

Events Roundup:

Kentucky's annual events and festivals celebrate the state's deep traditions in horse racing, bourbon, bluegrass music, food, and local culture. From internationally known gatherings to beloved hometown celebrations, these events draw visitors and communities together throughout the year. Below is a list of some of the most anticipated annual events. And further down you'll find a round up of **Pride** events and **multicultural** events.

For more events, please visit <https://www.kentuckytourism.com/events>

Highly Anticipated Annual Events in Kentucky

- **Bourbon Classic – Louisville, Feb. 24–27, 2027:** Bourbon Classic is a multi-day celebration of bourbon, culinary artistry, and cocktail craftsmanship in downtown Louisville. The signature festival combines tastings, educational experiences, chef-driven food events, cocktail competitions, and access to distillers and industry experts. Major Friday and Saturday programming takes place at the Kentucky International Convention Center. <https://www.bourbonclassic.com/>
- **Keeneland Spring Meet – Lexington, April 2–23, 2027:** Keeneland's Spring Meet brings 15 days of live Thoroughbred racing to the historic Lexington track, with racing held Wednesdays through Sundays except Easter Sunday. The meet pairs elite racing and Kentucky Derby prep stakes with tailgating, dining, family-oriented Sunrise Trackside mornings, and the distinctive spring social atmosphere for which Keeneland is known. <https://www.keeneland.com/events/spring-meet>
- **Hillbilly Days – Pikeville, April 15–17, 2027:** Hillbilly Days is Pikeville's large-scale downtown celebration featuring free live entertainment on multiple stages, a carnival, parade, food, crafts, vendors, and family activities. Proceeds support the Shriners Hospitals for Children. The festival's playful Appalachian theme and broad local participation make it one of eastern Kentucky's most recognizable annual gatherings. <https://www.hillbillydays.com/>
- **Kentucky Derby Festival – Louisville, April 18–May 1, 2026:** The Kentucky Derby Festival extends Derby season into a citywide celebration with more than 70 events in the two weeks leading to the race. Its 2026 highlights include Thunder Over Louisville, the Pegasus Parade, Great BalloonFest, miniMarathon and Marathon, Great Steamboat Race, Fest-a-Ville, and Festival Day at the Downs. <https://kdf.org/>
- **Churchill Downs Spring Meet – Louisville, April 25–June 28, 2026:** Churchill Downs' 152nd Spring Meet offers 44 days of live racing over nine weeks, beginning with Derby Week and continuing through late June. The season includes the Kentucky Derby and Oaks, traditional daytime racing, Twilight Thursday programs, special-event days, and the Stephen Foster Day stakes celebration. <https://www.churchilldowns.com/calendar/>

- **Kentucky Derby – Louisville, May 1, 2027:** The Kentucky Derby is the famed “Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports,” bringing three-year-old Thoroughbreds to Churchill Downs for the first leg of the Triple Crown. The race is the centerpiece of a larger Louisville tradition defined by fashion, Derby-week celebrations, mint juleps, nationally watched racing, and a worldwide audience.
<https://www.kentuckyderby.com/>
- **BBQ & Barrels – Owensboro, May 8–9, 2026:** BBQ & Barrels celebrates Owensboro’s barbecue heritage and Kentucky bourbon culture with pit-smoked food, bourbon tastings, live entertainment, and downtown festivities. The event continues a more than 45-year local culinary tradition, while its Saturday bourbon experience gives adults opportunities to sample and learn about Kentucky spirits alongside barbecue pairings. <https://bbqandbarrels.com/>
- **Railbird Festival – Lexington, June 6–7, 2026:** Railbird Festival blends music, bourbon, and equine culture at The Infield at Red Mile. The two-day Lexington event brings nationally known artists, regional food and drink, bourbon experiences, and a festival setting rooted in the Bluegrass State’s racing heritage. Its 2026 lineup includes The Lumineers, Tyler Childers, and Zach Top. <https://www.railbirdfest.com/>
- **W.C. Handy Blues and Barbecue Festival – Henderson, June 11–14, 2026:** The W.C. Handy Blues & Barbecue Festival honors Henderson native and “Father of the Blues” W.C. Handy with several days of music, dancing, barbecue, and community celebration. Traditionally held in Audubon Mill Park and downtown Henderson, the festival offers a welcoming outdoor setting for blues fans and families.
<https://handyblues.org/>
- **ROMP Festival – Owensboro, June 24–27, 2026:** ROMP is a four-day bluegrass festival at Yellow Creek Park and the premier fundraising event for the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum. It pairs acclaimed bluegrass and roots performers with camping, workshops, family activities, and a communal festival environment that celebrates the music’s past, present, and future. <https://www.rompfest.com/>
- **Master Musicians Festival – Somerset, July 16–17, 2027:** The Master Musicians Festival is a two-day outdoor music festival at Festival Field on the Somerset Community College campus. Its eclectic programming spans genres including folk, rock, jazz, blues, country, world music, and bluegrass. The 33rd annual event combines established performers, local atmosphere, and a relaxed summer festival experience. <https://mastermusiciansfestival.org/>
- **40 Days of Christian Music – Williamstown, July 28–Sept. 5, 2026:** This six-week Christian music event presents multiple daily concerts and speakers at the Ark Encounter, with selected programming at the nearby Creation Museum. Genres include contemporary Christian, praise and worship, Southern gospel, and bluegrass. Visitors can combine concert attendance with access to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum attractions. <https://40daysofchristianmusic.com/>

