

NEW JERSEY | MEDFORD



Marvelous Medford

Discover history, small-town charm
and natural beauty

By Lisa A. Beach

ESTABLISHED IN 1847 AND nestled between farmland and the New Jersey Pinelands National Reserve, Medford, N.J., brims with history, green spaces, restaurants, craft breweries and boutiques.

“As the hub of business and culture for this region, Medford boasts a bustling village area lining our original and historic Main Street,” notes Mayor Charles “Chuck” Watson. “Medford’s residential neighborhoods — which include log cabins, Victorian estates and contemporary facades — have been created with respect for the woodlands, streams and lakes surrounding us.”

HISTORIC SITES

Stroll the brick sidewalks in historic

Medford Village, first settled by Quakers in 1762. Dotted with shade trees and old-fashioned gas lanterns, the quaint Main Street is home to locally owned gift shops, boutiques, eateries, craft breweries and cafés. Serving as the cultural hub, the Medford Arts Center offers a gallery, gift shop and year-round activities in its facility and at the adjacent park and gazebo.

The newly revamped Feed Mill complex opened last fall after a developer rehabilitated the historic structure built in 1875. The space now includes a coffee shop, brewery, barbecue eatery and ice cream store, as well as Studio 67, a center that hosts classes, workshops and performances in a variety of art forms.

History buffs will also enjoy a trip to Kirby’s Mill, a grist mill built in 1778 with ongoing restoration efforts by The Medford Historical Society. Now on the

National Register of Historic Places, the Kirby’s Mill complex boasts a working waterwheel, blacksmith shop, sawmill, sawyer’s house, storage barn, carriage barn, an extensive collection of antiques and a museum that includes a country store and milliner, print and carpenter shops.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Families will love Johnson’s Corner Farm, known for “planting seeds and harvesting memories.” Take a hayride or pick your own seasonal produce, which may include blueberries, sweet corn, string beans and peaches. Nosh on homemade goodies from the bakery and farmhouse menu, including the popular cider donuts, chicken potpies and seasonal bistro sandwiches. Kids will

EXPLORE WHARTON STATE FOREST

Medford borders 1.1 million acres of protected forest known as the Pine Barrens. Peruse this beautiful habitat at Wharton State Forest, the largest single tract of land within the New Jersey park system.

Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy miles of trails by foot, bike or horseback or navigate the rivers and lakes in a boat, canoe or kayak. Cast your line in the waters to reel in catfish, perch and sunfish or cool off in the summer with a plunge into Atsion Lake.

Journey into the past at the park’s historic Batsto Village, a former iron and glassmaking industrial hub from 1766 to 1867. Stop in the museum to trace Batsto’s history through exhibits and artifacts and explore the rest of the village on your own or with a guided tour.

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Sawmill at Batsto Village

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MEDFORD TOWNSHIP; GETTY IMAGES

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Freedom Barks Dog Park

FREEDOM BARKS DOG PARK

love the Discovery Barnyard and Animal Farm, which includes multiple play areas with go-kart tracks, lawn games, a giant sandpit and three splash pads. Little ones can also feed the farm’s chickens, cows, donkey, goats and sheep.

If you travel with your pup, be sure to make time for a visit to Freedom Barks Dog Park. Maintained by a volunteer-led nonprofit, this 26-acre park provides plenty of space to romp and swim. Check out special events like “yappy” hours and food trucks featuring locally sourced dog treats. Your canine will love the agility

equipment, trails, cedar creeks and four fields (aptly named Squirrel, Dog House, Hydrant and Bone).

For a serene, nature-infused outing, visit the beautiful, 160-acre Barton Arboretum and Nature Preserve of Medford Leas. Admission is free, and the arboretum blends a diverse horticultural array of meadows, designed gardens, wetlands, landscaped grounds and natural woodlands. Bird lovers will enjoy spotting spring visitors like the red-winged blackbird, Eastern Phoebe and yellow-rumped warbler.

Animal lovers can also explore the 171-acre Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge. The site’s nonprofit-run rehabilitation hospital cares for injured wildlife until they’re healthy enough for release, and for those with severe injuries, the refuge serves as a permanent home. Current residents include owls, eagles, raccoons, deer and turtles. The nature center offers an up-close look at Pine-lands displays and wildlife artifacts, and the area includes 3 miles of trails to hike the surrounding forest and cedar swamp habitats.



DINE-AND-DRINK DESTINATIONS

Don’t miss a taste of local Medford flavor at these establishments:

- **Braddock’s Tavern**
Step back in time at this historic, four-star restaurant offering fine dining in a colonial atmosphere. This three-story, frame-and-clapboard structure was nearly destroyed by fire in 1843. After its reconstruction, the building operated as an inn and hotel through the 1800s until Charles Braddock purchased the property in 1898.
- **Stokelan Winery**
This sustainable, family-owned boutique winery sits on 10 acres, with the 1853 Stokelan home at the heart of the property, surrounded by 112 acres of preserved farmland.
- **Lower Forge Brewery**
Cap off your small-town visit with a pint at Medford’s original craft beer brewery. Try the flagship Healthy, Wealthy & Weizen, a Hefeweizen made with wheat and barley grown at Rabbit Hill Farms in Cumberland County, N.J.

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