

One for the ROAD

INSITES

App guides you along the state beer trail

Are you thirsting for a getaway that's not too far away? Are you dying to release some of that bottled-up quarantine energy? Are you suffering from a case of cabin fever? Gather a few friends and get ready to buy the next round.

The Brew Barons Beer Trail app will help you tap into some of Pennsylvania's many craft beer offerings.

The Beer Trail app is brought to you by Visit Hershey & Harrisburg, a marketing organization dedicated to attracting tourism to the area. Government and chocolate are not the only industries in that part of the state. There are more than 20 microbreweries scattered throughout the region. The app, which is free on the App Store and Google Play, is your guide to finding them.

The nice thing about vacationing along the beer trail is you don't have to leave the state, so there's no need to worry about self-isolating for two weeks when you get back. Also, many of the breweries have outside seating, which is noted on their profiles in the app. That's a big draw in these pandemic times. And, with a designated driver, it's close enough to be a day trip, which is another pandemic consideration for many.

The app pours a lot of useful information into a streamlined interface. Icons across the bottom of the screen serve up the different sections. The Beer Trail section has profiles of all the participating breweries. The profiles include a description of the atmosphere, prices for sample flights, food options, if they're family-friendly and if they have outdoor seating. There's also a link for directions via Google Maps and links to the brewery's website and social media offerings.

The Map section pinpoints the breweries on an

interactive map. Clicking on a pin opens a window with the name, address, rating, photos and other information. There's also a link to directions.

The app is more than just a guide. It's also a game with prizes awarded. When you arrive at a brewery you check in with the app, which keeps track of each site you visit. If you visit six locations, you will be sent a deck of Brew Barons Beer Trail playing cards. If you visit 12 breweries, you get an ale-can glass. Seventeen visits earns you a stainless steel growler.

There's an Events section that features a calendar of activities brewing at different locations. Because of the pandemic, they are scraping the bottom of the barrel. The Boneshire Brew Works has a weekly Taps and Trivia night, and Mount Gretna Brewery has a monthly jazz brunch. Otherwise, the events calendar is dry.



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If you decide to hit the trail for more than a day, the app has information on hotel packages available in the area. If you want to get off your bar stool and see what else there is to do nearby, there's an Explore Hershey & Harrisburg section in the app. It features several subsections, including Places to Stay, Plan a Trip, Things to Do, Restaurants, Vineyards and more.

The Brew Barons Beer Trail app is tastefully designed and intuitive to use. It features nice imagery, good typography and a pleasant color palette. It's full of good information and is a good resource if you're planning on heading to the state capital to tip a few.

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