

Trapp Family Lodge Self-Guided Tours

Chapel Hike – 1 Mile Round Trip

Enjoy a short (but steep) hike/snowshoe to the chapel that Werner von Trapp and other members of the family built. From the Outdoor Center head to the Fox Track trail and hike up approximately 1/10th of a mile to the start of the Chapel Trail on the right. The trail then has a few switchbacks and gets a bit steeper just before you reach the Chapel.

You may go inside the Chapel and write a prayer or ring the bell that sits upon the top of the Chapel.

The shortest route back to the Trapp Family Lodge is straight down the hill opposite the entrance to the Chapel.

History of the Chapel

Werner von Trapp and his brother Rupert joined the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division in 1943 in the middle of WWII. This was an elite unit of mountaineers and skiers that was deployed to Europe to fight the Germans and Axis Powers in WWII.

There was a battle that took place in the mountains of Italy that Werner did not think he would survive. Werner made a promise to God that if he made it through the war alive that upon returning home he would build a Chapel to God. Werner survived with his brother Rupert and in 1946 started hauling stone up the hill behind the Lodge. It took Werner over 4 years to complete the Chapel.

The oldest surviving of the singing children is Rosemarie von Trapp, who is now 91 years old. She lives in Stowe Village and in the Summer hikes up to the Chapel to collect the prayers that people leave behind. Rosemarie brings the prayers back to her church which is the Stowe Community Church located in the Village of Stowe. Rosemarie gets a few friends together to pray that the prayers written by our Guests come true.

Johannes von Trapp (youngest of the singing children) and his wife Lynn were married in the Chapel in 1969. Johannes is now 81 and is the President of the Trapp Family Lodge.

Maple Sugar Snowshoe/Walk – 1.5 mile round trip

Take a casual .75 mile snowshoe/walk into the Trapp Family sugar bush. The most direct route to the Sugar House is through the field behind the Outdoor Center. Follow the snow fence line to the woods. Slightly to the left you will find Maple Lane which will lead you to the Sugar House. The Sugar House is currently closed to the Public but you may notice the steam coming from the center Copula if they are “boiling” or Sugaring.

You will find buckets on the Sugar Maple Trees that may have sap in them. To see if the Sap is “running” gently slide the cover off the top of the Sap Bucket and you will see the Maple Sap dripping from the tap if the temperature is above freezing. The raw sap looks just like water and it takes 40 Gallons of Sap to make one Gallon of Maple Syrup through a process of concentrating the sugar content through “Boiling”.

Pure Maple Syrup has a sugar content of 66.9% regardless of what grade of Maple Syrup it is. The different grades of syrup are determined by the color. The lighter grades have a more Delicate Maple Flavor and the Darker Grades have a heavier Maple Flavor. This grade difference is created by the type of Sap the tree produces through the Sugaring Season, which typically lasts from the beginning of March through Mid-April in this area.

Meet the Cows – approximately ½ mile

Our Scottish Highlander herd is located in our “Orchard Pasture”. This is approximately ¼ to ½ of a mile on the left past the Outdoor Center heading down the dirt road. We have about 50 of these beautiful furry beef cattle.

This breed is the hairiest domestic breed of cow and is capable of surviving very cold and wet climates. The cows have two layers of hair to keep them warm enough that we do not even need to have a barn for them in the Winter months. The long outer layer of hair is “Oily” and can repel the water and snow, while the under layer of hair is soft and downy to keep them warm.

You will not find this breed in warmer climates due to their intolerance of heat. They often retreat into the woods to find shade on the hot Summer days.

If you would like to make a few cows happy feel free to gently toss a couple of apples over the fence.

Meet the Sheep

The Trapp Family Lodge's flock of Katahdin Sheep are located just below the Kaffeehaus at our Woodshed.

These sheep often get mistaken for Goats due to their unusual appearance. This breed was created by mating an African Hairy Sheep with a Merino Wool Sheep. The purpose for this was to create a breed that was "self" shedding and would not have to be sheared. These sheep are bred for their meat and not their wool.

In the Spring, Summer and Fall months we rotate the sheep from pasture to pasture to help in mowing of our steeper lawns. They do a great job but have been known to escape under/over the fence to find greener pastures or even enjoy some apples that have fallen from our apple trees in the Fall.