

The ANATOMY of a PERFECT GOLF TRIP

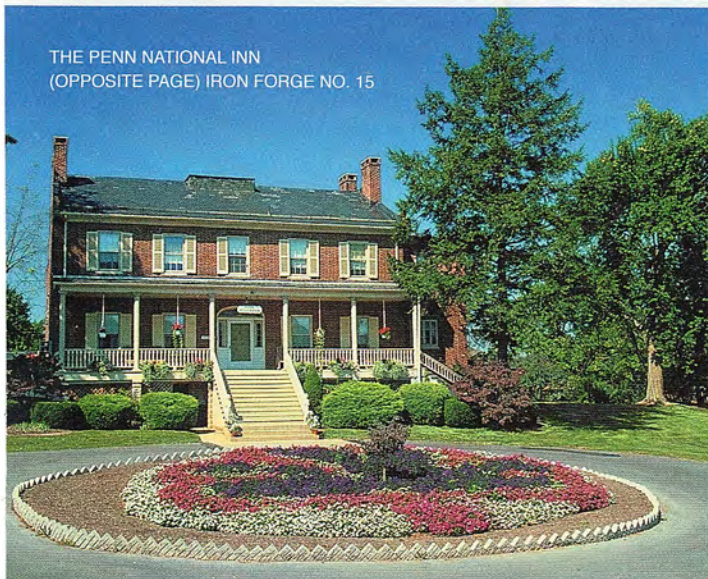
A buddy trip requires a group leader but it's not always easy to find someone to take on that job. Drawing the short straw on a Penn National excursion can be like getting two vacations in one. Just don't tell your buddies.

By Richard Watkins

Taking the lead in arranging a trip to Penn National Golf Club and Inn takes only one phone call or a visit to www.pennngolf.com and the "golf package planner." The Inn staff takes it from there, planning out your Stay & Play golf trip. Two great courses, great conditions, a quaint and quiet inn, lodges and excellent food – what else do you need?

BOOK IT: I dialed 800.231.0080 and the adventure began. Craig at Penn National took care of everything. That included rooms, tee times, even food. Melanie, Pat and Christine at the Inn even took care of collecting our group's deposit. My friends called in with their deposits so I didn't have to worry about collecting money from any of them – especially with at least one known tightwad in the group. →

THE PENN NATIONAL INN
(OPPOSITE PAGE) IRON FORGE NO. 15



Penn National Golf Club & Inn

Mont Alto, Pennsylvania

Golf: Founders Course (Ed Ault, 1968) is very traditional with tree-lined fairways and large greens. Iron Forge (Bill Love, 1997) is open with tall fescue grass lining the fairways, much like a links course.

Penn National Inn: The centerpiece of the inn is the restored 1847 Manor House. Six modern guest lodges surround the Manor House, providing 52 guest rooms.

Contact: 800.231.0080 (Stay & Play); 800.221.7366 (tee times)
www.pennngolf.com or www.pennngolf.com/stay-and-play/great-trip



Once booked, Craig promptly sent me a confirmation letter with all the important details like tee times and inclusions for the trip. All that was left for me to do before departure was to put together a room list, making sure I didn't get stuck with the snorer in the group.

CHECK IT: We brought our games, our clubs, our enthusiasm and our own beer (Penn National is located in a dry township) and we were good to go. Melanie, Pat and Christine were ready for us at the Inn according to our planned ETA, so check-in was efficient and fast. We sailed through it so swiftly, we even had time to actually stretch when we got to the range. Once we hit the bag drop, there was no further need to schlep our clubs around. They were safely stored each night and waiting for us on the cart the next morning. In fact, we never had to lift our bags again until we headed home.

PLAY IT: Our next play was, well, to go play. With two distinctly different and well-maintained courses on the same property, we enjoyed the Founders Course and the Iron Forge Course the same day for a low replay rate and a guaranteed tee time in the afternoon. Pace of play was good due to 10-minute tee time intervals. This allowed the group plenty of time between rounds to grab lunch.

Being able to book our replay rounds in advance was a great thing for our group – we remember trips to other courses where we had to finish the first round and then had to run straight to the golf shop to try to reserve our second round only to find out that we couldn't get back out until after 3 p.m. Now we head straight to the grill for lunch.

DOWN IT: After a day on the courses, we headed to the restaurant located just steps from the putting green. And this situation was ideal, especially since we still needed to settle a few bets. At the restaurant, we discovered a fine dinner selection including steaks, seafood, a daily special, salad bar and desserts. Remember, it's BYOB at dinner, too. The restaurant staff even corked the wine.

Penn National Inn's unique accommodations setup allowed our group to socialize in a common area outside our rooms. We used it for cocktails and card playing. Since we came with 16 players, we had an entire lodge building to ourselves. Breakfast was provided each morning and hitting a few extra balls to warm back up was no problem. Range balls are included in the package. For larger groups, we noticed a private hospitality room with cable TV and enough room for a multi-table poker tourney. Group awards and prizes were available in the pro shop. Penn National's pro shop has a fine selection of merchandise and the prices were pretty good.

POST IT: We didn't even have our clubs back to our cars by the time the chatter began. Rebooking a return visit to Penn National Golf Club & Inn was just as easy as it was the first time around. Because the Penn National staff made it so easy for me as the group leader from start to finish, it was the most relaxed and stress free golf trip I have ever experienced. We've tried some other places, but I think we've found a home here. ■