

# SNUGGLE IN FOR A WINTER'S BREAK

*Experience Kentucky's winter beauty in the Appalachian foothills*

*By Linda Stahl*

**I**nnkeeper Barbara Napier's rosemary braided bread is tender, fragrant and beautiful. It is pure pleasure to see it resting on a pan in her kitchen and anticipate its arrival at the dining table. It is the signature dish of a woman whose vegetarian culinary talents are broad and deep.

But Napier's artistry extends well beyond the kitchen.

She is raconteur and entrepreneur, too, as you will find out if you follow the winding and narrow McSwain Branch Road to her door at Snug Hollow Farm Bed & Breakfast in Estill County. And while you will literally be at the end of a road, you will be at the beginning of a memorable experience.

You will have reached the foothills of the Appalachians and you will find Napier, a daughter of Appalachia, more than willing to share the best of her lifestyle with you—from sleeping under handmade quilts to rocking on a porch while listening to birdsong.

She provides no television or video games for her guests. There is no cell phone coverage, so your texting thumbs will get a rest.

Last summer, when I spent some time at Snug Hollow, a group of four women from Lexington dropped in unexpectedly. One of them had read and cooked from Napier's cookbook and all were intrigued with the idea of their girls' group, six in all, staying there. They left after touring the premises with the notion of arranging a girls' lunch for the fall season to be followed by a longer stay of several nights in the winter.

They had the right idea. Snug Hollow won a place in "50 Best Girlfriends Getaways in North America" in *National Geographic* in 2007. It is an ideal place for walking, napping, reading and catching up on friends' news. It is also a perfect destination for those who search for places to enjoy Kentucky's winter beauty.

"Guests get snowed in sometimes, but they don't seem to mind," said Napier. "They walk in the snow and then come in and make fudge."

Food is an important part of the Snug Hollow experience. Napier



Photo by Barbara Chrisman

is a certified organic farmer who is a vegetarian cook. Breakfasts are provided to overnight guests, of course, but other meals can be arranged too. In fact, you don't have to leave Napier's 300 acres surrounded by cliffs and knobs during your stay if you don't want to. (If you do want to get out, she has a variety of activities to suggest, from shopping in Berea, a crafts mecca 20 minutes away, to hiking in the Red River Gorge, 45 minutes away.)

On a winter visit, look forward to such breakfast treats as crisp oatmeal and cornmeal waffles and Kentucky fried apples, which Napier's mother, Etta Napier, served to her family every Sunday morning. Other winter meals might feature Napier's Kentuscan Bean Soup, a Snug Hollow original, served with cheese grits, and a serving of roasted winter vegetables.

When you call Napier and talk to her about your reservations she will make it abundantly clear that there is "nothing to do" and that you will be unplugged.

But the winter guest will have the cozy comforts of the sun porch or the second-floor library of the farmhouse. In both spaces, available to all guests, books are abundant. There are board games.

You can enjoy the outdoors in different fashions—on foot in the meadows and on the hiking trails that wind through the woods at Snug Hollow or from a comfortable chair in the commons areas of the rambling farmhouse, which has dozens of windows.

The farm pond and the creek called McSwain Branch attract wildlife that will stand out in a leafless winter landscape. Deer and wild turkey should be easy to spot. The rat-a-tat of the pileated woodpecker, the largest native Woodpecker species, and the smaller woodpeckers like the downy woodpeckers will punctuate the air. Nuthatches will sound their nasal notes as if blowing a tiny tin horn. The red of cardinals will decorate the trees. At night, barred owls will call "who cooks for you, who cooks for you-all."

And an incredible joy can be found in the brilliance of the stars in the winter sky. "I've seen the aurora borealis seven times," Napier said.



Napier will work to make her housing work for you. But no pets, please. A jealous Jack Russell terrier, Hillary Rotten, bars pet guests.

Accommodations in the two-story farmhouse include a spacious bedroom with bathroom or a suite of two bedrooms with its own bathroom, both upstairs. The suite consists of a bedroom with a queen bed and an adjoining bedroom with three singles.

The 150-year-old chestnut log cabin has an upstairs bedroom with queen bed, full bed and two single beds and half bathroom.

Downstairs the cabin has two single beds tucked under windows in a corner and a futon that converts to a bed. There is a bathroom downstairs. There also is a kitchen with small appliances and microwave.

