

# KENTUCKY

GROUP TRAVEL GUIDE







TEAM  
KENTUCKY®

CUMBERLAND FALLS

ON THE COVER: PHOTOS COURTESY KY DEPT. OF TOURISM



# KENTUCKY

GROUP TRAVEL GUIDE

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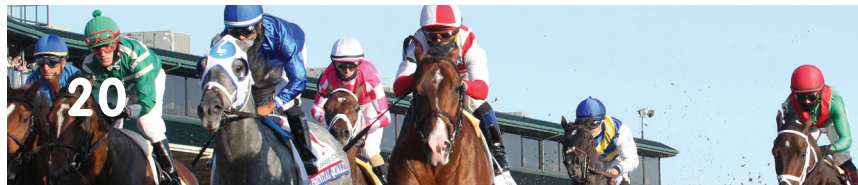
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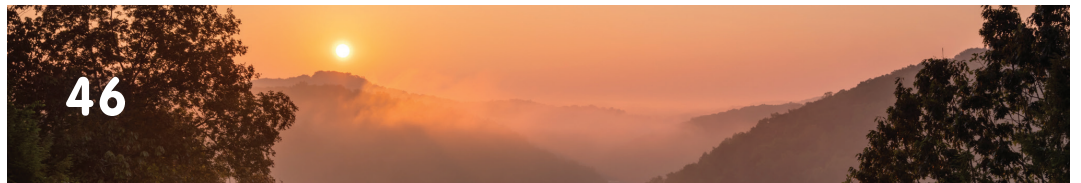
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# Explore KENTUCKY'S REGIONS



## BOURBON, HORSES & HISTORY

Soak up the sights and sounds, notes and flavors, cultures and traditions that define Kentucky.



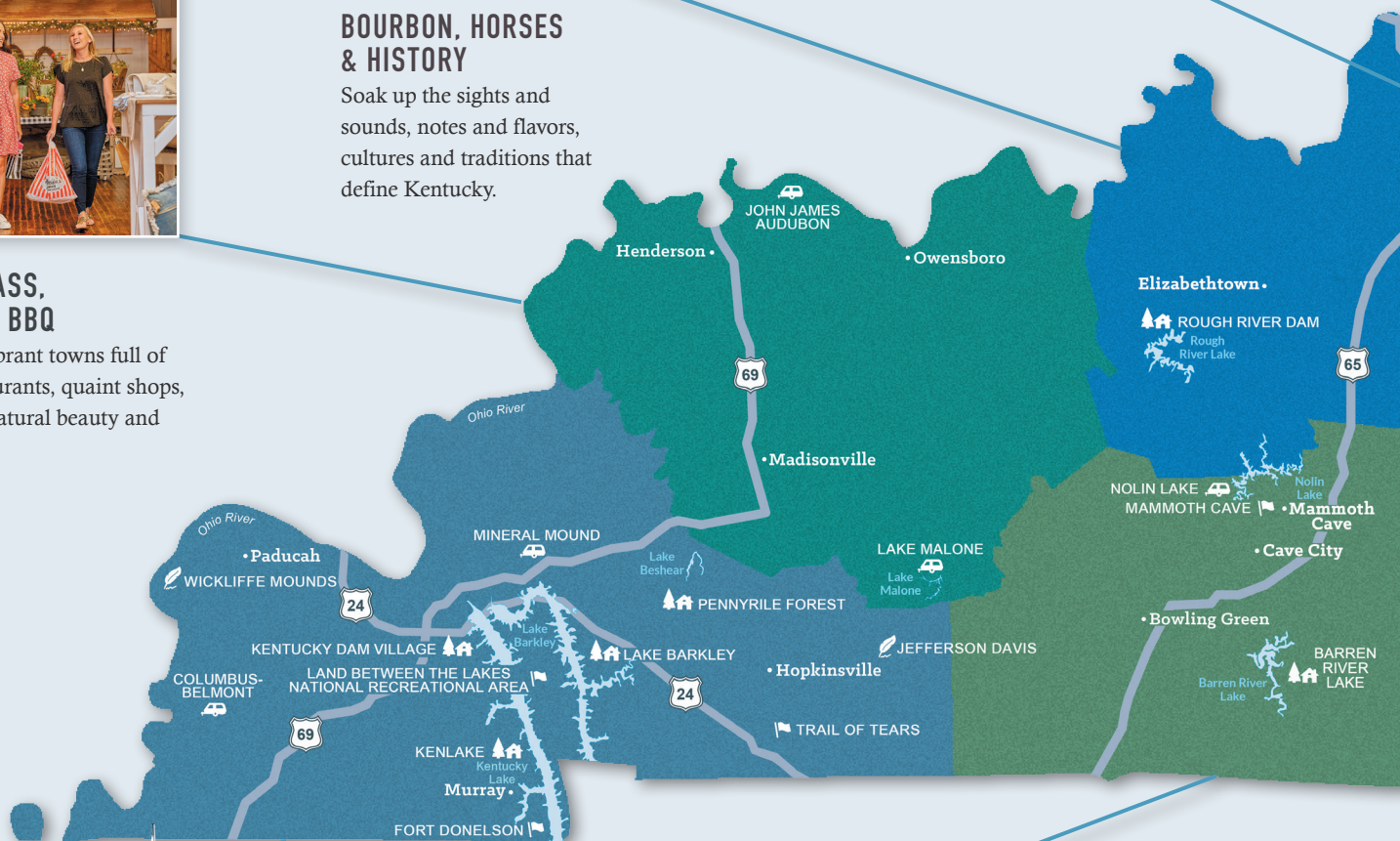
## BLUEGRASS, HORSES, BOURBON & BOONE

Fall in love with the heart of the Bluegrass, with its peaceful landscapes stretching across rolling hills.



## BLUEGRASS, BLUES & BBQ

Explore vibrant towns full of local restaurants, quaint shops, stunning natural beauty and ... BBQ.



## WESTERN WATERLANDS

Enjoy rivers and lakes as far as the eye can see — and countless adventures on the land around them.



## CAVES, LAKES & CORVETTES

Get behind the wheel or venture deep underground to discover the history, mystery and beauty of Kentucky.





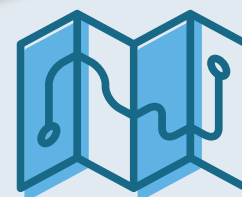
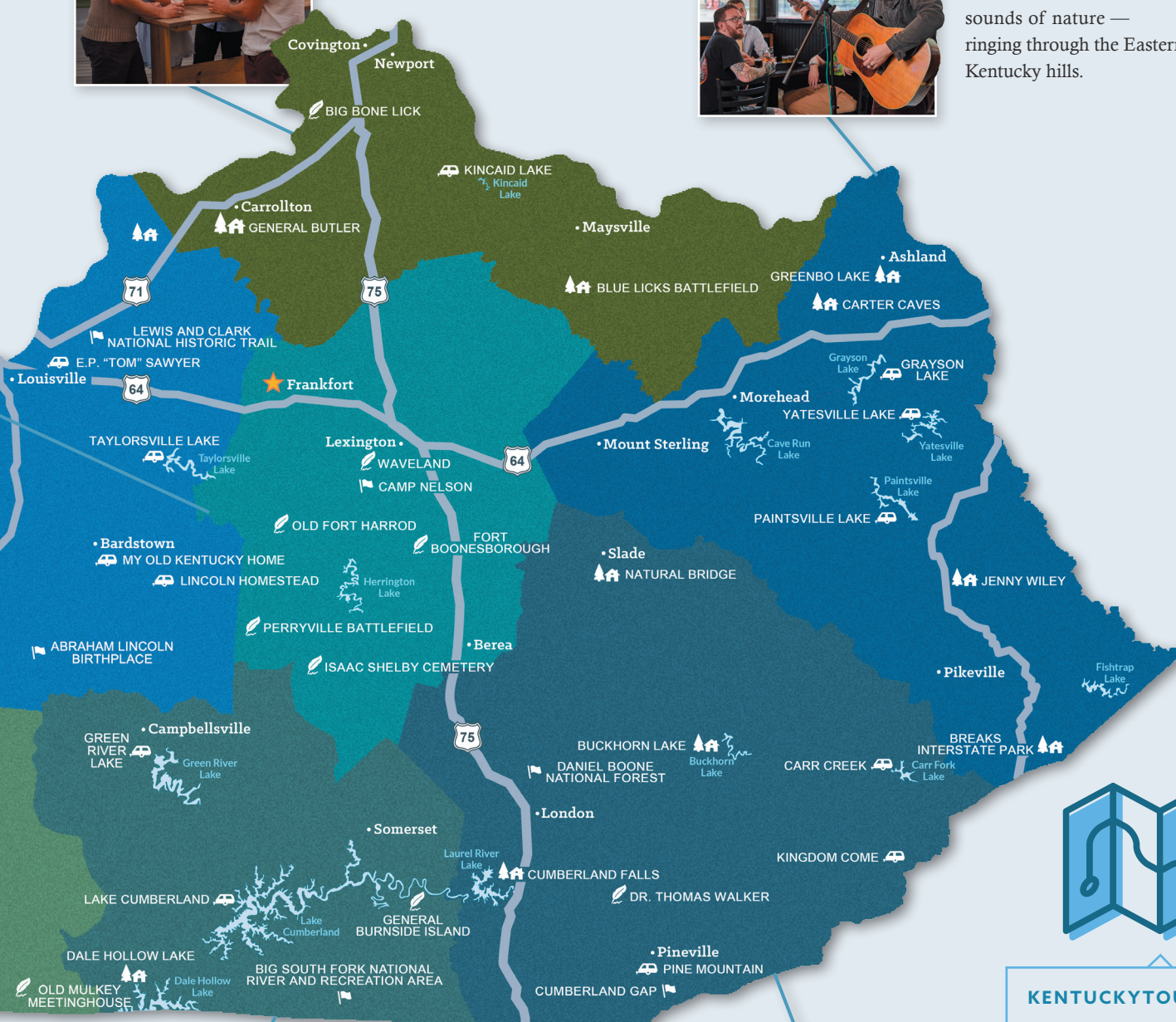
## NORTHERN KENTUCKY RIVER

Discover a seamless blend of city amenities, small-town charms and plenty of places to play outdoors.



## KENTUCKY APPALACHIANS

Hear the music of the mountains — and the sounds of nature — ringing through the Eastern Kentucky hills.

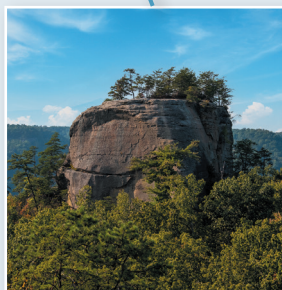


[KENTUCKYTOURISM.COM](http://KENTUCKYTOURISM.COM)



## SOUTHERN KENTUCKY VACATIONS

Make a splash on or off the water in a recreation wonderland full of lakes, forests, parks and trails.



## DANIEL BOONE COUNTRY

Soak up stunning views in an area blessed by rugged beauty and rich in Kentucky traditions.



# LANDMARK SITES

BY RACHEL CRICK

## BUILD A TOUR AROUND THESE KENTUCKY FAVORITES

From nationally recognized natural landmarks to fascinating tributes to American culture, Kentucky has no shortage of iconic sites that showcase its rich heritage, history and natural beauty. For groups looking to explore the Bluegrass State and discover what makes it unique, here are a few must-see attractions to include in the itinerary.



### KENTUCKY HORSE PARK

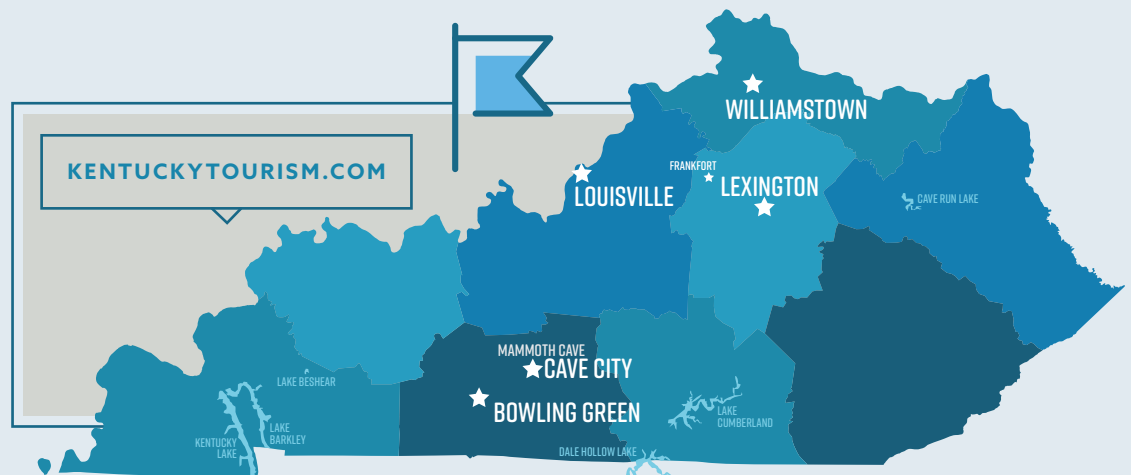
LEXINGTON

Lexington is known as the Horse Capital of the World, making it an excellent location for a park dedicated to all things equine.

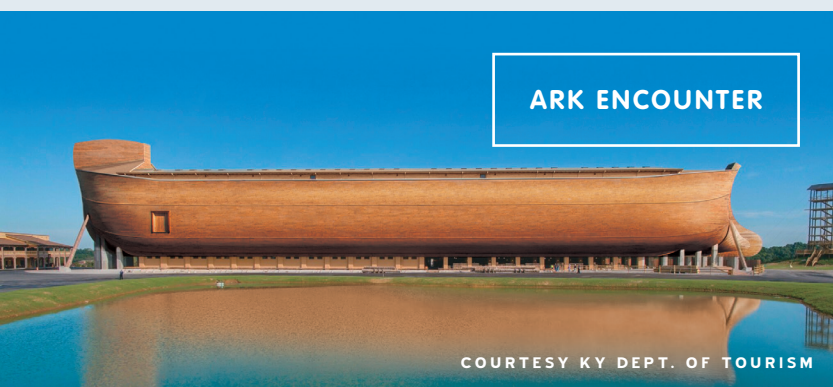
The Kentucky Horse Park opened in 1978, but the land on which it's located has a long history with these majestic animals. The park functions as a working horse farm, but it also serves as a venue for a variety of equestrian events and competitions, and it even hosted the World Equestrian Games in 2010.

Visitors can catch an entertaining live equine show or visit the International Museum of the Horse, a Smithsonian affiliate, to learn all about the special relationship between humans and horses. Those looking to enjoy the outdoors can hike, go horseback riding or even spend a few nights at the park's campground and enjoy amenities such as tennis courts, playgrounds and a pool.

