

Dinner with an Amish Family

Written by Susan Hollingshead
Sunday, 03 June 2007 12:14



Last week Brenda, our hostess at the [Scottish B & B](#) , wanted to know if we would be interested in having a *real* Amish meal in a *real*

Amish home. Apparently during our visit we could go for a buggy ride, eat in our hosts kitchen and even ask them about their lifestyle. It sounded like a really interesting experience and for \$12 each, a great meal deal to boot and so this morning Brenda made the arrangements for our visit.

Our friends, Dee and Don joined us along with four other people and we all congregated at the farm of Ben and Mary Etta Mullett at 5:30 as scheduled. Their farm is located just a few miles outside of Nappanee and a short drive from where the Scottish B & B is located. We opted to forgo the buggy ride; it was colder than we would have liked and so while the other guests went out with Ben... Dee, Don, Rick and I went in the house to wait. Mary Etta greeted us at the door and invited us to sit down at a long table in large, plain kitchen. The décor was simple; white walls, white curtains, lots of wooden cupboards, no electrical appliances and a couple of memorial plaques for Ben's parents on the wall. There was a large ornate hook on the ceiling (hanging below what looked like an upside down plate) where a gas lantern was later hung to light the room as dusk settled in.

Our meal consisted of mashed potatoes, gravy, salad, green beans, fried chicken, "poor man's steak", a noodle dish, bread, apple butter and two kinds of pie and ice cream for dessert. Being non meat eaters Rick and I loaded up on the salad, veggies, potatoes, home-made

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bread, apple butter and dessert. It was all delicious and plentiful and you could tell it was made with love.

We learned plenty too; Amish marriages aren't arranged, courtships last from one to three years, divorce is uncommon and cause to be shunned, the woman do not cut their hair, they live their lives according to the bible, have phones for voice mail and emergencies housed in a shed well away from their home, have running water but no electricity, go to school until grade 8 and are discouraged from going to high school or college, care for and respect their elders, do not tolerate violence and practice forgiveness for everything. Crime and infidelity are practically non-existent and are rarely committed by a true Amish-raised person (but after all they are human first). That is the stuff I remember off hand; we asked lots of questions (well mostly I asked lots of questions) and we had a wonderful evening.

We found Ben and Mary Etta to be gentle, kind folk; they are hard working, faithful, loving and generous and we, The English (as we are called) could learn a lot from them. They may live simple lives but they are far from simple people. The Amish do not allow themselves to be photographed and though I could have taken pictures of their kitchen, I chose not to out of respect for their privacy. I did however take a picture of the horse and buggy they used for taking the other guests for a ride.