



# Summer Breeze

Exploring the picturesque Laurel Highlands in **Pennsylvania**.



## Road Captain Recon

Tips from the Johnstown PA H.O.G.® Chapter

**T**he rolling hills of southwestern Pennsylvania may be one of the state's best-kept motorcycling secrets. The Laurel Highlands, just an hour southeast of Pittsburgh, is situated in the bucolic Allegheny Mountains. Named for the Allegheny's Laurel Ridge and the mountain laurel – Pennsylvania's state flower – the 3,000-square-mile, three-county region offers an irresistible combination of scenery, history, and culture.

### HISTORIC HIGHWAYS

Take a ride through history on the Historic National Road Corridor – U.S. 40 – or the Lincoln Highway – U.S. 30 – both of which pass through the area. The National Road dates to 1811 and was the first federally funded highway and an early gateway to the Midwest, while the Lincoln Highway was constructed a century later as the first transcontinental route. And be sure to check out the 68-mile Laurel Highlands Scenic Byway (state roads 711 and 381).



### A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Eight state parks dot the Laurel Highlands, and the Great Allegheny Passage – a 335-mile hiking and bicycling trail from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC – traverses the region. At Ohiopyle State Park, the Youghiogheny River Gorge features waterfalls and whitewater rapids.



### THE WRIGHT STUFF

Famed American architect Frank Lloyd Wright designed three homes in Laurel Highlands, and Fallingwater, constructed in 1936 atop a waterfall, is considered his masterpiece. Today the home is the only Wright property open to the public with its original furnishings, artwork, and setting intact. Guided home tours are \$25, purchased in advance ([fallingwater.org](http://fallingwater.org)).



### SOLEMN REMEMBRANCE

The Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville is a sobering reminder of the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. That day, one of four hijacked airliners crashed into an open field here after passengers fought back, preventing the plane from reaching its intended destination of Washington, DC. A visit to Memorial Plaza and its Wall of Names is a fitting way to pay tribute to those who gave their lives that day as well as to those who defend our freedoms.

### COVERED BRIDGES

Pennsylvania has more historic wooden covered bridges than anywhere else in the country, including at least 10 in the Laurel Highlands – a perfect excuse for a motorcycle tour. "We go on covered bridge rides, where we check out all the bridges in the area," says Cliff Fetterman, Head Road Captain of the Johnstown H.O.G.® chapter.

### COAL MINES

Historically, coal was king in southwestern Pennsylvania, although few mines remain today. An accident at Queecreek mine in Somerset captured worldwide attention in 2002, when nine miners were rescued from a flooded shaft after 77 hours trapped underground. Today a plaque and seven-foot bronze statue of a miner mark the spot. "They also have the rescue capsule there, and you can see where they brought the miners up out of the hole," Fetterman says.

### WHEN TO GO

Laurel Highlands averages more snowfall than anywhere in the state, but come springtime, "the street sweepers clear off the sand and gravel, so anytime from mid-April on is best," advises Fetterman. The mountain laurels start blooming mid-June, and fall foliage is superb as well.

The Pennsylvania H.O.G. rally runs July 28-30 in Williamsport: [paStateHogRally.com](http://paStateHogRally.com)  
For more information on **Laurel Highlands**, visit [LaurelHighlands.org](http://LaurelHighlands.org)