- **Kentucky Bourbon Festival – Bardstown, Sept. 10–13, 2026:** The Kentucky Bourbon Festival turns Bardstown, the Bourbon Capital of the World, into a destination for tastings, distillery experiences, bourbon education, live music, food, and connections with fellow enthusiasts. Held on the historic grounds of Spalding Hall, the festival celebrates America’s native spirit and the makers who define Kentucky bourbon. <https://kybourbonfestival.com/>
- **Louder Than Life – Louisville, Sept. 17–20, 2026:** Louder Than Life is a four-day rock and heavy-music festival at the Kentucky Exposition Center. The large outdoor event brings major artists and fans together for multiple stages, festival food, bourbon offerings, camping, and a high-energy Louisville weekend. Lineup, schedule, and set-time details are released through the festival’s official channels. <https://louderthanlifefestival.com/>
- **Bourbon & Beyond – Louisville, Sept. 24–27, 2026:** Bourbon & Beyond is billed as the world’s largest bourbon, food, and music festival. Held at the Kentucky Exposition Center, its four-day program pairs a major multi-stage concert lineup with bourbon tastings, chef-focused food experiences, and demonstrations. The festival brings together Kentucky’s signature spirit, culinary talent, and nationally recognized musicians. <https://bourbonandbeyond.com/>
- **World Chicken Festival – London, Sept. 24–27, 2026:** The World Chicken Festival is an international celebration of Colonel Harland Sanders’ legacy and London’s chicken heritage. Downtown London hosts four days of food, live music, contests, vendors, children’s attractions, and community activities. The festival traditionally takes place during the last full weekend of September. <https://chickenfestival.com/>
- **St. James Court Art Show – Louisville, Oct. 2–4, 2026:** The 70th annual St. James Court Art Show transforms Historic Old Louisville into a four-block outdoor gallery. More than 600 artists display works across 17 artistic mediums, including painting, sculpture, jewelry, ceramics, photography, and wood. It is held annually on the first full weekend in October. <https://www.stjamescourtartshow.com/>
- **Keeneland Fall Meet – Lexington, Oct. 2–24, 2026:** Keeneland’s Fall Meet offers live Thoroughbred racing in Lexington during the height of autumn. The 2026 meet includes racing from Friday, Oct. 2, through Saturday, Oct. 24, with no racing on Mondays or Tuesdays. The meet attracts horse-racing fans for premier stakes, tailgating, shopping, dining, and Kentucky’s classic trackside atmosphere. <https://www.keeneland.com/events/fall-meet>
- **Burgoo Festival – Lawrenceburg, Oct. 16–18, 2026:** The Anderson County Burgoo Festival celebrates Kentucky’s signature burgoo stew with a weekend of food, crafts, entertainment, community activity, and downtown festival traditions. The event provides an opportunity to sample the hearty regional dish while enjoying vendors and local programming in Lawrenceburg. <https://www.kentuckyburgoo.com/>

- **Mount Sterling Court Days – Mount Sterling, Oct. 16–18, 2026:** Mount Sterling Court Days is Kentucky's oldest continuously running festival, filling historic downtown with arts and crafts, antiques, food, entertainment, and hundreds of vendors. Held the weekend before the third Monday in October, the longstanding event attracts visitors seeking traditional festival shopping, local flavor, and a lively downtown experience. <https://www.mtsterlingcourtdays.com/>
- **Breeders' Cup – Lexington, Oct. 30–31, 2026:** The Breeders' Cup World Championships will return to Keeneland for two days of championship Thoroughbred racing. The international event gathers elite horses, jockeys, trainers, owners, and fans for high-stakes races, while Lexington hosts accompanying celebrations, hospitality, and industry activity. Event schedules and ticket details are announced by Breeders' Cup and Keeneland. <https://www.breederscup.com/>

