

inside track
THE CATSKILLS

EMMA LOVE RECOMMENDS WHERE TO STAY, EAT AND EXPLORE IN THIS RURAL AREA OF NEW YORK STATE WITH A BOHEMIAN VIBE



ABOVE The sitting room in Foxfire Mountain House. CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW LEFT Dinner is served four nights a week in the hotel's restaurant. Owners Eliza and Tim have restored the formerly derelict mansion. One of the 11 bedrooms. The peaceful grounds include a pretty lily pool

HOTEL FOXFIRE MOUNTAIN HOUSE

When former TV showrunner Eliza Clark and her chef husband Tim Trojian decided to switch careers and open a country inn in 2013, they stumbled across a near-derelict, twentieth-century wood-slatted mansion with a belfry and pond, tucked away off the highway between the towns of Phoenicia and Woodstock. The next three years were spent creating a laid-back, bohemian B&B that attracts everyone from road-tripping young couples, to art directors and Wall Street bankers escaping New York. The ground floor of Foxfire Mountain House (foxfiremountainhouse.com) has an open-plan sitting room with a velvet sofa in front of a stone fireplace, wooden floors and a pair of leather chairs next to a record player. Indian saris hang at the windows; horns from Africa decorate the wall. A help-yourself breakfast is laid out on the polished concrete bar (the buttermilk scones and apple and cinnamon tart are delicious). There are 11 bedrooms: the best and biggest is room six, which has blue and white Lake August 'Fox in the Snow' wallpaper, a reclaimed barn-wood bed with rope detail and Moroccan tiles on the bathroom floor. Dinner - roasted trout with charred lemon butter, say, or wild mushroom risotto - is served Thursday to Sunday, when it is lovely to sit at the communal table on the porch or chat to the friendly barmen. Doubles from \$250.

DON'T MISS

One of the biggest draws of the Catskills is the chance to walk in glorious countryside. If you only have time for one hike, make it two-tiered Kaaterskill Falls, one of the highest waterfalls in New York State, near the town of Tannersville. Start at the Laurel House Road car park: it is close to the viewing platform for the upper falls and there are a number of forest trails from here. Alternatively, head for Overlook Mountain, near Woodstock town. Keep going on the winding path until you reach an old hotel ruin and the fire tower just beyond - the green vistas are worth the steep climb.



RESTAURANT SILVIA

Set on the site of the legendary Joyous Lake nightclub in Woodstock, where everyone from Keith Richards to Jimi Hendrix once performed, this is a game-changing restaurant for the still vaguely hippy town. Silvia (silviawoodstockny.com) was opened in 2017 by self-taught chef Doris Choi and her sister Betty, who migrated to the Catskills from New York City. Silvia serves up the kind of farm-to-table food the sisters eat at home. The open kitchen has a wood-fired grill for smoking chicken and cooking their signature burgers (all the beef is grass fed, and finished and butchered in-house). There is a cosy bar area, with velvet banquette seating, marble tables and a mini art gallery of paintings on dark blue walls; and the lofty main room opens onto an outside deck. The sisters' Korean heritage is evident in the seasonal menus, which feature BBQ beef lettuce wraps with kimchi and the must-try bibimbap, which comes topped with a fried egg. They also place huge importance on locally sourced ingredients. Silvia is a destination restaurant that really puts Woodstock on the Catskills food map.



ARDEN WRAY; PETER CROSSBY; JON BILOUS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

ANTICLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT Rough Draft in Kingston is a combined bookshop and bar.

The gallery-style display of artworks in Woodstock restaurant Silvia. The Catskills' spectacular views are easily accessed with a variety of hiking trails and look especially dramatic in autumn. Clove & Creek sells local crafts



SHOPPING

Top of the list of towns to visit is sprawling Kingston, where the best independent boutiques are in the Stockade district. In several blocks of easy-to-stroll streets, you will find: Rough Draft Bar & Books, a brilliant bookshop, bar and café rolled into one (roughdraftny.com); men's clothing and gift shop Hamilton & Adams – think slogan T-shirts, wooden bartenders' knives and books on whisky (hamiltonandadams.com); and Oak 42, a women's fashion boutique selling cool American labels such as Knot Sisters and BB Dakota (oak42.com). Don't miss the Downtown district either. Lifestyle store Clove & Creek, where highlights include cups by ceramicist Andrew Molleur, quilted kimonos by The Highlands Foundry and timber baskets by the Peterboro Basket Company (cloveandcreek.com), Hops Petunia, a florist that also sells candles and home accessories (hopspetunia.com), and Jay Teske Leather Co (jayteske.com) are all full of beautiful, locally crafted pieces.

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