A new cedar and pine cabin by the creek, which opened this year, has a queen bed, queen sofa bed and bathroom. There is a galley-style kitchen with small appliances and microwave. The open floor plan makes it a perfect for setting up more beds if needed or for using it as a center for workshop activities.



Photo by Barbara Chrisman

## SNUG HOLLOW'S ROSEMARY BRAIDED BREAD

- 1½ cups warm water
- 3 tablespoons active dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- ½ cups olive oil
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 3½ cups or more all-purpose flour
- 1 egg, beaten

### ROSEMARY MIXTURE

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tablespoon chopped or rubbed sage



- \* Preheat oven to 400 degrees
- \* In large bowl, combine warm water, yeast, honey, lemon juice, ½ cup olive oil, salt and 1 cup whole wheat flour. Stir well and let rest for about 5 minutes
- \* Add remaining flour a little at a time, stirring to mix well until you have a soft dough. Turn out on a floured board to knead.
- \* Add small amounts of flour and knead for approximately 6 minutes or until you have a soft, pliable dough. Pour a little olive oil in your hands and continue kneading until dough "pops up" when punched. Leave to rest for about 5 minutes
- \* Divide dough into three balls. With your hand roll each section into a long rope (about 12 inches) for 1 large loaf, and braid strands loosely into a loaf. Pinch and tuck ends. Transfer to baking sheet and brush with beaten egg. Let rest for 5 minutes in a warm place.
- \* Bake approximately 15 minutes or until lightly golden.
- \* Mix together ½ cups olive oil and herbs. Pour mixture over hot bread and serve warm.

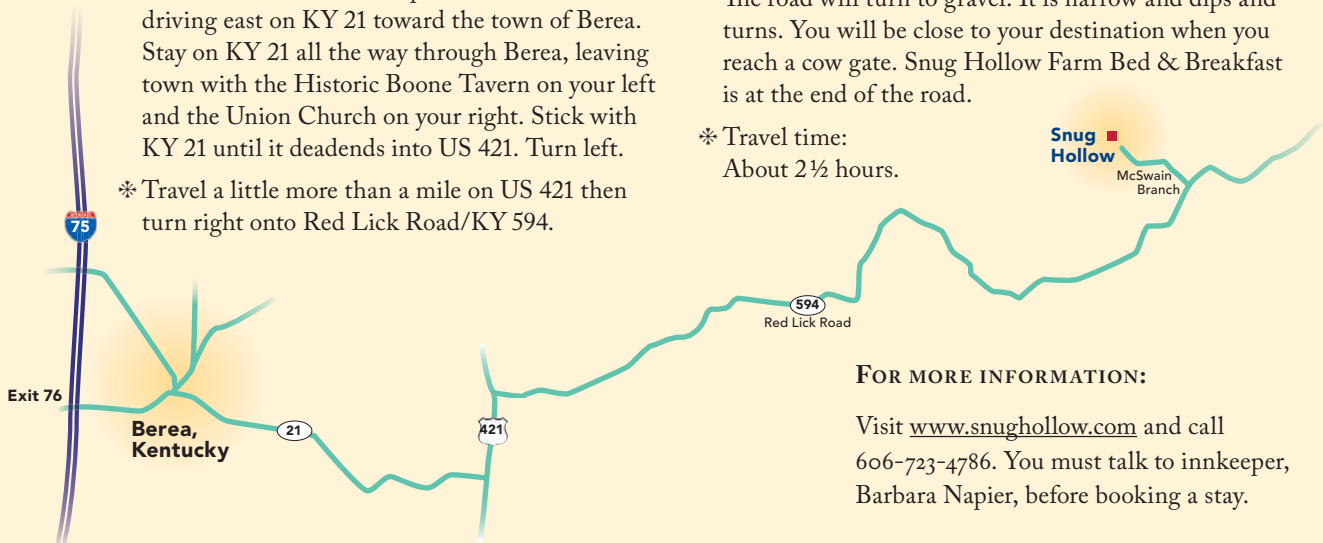
## SNUG HOLLOW FARM BED & BREAKFAST

### DIRECTIONS FROM LOUISVILLE:

- \* Take Interstate 64 East to Interstate 75 South.
- \* Travel Interstate 75 South to Exit 76.
- \* At the end of the exit ramp turn left. You will be driving east on KY 21 toward the town of Berea. Stay on KY 21 all the way through Berea, leaving town with the Historic Boone Tavern on your left and the Union Church on your right. Stick with KY 21 until it deadends into US 421. Turn left.
- \* Travel a little more than a mile on US 421 then turn right onto Red Lick Road/KY 594.

