

[Much to do in Markham, Canada](#)

[GoNOMAD](#) has sent me on a press trip covering family travel in Toronto and my son, James, is joining me.

It's been great to have him along. When asked how he rated where we are staying, James's comment was, "If it is a scale from one to ten, ten being the president should stay here, and one being a Motel 6, I'd give it a twenty." He likes it. We're in a two-bedroom suite at the [Homewood Suites by Hilton](#), in Markham, Ontario. James likes it for the same reason any nine-year-old would; indoor pool, fluffy bed, flat screen TV, your own kitchen and bath, putting green, homemade cookies. I think the decor and amenities are nice and serviceable, reflective of this brand, which prides itself on being the most upscale in the extended stay market.

In today's itinerary we're exploring an area outside Toronto called Markham. Included is a short hike through a *rescued* forest, visiting a working/educational farm right out of Charlottes Web, and lunch plus shopping on a circa 1800s main street.

[York Regional Forest](#) was a barren desert before it was rescued in 1924. Apparently farmers of the 1800s had cleared and farmed the land to extinction. The Canadian forest management came to the rescue in 1924 planting mostly red and white pine trees. Since then indigenous flora and fauna have moved in creating a dreamy forest canopy. We walked one short trail of 22. James gave it an A-plus calling it a "nice, quiet, relaxing walk where you can see old trees."

"We raise our own beef, pork and chicken. We're a *working farm* that provides education and entertainment to our visitors," says Jim Forsythe of [Forsythe Family Farms](#). Doesn't warm apple pie from the country store, feeding greedy goats, navigating a corn maze, cuddling baby bunnies, taking a wagon ride behind a [John Deere](#) and visiting a storybook forest, sound like fun for kids, and adults too!? A down-home word is appropriate here—it was, *swell*. Teaching and entertainment is both a passion and a survival strategy for this 64 acre farm. The Forsythes have hit on a perfect combination of tradition, charm, education and real-life farming.

Lunching in what was once the site of a Model T Ford shop, we ordered some Canadian brew, ate, rested up, and then sallied fourth down Unionville's main street in Markham. Appropriately, [Unionville](#) is frequently used as a TV and film set location for the quintessential main street America. Today Canadian

flags lined the street, yesterday it was American. James grew impatient while I ducked in and out of girly stores, absolutely refusing to set foot in a lingerie store hidden behind a charming victorian facade. I wanted to purchase a [perfectly tame nightgown](#). He wanted nothing to do with it.

That will change one day.

Posted by Cathie Arquilla at [12:59 PM](#)