[KYHORSEPARK.COM](http://KYHORSEPARK.COM)







## ARK ENCOUNTER

### ARK ENCOUNTER NORTHERN KENTUCKY

In northern Kentucky, halfway between Lexington and Cincinnati, there exists a ship of biblical proportions — literally.

The Ark Encounter, which opened to the public in 2016, was designed to give insight into and answer questions about the biblical account of Noah's Ark and the flood described in Genesis. It's the largest timber frame structure in the world, built precisely to the proportions described in the Bible. The impressive structure contains three stories of exhibits replicating what Noah's Ark may have looked like, and the surrounding park and village offer plenty of opportunities for learning and fun.

Visitors can tour the ark and attend concerts and faith-based presentations daily. The Ark Encounter also features plenty of dining options, a playground, zip lining and a petting zoo with animals from around the world.

[ARKENCOUNTER.COM](http://ARKENCOUNTER.COM)

### CHURCHILL DOWNS LOUISVILLE

Each year, millions of Americans tune in to watch the most exciting two minutes in sports, which comes to them live from Louisville.

Churchill Downs has been home to the Kentucky Derby since it first opened in 1875, making the "Run for the Roses" the longest-running continual sporting event in the United States. The iconic track is also home to the Kentucky Oaks and has hosted the Breeder's Cup World Championship on multiple occasions. Races are hosted during three meets: spring, September and late fall.

During the meets, visitors can watch, bet on and even learn how to handicap races. Guests can discover more about the historic racetrack through a visit to the on-site Kentucky Derby Museum, where a variety of guided tours are available to groups. After their tour, visitors can also enjoy a delicious, locally sourced meal and a mint julep at the Derby Café Express.

[CHURCHILLDOWNS.COM](http://CHURCHILLDOWNS.COM)



## MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

COURTESY KY DEPT. OF TOURISM

### MAMMOTH CAVE CAVE CITY

Kentucky may be known more for its horses and bourbon than for its underground attractions, but it's home to the world's most extensive known cave system.

Mammoth Cave was designated a World Heritage Site in 1981. In addition to the impressive geologic structures that have been formed by millennia of natural processes, Mammoth Cave and the surrounding national park feature a wide variety of flora and fauna.

Travelers can explore the cave systems on guided tours. Aboveground, the park offers many opportunities for outdoor fun, such as hiking, fishing, kayaking and horseback riding. There are multiple campgrounds for visitors to choose from, but those who prefer the comforts of indoors can rent historic cottages or stay at the Lodge at Mammoth, where farm-fresh, locally sourced meals are available.

[NPS.GOV/MACA](http://NPS.GOV/MACA)

### NATIONAL CORVETTE MUSEUM BOWLING GREEN

The Corvette is known as America's Sports Car and for good reason: Every Corvette is made in America, and each produced since 1981 can be traced back to the General Motors Assembly Plant in Bowling Green, Kentucky. That makes this city the perfect place to learn about and celebrate 'Vette culture.

Just a quarter mile from the assembly plant, the National Corvette Museum opened in 1994 as a tribute to one of America's most iconic automobiles. The museum's distinct architecture, including its signature conical Skydome, has made it a landmark for Bowling Green. Inside the museum, approximately 80 Corvettes are displayed at any given time; many of them are unique concept vehicles or perfectly preserved models from years past.

Guests can tour the museum to learn about the history and production of Corvettes. Enthusiasts and newbies alike are sure to enjoy the interactive exhibits and gift shop filled with all things Corvette.

[CORVETTEMUSEUM.ORG](http://CORVETTEMUSEUM.ORG)



# BLACK VOICES

BY RACHEL CRICK

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE RESONATES THROUGHOUT KENTUCKY

**T**hough often understated, Kentucky's Black heritage is rich, and there's never been a more critical time to learn about it.

Black history and heritage are a vital part of Kentucky, and historic sites and museums across the state are dedicated to honoring that fact. From discussing the hardships and triumphs faced during enslavement and the civil rights movement to acknowledging contributions of Black Kentuckians, these destinations cover a broad range of topics and histories that are sure to captivate and educate all who visit.



## MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER

LOUISVILLE

Although he was known primarily for his professional boxing career, Muhammad Ali was more than an athlete. His controversial and unapologetic stances on subjects such as religion, war and racial pride made him an icon to many. He lived by and promoted several core principles through philanthropy and activism, and it's this legacy the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville upholds today. The museum was co-founded by Ali himself in 2005 to inspire children and adults alike to be their best selves.

The Ali Center features an expansive collection of interactive exhibits and galleries dedicated to Ali's many accomplishments and contributions. Visitors can tour the facility either on their own or with a guide and discover what made Ali a legend.

[ALICENTER.ORG](http://ALICENTER.ORG)







## LINCOLN HALL AT BEREA COLLEGE

**BEREA**

The struggle to integrate schools and provide African Americans with quality education was central to the Civil Rights Movement. This was especially true in the South, where social and legal factors created additional barriers to education for Black students. However, one school in Kentucky, Berea College, was founded by abolitionists with the goal of educating Black and white students together.

Lincoln Hall is one of the oldest and most historically significant buildings on Berea's campus. Constructed in the late 19th century and named for Abraham Lincoln, this building's history is a testament to the school's original goal of integration. Black and white students learned in its classrooms side by side during a time when this was a radical concept. Lincoln Hall also served as a site for civil rights protests during the 1960s and '70s.

This site is registered as a National Historic Landmark. Visitors can schedule a tour of the college's campus to learn about its rich history and contributions toward racial equality in education.

[BEREA.EDU/CAMPUS-MAP/LINCOLN-HALL](http://BEREA.EDU/CAMPUS-MAP/LINCOLN-HALL)

## SEEK MUSEUM

**RUSSELLVILLE**

One destination in western Kentucky reminds visitors that enslaved people's fight for freedom did not end with emancipation. The Struggle for Emancipation and Equality in Kentucky (SEEK) Museum refers to two sites in Russellville that feature a collection of buildings with similar histories. The SEEK Museum at the Bibb house tells the story of three generations of slaves who were later freed after the death of their owner. The SEEK Museum in the Bottom is a collection of historic buildings where emancipated Blacks lived and highlights their struggles against discrimination.

Visitors can tour any of the historic buildings at either museum and see Civil War-era documents and artifacts. Exhibits explore topics such as the abolition movement in Kentucky, racial violence and segregation. The museum grounds also feature a life-size bronze statue of Alice Allison Dunnigan, a Russellville native who became the first Black woman admitted to the White House, congressional and Supreme Court press corps.

[SEEKMUSEUM.ORG](http://SEEKMUSEUM.ORG)



## CAMP NELSON NATIONAL MONUMENT

**NICHOLASVILLE**

Kentucky has a unique and complicated history when it comes to the Civil War. Because of its strategic position as a border state, it was allowed to remain in the Union despite being a slave state. Camp Nelson National Monument, in Nicholasville, demonstrates this complicated history.

Enlisting in the Union Army was one way for those who were enslaved to earn freedom, and many enslaved people from Confederate states flocked to Camp Nelson as a result. However, slaves owned by Kentuckians did not have this same opportunity. Camp Nelson was one of the largest recruitment and training centers for Black soldiers during the Civil War. It also served as a hospital and a place of refuge for the families of these soldiers.

Visitors can learn all about the complex history of Camp Nelson and Kentucky during the Civil War by touring the museum and visitors center. Visitors can see the reconstructed army barracks and visit the Camp Nelson National Cemetery, which honors those who fought and died to end slavery.

[NPS.GOV/CANE](http://NPS.GOV/CANE)

## HOPKINSVILLE AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY TOUR

**HOPKINSVILLE**

Many buildings throughout Hopkinsville have fascinating histories and important ties to Black heritage. The Hopkinsville African American History Tour aims to tell the story behind each of these landmarks, starting with the Founders Square Mural and ending with the Pennyroyal Area Museum. The tour features buildings of historical significance throughout Hopkinsville, such as Black schools, churches and businesses and the homes of notable historic figures.

Visitors can complete the tour at their leisure and rejoin at any time to learn all about the extensive Black history in this charming western Kentucky town.

[HOPKINSVILLEKY.US](http://HOPKINSVILLEKY.US)



# ICONIC PRESERVES

BY RACHEL CRICK

KENTUCKY'S STATE PARKS ARE GREAT FOR GROUPS

State parks serve the dual purpose of preserving the beauty of the natural world and providing us the opportunity to enjoy it. Kentucky has abundant state parks; each offers stunning scenery and a broad range of outdoor recreational activities year-round for groups and individual travelers alike.

Here are a handful of state parks across Kentucky that offer groups uniquely rewarding experiences.

## DALE HOLLOW LAKE STATE RESORT PARK



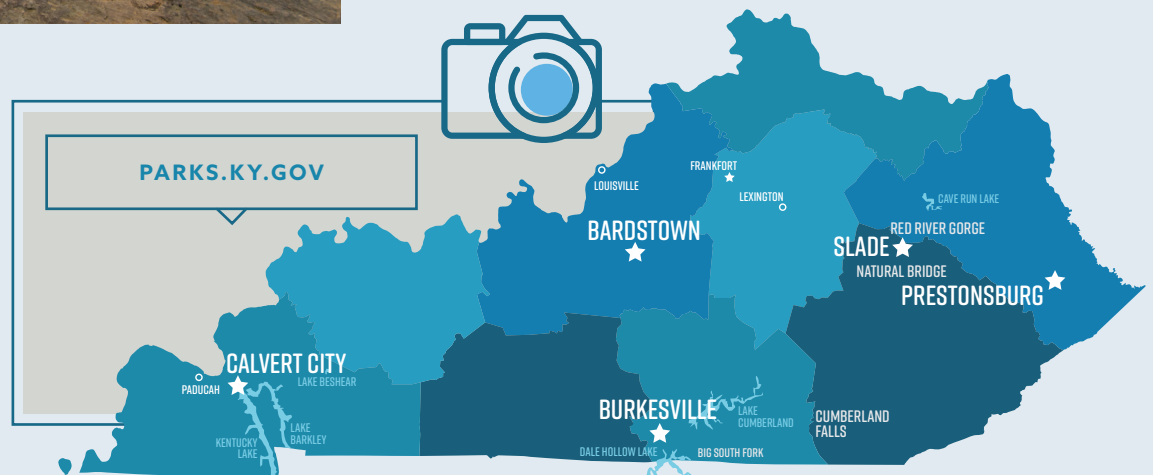
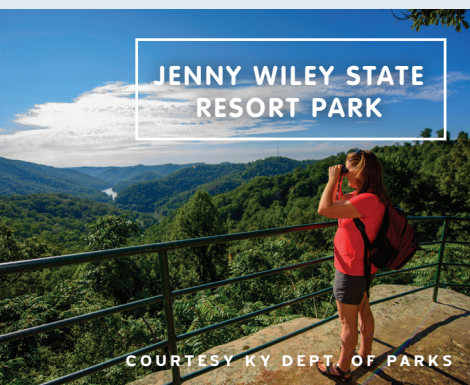
## NATURAL BRIDGE STATE RESORT PARK

SLADE

Home to one of the most recognizable and beloved landmarks in Kentucky, Natural Bridge State Resort Park is located in the Red River Gorge, which is renowned for its beautiful scenery and hiking trails. The signature sandstone arch for which the park is named is easily accessible by both trails and a sky lift that offer stunning views of the park.

Groups that want to stay overnight can book a cabin or a room at the Hemlock Lodge. The park offers fishing, canoe and kayak rentals and mini golf. Guests can grab a bite at the Sandstone Arches Restaurant. Those looking for more social activities can head to Hoedown Island in the summer for a fun evening of square-dancing.

## JENNY WILEY STATE RESORT PARK







## KENTUCKY DAM VILLAGE STATE RESORT PARK

CALVERT CITY

While gorgeous scenery and endless fun on the water may seem like perfectly good reasons to create a lake, the Kentucky Lake and the dam that formed it were the result of efforts to prevent destructive flooding from the Tennessee River. Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park, perched on the Kentucky Lake, became an important geological site and is now one of the few places in the state where eagles nest year-round. Visitors can watch for the beautiful birds on self-guided explorations.

Guests can stay at the park's main lodge, a cabin or the Village Green Inn, which is also available for group rental. They can enjoy a meal and a scenic view at the Harbor Lights restaurant in the lodge. To spend some time on the water, visitors can head over to the Kentucky Dam Marina, where a variety of boats and recreational water equipment are available for rent. There's also an 18-hole golf course and other amenities.

## DALE HOLLOW LAKE STATE RESORT PARK

BURKESVILLE

Those looking for a peaceful getaway in nature need look no further than Dale Hollow Lake. On the border of Kentucky and Tennessee, the Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park offers a scenic and relaxing getaway for the whole family. The Mary Ray Oaken Lodge, on a cliff overlooking the lake, provides park visitors gorgeous views, pet-friendly rooms and delicious meals from the Island View Restaurant.

Fishing and boating are popular activities on the vast lake. The park also features a nationally ranked 18-hole golf course for guests to enjoy. Visitors can hike or ride horseback on the park's extensive trails. Those feeling adventurous can explore Cindy Cave or hike up to Eagle Point Overlook.



## MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME STATE PARK

BARDSTOWN

Every Derby Day, spectators in the stands of Churchill Downs rise and sing "My Old Kentucky Home," a song that embodies the spirit of Kentucky as much as the Derby itself. This cultural staple has its roots in a real place, and travelers can visit the historic mansion and grounds that inspired the quintessential Kentucky ballad at My Old Kentucky Home State Park in Bardstown.

Built in the early 19th century, the three-story mansion has since been converted into a museum. For a taste of Kentucky culture and history, guests can tour the museum and grounds. During the summer months, visitors can enjoy a lively performance of Kentucky's longest-running outdoor drama, "The Stephen Foster Story." The park also features an 18-hole golf course.

## JENNY WILEY STATE RESORT PARK

PRESTONSBURG

In 1789, a pioneer woman named Jenny Wiley was taken captive by Native Americans. She survived 11 harrowing months before escaping, and her dramatic tale became legend in eastern Kentucky. The state park named in her honor offers a wide range of activities designed to help visitors explore and enjoy the natural world in true pioneer fashion.

The park is known for its mountain biking and hiking trails. Though visitors can find plenty of the usual specimens of Kentucky wildlife on these trails, they can also take elk viewing tours to see these majestic creatures, only recently reintroduced in Kentucky. Guests can also enjoy disc golf and even outdoor theater. One of the park's most scenic features is Dewey Lake, a man-made lake that's great for fishing and boating. The May Lodge overlooks the lake.