- \* Follow KY 594 for 12½ miles, then look for the road called McSwain Branch and turn left. You'll see a black barn with a quilt square painted on it on your left. The road will turn to gravel. It is narrow and dips and turns. You will be close to your destination when you reach a cow gate. Snug Hollow Farm Bed & Breakfast is at the end of the road.

- \* Travel time:  
About 2½ hours.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit [www.snughollow.com](http://www.snughollow.com) and call 606-723-4786. You must talk to innkeeper, Barbara Napier, before booking a stay.

Writers in particular have been attracted to winter stays at Snug Hollow.

Author Gwen Rubio, who visits the farm because it is a quiet place where a writer can work, brought the *Oprah* show to Snug Hollow a few years back. At the time her book *Icy Sparks* was an Oprah Winfrey Book Club selection. Ask Napier about the visiting *Oprah* crew from Chicago and you'll find out what a good storyteller she is.

Experienced traveler Barbara Prairie of Berea, Kentucky, thinks bed and breakfast establishments are always better when the innkeeper has a winning personality and she finds Napier's one of the best. "She's passionate and she has such a great story to tell," Prairie said after a recent visit to Snug Hollow, not her first.

So if you go, ask Napier about buying the farm 32 years ago and then ask her about losing it, getting it back and how, in the end, she found her calling as an innkeeper and opened Snug Hollow Farm Bed & Breakfast in January 2000. It's a great story.

*Linda Stahl is a former writer for The Courier-Journal who lives in the woods in Eastern Kentucky.*

As a prelude to a visit, enjoy Barbara Napier's newest creation — the *Snug Hollow Farm Cookbook*, available at Carmichael's and other fine bookstores. The photograph-rich spiral-bound book offers approximately 80 of Barbara's favorite vegetarian recipes celebrating the harvest of Kentucky.

## SNUGHOLLOW FARM COOKBOOK

from Kentucky's unique and authentically Appalachian Bed & Breakfast



Hot Food & Warm Memories  
by Barbara Napier, Innkeeper



### KENTUSCAN BEAN SOUP

This is a very brothy and fragrant soup, a Snug Hollow original. You may serve it as an entrée with cheese grits, or as a soup course.

- 2 small cans of great northern beans, rinsed
- ½ stick butter
- 3 tablespoon chopped fresh garlic
- 2 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tablespoon rubbed sage
- 2 tablespoon Tamari sauce
- 2–3 tablespoon nutritional yeast
- 2 cups water
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

- \* In saucepan, melt butter over medium heat; add garlic, rosemary, sage and pepper. Cook slowly for a few minutes.
- \* Add Tamari sauce and nutritional yeast and stir until mixed.
- \* Add water and great northern beans (rinsed well) or you may substitute with a can of pinto beans.
- \* Bring to slow boil and simmer for about 10 minutes and remove from heat. Warm before serving.
- \* Makes 4 large servings.

### ROASTED WINTER VEGETABLES

- ⅓ cup olive oil
- 6–7 whole garlic cloves
- 3 large carrots
- 2 tablespoon Tamari sauce
- 3 large onions
- 2 turnips
- 1 large sweet potato or butternut squash
- Fresh herbs such as rosemary, sage, thyme, salt and pepper
- 4 small red or Yukon gold potatoes
- 2 cups Brussels sprouts or broccoli
- 2–3 beets

- \* Quarter onions and thickly slice vegetables except Brussels sprouts and broccoli. Mix the vegetables except the green ones in a large bowl. Add olive oil, Tamari sauce, herbs, salt and pepper to taste. Stir until coated well with oil.
- \* Spread vegetables on a large baking sheet and roast in a 425 degree oven until vegetables begin to brown (about 20 minutes). Stir and turn once during roasting to loosen from pan and ensure even browning.
- \* Coat Brussels sprouts and broccoli with oil, add to pan and roast about 20 minutes or until done.
- \* These vegetables will be quite brown, crisp and delicious!