



Silvertip the llama greets trekkers by sniffing their hair.

Bloomtown Acres/ Four Ladies & Me Llama Trekking

4179 Divine Llama Lane

East Bend, N.C. 27018

Phone: 336-972-3986

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Hours: Open year-round except during midsummer. Advance reservations are required.

Directions: From U.S. 52 North near the Forsyth County–Stokes County line, take Exit 123 (the King/Tobaccoville exit) and turn left on South Main Street. In about 0.5 mile, South Main Street becomes Doral Drive. Travel approximately 1.5 miles and turn right on Tobaccoville Road. After about a mile, bear right on Ridge Road. Drive 3 miles, turn right on Reynolda Road (N.C. 67), go about 4 miles, turn right on Macedonia Road, and continue about 1 mile. Divine Llama Vineyards is on the left.



“Enjoy hiking with llamas in Yadkin Valley Wine Country . . .”

Bloomtown Acres/Four Ladies & Me Llama Trekking brochure

The Yadkin Valley is widely known for its vineyards, wineries, and wine-related events. According to the website of the Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, “The Yadkin Valley is North Carolina’s first federally recognized American Viticultural Area.” It boasts “nearly 30 wineries and 400 acres devoted to vineyards.” The region attracts a multitude of tourists, who come to sample wine, bask in the relaxing landscape of the vineyards, and enjoy a gourmet meal at one of the many vineyard restaurants. They may not be aware, however, that one vineyard offers those experiences in the company of cuddly and friendly llamas.

Michael and Patricia West, the owners of Four Ladies & Me Llamas, joined with Thomas and Julia Hughes to open Divine Llama Vineyards in May 2009. Located in East Bend, the seventy-seven-acre vineyard contains one of the largest llama farms in the state. Over forty llamas—along with miniature horses, a miniature donkey, waterfowl, exotic chickens, and, of course, crias (baby llamas), which can be seen in the spring and fall—populate this Yadkin County vineyard.

Shortly after opening Divine Llama Vineyards, the Wests partnered with Mark and Sharon Berry, the owners of Bloomtown Acres—another llama farm in East Bend—to create a unique activity that would involve both wine and llamas. They began accepting reservations for llama trekking and picnics on the vineyard property during the fall of 2009.

Visitors are given a menu prior to the trip to make their food and wine selections; one bottle of Divine Llama Vineyards wine per couple is included in the cost of the trek. On the day of the trek, participants meet at a particular location on the vineyard property, where their energetic hosts, Mark and Sharon Berry, introduce them to their llama trekking companions. In most instances, guests will have the pleasure of trekking with Silvertip and Fiddlesticks, two charming male llamas that like to greet newcomers by sniffing their hair. These sure-footed animals have been trained to carry lunch and other necessities on the trail. They can also tote jackets and rain gear, should guests wish to bring them.

Before starting a trek, participants are shown how to properly lead their llamas. Once they are comfortable doing so, the trek commences. Walking toward the trail entrance, trekkers can absorb the vineyard’s outstanding scenery. The view of Pilot Mountain is exceptional, and the architecture of buildings and barns set amidst ripening vines and rolling fields is captivating. Colorfully coated llamas fill the surrounding pastures. Many of them follow the trekkers along the fence rail until the walk progresses into the woods.



Harvesting grapes at Divine Llama Vineyards

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF
DIVINE LLAMA VINEYARDS
AND FARM

Entering the forest, participants traverse hilly terrain that follows and crosses wide streams; at several places, they must choose to jump or walk across. Halfway through the hike, Mark and Sharon lead trekkers to a remote creek-side area. There, they prepare a picnic lunch while hikers and llamas have a chance to relax. Participants are treated to a candlelit feast accompanied by the soothing sounds of nature—bubbling water from the stream, rustling leaves, and hums from curious llamas.

After guests have had ample time to digest their meals, the llamas are repacked and the trek continues. Out of the woods and off the trail, trekkers can return to the barn by way of a pasture or a gravel driveway. Those who choose the pasture can visit with the miniature horses and Bucky the miniature donkey.

Before departing, guests are invited to the tasting room (a modest additional fee is charged) for a sampling of seven Divine Llama wines. Among the favorites are “Red Rita” and “In a Heartbeat”—blends of wine named for llamas that reside at the vineyard.

Divine Llama Vineyards also welcomes the public during harvest season. Grapes are typically harvested during the last week of August and the first three weeks of September. During the harvest, grape-picking volunteers and their bucket-carrying llama companions gather the fruit together. Afterward, volunteers and staff enjoy a meal, wine, and festive talk of llamas.

Trekking with llamas and partaking of a picnic on the grounds of Divine Llama Vineyards combine to make a memorable experience. The friendly hosts and owners will do all they can to accommodate guests’ needs and make the excursion a gratifying event. Whatever the occasion—whether family outing or romantic rendezvous—an afternoon spent trekking with llamas is an out-of-the-ordinary occurrence that participants will long remember.

Tips

- Note that trips are payable by cash only.
- Remember, trekkers only lead llamas; they do not ride them. The trek is approximately two miles long and typically lasts about three hours. The terrain is a bit steep in places, so consider your physical condition before scheduling an excursion. Mark and Sharon Berry offer shorter distances, so feel free to discuss other options with them.
- Make sure you wear good walking—or preferably hiking—shoes, keeping in mind they may get muddy or wet. Bathrooms are not available on the trail, so visit the facilities prior to heading out on your trip.
- Keep in mind that you have to continue your hike after lunch. Therefore, you may want to order something on the light side.
- If you are interested in volunteering for the grape harvest, visit the Divine Llama Vineyards website, www.divinellamavineyards.com, and sign up to receive e-mail announcements.
- Anyone interested in llama fiber or products made from it should visit the Mill Stone General Store & Gallery, owned by Patricia West. The store is in the Bethania Mill & Village Shoppes at 5455 Bethania Road in Winston-Salem. To learn more, call 336-922-0374 or visit www.bethaniamillandvillageshoppes.com.

SciWorks

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Hours: Spring, fall, and winter hours are Monday through Friday from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. and Saturday from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. Summer hours (June 1 through Labor Day) are Monday through Saturday from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.