series of gorges and finally drops 80 feet over the falls and into a sparkling pool. Bash Bish Falls State Park is located within the much larger Mount Washington State Forest, which offers 30 miles of trails and wilderness camping. Nearby 1,110 acre Mount Everett State Forest offers picnicking at Guilder Pond. A road to the top of Mount Everett gives visitors access to a view spanning three states.



Bash Bish Fall State Park is located in the southwest corner of Massachusetts. From the Massachusetts Turnpike (Rte. I-90): take exit 2, Rte. 102 west, Rte. 7 south, Rte. 23 west, Rte. 41 south. There are two access points for viewing Bash Bish Falls. Following signs from Route 41 in Egremont, Massachusetts, you'll first arrive at the upper parking lot on the left, from which the waterfalls are about a 15-minute downhill hike. Remember-you'll have to hike back uphill when you've had your fill of the cascades' whooshing roar. The hike is moderate, though it can be slippery in parts if there has been significant rain. An easier point of access is the lower parking lot, which is the second parking area you'll reach on the left.

The waters of Bash Bish Falls begin at a spring high in Mount Washington and tumble into an aquamarine pool at the bottom of a deep snakelike gorge. After the 200-foot plunge of the falls, Bash Bish Brook continues on a gentler course through New York State until it finally joins the Hudson River on its way to the Atlantic.

The falls are made up of a series of cascades that twist between the cliffs of a precipitous gorge. A diamond shaped schist and granite outcrop divides the last section of the falls into two 50-foot freefalling cataracts. The beauty of Bash Bish changes through the seasons. Spring brings the greatest torrent of water, churning the cascades to foamy ribbons. In summer, the cooling spray from the falls provides a cooling effect for hikers. Autumn frames the falls in brilliant reds and yellows. Winter transforms Bash Bish into a sparkling wonderland.

Mount Everett State Reservation

In the extreme southwest corner of Massachusetts is a cluster of parks particularly notable for their spectacular scenery and breathtaking views. The 1,100 acre Mount Everett State Reservation in the town of Mount Washington, offers informal picnicking at Guilder Pond (the highest freshwater pond in Massachusetts). An approximate 1.5 mile road (currently closed to vehicular traffic but open to foot traffic) to the top of Mount Everett gives visitors access to a breathtaking 360-degree view spanning Massachusetts, New York and Connecticut. The Appalachian Trail also winds its way across the reservation.

Taconic State Park

The Taconic State Park is a 5000-acre park on the western side of the Taconic Ridge. The land is forested, and features several streams, a waterfall (Bash Bish Falls), and recreational access through hiking trails. The Park stretches 11 miles along the border that separates New York from Massachusetts and Connecticut

The Park features western-facing slopes dominated by mixed northern hardwood forests with hemlocks in the deep ravines. Along the ridge, you can also find several pitch pine communities.

The New York government set aside this park in the 1920s. Before that, logging companies harvested these forests extensively for charcoal to heat furnaces for iron production. In fact, in 1845, Lemuel Pomeroy (of Pittsfield, Massachusetts) and his sons built an iron foundry in Copake, on what is now parkland. The furnace still stands today and has been converted into a small museum, which includes a self-guided tour and interpretive display of the iron works, as well as some of the original tools of the time. The buildings that once housed the iron workers still stand and have been converted into camping cabins for public use.

The Park offers hiking, swimming, fishing, picnicking, camping, and an Iron Industry Museum. The park shares a border along the Taconic Mountain Range with Massachusetts and Connecticut. It also has an extensive trail system, which provides terrain from easy to challenging and offers spectacular views.

Hiking:

You can hike along the river to beautiful Bash Bish Falls. Beyond that, you can explore a whole series of trails that feature challenging terrain and spectacular views. Brace Mountain -- Dutchess County's highest peak (2,311 feet) is located in the park. The hike is done using the white-blazed South Taconic Trail

Swimming:

You can swim in the 40-foot deep Ore Pit Pond which, on a sunny day is so clear you can see the bottom. Or enjoy the Wading Pond, a shaded, tranquil place with shallow water. This pond is especially well suited for children.



Fishing:

Pit Pond and Bash Bish Brook are great places for trout fishing.

Campsites and cabins, as well as a picnic and playground area, are both provided here.

Contact Information: Taconic State Park - Copake Falls Area
Valley View Road
Copake Falls, NY 12517
Phone: (518) 329-3993

Taconic State Park - Rudd Pond Area
RR 2, Box 99
Millerton, NY 12546
Phone: (518) 789-3059