# AMERICA'S

BY TOM ADKINSON

## COME ENJOY **BOURBON** IN THE PLACES WHERE IT'S MADE

**B**ourbon whiskey is so intertwined with Kentucky history that many believe it must be made in Kentucky to officially be considered bourbon. While this may not technically be true, Kentucky produces 95% of the world's bourbon, so we can understand the misconception — and we don't mind it all. After all, there's no place in the world where you'll find a wider selection of this native Kentucky beverage. That's why a visit to Kentucky is guaranteed to bring groups in for a closer look at bourbon. Across the commonwealth, you can learn how it's made, see how it's produced, get to know distillers and, ultimately — yes — sample the amber liquid some revere as the elixir of the gods. With millions of barrels of bourbon aging in Kentucky rickhouses, there's more than enough to go around.

Here are some group tour destinations scattered throughout the state where you can learn all about it.

### Heaven Hill Bourbon Experience

**BARDSTOWN**

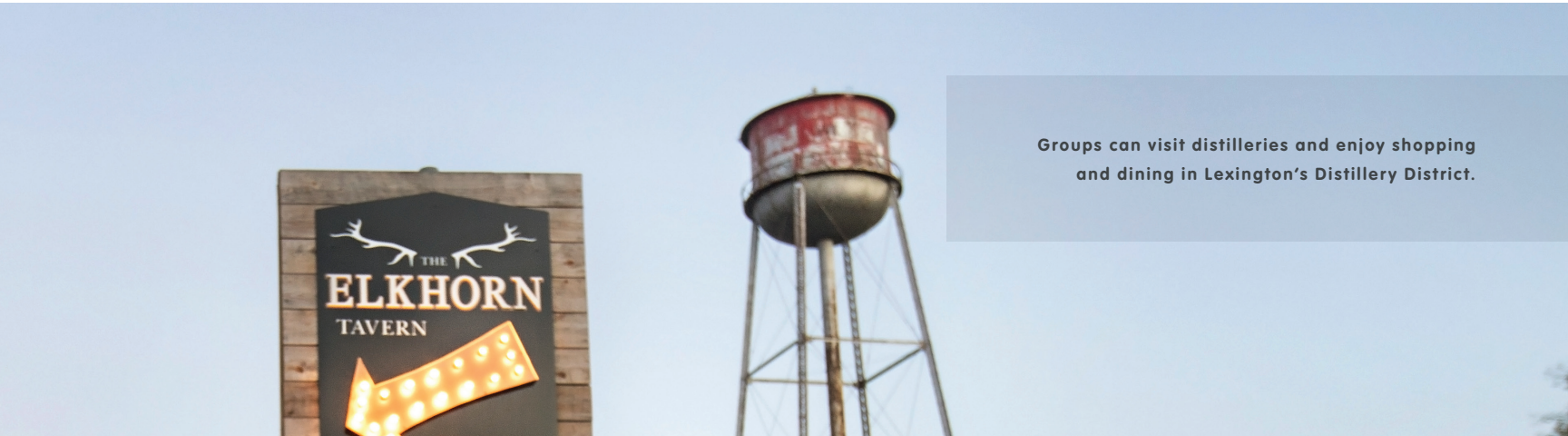
Bourbon is so central to Bardstown's persona that it has registered the term "Bourbon Capital of the World." Bourbon is everywhere here, and many visitors start their bourbon education at the Heaven Hill Bourbon Experience.

Heaven Hill opened its visitor center in 2004, but you'd barely recognize it today because in 2021, it unveiled a \$19 million upgrade that tripled the space for the Heaven Hill story and your tasting enjoyment. Several rickhouses greet you upon arrival, each filled with thousands of barrels that eventually will become several products. Among them are Elijah Craig, Evan Williams, Bernheim Original and Henry McKenna.





# SPIRIT



Groups can visit distilleries and enjoy shopping and dining in Lexington's Distillery District.



COURTESY VISITLEX





Group tours are easy here. Your motorcoach goes to the front door, and you can proceed to a full tour or choose simply to “stop, shop and sip.” The renovation tripled the tasting room space, and the gift shop now carries expanded lines of bourbon-inspired food, merchandise and seasonal items.

Heaven Hill is notable because it continues as a family-owned business — it dates to 1935 — and it is adjacent to one of Kentucky’s most famous visitor attractions: My Old Kentucky Home.

**HEAVENHILLDISTILLERY.COM**



TOP: A new rickhouse at Heaven Hill in Bardstown. BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Touring Frankfort’s Buffalo Trace; a Buffalo Trace barrel pull.



➤ **THE 25-ACRE DISTRICT, ONCE THE HUB OF LEXINGTON DISTILLATION, WAS THE HOME OF THE JAMES E. PEPPER DISTILLERY, WHICH OPERATED FROM 1879 TO 1958.**

**LEXINGTON DISTILLERY DISTRICT**

## Buffalo Trace Distillery

**FRANKFORT**

Buffalo Trace claims the distinction of being America’s oldest continuously operating distillery. What about Prohibition, you ask? It was permitted to operate to produce product for “medicinal purposes.”

Today, its sprawling facility is great for groups, with ample parking, tours customized to an individual group’s needs and meal options that range from boxed lunches to sit-down events in the Buffalo Trace Clubhouse. History lives here, proven by the Old Taylor House, a one-story structure built in 1792.

There are more than a half-dozen themed tours that explore various aspects of the operation. The Trace Tour introduces you to the history and science of bourbon, the Bourbon Barrel Tour delves into what makes whiskey barrels special and what happens to them after their tour of duty aging fine spirits, and the very special Albert B. Blanton Botanical Gardens and Bird Sanctuary Tour shows an unexpected side of Buffalo Trace. There’s even a ghost tour.

Buffalo Trace tours are complimentary and include tastings. You get to choose from Buffalo Trace Bourbon, Eagle Rare Bourbon, Wheatley Vodka, Buffalo Trace Cream and Freddie’s Root Beer. If you don’t want to imbibe, there’s another decidedly Kentucky choice: Rebecca Ruth bourbon balls.

**BUFFALOTRACEDISTILLERY.COM**



# TASTE OF KENTUCKY



Cocktails at Bardstown's Old Talbott Tavern



COURTESY OLD TALBOTT TAVERN



COURTESY BUFFALO TRACE

**OLD TALBOTT TAVERN | Bardstown** Built in 1779 as a haven for pioneers, the Old Talbott Tavern is still renowned for its hospitality today. It serves as both a historic landmark in Bardstown and a great venue for all sorts of group dining occasions. Guests can admire the beautiful historical architecture and learn about famous guests who have visited over the two centuries it's been open. The tavern offers several private rooms for groups to rent.

The Old Talbott Tavern serves classic Kentucky fare, such as hot browns, burgoo and country-fried steak. To satisfy your sweet tooth, the tavern offers homemade desserts, like bread pudding with bourbon sauce. For those who'd like to enjoy a refreshing cocktail with their meal, the tavern's famous bourbon bar features over 120 brands of Kentucky's signature spirit. Groups can also enjoy live music and entertainment from local musicians.

[TALBOTTTAVERN.COM](http://TALBOTTTAVERN.COM)

## Lexington Distillery District

LEXINGTON

Lexington is not left out of the bourbon party. It celebrates the state beverage in a big way at the Lexington Distillery District, a multi-business complex barely a mile from the University of Kentucky's Rupp Arena.

The 25-acre district, once the hub of Lexington distillation, was the home of the James E. Pepper Distillery, which operated from 1879 to 1958. After that, the property lay fallow for more than 50 years. An area revitalization begun in 2008 continues to blossom.

The James E. Pepper Distillery is back making whiskey and offering tours, and Barrel House Distillery is on the scene, too. From there, you can get a craft cocktail at the Elkhorn Tavern; sample something cold at the Crank and Boom Ice Cream Lounge; shift gears with a craft beer at Ethereal Brewing; enjoy a slice at Goodfellas Pizzeria; take in some live music at the Burl, located in a restored train depot; or feel like a kid again playing vintage arcade games at the Burl Arcade. One of the district's newest additions is the Manchester, a 125-room hotel with a rooftop bar.

That's only part of the Lexington Distillery District's inventory of businesses, proving that it's a destination that easily can divert and entertain a group tour.

[LEXINGTONDISTILLERYDISTRICT.COM](http://LEXINGTONDISTILLERYDISTRICT.COM)

BELOW: James E. Pepper Distillery in Lexington; Crank and Boom Ice Cream in the Distillery District.



COURTESY VISITLEX



COURTESY VISITLEX





COURTESY VISITLEX



COURTESY GREEN RIVER DISTILLING CO.

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Lexington's Distillery District;  
Green River Distilling Co. in Owensboro;  
Barrels aging at Green River Distilling Co.



## Green River Distilling Company

OWENSBORO

Though much of the traditional focus on Kentucky bourbon has been in the central part of the state, the Green River Distilling Company on the western side of the state has a story to tell, and it's one of revival.

The story begins in 1885 when J.W. McCulloch began making Green River, whose advertising slogan was "The Whiskey Without a Headache." A 1918 fire and Prohibition took whiskey production out of Owensboro for more than two decades, but operation began again in 1939. Names changed and operations came and went, and in 2020, Green River Distilling reclaimed its original name with the blessing of J.W. McCullough's great-grandson.

Today, the Green River Distilling Company is the westernmost stop of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, a promotional organization of dozens of distilleries statewide. This distillery offers three tour options. One, the Barrel Thieving Tour, offers the full history and production story along with the opportunity to taste three bourbons pulled directly from barrels by master distiller Jacob Call. Another is the quite relaxed Sit and Sip Tour, a nonwalking experience.

In addition to a Green River Distilling tour, Owensboro offers another distinctly Kentucky experience: an entertaining education about bluegrass music at the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

[GREENRIVERDISTILLING.COM](http://GREENRIVERDISTILLING.COM)

## New Riff Distilling

NEWPORT

While many Kentucky distilleries brag about their bucolic settings, the view at New Riff Distilling is quite different: the Ohio River valley and the Cincinnati cityscape. The name comes from its philosophy, that of being a new riff on an old tradition. It can chart its own course because it is independently owned by one family.

Northern Kentuckians knew the location even before the distillery opened in 2014. That's because it is adjacent to the Party Source, a massive purveyor of spirits, wine, beer and party supplies. Making it even easier to find is the glass-enclosed 60-foot-tall copper still that towers over its entrance. The still is a Kentucky product from Vendome Copper and Brass Works in Louisville.

New Riff's water source is notable. After scouring the region for exactly what its master distiller wanted, the consulting hydrologist pointed to a spot practically at the distillery's front door. A hundred feet down was an aquifer that delivered 500 gallons of 38-degree water every minute.

Tours of the operation and sips at a rooftop patio or the Aquifer Tasting Bar come with a bonus. The cost of the tour ticket can be applied to gift shop purchases of more than \$25. Also, New Riff is part of a regional promotional group called the B-line that includes selected restaurants, bourbon centric bars and other distilleries. Other stops on the B-line can build out a northern Kentucky itinerary.

[NEWRIFFDISTILLING.COM](http://NEWRIFFDISTILLING.COM)



BY TOM ADKINSON







COURTESY GREEN RIVER DISTILLING CO.

## James B. Beam Distilling Company Jim Beam American Outpost

CLERMONT

Jim Beam, distilling since 1795 and producer of nearly half of the world's bourbon, has something new to talk about: a thorough reworking of its visitor experience. The American Outpost replaces the American Stillhouse of years past and, among other features, includes new tasting rooms for sit-down, guided tastings at the end of facility tours.

Beam Made Bourbon is the name of what the distillery calls an immersive consumer tour that showcases all the Beam brands — Jim Beam, Knob Creek, Booker's and more— explains the history of bourbon production, highlights the Beam legacy and peeks into the industry's future.

Legacy is a big deal here, proven with the addition of the Fred B. Noe Craft Distillery, named for Beam's seventh-generation master distiller, Fred Noe. Already on the scene is the eighth-generation distiller, Freddie Noe.

Another significant addition of group tour interest is the Kitchen Table, a 5,000-square-foot restaurant and gathering place. The restaurant's promise is to champion local farmers and producers and to deliver a world-class food experience. It will offer both indoor and outdoor seating.

[JIMBEAM.COM](http://JIMBEAM.COM)

> **IN 1885 ... J.W. McCULLOCH**  
**BEGAN MAKING GREEN RIVER,**  
**WHOSE ADVERTISING SLOGAN**  
**WAS "THE WHISKEY WITHOUT**  
**A HEADACHE."**

GREEN RIVER DISTILLING COMPANY



BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: A New Riff bourbon tasting; touring the Beam facility in Clermont; New Riff Distilling's northern Kentucky facility; Jim Beam's master distillers.



COURTESY JIM BEAM



BY TOM ADKINSON



COURTESY JIM BEAM





## Maker's Mark

LORETTO

With its dripping, red wax topper sealing the bottle, Maker's Mark is one of the most easily recognizable bourbons. Its distinctive look, coupled with a distinctive flavor, made it a household name and one of the most accessible bourbons in the business.

Beginning with a 170-year-old family recipe, Bill Samuels, Sr. began experimenting with bourbon distilling in the 1950s. He decided to replace the spirit's traditional rye with the softer flavors of red winter wheat. In the process he created a palatable bourbon with a hint of sweetness instead of the sharp or spicy flavors of many other bourbons.

Samuels' wife, Margie, also contributed plenty to the brand, including its signature wax topper, the design of the bottle and even its name. She was the first woman involved with a distillery to be inducted into the Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame for her innovation surrounding her family's whiskey and bourbon tourism as a whole.

When they visit the Maker's Mark Distillery in Loretto, groups can take a guided tour of the campus to learn more about the brand's rich history. They can choose the more in-depth Behind the Bourbon Tour if they want a detailed look at how the bourbon is made.

Tours finish with a guided tasting of some of the brand's most well-known bourbons.