Multicultural Festivals

- **Louisville Holi Mela – Louisville, April 26, 2026:** Louisville Holi Mela, the city's Festival of Colors, brings families and friends together for Indian food, carnival games, shopping, stage performances, and a communal color play beginning at 3 p.m. The event celebrates spring, cultural traditions, and community connection at the Hindu Temple of Kentucky. A rain date of May 3 is reserved. <https://louisvilleholi.com/>
- **Louisville Greek Festival (GreekFest) – Louisville, June 5–6, 2026:** Louisville GreekFest offers a two-day taste of Greek culture at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church. Visitors can enjoy authentic Greek food and sweets, Greek beer and wine, live music, traditional dance performances and lessons, cooking demonstrations, church presentations, and specialty imports. Admission and parking are free. <https://www.louisvillegreekfest.com/>
- **African Heritage Festival – Louisville, July 11, 2026:** The African Heritage Festival is a free cultural celebration presented by Ngoma y'Africa Cultural Center. The annual gathering highlights African heritage through community-focused programming and cultural expression, offering an accessible opportunity for attendees to experience and celebrate African traditions, arts, and connections in Louisville. <https://culturelearningcenter.org/african-heritage-festival>
- **Owensboro Multicultural Festival – Owensboro, Aug. 15, 2026:** The Owensboro Multicultural Festival is a free annual community celebration of diversity, sponsored by First Presbyterian Church. Its 2026 theme, "Roots Across the World," frames a day of cultural sharing through international food, exhibitors, performances, and community participation. The 28th annual festival is held at First Presbyterian Church. <https://www.facebook.com/owensboromulticulturalfestival/>

- **Berea Celtic Festival – Berea, Aug. 13–16, 2026:** Berea Celtic Fest and Gathering is a citywide, grassroots celebration of Celtic music, song, and dance. More than 70 musicians, singers, and dancers are expected across performances, workshops, presentations, traditional sessions, and a Celtic celebration concert. Events take place at several welcoming venues throughout Berea. <https://bera-celtic.org/>
- **Kentucky Downs Fall Meet – Franklin, Aug. 29–Sept. 9, 2026:** Kentucky Downs hosts seven dates of live Thoroughbred racing on its distinctive European-style turf course. The fall meet is known for high-stakes racing, significant purses, and a relaxed setting near the Kentucky–Tennessee border. Racing is scheduled for August 29–30 and September 3, 5–7, and 9. <https://themintkentuckydowns.com/live-racing/>
- **Honoring Our Veterans Pow Wow – Corbin, Sept. 5–6, 2026:** The 17th Annual Honoring Our Veterans Pow Wow recognizes veterans while bringing together Native American dancers, drum groups, families, and visitors for a weekend of Indigenous cultural celebration. Held over Labor Day weekend at K&S Farm, the gathering provides a respectful setting for honoring service, tradition, community, and intertribal connection. <https://skanp.org/powwow>
- **Trail of Tears PowWow – Hopkinsville, Sept. 12–13, 2026:** The Trail of Tears Pow Wow commemorates Hopkinsville’s place along the Cherokee removal route while celebrating Native American culture and traditions. The annual intertribal gathering welcomes Native participants and visitors for dancing, drumming, cultural exchange, and remembrance at the Trail of Tears Commemorative Park. The event traditionally occurs on the weekend after Labor Day. <http://www.trailoftearshopkinsville.org/powwow.html>
- **Kentucky Japan Festival – Frankfort, Sept. 12, 2026:** The Japan/America Society of Kentucky’s Japan Festival brings Japanese cultural activities, food, and community experiences to downtown Frankfort. The event supports cultural exchange between Kentucky and Japan and gives visitors a day to explore Japanese traditions, entertainment, cuisine, and family-friendly festival activities. <https://jask.wildapricot.org/event-6557857>
- **Asian Night Market – Louisville, Sept. 13, 2026:** Louisville’s Asian Night Market at Fourth Street Live! showcases Asian food and retail vendors alongside live performing arts. Produced by Asia Institute–Crane House, the evening festival creates a lively downtown setting for tasting diverse cuisines, shopping with vendors, and experiencing performances that represent Asian and Asian American communities. <https://crane-house.org/event/asian-night-market-4/>
- **WorldFest – Louisville, Sept. 4–7, 2026:** WorldFest is Louisville’s premier international festival and one of the region’s most diverse cultural gatherings. Held over Labor Day weekend on the Belvedere, it invites attendees to “travel the world” through global cuisine, music, dance, crafts, cultural displays, and community

programming in the heart of downtown Louisville.

