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Winter Weekends: Lambertville and New Hope



Norman Y. Lono for The New York Times

New Hope, foreground, known for shops and restaurants, is on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River; on the New Jersey side, just across a steel bridge, is Lambertville, with its 19th-century town houses and a less-discovered charm.

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Lambertville, N.J., and New Hope, Pa., linked by a steel truss bridge that looks more fragile than it really is, snuggle on either side of the Delaware River about 15 miles northwest of Trenton. Even in winter, traffic jams of weekend pedestrians form on the towns' tight sidewalks, strolling past restored Victorian houses enjoying second lives as inns. No one seems to mind the crowds. These are places to amble in — window-shop, eat, then window-shop some more before maybe eating something else.

Connecting them is the New Hope-Lambertville Toll Supported Bridge — actually toll-free since 1919, with a pedestrian walkway and 1,053 feet long. It sits only 10 or 15 feet above the river surface, and from the middle, on the state line, the views up and down river are serene even when icy patches interrupt the water.

New Hope is loaded with small shops. One on West Mechanic Street, TearDrop Memories (215-862-3401; www.teardropmemories.com), specializes in Victorian birdcages, clown memorabilia and, oh, yes, death-related antiques like mourning jewelry and old funeral-parlor advertising handouts. On South Main Street, look for Gerenser's Exotic Ice Cream (215-862-2050), which isn't just for summer. Order a double dip cone — maybe one scoop of African Violet and one of Jamaican Tree Bark. The watermelon [ice cream](#) tastes so much like watermelon that you expect to spit seeds on the sidewalk.

Lambertville is a destination for antique hunters, who might start their tour through its shops at America Antiques and Designs on South Main Street (609-397-6966; www.americadesigns.com). The Lambertville Station (11 Bridge Street, 609-397-8300; www.lambertvillestation.com) offers American cuisine, Sunday brunch and a river view in a restored stone train station built in 1867.

The highlight of a joint winter festival (www.winterfestival.net, 215-862-5067) Jan. 21 to 25 will be a parade that begins at noon in New Hope and ends an hour later in Lambertville. Two Mummers bands will strut in the parade, wearing feathered, sequined costumes and playing banjo-and-saxophone-heavy [music](#).

Among several highly regarded bed-and-breakfasts are the Inn at Bowman's Hill near New Hope (215-862-8090; www.theinnatbowmanshill.com; rates from \$295), and the Chimney Hill Estate and Ol' Barn Inn near Lambertville (609-397-1516; www.chimneyhillinn.com; rates from \$225).