[MAKERSMARK.COM](http://MAKERSMARK.COM)

> **AS COPPER AND KINGS LIKES  
TO SAY, "AGED IN KENTUCKY  
BOURBON BARRELS. MATURED  
WITH ROCK 'N' ROLL."**

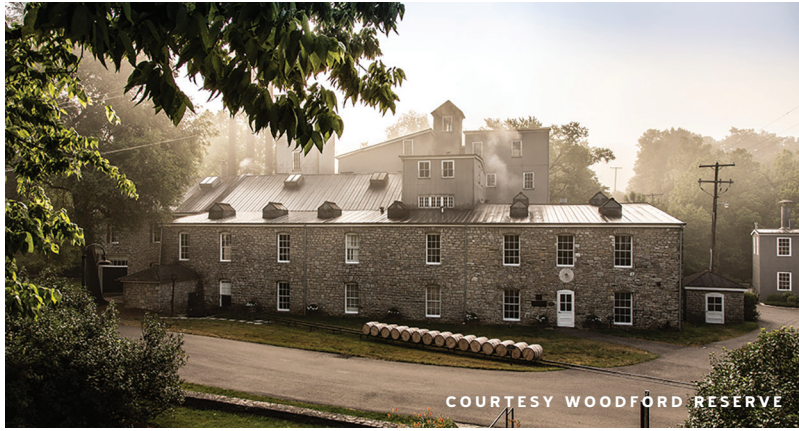
**COPPER AND KINGS  
AMERICAN BRANDY CO.**

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Fermenting mash at Maker's Mark in Loretto; iconic wax-topped Maker's Mark bottles; historic distillery buildings at Woodford Reserve in Versailles.

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: a Woodford Reserve tasting; Louisville's Copper & Kings Distillery; an outdoor tasting area at Copper & Kings.







## Woodford Reserve

VERSAILLES

As with many Kentucky distillery sites, the land now known for Woodford Reserve has a rich and somewhat convoluted history. Distilling began on the site of the current distillery in 1812 — it is a National Historic Landmark — and although operation and ownership have not been continuous, this is one of Kentucky's most famous bourbon sites.

It has been owned twice by Brown-Forman, which introduced Woodford Reserve in 1996. A tour today walks you through history and explains why Woodford Reserve's master distillers say their products are the result of time, patience, science and art. Master distiller Chris Morris was an understudy to the brand's first inaugural master distiller, and assistant master distiller Elizabeth McCall is one of the youngest female distillers in the country.

The tour explains the process that begins with grain, continues with water directly from the property, extends through a fermentation period among the longest in the industry, shifts to careful combination of whiskey from pot stills and whiskey from column stills and finishes with maturation in oak barrels from Woodford Reserve's own cooperage.

At tour's end, everyone can taste the prized craft bourbon that gets a big shot of publicity every spring at an event in Louisville. The reason? Woodford Reserve is the presenting sponsor of the Kentucky Derby.

[WOODFORDRESERVE.COM](http://WOODFORDRESERVE.COM)

## Copper and Kings American Brandy Co.

LOUISVILLE

Bourbon isn't the only distilled spirit, and Copper and Kings verifies that fact by producing widely recognized copper-pot-distilled brandy. Its literature declares it takes pride in making "American brandy influenced by American whiskey and American music."

Copper and Kings explains that by saying used bourbon barrels are the perfect maturation vessel for brandy; but what about the music angle? One answer is that the company's pot-stills, appropriately manufactured nearby at Vendome Copper and Brass Works, are named for women on Bob Dylan's album "Desire." They are the 1,000-gallon Isis, the 750-gallon Magdalena and the 50-gallon Sara.

Another answer is what it calls "sonic aging." Learn about that on a tour that explains why there is a major sound system playing music in the maturation cellar. As Copper and Kings likes to say, "Aged in Kentucky Bourbon barrels. Matured with rock 'n' roll."

Copper and Kings is in the Butchertown neighborhood, and its rooftop bar, called Alexander, offers impressive views of the Louisville skyline. Solar panels, shipping container construction and a monarch butterfly sanctuary show you this is a modern business that still thrives on tradition.

[COPPERANDKINGS.COM](http://COPPERANDKINGS.COM)

KY





# TRACKS OR

BY PAT HENDERSON

## KENTUCKY MEANS HORSES NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE

There are few things so closely tied to Kentucky culture as horses. The majestic animals are at the center of an industry that drives billions into the local economy; employs thousands at farms, tracks, training centers and attractions; and creates experiences that beckon visitors from around the world. In addition to renowned sites such as the Kentucky Horse Park and Churchill Downs, the state has many other places where groups can enjoy excellent equestrian tours and programs.

At Cumberland Falls Horse Riding Stables in Williamsburg and H&M Stables in Pikeville, they can take in Kentucky's beauty during guided horseback rides. In the central part of the state, they can learn about the inner workings of modern-day horse farms as part of a tour with Horse Country or see current and retired Thoroughbreds when they head to Keeneland or Old Friends Farm. And near Louisville, they can visit the Red Fern Riding Center in Simpsonville and Windy Meadows Horse Farm in La Grange, two attractions that are home to a variety of different breeds.

### Cumberland Falls Horse Riding Stables

WILLIAMSBURG

Cumberland Falls State Resort Park is a nature lover's paradise. Near Williamsburg in southern Kentucky, the park offers guests a variety of outdoor experiences, including horseback riding, hiking, rafting, birding and fishing.

"I love talking and listening to our guests and hearing their experiences here," said Joe Mounce, park manager. "They talk about how beautiful it is and how they will never forget visiting."





# TRAILS



Groups can enjoy guided horseback excursions at many stables, such as Double J Stables and Campground near Mammoth Cave.

COURTESY KY DEPT. OF TOURISM





The guided rides, which last about 45 minutes, follow a trail through the woods of the Daniel Boone National Forest. Riders can see wildlife as they go along; birds and squirrels are common, and there are a lot of deer and turkeys.

“You are ambling along at a nice slow pace through the woods seeing rock formations, old trees and wildlife,” said Mounce.

Guides are with the groups at all times, with one up front and one at the back. And, if first-time riders have any trepidation, Mounce said the horses are well trained and know to follow one another.

He also recommends that groups pair a horse ride with a visit to the falls, a guided hike or a whitewater rafting experience. “It is Class 3 rapids, so calm enough for families.”

**PARKS.KY.GOV**



TOP: Cumberland Falls Riding Stables.  
MIDDLE ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: A group ride at Muddy Boots;  
Old Friends Farm in Georgetown.  
BOTTOM: Exploring Old Friends Farm.



## H&M Stables/Muddy Boots

**PIKEVILLE**

One of the best ways to experience Kentucky’s mountainous beauty is on a horseback ride with H&M Stables in Pikeville. The stables are part of Muddy Boots LLC, an umbrella organization that manages two other outdoor adventure outfitters: Hatfield and McCoy River Trails and White Line Zip Line.

“Back when I lived in Lexington, I had a friend from Florida who came home with me,” said manager Alison Maddox. “She kept saying, ‘Wow, the mountains are so beautiful.’ I think they are boring because I’m used to seeing them, but she helped remind me of how nice it is here in the mountains.”

The stables are the starting point for H&M’s guided horse tours. A typical ride lasts between 30 and 60 minutes, and it offers guests a firsthand look at the rugged landscape.

“As you head up in the mountains, you’ll see cut-throughs and rock formations,” Maddox said. “We do a lot of 30-minute trail rides, which are better for new riders and others that may not want to be in the saddle as long.”

The company began offering carriage rides through downtown Pikeville around the holidays, and those excursions have become increasingly popular for families looking to do something special around Christmas.

**FACEBOOK.COM/MUDDYBOOTSLLC1**

➤ **“YOU SEE THEM VERY QUICKLY  
FORM AN ATTACHMENT TO SOME  
HORSE THEY JUST GAVE A CARROT  
TO OR SEE THEM LIGHT UP WHEN  
THEY PET THE NECK OF A HORSE  
THEY SAW RACE YEARS AGO.”**

**CINDY GRISOLIA, OLD FRIENDS FARM**



# TASTE OF KENTUCKY



COURTESY RESERVE WOODFORD

**THE GLITZ | Versailles** Off a winding country road outside Versailles, in quaint Nonesuch, an elementary school was converted into an antiques gallery by a family with a passion for all things vintage. Guests are in for a treat when they head down into the gallery's basement and stumble upon the Glitz Restaurant at Irish Acres. The Glitz features glamorous decor of twinkling lights and chic furniture that contribute to its unique style and ambience.

The food is just as impressive as the setting: The Glitz changes its menu every three weeks to use whatever fresh local ingredients are in season. However, there are some year-round staples, such as the signature spiced apple refresher served at the beginning of each meal. After enjoying the delicious fare, groups can peruse the gallery, which boasts more than 50 showrooms filled with antiques.

[IRISHACRESGALLERY.COM/GLITZ](http://IRISHACRESGALLERY.COM/GLITZ)



## Old Friends Farm

GEORGETOWN

Since its founding in 2003, Old Friends has been a place where retired and rescued Thoroughbreds can find value once their racing and breeding careers are over. That mission sets the farm in Georgetown apart from other horse attractions across the state, and it is an ethos that quickly resonated with visitors from near and far.

"Michael Blowen, our founder and president, always hoped that by creating a scenario where people could revisit these wonderful athletes — some of our horses are great champions — it would add a lot of value for the visitors and for the horses, too," said Cindy Grisolia, the chair of the Old Friends board of directors.

During a tour, guests see some the farm's famous retired Thoroughbreds and hear stories about their careers. The list of notable residents over the years includes 1997 Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner Silver Charm and Breeders' Cup winner Alphabet Soup.

"We offer up-close experiences here, ones you won't get at any other farm, because our horses are older and have chilled out," said Grisolia. "They get used to their role as ambassadors in just a few weeks, and they begin to figure out what all these people are about. They are very smart animals, and the next thing you know, they are having a great time with our guests."

To that point, Grisolia said one of her favorite things is to watch as guests connect with a horse and understand that Old Friends is more than just a name.

"It is great to watch guests have this moment when they understand what they are looking at and the magnitude of what we do here," she said. "You see them very quickly form an attachment to some horse they just gave a carrot to or see them light up when they pet the neck of a horse they saw race years ago."

[OLDFRIENDSEQUINE.ORG](http://OLDFRIENDSEQUINE.ORG)



BY LAURA BATTLES. COURTESY OLD FRIENDS FARM





PHOTOS BY DAVID COYLE. COURTESY KEENELAND RACE COURSE



SCENES FROM LEXINGTON'S KEENELAND, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:  
Spring at the track; a racing start; socializing in the grandstand;  
the home stretch; call to post.



➤ **“ON A RACE DAY, YOU WALK FROM THE BARNS UP TO THE SADDLING PADDOCK, GET TO BE IN THE WINNER’S CIRCLE WHEN THE HORSES PARADE OUT AND THEN WATCH THE RACE FROM THERE.”**

**KARA HEISSEN BUTTEL,  
KEENELAND RACE COURSE**

## Keeneland Race Course

LEXINGTON

What’s your Keeneland story? Kara Heissenbuttel wants to know.

“I love to hear the stories of people from near and far of what Keeneland means to them and about the memories they have created here,” said Heissenbuttel, who serves as the attraction’s director of patron experience. “Everyone truly feels that this is their Keeneland, and that is pretty spectacular.”

The track and grounds, just across from the Lexington airport, play host to live racing during 22-day meets each April and October. Group tour offerings across the year showcase different aspects of Keeneland and the horse racing industry.

As part of the Morning Works Tour and the Backstretch Tour, guests learn the history and visit the stables, the paddock and the track. The Behind-the-Scenes Sales Tour sheds light on another important aspect of Keeneland: its April, September and November Thoroughbred auctions.

Heissenbuttel said visitors can enjoy other specialized programming through the Keeneland Crafted Event series. One of the more popular options is Breakfast at the Track, during which people watch the horses’ morning workouts, tour the grounds, see demonstrations at the paddock and have breakfast.

“We also have an Owners Experience Tour,” Heissenbuttel said. “So, on a race day, you walk from the barns up to the saddling paddock, get to be in the winner’s circle when the horses parade out and then watch the race from there. It is really this unique chance to experience the races like the owners do.”

There are a number of event spaces on the sprawling grounds, and tour planners can contact Keeneland staffers to create customized programs and experiential elements for their groups.

**KEENELAND.COM**





## Horse Country

### CENTRAL KENTUCKY

A relative newcomer on the central Kentucky scene, Horse Country is a nonprofit organization that was formed by many horse farms and equine attractions in the Lexington area. The company coordinates all the front-end details for the traveling public, serving as a one-stop-shop for horse-related tourism product.

“When the group arrives on-site, a tour guide from the attraction or farm is there and ready to welcome them and show them a little bit of Kentucky,” said Stephanie Arnold, the organization’s marketing and member service director. “Groups are at the site from 60 to 90 minutes, although some experiences may be shorter or longer.”

Horse Country represents dozens of attractions, and it offers programs at roughly 30 locations at any given time. A typical tour will cover the history of the farm and its current operations and often includes interactive experiences such as petting a horse or touching their hooves.

“We have a location that has become quite keen to let the guests feed the horses carrots, and they interact with the mares and young horses,” said Arnold. “Another, Claiborne Farm, is the only operation where you can pet a stallion, and they allow photo ops with the stallions, too.”

Other attractions have developed experiences around specific horses. At Denali Stud in Paris, groups can enjoy a meet-and-greet with Serena’s Song, a former racer who went on to become one of the most successful broodmares ever. The two most recent Triple Crown winners, Justify and American Pharoah, reside at Coolmore

at Ashford Stud in Versailles, and Horse Country gets a lot of requests to see these champions.

“It is a stallion tour at those farms, and it just so happens that some of their stallions are Triple Crown winners,” Arnold said.

**VISITHORSECOUNTRY.COM**

**BOTTOM RIGHT: A farm tour with Horse Country.**



COURTESY HORSE COUNTRY





➤ **“WE WANT TO HELP PEOPLE HAVE THE BEST EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE WHEN THEY RIDE A HORSE HERE.”**

**JUSTINE SAUDAN,  
RED FERN RIDING CENTER**

## **Red Fern Riding Center** **SIMPSONVILLE**

“Ours is a really cool place that has the diversity of Kentucky,” said Justine Saudan, the owner of the Red Fern Riding Center in Simpsonville. “We’ve got these beautiful open fields; there are around 300 acres of tree-covered trails; there is a creek that runs through Shelby Trails park where we are; you’ve got a lot of wildlife.”

In addition to its gorgeous natural scenery and a dairy barn, the center is home to numerous breeds of horses, including quarter horses, Thoroughbreds, draft horses and even a giant Belgian horse. Guided rides are offered, and Red Fern places a premium on safety.

“We want to help people have the best experience possible when they ride a horse here,” said Saudan. “We begin with safety a half hour before the ride because we want people to be comfortable with how to hold the reins, how to stop and how to steer.”

The fun isn’t limited for those exploring the park on horseback. Nonriders can also pet the horses or head into the big barn and give those in the stalls some carrots. Additionally, the Red Fern has picnic tables and a covered pavilion, and there are hiking trails that lead to lakes.

The center has one other key thing working in its favor: its location.

“We are a great stop for a group combining horse and bourbon touring around Louisville and Lexington,” said Saudan. “We are in between the cities just 15 minutes off of Interstate 64, and so it is easy to get here, do a horse ride and get back on the road.”