<https://louisvilleky.gov/government/city-events/worldfest>

- **Festival Latino de Lexington – Lexington, Sept. 18–19, 2026:** Festival Latino de Lexington is a two-night celebration of Latin American culture in downtown Lexington. The festival brings together music, dance, food, vendors, and cultural experiences, creating a vibrant public gathering that recognizes the area’s Latino community and welcomes visitors to enjoy its many traditions and contributions. <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/playing/arts-events/festival-latino-de-lexington>
- **Bowling Green International Festival – Bowling Green, Sept. 26, 2026:** The 36th annual Bowling Green International Festival brings global food, entertainment, vendors, and cultural experiences to Circus Square Park. Performances and vendor activities run throughout the day, making the festival a broad community celebration of the cultures represented in Bowling Green and the surrounding region. <https://www.bginternationalfest.com/>

Pride Festivals and Events

- **Cinema Systems Lesbian Film Festival – Paducah, May 21–24, 2026:** Cinema Systems is the United States’ only all-lesbian film festival, presenting films of every genre by lesbian filmmakers from around the world. Held Memorial Day weekend in downtown Paducah, the four-day program includes screenings, filmmaker Q&As, workshops, live music, dancing, and community gatherings. <https://cinemasystems.com>
- **Lexington Pride Festival – Lexington, May 30, 2026:** Lexington Pride Festival is a major regional LGBTQIA+ celebration designed as a welcoming public space for people of every age, identity, ability, race, and background. The 2026 event returns to Oliver Lewis Way and includes a Pride Parade as its kickoff, along with festival programming, community resources, food and beverage options, entertainment, and accessibility information. <https://www.lexpridefest.org/festivalinfo>
- **NKY Pride Parade & Festival – Covington, June 7, 2026:** Northern Kentucky Pride brings a colorful community parade through Covington followed by PrideFest in Goebel Park. The parade ends in MainStrasse Village and includes more than 50 participating organizations. The afternoon festival features live entertainment, local artisans, community organizations, and all-ages activities that emphasize LGBTQ+ visibility, celebration, and regional connection. <https://nkypridecenter.org/>
- **Kentuckiana Pride Parade & Festival – Louisville, June 20, 2026:** Kentuckiana Pride’s parade and festival is one of the region’s largest LGBTQ+ gatherings. The downtown Louisville parade launches the day’s celebration before attendees gather at the Great Lawn for live entertainment, food and drinks, vendors, local

organizations, and inclusive activities. The event highlights LGBTQ+ visibility, unity, and support across Kentucky and Southern Indiana. <https://kypride.com/festival/>

- **Pikeville Pride – Pikeville, Sept. 12, 2026:** Pikeville Pride celebrates its seventh year of building affirmation, visibility, and community in Pike County and the surrounding Southern Appalachian region. The free event at Appalachian Wireless Arena Plaza includes vendors, entertainment, local participation, and Pride-focused activities that welcome people of all gender identities and sexualities. <https://www.pikevillepride.org/>
- **Louisville Pride Festival – Louisville, Sept. 12, 2026:** Louisville Pride Festival brings Pride back to Bardstown Road for its 11th annual celebration. Rooted in joy, visibility, and community, the day-long event offers a central gathering place for LGBTQ+ residents, allies, neighborhood businesses, performers, vendors, and visitors. It is one of Louisville's prominent late-summer community festivals and complements the city's June Pride programming. <https://www.facebook.com/louprideky/>
- **Kentucky Black Pride Festival Weekend – Lexington, Sept. 18–20, 2026:** Kentucky Black Pride Festival Weekend centers Black LGBTQ+ community, culture, connection, and celebration in Lexington. The weekend includes Kentucky Black Pride programming and Pride in the Park at Woodland Park, creating opportunities for entertainment, community gathering, advocacy, and support. It provides a dedicated space to celebrate the intersections of Black identity and LGBTQ+ pride. <https://www.instagram.com/kentuckyblackprideinc/>
- **Bourbon & Belonging – Multiple Kentucky locations, Oct. 1–4, 2026:** Bourbon & Belonging is Kentucky's Queer Bourbon Week, presented by Queer Kentucky. The statewide event invites LGBTQ+ visitors and allies to experience bourbon culture in an inclusive setting through exclusive tastings, distillery tours, classes, queer-history tours, drag shows, panels, bar crawls, and related events. Programming spans multiple Kentucky cities and regions. <https://www.bourbonandbelonging.com/>
- **Capital Pride KY – Frankfort, Oct. 10, 2026:** Capital Pride KY brings LGBTQ+ celebration and community to downtown Frankfort. The festival is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. near 300 West Broadway Street, offering a public gathering for Pride visibility, connection, community partners, and inclusive celebration in Kentucky's capital city. <https://www.capitalprideky.org/>