**SHELBYTRAILSPARK.COM**

**TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Touring Ashford Stud with Horse Country; horses graze at a Lexington horse farm; curious horses peek over a fence in horse country; horseback riding at Red Fern Riding Center in Simpsonville.

**BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Traversing open fields and forest trails at Red Fern Riding Center in Simpsonville; stable tours and a hands-on encounter at Windy Meadows Farm in La Grange.







COURTESY KY DEPT. OF TOURISM



COURTESY RED FERN RIDING CENTER

## Windy Meadows Horse Farm

LA GRANGE

Ellie Troutman loves her job. Owner of Windy Meadows, a working horse farm near La Grange, she relishes every chance she gets to pass along information to visitors about Kentucky's thriving horse industry.

Accordingly, Troutman leads all the tours. During the 45- to 60-minute walks around the grounds, she shares an in-depth overview of the state's connection to horses, a bit about her background and the history of the farm, which has become a preferred partner in recent years for actor Jon Voight and the Hallmark Channel when it comes to the network's horse-themed movies.

"In Kentucky, the horse business is really diversified, and it isn't just racehorses and Thoroughbreds," she said. "When you get to Windy Meadows, we have multiple breeds that are retired here: the American Saddlebred, Arabians and the hackney pony, which is synonymous with Kentucky as well."

One of the unusual aspects of a visit to Windy Meadows is hearing about its role in movies that were filmed on-site: "Ultimate Legacy," "JL Family Ranch," "The Orphan Horse" and "The Wedding Gift." That has brought stars such as Voight, James Caan, Melanie Griffith, Raquel Welch and Bo Derek to the farm.

"While I don't do a lot on our farm's accolades on my tours, I do talk about the movies," Troutman said. "That is a huge draw for bus groups because even if they aren't into the horse industry, they are

engaged by the information about the movies."

A lot of memorabilia and movie props are displayed in the larger of the farm's two event spaces, where groups often have catered meals.

[WINDYMEADOWS1309.COM](http://WINDYMEADOWS1309.COM)

KY

> **"THAT IS A HUGE DRAW FOR BUS GROUPS BECAUSE EVEN IF THEY AREN'T INTO THE HORSE INDUSTRY, THEY ARE ENGAGED BY THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MOVIES."**

ELLIE TROUTMAN,  
WINDY MEADOWS HORSE FARM



COURTESY WINDY MEADOWS



COURTESY WINDY MEADOWS



# KENTUCKY

BY PAT HENDERSON

## FINE ART AND FOLK ART EMBELLISH THE BLUEGRASS

“All of our works are by Kentucky artists, and so if you want to know what creative life is like across the state, this is your place.”

Though Julia Finch was talking about her place, the Kentucky Folk Art Center, her statement applies to what groups experience when they explore Kentucky on tours that include visual or performing arts components, or both.

The arts attractions featured in this story include three that are all about local and regional artisans, a trio of noteworthy performance-related venues and two world-class museums. Each one helps showcase the diversity and depth of Kentucky’s art industry, and groups can experience it all through tours, special programs and hands-on activities at these special places.

### Kentucky Folk Art Center

MOREHEAD

The Morehead State University campus is home to one of the state’s hidden gems: the Kentucky Folk Art Center.

“There are only a handful of museums in the world that are dedicated totally to folk art, so we see ourselves as being regional but offering something on a national and international scale,” said Finch, the center’s interim director.

One of the defining elements of the museum is that its more than 1,400-item collection is entirely composed of works by untrained artists. “Sometimes we also call them intuitive or visionary artists,” said Finch.

The works on display often represent or are made with common objects or items that are easily accessed. Finch said there is value in the artists’ inspiration





# CREATIONS







coming from everyday life, as it better reflects Kentucky culture and traditions.

“In terms of being a place that gives you a sense of the region and its unique qualities, the Folk Art Center really does that,” she said. “We have fun showing people the breadth of works from our artists; it’s not just quilts, woven baskets and carved canes.”

Following a tour, a visit to the center’s gift shop is a must, as visitors can purchase one-of-a-kind pieces from the artists whose works are on display at the museum.

**MOREHEADSTATE.EDU/KFAC**



TOP: Kentucky Folk Art Center in Morehead.  
BOTTOM ROW: Playing fiddle at the Kentucky Opry;  
Kentucky Artisan Center in Berea.

➤ **“I LOVE IT THAT IT’S ALL  
MADE BY SOMEONE WHO LIVES  
IN KENTUCKY...THEY CAN  
SAMPLE LOCAL BLACKBERRY  
JELLY OR RUTH HUNT CANDY OR  
DERBY PIE.”**

**TERESA PARRETT,  
KENTUCKY ARTISAN CENTER**

## Kentucky Artisan Center

**BEREA**

The Kentucky Artisan Center in Berea may not be the official Kentucky welcome center, but it might as well be. Just off Interstate 75 south of Lexington, the center is part resources provider, part art gallery, part local products store, and all about promoting Kentucky and its assets.

Works by more than 850 artists in a number of media, from sculptures and paintings to blown-glass pieces and fiber-arts handicrafts to jewelry and handmade soaps, are on display throughout the state-of-the-art center.

“I love it that it’s all made by someone who lives in Kentucky,” said Teresa Parrett, the center’s assistant director. “That matters to the people I talk to who come in. People in this state are so creative, and we get to share information about each of the artists with visitors.”

The center offers many ways for guests to learn more about the artists through interactive programs, such as the Saturday Demonstration series.

“Our demonstrators are the local artists whose works we carry in our shop,” said Parrett. “Every Saturday, we would have a different artist come and talk about and show what they do. Some of our artists even allow people to help them, like the lady who does painted rocks. Visitors love helping her.”

Parrett also noted that visual art isn’t all that people can enjoy when they stop.

“We also have a lot of Kentucky Proud food products. So, if they don’t purchase any art, they can sample local blackberry jelly or Ruth Hunt candy or Derby pie.”

**KENTUCKYARTISANCENTER.KY.GOV**





COURTESY BOONE TAVERN



**BOONE TAVERN | Berea** The Historic Boone Tavern was built in 1909 for guests of Berea College, but it's known today for its Southern hospitality. Guests can enjoy the atmosphere of the historic building while they dine in the Boone Tavern Restaurant, which offers an extensive menu of comfort food and traditional Kentucky dishes. It's famous for its chicken flakes in a bird's nest, a signature dish of the tavern since the 1940s. Also popular are the Boone Tavern hot brown and spoonbread.

The Boone Tavern Restaurant offers a variety of dining experiences for groups, whether they're looking for plated meals, buffets or hors d'oeuvre receptions. The Boone Tavern partners with local wineries to offer wine pairing dinners and bourbon tastings for groups. Additionally, local musicians and actors can provide guests with live entertainment while they dine. For an evening of fun, groups can participate in themed events, such as murder mystery dinners.

[BOONETAVERNHOTEL.COM](http://BOONETAVERNHOTEL.COM)

## Appalachian Artisan Center

HINDMAN

If you want a quintessential, only-in-Kentucky experience, make your way to the Appalachian Artisan Center in the mountains of eastern Kentucky in Hindman. The attraction focuses on keeping local traditions such as blacksmithing, ceramics and musical instrument making alive.

"If you come here for a tour, it takes about an hour and a half to go to all the sites," said Yoko Nogami, the center's artistic director. "As you go to the different buildings, you get a walking tour of downtown Hindman, which is a great small town."

The center includes four separate locations: the Cody Building, the Appalachian School of Luthiery, the Troublesome Creek Instrument Company and the Blacksmith Studio. The main attraction is the Cody Building, which includes two galleries, a ceramics studio, the Museum of the Mountain Dulcimer and a large store with works by Kentucky artists.

"We have a very deep, old-time music culture here, and our Museum of the Mountain Dulcimer and the Appalachian School of Luthiery share that history," Nogami said. "There are workshops at the school where we make stringed instruments, and demonstrations are offered at the blacksmith studio, too."

She said additional hands-on programs can be arranged ahead of time.

[ARTISANCENTER.NET](http://ARTISANCENTER.NET)

## Mountain Arts Center

PRESTONSBURG

With the lengthy list of top musical acts coming out of eastern Kentucky over the past few decades, it is no wonder that the Mountain Arts Center has been a success since it first opened in Prestonsburg 25 years ago.

The intimate 1,050-seat venue hosts touring performers and shows and has a group of in-house entertainers who are part of Billie Jean Osborne's Kentucky Opry. The Opry is a variety show that takes place across seven Saturday nights in June and July and is staged for three weekends before Christmas.

"Back in the 1990s, the Opry was getting huge, and it offered something new for the area," said Joe Campbell, the center's executive director. "No one had ever put together a show with that type of variety in Kentucky, and they wanted a permanent home. Over the years, we've had so many musicians come up through the Kentucky Opry that have gone on to tour with people like Chris Stapleton and Justin Moore and Blake Shelton."

Speaking of Stapleton, he performed at the center multiple times before making it big, as has Nicholas Jamerson.

"Nicholas worked at the concession stand here 20 years ago and played some, and Chris would come in for a guest spot with the Kentucky Opry show, which is two songs and you're done," said Campbell.

[MACARTS.COM](http://MACARTS.COM)





COURTESY NORTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS



COURTESY MOUNTAIN ARTS CENTER



➤ **THE CENTER ITSELF IS A PIECE OF ART, ESPECIALLY TO FANS OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT.**

**NORTON CENTER  
FOR THE ARTS**



**TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: A performance at Norton Center for the Arts at Centre College; a concert at Prestonsburg's Mountain Arts Center; exploring Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame exhibits; a heritage loom at Hindman's Appalachian Artisan Center; an embroidery circle at Appalachian Artisan Center.**

**BOTTOM ROW: A modern quilt on display at Paducah's National Quilt Museum.**

## Norton Center for the Arts

**DANVILLE**

Centre College's Norton Center is at the center of it all in the town of Danville. Each season, the unique venue brings a variety of shows to its stage: touring productions of Broadway musicals and plays, dance programs, symphonies and orchestras, and concerts from top national and regional acts that span a range of genres.

"We really are trying to bring in showstoppers that are recognizable names, as well as some cultural-experience-type shows with artists that audiences may not know but that they will come and see because we've earned their trust," said Steve Hoffman, the center's executive director.

In addition to taking in a performance, groups can get a behind-the-curtain look through special programming. Panel discussions and other talk-back sessions with performers are available, and Hoffman said the center offers a Tastemaker Series, which is held after performances with featured artists and includes local food and drink.

The center itself is a piece of art, especially to fans of Frank Lloyd Wright. Designed in conjunction with the Wright Foundation, it is one of the few buildings in the state with direct ties to the noted architect.

"It is a very unique building, especially considering it is set against the Centre College campus, which features much more traditional architecture," said Hoffman.

**NORTONCENTER.COM**

## Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum

**OWENSBORO**

Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum executive director Chris Joslin starts a group visit with a simple question: "Have you ever been to the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville or the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland?" Most often a few hands go up, then he says, "We are that for bluegrass music."

The Owensboro museum takes its mission of preserving bluegrass music and telling the genre's story seriously. Groups can see two floors of gallery space that offer a look at Kentucky's signature sound, from its early days to the present. Exhibits include details on pioneers such as Bill Monroe, Earl Scruggs, Doc Watson and John Hartford, and groups can check out rows of plaques with details about every bluegrass legend who has been inducted into the on-site Hall of Fame.

Although seeing those exhibits is essential, Joslin said that is only part of the experience.

"We want people to participate in the music," he said. "So, even if you don't play an instrument, we try to do songs during a performance that are familiar so groups will sing along. It changes things when you become part of the experience rather than just watching it."

The attraction has two live music venues: a 450-seat indoor theater and an outdoor stage. Those spaces, as well as other areas of the museum, are used for customized group programs.

**BLUEGRASSHALL.ORG**





COURTESY BLUEGRASS MUSIC HOF



COURTESY APPALACHIAN ARTISAN CENTER



COURTESY APPALACHIAN ARTISAN CENTER



COURTESY KY DEPT. OF TOURISM

➤ **“WE HAVE A VERY DEEP, OLD-TIME MUSIC CULTURE HERE, AND OUR MUSEUM OF THE MOUNTAIN DULCIMER AND THE APPALACHIAN SCHOOL OF LUTHIERY SHARE THAT HISTORY.”**

**YOKO NOGAMI, APPALACHIAN ARTISAN CENTER**

## National Quilt Museum

**PADUCAH**

The National Quilt Museum in Paducah was founded in 1991 with a mission of bringing the work of today’s quilters to new audiences around the world. At the time that goal may have seemed too aspirational, but the museum has done that — and much more.

“The museum has grown and has a global reach; for instance, in an average month, we get visitors from 40 to 50 states, as well as 10 or so other countries,” said Frank Bennett, the attraction’s CEO. “We are the first museum in the world that every day of the year exhibits the work of active quilters and fiber artists.”

The attraction also played a key role in helping Paducah earn the Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art designation from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which also makes it part of UNESCO’s noted Creative Cities Network.

During a visit, groups can tour the galleries and check out the quilts and other fiber art works done by master artists. They also have a chance to take part in a hands-on program that allows them to do a quilt square and take it home as a memento of their visit.

“In roughly 90 minutes, we teach anybody — old, young, male, female — how to make one quilt block,” said Bennett. “We’ve had men who’ve never used a sewing machine, and when they finished their block, they were so excited you’d have thought they cured cancer.”

**QUILTMUSEUM.ORG**

## Speed Art Museum

**LOUISVILLE**

The Speed Museum in Louisville remains Kentucky’s largest and foremost art museum. Since it opened in 1925, the attraction on the University of Louisville campus has experienced steady growth, including a \$50 million renovation project that was completed in 2016.

The Speed’s collection is vast and varied and features works in many different media that represent the finest in European art, African art, Native American art, contemporary art and photography. The attraction stays true to its home state, with a large section dedicated to Kentucky art. The museum also has rotating exhibits highlighting a range of contemporary artists and topics, with past exhibits featuring Andy Warhol and even Breonna Taylor.

“That shows the boldness of the museum and how they are looking to do more current, newsworthy exhibits rather than just showing classic art — which they also have,” said Jordan Skora, marketing communications manager for Louisville Tourism.

There are different tours available, including specific offerings for motorcoach groups and students. Travel planners should time a visit to coincide with workshops, gallery talks and other special programs.

Another thing Skora loves about visiting the Speed is the building itself.

“I’m kind of an architecture nerd, and it is just a cool building to walk around,” said Skora. “There is an older part from the 1920s and the newer part from the 2016 renovation, which offers an interesting juxtapose. And you see all the diversity in the artwork.”

**SPEEDMUSEUM.ORG**



# LEADERS &

BY PAULA AVEN GLADYCH

## KENTUCKY'S HISTORY IS AN AMERICAN TREASURE

**T**he stories of Kentucky's past are told by Native Americans, pioneers, Shakers, Black leaders and a host of other charismatic characters.

Before European settlers arrived in Kentucky, the territory was home to several Native American tribes. It wasn't until 1774 that a permanent English settlement was established. Kentucky became a state in 1792, weathering the Civil War, slavery and reconstruction.

There are many must-see historical sites across Kentucky that tell the tales of the people, cultures and places that shaped the future of the commonwealth. Here are just a few that welcome group travelers.

### Fort Boonesborough State Park

RICHMOND

Fort Boonesborough State Park covers an area that once housed Kentucky's second settlement. Its most famous occupant, Daniel Boone, helped build the fort there that would figure prominently in several attacks by native people and a Revolutionary War victory that took place at the site in 1778. And although the original fort is no longer there, a full-scale replica was built on-site in 1974. Archaeologists have since excavated the site of the original fort and several buildings in the area that served as a frontier settlement until it was abandoned in 1820.

Visitors can wander around the original fort site and interact with the living historians at the replica site. A 20-minute video introduces groups to the history of the fort and then leaves them time to wander around enjoying presentations by blacksmiths and other artisans demonstrating pioneer skills such as soap and candle making, weaving and yarn making. There also are tomahawk





# LEGACIES



An Abraham Lincoln statue in the Kentucky State Capitol pays homage to one of the commonwealth's most famous sons.



COURTESY LRC PUBLIC INFORMATION





COURTESY KY DEPT. OF PARKS

demonstrations. Several cabins and blockhouses have been reconstructed with period furnishings. One houses Boone memorabilia. There is no entrance fee to the park, but a small fee is required to visit the replica fort. Tours of the fort are available to individuals and groups.

The state park is also home to the Kentucky River Museum, which gives visitors insight into the people who lived on the river and worked the locks and dams in the 1900s.

Bird-watchers will find wild turkeys, pileated woodpeckers and red-tailed hawks. Vultures and dark-eyed juncos are common during the winter months. Boating, fishing, hiking and camping on the banks of the Kentucky River are also available.

**FORTBOONESBOROURLIVINGHISTORY.ORG**



COURTESY HIGHLANDS MUSEUM



COURTESY BIG SANDY HERITAGE MUSEUM

TOP: A demonstration at Fort Boonesborough State Park.  
BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: A re-created school room at  
Highlands Museum and Discovery Center in Ashland;  
a bone necklace on display at Big Sandy Heritage Center  
Museum in Pikeville; a pistol owned by "Devil Anse" Hatfield  
at Big Sandy Heritage Center.



## Highlands Museum and Discovery Center

**ASHLAND**

The Highlands Museum and Discovery Center features an eclectic mix of artifacts from the history of Kentucky.

The main floor of the museum has 11,000 square feet of exhibit space displaying vintage clothing, a rare 1800s graveyard quilt, items from Ashland's industrial past, a re-creation of an old schoolhouse, a doctor's office from the 1950s, a military exhibit featuring a bomb and ammunition that was manufactured in Ashland, and the museum's most famous artifact, the telephone from Hitler's bunker, which was brought to Ashland by an employee of Ashland Oil who was in Germany for business. He visited the bunker and saw the phone and an old lamp. He bought them from a soldier for two packs of cigarettes.

The basement Discovery Center for children is a wonderful place for kids to explore. It also has a Space Science Center affiliated with Morehead State University that showcases three real satellites the university once sent to space. Visitors can learn how they were constructed and about the space programs offered by the university. The Highlands International Space Station allows visitors to experience what it would be like orbiting above the earth's surface.

Docents are available to give semi-guided or fully guided tours of the museum's exhibits, and visiting groups can have a meal delivered from the restaurant next door.

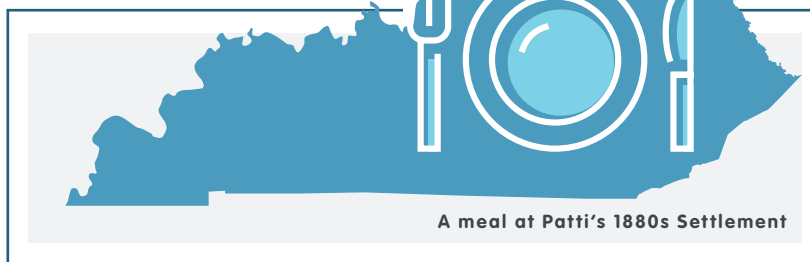
**HIGHLANDSMUSEUM.COM**

➤ **"LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE  
FARM, THERE IS A DIRECT  
CONNECTION TO THE LAND, FOOD  
RAISED HERE AND SERVED HERE,  
LIKE THE SHAKERS."**

**BILLY RANKIN  
SHAKER VILLAGE OF PLEASANT HILL**



# TASTE OF KENTUCKY



COURTESY PATTI'S 1880S SETTLEMENT



**PATTI'S 1880S SETTLEMENT | Grand Rivers** Looking for Southern comfort food with a side of time travel? Located in Grand Rivers, Patti's 1880s Settlement was designed to give visitors a unique dining experience reminiscent of the simpler time for which it's named. Patti's is most famous for its two-inch-thick pork chop, which draws visitors from hundreds of miles away. It's also known for its dessert selection, including its mile-high meringue.

The restaurant's charming atmosphere is equally notable. Staff at Patti's wear period costumes, allowing guests to feel like they're stepping back in time. In addition to enjoying the delicious fare and the entertaining dining experience, groups can explore the rest of the settlement, including its log cabin village, gardens, boutiques and gift shop. Visitors can play a round of mini golf after their meal or treat themselves to something delicious from the settlement's bakery.

[PATTIS1880S.COM](http://PATTIS1880S.COM)

## Big Sandy Heritage Center Museum

PIKEVILLE

The Big Sandy River flows through Louisa in eastern Kentucky into the Ohio River near Catlettsburg. Pikeville is on the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River; most of the infamous Hatfield and McCoy feud took place on the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy. Visitors to the museum come from all around the world to learn more about the feud. The museum specializes in the history and heritage of Pike County, Pikeville, eastern Kentucky and the Big Sandy Valley.

The museum houses Native American artifacts such as arrowheads, jewelry and tools that were found locally, and exhibits include a necklace that is 500 to 1,000 years old. There are tools and items left in the area by Civil War soldiers, and one exhibit is dedicated to Col. James Garfield, who later became president of the United States. Garfield traveled up the Big Sandy River and was sworn in as a brigadier-general in Pikeville.

Another exhibit is called the Country Music Highway and is dedicated to famous country music artists; many of whom called the area home.

Most visitors are attracted to the museum because of its collection of pictures and artifacts from the Hatfield and McCoy feud, including a small pistol said to have belonged to Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield. The museum houses some artifacts from that study, as well as charred wood from the cabin.

Visiting groups can organize a private tour of the museum's exhibits or a docent can give them a 15-minute introduction before letting them explore the museum at their leisure.

[BIGSANDYHERITAGE.COM](http://BIGSANDYHERITAGE.COM)

## Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill

HARRODSBURG

Kentucky's largest historic landmark, Shaker Village, established in 1805, has been open to the public for 53 years. Village residents believed in equality for all, regardless of race or gender, which was an anomaly in a slaveholding state. The site was abandoned after the last Shaker died in 1923. It was preserved and opened to the public in 1968. There are 34 structures still standing on the 3,000-acre property. Some of the buildings are immense 20,000-square-foot brick constructions that date back to 1809.

The village is open for tours, and 13 of the original buildings on-site house 72 overnight guest rooms. One of the historic buildings was converted into the Trustees' Table, a seed-to-table restaurant. The restaurant sits next to the vegetable garden where some of the restaurant's food is grown.

"Looking out across the farm, there is a direct connection to the land, food raised here and served here, like the Shakers," said Billy Rankin, vice president of programming and marketing for the village.

There are 36 miles of hiking trails in town; and the Dixie Belle, a 112-passenger riverboat, takes guests on a one-hour tour along the Kentucky River and the Palisades, a scenic system of cliffs and caves overlooking the riverfront. There are horse-drawn wagon rides and hayrides pulled by tractors. Groups can take tours of the village and participate in many hands-on activities like broom making, tastings and crafts. Custom tour packages are available based on a group's interests. They can learn about the Shaker buildings and beliefs; architecture and historic preservation; agricultural practices; and Shaker theology, worship and music.

[SHAKERVILLAGEKY.ORG](http://SHAKERVILLAGEKY.ORG)





PHOTOS COURTESY SHAKER VILLAGE OF PLEASANT HILL



➤ **A HIGHLIGHT OF THE TOUR IS THE ROTUNDA, WHICH WAS MODELED AFTER NAPOLEON'S TOMB AND BUILT FROM SOLID MARBLE AND GRANITE.**

**KENTUCKY STATE CAPITOL**

**TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: A bird's-eye-view of Shaker Village; a historic residence at Shaker Village; a re-created cabin at Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park.**

**BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: A jockey at the Kentucky Derby Museum is a part of the Unfiltered Truth Collection in Louisville; the inside of Kentucky State Capitol.**



## Unfiltered Truth Collection

**LOUISVILLE**

The Unfiltered Truth Collection tells the stories of Louisville's influential African American residents, using their own voices to create personal experiences at seven of the city's main tourist attractions.

Unfiltered Truth brings experiences to life using actors who take on the roles of historical Black Kentuckians who influenced the state's main industries, among them bourbon, baseball and horse racing.

At the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience, "The Ideal Bartender" is led by an actor and bourbon expert who plays the role of Tom Bullock, the first African American to publish a bartending book. He serves visitors tastes of different bourbons while speaking about his life and his book. The Kentucky Center for African American Heritage presents "Songbird of the South," the tale of Maryann Fisher, one of the first African American women to have a career as a national rhythm and blues singer. The museum itself is in the Russell neighborhood of Louisville, called the Harlem of the South in the late 1800s and early 1900s. It was full of Black-owned businesses and bars and a huge music scene.

The Frazier History Museum tells the story of African Americans who made contributions to the bourbon industry. At Historic Locust Grove, a historic home in the area, groups are greeted by a distillery hand and a laundress who walk them through the house and tell them about the family that owned them as slaves in 1816. The Kentucky Derby Museum presents "Proud of My Calling," the tale of the Black jockeys who had a major impact on derby racing in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Other experiences take place in the Roots 101 African American Museum, which opened early this year, and the Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory, which offers an experience called "The Best Black Baseball Team You've Never Heard Of."

**[GOTOLOUISVILLE.COM/UNFILTERED-TRUTH-COLLECTION](https://gotolouisville.com/unfiltered-truth-collection)**





➤ **TO SEE THE CABIN, VISITORS MUST WALK UP 56 STEPS, ONE STEP FOR EVERY YEAR OF LINCOLN'S LIFE.**

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN BIRTHPLACE  
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

COURTESY NPS



BY CRYSTAL LUDWICK, COURTESY LOUISVILLE TOURISM



COURTESY WWW.50-NIFTY.COM

## Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park

**HODGENVILLE**

Many people believe that Abraham Lincoln was born in Illinois, but he spent the first seven years of his life in Kentucky. Group visitors to the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, which sits on the Sinking Spring Farm where Lincoln was born, can start their visit at the park service visitor center, where there is a museum, an orientation film and a bookstore, before visiting the symbolic birth cabin inside a memorial building.

To see the cabin, visitors must walk up 56 steps, one step for every year of Lincoln's life. The cabin in the memorial is not Lincoln's actual birth cabin but rather a preserved local cabin that is similar to what Lincoln's family home would have looked like. There are picnic areas and trails to follow, and no visit is complete without a visit to the Sinking Spring, at the base of the staircase, which is where Lincoln's family would have procured water for their farm.

Ten miles away from the Lincoln Birthplace is Knob Creek, where Lincoln spent five years as a boy. Groups can visit a symbolic boyhood cabin that resembles the home where Lincoln's family lived, and the Knob Creek Tavern, which was built from the 1920s to the 1930s and was one of the first tourist attractions dedicated to Lincoln in Kentucky. The tavern is being rehabilitated as a second visitor center in the park. Visitors can grab a bite to eat, buy some souvenirs and tour the cabin, which is in a very rural setting that seems frozen in time, looking much as it did when Lincoln's family lived there.

**NPS.GOV/ABLI**

## Kentucky State Capitol

**FRANKFORT**

The small town of Frankfort still serves as the capital of Kentucky, even though it is dwarfed by much larger urban centers like Lexington and Louisville. Visitors to Frankfort can tour both the working capitol, which was dedicated in 1910 and still serves as the home of all three branches of government in the state, or the old capitol building, which is now a museum preserved as the building looked in 1830.

Groups can tour the Kentucky State Capitol to see highlights such as the rotunda, which was modeled after Napoleon's tomb and built from solid marble and granite. Lovely statues are scattered throughout the rotunda, including one of Lincoln right in the center. There are murals throughout the building and a state reception room that was modeled after Marie Antoinette's drawing room.

The Supreme Court chamber is lined with hand-carved Honduras mahogany paneling and a coffered ceiling covered in Old Dutch Metal leafing, and all of the big rooms on the third floor have leaded glass skylights. The House and Senate chambers contain their original 110-year-old rolltop desks.

The Capitol sits on 50 acres in a residential neighborhood, while the old capitol is in downtown Frankfort. A beautiful rose garden was established between the Capitol and an annex, and there is a gigantic working floral clock on the grounds. The Governor's Mansion is next door.

**CAPITOL.KY.GOV**

**KY**



# STOP AND

BY RENA BAER

## SMALL TOWNS ARE BIG REASONS TO TOUR KENTUCKY

**K**entucky has lots of small towns and cities, each with its own flavor and brand of fun. But what they all share is a definite sense of place and the warmth and friendliness for which the Bluegrass State is known.

Groups traveling in Kentucky will undoubtedly spend time in its signature cities. But for a true taste of the commonwealth, be sure to plan visits to some of these small-town charmers as well.

### Elizabethtown

When it comes to small Kentucky towns, Elizabethtown qualifies as one of the larger ones. And with that distinction comes plenty to do and see.

The town, in Hardin County, abounds with history; for example, it was home in the early 1800s to Abraham Lincoln's father, Thomas Lincoln. Visitors can stop by the Lincoln Heritage House at Freeman Lake Park.

Every Thursday, the town hosts a historic downtown walking tour where community members dress and act the parts of notorious "visitors" to the area. These visitors include Gen. George Custer and P.T. Barnum, who in 1851 brought famous Swedish soprano Jenny Lind to Elizabethtown, where she serenaded locals on the stopover before a concert in Louisville.

Elizabethtown is also home to an 80% scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, dedicated in 2018, located in the Elizabethtown Nature Park. The park charms visitors with scenic lakeside and creekside trails, a few other war memorials and hidden painted rocks done by local artists. Also within walking distance is the free Swope's Cars of Yesteryear Museum, which features cars from the 1900s to the 1960s.





# TALK

Groups can see an 80% scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at Elizabethtown Nature Park.



COURTESY ELIZABETHTOWN ETB





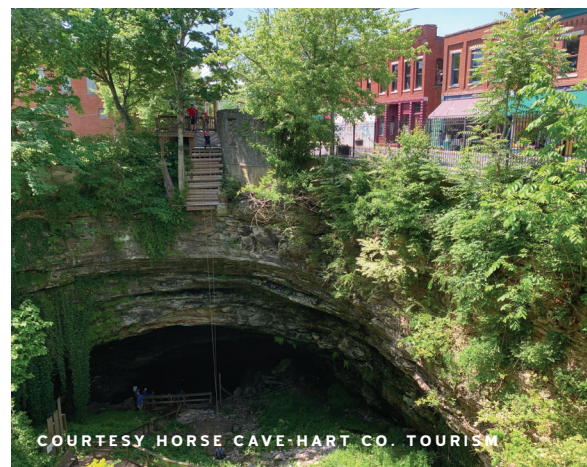
COURTESY ELIZABETHTOWN ETB

For some additional fun, visitors can test their skills at the Cornhole Palace, a recreational and competitive cornhole arena that also serves food and drinks. Or if a group is looking for a more relaxing venue, they may want to check out the new downtown Waters Edge Winery and Bistro, which offers dozens of wine selections exclusive to the area and an eclectic food menu.

[TOURETOWN.COM](http://TOURETOWN.COM)



COURTESY KY DEPT. OF TOURISM



COURTESY HORSE CAVE-HART CO. TOURISM

TOP ROW: Paddleboarding in Elizabethtown.  
BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Ale-8-One, a Winchester product;  
Hidden River Cave; Kentucky Down Under.



➤ **“WE WERE THE FIRST RAILROAD TOWN BUILT IN KENTUCKY [1830], AND THEY JUST LITERALLY SITUATED IT AROUND A RAILROAD TRACK.”**

GRAYSON VANDEGRIFT, MIDWAY

## Horse Cave

If someone in an elevator were to ask Sandra Wilson about Horse Cave, the first thing she said she'd do is reach over and press the red button. There's just too much to talk about.

And that's a good problem to have when you're the executive director of the Horse Cave/Hart County Tourist Commission.

“We are a tiny town, and right in the middle of our Downtown National Register Historic District is Hidden River Cave, a huge cave that has the world's longest underground suspension bridge [100 feet] that goes to into Kentucky's largest cave domed room,” she said. “And you can zip line and rappel.”

Groups will also find a variety of distinctive attractions and overnight experiences in Horse Cave. Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo draws from 60,000 to 80,000 visitors a year who come from all over to experience a slice of Australian culture and natural life in the Bluegrass State. Guests can stroll through an open field where kangaroos and emus roam freely.

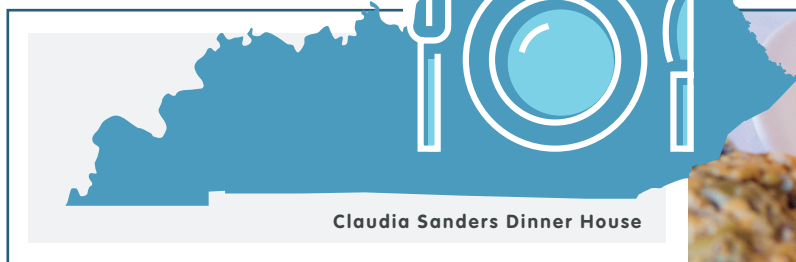
For lodging, Horse Cave offers an unusual accommodation: Conestoga wagons equipped with modern amenities such as a comfortable bed, heat and air conditioning at the KOA Holiday campground.

Dining in Horse Cave gives visitors an opportunity to appreciate that the area is home to Kentucky's largest Amish population. At the Farmwald Dutch Bakery and Deli, patrons can wallow in the delights of homemade Amish foods, including freshly made doughnuts and pretzels.

[HORSECAVEKY.COM](http://HORSECAVEKY.COM)



# TASTE OF KENTUCKY



COURTESY SHELBYVILLE CVB



BY SIERRA MARTINEZ.  
COURTESY HORSE  
CAVE-HART CO. TOURISM

## CLAUDIA SANDERS DINNER HOUSE | Shelbyville

Travelers can get a taste of Kentucky from anywhere on the road thanks to KFC, but not many are aware that the founders of the restaurant chain, Colonel Sanders and his wife, Claudia, also established another restaurant in Shelbyville. This local, one-of-a-kind establishment perfectly showcases its delicious recipes and all the charm of the South with a little more formality.

The Claudia Sanders Dinner House aims to embody Southern hospitality, and its charming architecture and decor provide an elegant space for guests to dine. The facilities are spacious enough to accommodate groups large and small. The menu consists of scratch-made Southern staples, including the Colonel Sanders classic fried chicken. Meals can be served plated, family-style or buffet-style; guests can also enjoy the full-service bar and lounge.

[AMERICANRESTAURANTSHELBYVILLE.COM](http://AMERICANRESTAURANTSHELBYVILLE.COM)

## Winchester

Kentuckians love their beer cheese and Ale-8, and Winchester has taken steps to get the word out to the rest of the world.

In 2013, Winchester-Clark County Tourism Commission executive director Nancy Turner helped successfully lobby the Kentucky Legislature to name Ale-8-One, based in Winchester, the state's official soft drink. But her efforts did not stop there: She also had the town recognized as the official birthplace of beer cheese. The following year, the Beer Cheese Trail was born in Clark County, and it has since increased from five stops to 13. There's also the annual Beer Cheese Festival in June.

"It's been a big hit," said Turner. "We had people from 32 different states come in and conquer the trail."

Visitors who need some time between their beer cheese stops can take in some history. The tourism commission, with the help of a historian, recently put together a Boone Beyond Boonesborough itinerary, available online, that includes locations throughout the county where Daniel Boone had an impact. The itinerary will take visitors not only to Fort Boonesborough but also to where Boone performed his first land survey, and to the scenic Pilot Knob, where he had family ties.

Downtown Winchester is undergoing a revitalization, said Turner, and also offers opportunities to learn more about the area's history at the Bluegrass Heritage Museum and through a cellphone tour of downtown, the first of its kind in the state.

[VISITWINCHESTERKY.COM](http://VISITWINCHESTERKY.COM)

## Henderson

Right on the Ohio River, separated only by a leafy green buffer and a three-mile walking trail, Henderson's downtown has a vibe all of its own. A railroad bridge crosses over the river from Indiana, and the sight and sound of freight trains chugging to and from Kentucky feels nostalgic yet open to the possibility of adventure.

The John James Audubon Park is just a few miles away. Audubon, a naturalist and painter, lived in Henderson for a decade during the early 1800s. "He was so inspired by the nature around him that he went bankrupt at his general store and started painting the beautiful birds that made him famous," said Abby Dixon, executive director of the Henderson Tourist Commission. "And we have the largest collection of originals and artifacts here at the John James Audubon Museum."

The 1800s closed out to the sounds of musician W.C. Handy, who married a hometown girl he met while playing in Henderson. He stayed for a decade, though he did not start composing "the blues" until after they left the area. It was in Henderson where he began to realize that his own experiences and those of Black people could be set to music. An annual festival that commemorates the "Father of the Blues" takes place on the river each June.

[HENDERSONKY.ORG](http://HENDERSONKY.ORG)





TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Winchester's Beer Cheese Trail;  
Henderson's John James Audubon State Park;  
downtown Middlesboro.



› **“WE’RE THE ONLY TOWN IN THE COUNTRY AND ONE OF ONLY TWO IN THE WORLD THAT ARE LOCATED COMPLETELY WITHIN A METEOR CRATER.”**

JON GRACE, BELL COUNTY

## Somerset

Most cities are happy to have one “capital” distinction to their name, but in the case of Somerset, there are three: Capital of Lake Cumberland, Houseboat Capital of the World and the Official Car Cruise Capital of Kentucky.

The Somerset area is dubbed the houseboat capital because it has the largest concentration of houseboat manufacturers in the world.

“They are like yachts now,” said Leslie Ikerd, Somerset’s director of tourism. “And they ship all over the country and the world.”

Given its proximity to Lake Cumberland, the area is also a huge market for renting houseboats. Visitors can loll, fish, tube or enjoy any other water sport on the lake all day and catch the sunset and sunrise with a peaceful night’s sleep on the water in between. They can also rent kayaks to explore the smaller tributaries off the lake.

But if houseboats and outdoor adventure aren’t on the agenda and classic cars are, there’s the Somernight Cruise. On the fourth Saturday of the month, April through October, the downtown streets are closed to routine traffic. The classic cars roll in about noon, with each month entertaining a different genre, whether it’s Chevys, station wagons, old Firebirds or even RVs of yesteryear. The vehicles are displayed all afternoon at “Show and Shine,” followed by an evening road trip along Highway 27 known as Cruisin’ the Strip.

Somerset has also been host to the Master Musicians Festival since 1994. The two-day festival takes place in July and usually features a broad range of Americana artists.

LCTOURISM.COM







COURTESY BELL CO. TOURISM

## Lebanon

Driving to Lebanon, in the heart of Kentucky, fills travelers with a sense of calm. All roads that lead here meander past rolling green hills and pastureland, far from the noise and congestion of bigger cities.

"There's actually a marker here that shows where the geographic center of the state is," said Nena Olivier, executive director of the Lebanon Tourist and Convention Commission. "We are equally distant from almost everything in Kentucky."

Much of what brings visitors to Lebanon is bourbon, she said. The city has two stops on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. Maker's Mark, one of the largest bourbon distilleries, is 10 miles outside downtown, and Limestone Branch Distillery is right downtown.

But the hottest ticket on the bourbon trail is also in Lebanon, and it's not a distillery. It's Kentucky Cooperage, which produces the barrels most bourbon makers use to store and age their products.

"They offer tours five days a week," said Olivier. "Visitors will see how the barrels are handcrafted and charred on the inside and how light or dark charring affects the taste."

[VISITLEBANONKY.COM](http://VISITLEBANONKY.COM)

## Midway

Midway's charm starts with being able to go straight to the top with one phone call and talk to the mayor of this tiny railroad town of 1,900 residents about his lovely city halfway between Lexington and Frankfort.

"I think what we have is supremely unique in Kentucky," said Midway Mayor Grayson Vandegrift. "We were the first railroad town built in Kentucky [1830], and they just literally situated it around a railroad track. It's still running through the heart of our downtown, which is this really cute, small, vibrant kind of old-fashioned-looking downtown. It's bustling and alive with people and shopping. And really, pound for pound, we have the best dining of any city in Kentucky."

No one will leave Midway hungry. It is home to excellent bakeries and nationally recognized restaurants that are destinations in themselves. Among them are chef Ouita Michel's Holly Hill Inn and chef Mark Wombles' Heirloom, which he owns with his father, Henry. Both are known for using local, fresh ingredients.

Before or after dining, visitors will enjoy browsing the boutique shops in downtown, as well as the old-time architecture. More than 170 buildings and homes in the town are on the National Register of Historic Places, including some downtown, which was revitalized in the 1970s.

Another stop on the itinerary should be Weisenberger Mill. A visit will reap not just excellent flour and cornmeal but also beautiful scenery. The Elkhorn Creek has powered the mill's two turbines since the 1800s, and the artificial falls and dam create quite the picture.

[MEETMEINMIDWAY.COM](http://MEETMEINMIDWAY.COM)

## Middlesboro

Middlesboro is interesting. There's no two ways about it.

First, it's built in an enormous meteor crater.

"We're the only town in the country and one of only two in the world that are located completely within a meteor crater," said Jon Grace, Bell County's tourism director.

Second, that crater is bordered on all sides by the Cumberland Mountains, which includes Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. The V-shaped gap, from which the park derives its name, is famous for being a key passageway for Native Americans and settlers headed west in Colonial America, including frontiersman Daniel Boone.

A trip to the iconic Pinnacle Overlook in the park provides a view of Cumberland Gap and the crater.

"To the right you can see Middlesboro in what looks like a bowl, but it's a crater about four miles across that was created by a meteor about 180 to 200 million years ago," said Grace.

That bowl is home to a burgeoning music scene, classic car shows and an exceptionally large mural that celebrates Middlesboro's history.

The 106-foot-long and 30-foot-tall mural was done by Greetings Tours. "We actually have the biggest mural they've ever done in the smallest town they've ever done one in," said Grace.

[BELLCOUNTYTOURISM.COM](http://BELLCOUNTYTOURISM.COM)



COURTESY LEBANON TCC

KY

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Downtown Midway; houseboating on Lake Cumberland near Somerset; Lebanon's Kentucky Cooperage.





# OUTSIDE

BY RENA BAER

## THE BEST KENTUCKY TRIPS INCLUDE ITS OUTDOOR OFFERINGS

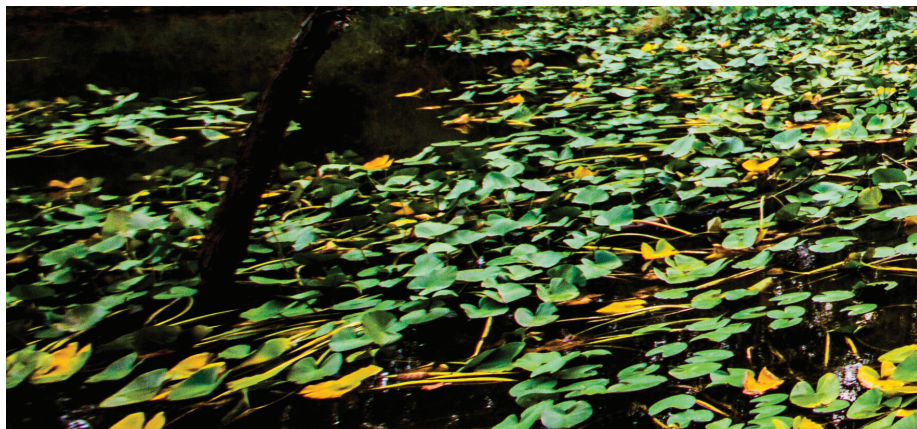
When it comes to getting outdoors, Kentucky has a wealth of offerings on both land and water. Hikers and bikers can find trails in most parts of the state, particularly in the southern and eastern parts, where they traverse mountains, valleys and canyons. Lakes and rivers also abound in these areas, creating gathering spots for recreation.

Whether it's fishing, boating, kayaking or photography, groups can enjoy a multitude of activities in the Bluegrass State.

### Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area

As the name implies, Land Between the Lakes is between two bodies of water. But it started out as the "land between the rivers" because of its location between the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. Regular flooding of the Tennessee River, though, made the area a logical choice for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to build a dam there and, 20 years later, a second dam on the Cumberland. With the second dam, the federal government saw the opportunity to develop a national recreation area on the rare 40-mile peninsula that is now the "Land Between the Lakes."

With over 300 miles of natural shoreline and hundreds of miles of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding, Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area is an outdoors lover's paradise. This 170,000-acre area between what are now Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley in western Kentucky and Tennessee is one of the largest blocks of undeveloped forest in the eastern United States and a wonderful getaway for groups that

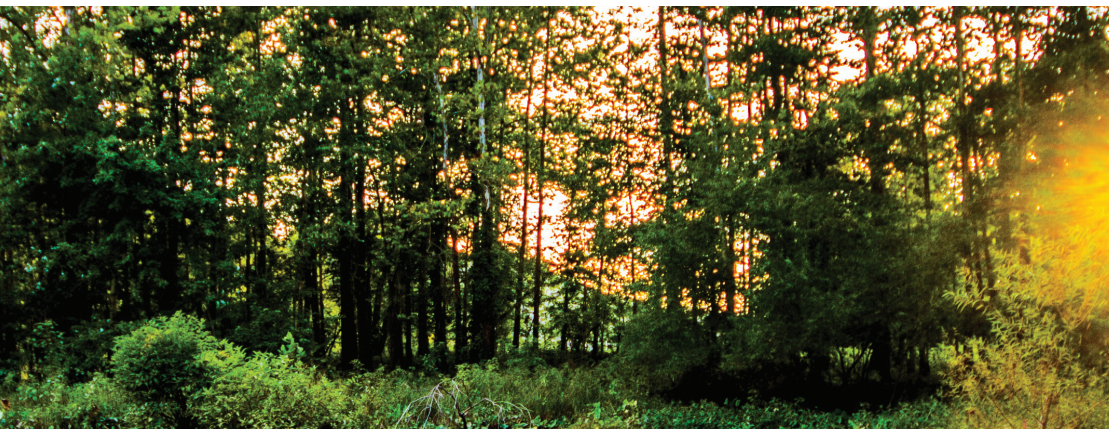




# INTERESTS



Morehead's Cave Run Lake offers a serene, scenic environment for outdoor exploration in eastern Kentucky.



BY JOY BROWN. COURTESY, MOREHEAD TOURISM





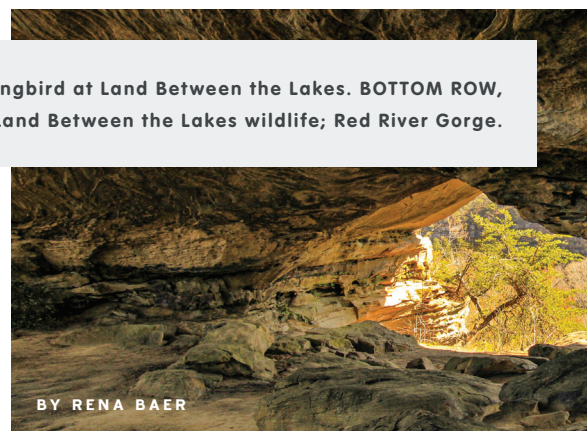
want to leave the hustle and bustle of urban life way behind.

Visitors can choose from a plethora of outdoor activities. They can rent a canoe or a kayak and head out and partake in some of the best bass fishing in the country, or just explore and bird watch. The area has close to 260 species, including bald eagles that roam the shoreline during the winter. In January and February, Land Between the Lakes offers groups boat trips and guided van tours to see these majestic raptors. In August, the avian object of interest skews much smaller as a hummingbird festival is held to mark the birds' migration.

Visitors can also meander along 500 miles of trails on foot, bike or horseback. Rocking U Riding Stables offers guided trail rides from April



TOP: A hummingbird at Land Between the Lakes. BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Land Between the Lakes wildlife; Red River Gorge.



➤ **FOR HISTORY ENTHUSIASTS AND TRAIN BUFFS, THERE'S A 14-MILE RIDE ON THE BIG SOUTH FORK SCENIC RAILWAY FROM THE TOWN OF STEARNS.**

**BIG SOUTH FORK NATIONAL RIVER AND RECREATION AREA**

until October. And no matter whether it's viewed on two legs, four legs or two wheels, wildlife abounds in the Land Between the Lakes. More than 50 species of mammals have been documented in the area.

For those who enjoy nature but lack time or mobility, the Woodlands Trace National Scenic Byway connects everything on the peninsula and is a destination in its own right. Along the drive, visitors can stop at the Golden Pond Planetarium; the Elk and Bison Prairie; and the Woodlands Nature Station, which is part of the 8,500-acre Nature Watch Area.

**LANDBETWEENTHELAKES.US**

## Red River Gorge

Nestled right above the northern edge of Kentucky's Cumberland Plateau, the Red River Gorge is an unusual gem being discovered by a growing number of visitors who often plan to return before they even leave.

About 70 miles southeast of Lexington, the area encompasses a canyon system of nearly 45 square miles along the Red River. It is part of the Daniel Boone National Forest and contains hundreds of miles of hiking trails that lead to breathtaking vistas, meandering streams, the occasional waterfall and over 100 sandstone arches, ridges and cliffs, all carved by rivers and time.

Given its abundance of natural riches, the gorge offers myriad other opportunities to commune with Mother Nature: above- and below-ground kayaking, canoeing, photography, zip lining and fishing, to name a few. And with its endless cliffs, the Red River Gorge is also a mecca for rock climbing and rappelling. But, these days, hiking is the major activity.



# TASTE OF KENTUCKY



COURTESY BB RIVERBOATS

**BB RIVERBOATS | Northern Kentucky** Dining cruises offer the distinct experience of enjoying a delicious meal or a refreshing cocktail against a moving backdrop rather than within the four walls of a restaurant. BB Riverboats, in Newport, has been offering river cruises on the Ohio River since 1980, and it's remained a popular destination for tourists and locals alike ever since. It's not hard to see why; guests are given the opportunity to dine in style while cruising down the Ohio River on historic riverboats.

The stunning views of the Covington and Newport riverfronts and the Cincinnati skyline make a memorable backdrop for group meals. Groups can enjoy brunch, lunch or dinner on their cruises and can opt for meals on the extensive menu to be served as a buffet or in food stations. The cruise line also offers hors d'oeuvres, bar packages and live entertainment for a wide variety of special occasions.

[BBRIVERBOATS.COM](http://BBRIVERBOATS.COM)



Popular trails include Auxier Ridge, which offers some of the best all-around views of the gorge; Copperas Falls; and Indian Staircase, which can be reached via Nada Tunnel, a one-way tunnel where drivers must wait their turn.

Every season the scenery changes. Spring in the Red River Gorge invites more than 25 species of colorful wildflowers such as dwarf iris and Jacob's ladder; summer delivers verdant green canopies of beech, sugar maple and oak trees mixed with white pines; fall astounds as the leaves turn brilliant shades of red, orange and yellow; and winter opens up views that go on forever.

The busiest seasons traditionally have been spring and fall, with the latter being particularly popular for viewing the changing leaves. But in recent years, the seasonal variations in visitor numbers aren't as stark. Local hospitality- and adventure-oriented businesses that used to shutter in the winter are remaining open year-round so visitors can continue to enjoy the area's wealth of natural beauty.

[REDRIVERGORGE.COM](http://REDRIVERGORGE.COM)

## Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area

Covering a vast 125,000 acres of the Cumberland Plateau, the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area preserves the free-flowing Big South Fork of the Cumberland River, along with its many pristine tributaries in southeastern Kentucky and northeastern Tennessee.

The area is rich with historic and natural features. It contains one

of the highest concentrations of natural bridges in the eastern United States and is known for its scenic gorges, sandstone bluffs and myriad opportunities for recreational activities.

The Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area contains miles and miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding trails, providing opportunities for everything from a short jaunt along the river to a multi-day pack trip through the backcountry. For those who enjoy adventure on the water, commercial outfitters offer whitewater paddling trips geared toward various skill levels.

The Big South Fork is also home to the state's tallest waterfall: Yahoo Falls. Though it's a short, easy hike to the top of the falls, visitors can head down a steep metal staircase to the base of the falls where there are a multitude of trails, including one that leads to Yahoo Arch.

For history enthusiasts and train buffs, there's a 14-mile ride on the Big South Fork Scenic Railway from the town of Stearns. The ride takes visitors through the mountains and descends 600 feet into the Blue Heron Mining Community, which has been restored to capture how coal was once mined in Appalachia. Blue Heron, also known as Mine 18, was a part of the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company. Its mines operated from 1937 until December 1962, when operations ceased being profitable. During its heyday, hundreds of people lived and worked in this isolated community on the banks of the Big South Fork River, with church and school being the main social events.

From Blue Heron, visitors can also get on the water with a leisurely five-mile kayak trip to Yamacraw Bridge, which leads to the trailhead to Princess Falls, a two-mile out-and-back easy hike that runs along Lick Creek.

[NPS.GOV/BISO](http://NPS.GOV/BISO)





BY RENA BAER



COURTESY NPS



TOP ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: Red River Gorge's Auxier Ridge;  
Big South Fork Scenic Railway; Fall in Bernheim Arboretum;  
Cumberland Falls State Resort Park.

➤ **TODAY, OVER 40 MILES OF TRAILS  
AND WALKING PATHS TRAVERSE  
THE 14,000-ACRE FOREST.**

**BERNHEIM ARBORETUM  
AND RESEARCH FOREST**

BELOW: Cave Run Lake in Morehead  
OPPOSITE PAGE: Eagle Falls at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park.



COURTESY MOREHEAD TOURISM

## Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest

"Nothing is static in the world," wrote Isaac Bernheim, founder of Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest. A German immigrant and successful brewer, Bernheim was known as a visionary who understood that the forest, given to the people of Kentucky in trust, would change with the times. But as it did, Bernheim wanted some ideals to be held in perpetuity, such as equal access for all to enjoy its beauty and for art to be incorporated into the surroundings.

He had purchased the land, just south of Louisville, in 1928 for one dollar an acre, a low price even for those times, because most of it had been stripped for mining iron ore. The Frederick Law Olmsted landscape architecture firm began designing the park in 1931, and it opened in 1950.

Today, over 40 miles of trails and walking paths, some of them handicapped and bike accessible, traverse the 14,000-acre forest, which is divided into an arboretum and a natural area. The trails range in length from the quarter-mile Overalls Loop to the almost-14-mile Millennium Trail, recommended only for experienced hikers.

And while many visitors enjoy putting in some miles weaving through knobs and valleys and along ridges and hollows, others relish fishing in one of the four lakes or leisurely strolling among the many tree collections. These include crabapples, dogwoods, magnolias, conifers and more Kentucky native trees.

An education center offers programs for all kinds of groups, with reservations required; an award-winning visitors center, built in 2005 using recycled materials, showcases an eco-friendly design with pergolas, arbors and a living roof.

The Art in Nature program ties art into the ecosystem and features several sculptures that have been donated throughout Bernheim's history. Currently, three giant trolls, created by artist Thomas Dambo from recycled wood, are visiting, adding to nature's magic by not hiding beneath a bridge.

**BERNHEIM.ORG**





## Cumberland Falls State Resort Park

A quick stop by Cumberland Falls to see the “Niagara of the South” to break up a long trip on Interstate 75 is a frequent reason visitors give for coming by the 1,600-acre park, which sits 20 minutes west of the interstate, near Corbin.

But, with a little time and research, Cumberland Falls can offer an itinerary of fun that could easily fill a few days. The 68-foot-tall falls forms a magnificent 125-foot-wide curtain that spans the Cumberland River across the county line from Whitley to McCreary. Encompassing both sides of the river, the park has 20 miles of beautiful hiking trails that include a half-mile gradual uphill hike to Pinnacle Knob, where an old fire tower has been lovingly restored. Visitors can climb the tower when a park ranger is present for the most expansive 360-degree views of the area, see all the way south to Tennessee on a clear day and learn about the tower’s history. The state stopped manning the tower in the 1960s when overtime laws were enacted and, as a cost-savings measure, began using helicopter surveillance instead.

Each day in the summer, the park offers programming for both kids and adults with everything from guided hikes to arts and crafts. The park also offers customized programming for groups and their particular areas of interest, whether it’s history, geology, hiking or anything in between.

Another must-see at the park is the DuPont Lodge, built in 1933 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The lobby showcases solid hemlock beams and knotty pine paneling that will take visitors back in time. The view from the lodge’s back patio overlooking the Cumberland River alone is worth the trip.

While exploring the park, children and adults can also try their hand at “gem mining” and sift through sediment riverbed in search of fossils, teeth or interesting rocks. In addition, the park contracts with an outside vendor to offer river rafting trips to the falls, canoeing, kayaking and horseback riding.

Last but by no means least is the moonbow, a phenomenon that takes place consistently at only two places in the world: Victoria Falls on the Zambia-Zimbabwe border and Cumberland Falls. The moonbow occurs only around the full moon and is the result of moonlight passing through the mist given off by the falls. It appears whiter to the human eye than a traditional rainbow.

**PARKS.KY.GOV**

## Cave Run Lake

There’s something for everyone who loves the water at Cave Run Lake. Whether it’s fishing for muskies and largemouth bass, swimming, sailing or kayaking, the 8,270-acre reservoir, completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1973, has room for it all.

Near Morehead, at the northern end of the Daniel Boone National Forest, Cave Run Lake protects the lower Licking River valley from floods and provides a habitat for various species of fish and wildlife. It’s also a wonderful area for families and groups to get away for a few days.

One of several area campgrounds, Claylick Boat-In Campground cannot be reached by vehicle, only by boat or on foot.

For those seeking amenities, there are also numerous private cabins for rent. In addition, Cave Run Marinas rents out houseboats to overnight guests who would prefer to stay on the water rather than near it. They also rent out pontoon boats and johnboats.

Nature lovers can hike or bike on the trails around the lake. The area has 90 miles of single-track trails for mountain bikers; the nearly nine-mile Caney Loop trail offers hikers beautiful views of the lake.

**MOREHEADTOURISM.COM**

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# TEAM KENTUCKY<sup>®</sup>



PHOTOS COURTESY KY DEPT. OF TOURISM