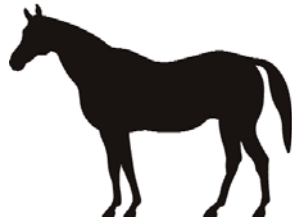


IDEA GUIDE



LEXINGTON CONVENTION
AND VISITORS BUREAU

301 East Vine Street
Lexington, KY 40507-1513
859-233-7299 or 800-845-3959
www.visitlex.com

DOWNTOWN LEXINGTON

*Enjoy Sightseeing, Dining, Shopping and
Entertainment in the “City in the Park”*

Unless otherwise noted, phone numbers are in the 859 area code.

Lexington has been called “the city in the park” because of its location at the center of hundreds of beautiful, park-like horse farms. But the nickname also seems an apt description of the cosmopolitan yet casual atmosphere of the downtown area.

Lexington offers a charming blend of big-city amenities and small-town friendliness. Before, after and between meeting sessions at the modern Lexington Center convention complex, you’ll find plenty to see and do. Beautiful historic office buildings, churches, and homes; many of Lexington’s finest restaurants, specialty shops and galleries; and major performance and sports arenas are within easy and safe walking distance.

A variety of excellent accommodations are convenient to the convention center and downtown attractions, including the **Hilton Lexington/Downtown** (369 W. Vine St., 231-9000) and **Hyatt Regency Lexington** (401 West High St., 253-1234); the elegant and historic **Gratz Park Inn** (120 W. 2nd St., 231-1777); and **The Lyndon House Bed & Breakfast** (507 N. Broadway, 420-2683).

Attractions Old and New

Looking at downtown Lexington today, it’s hard to imagine a town of log blockhouses and cabins, or the sight of horses racing down Main Street, but both were part of the city’s early history. Lexington was Kentucky’s first big city — a bustling commercial, education and cultural center by 1800. Take a walk in the historic neighborhoods near Lexington Center, or along Main Street, and you’ll find architecture spanning over 200 years. A few

attractions of special note:

- **The Mary Todd Lincoln House**, adjacent to Lexington Center at 578 W. Main St. was a girlhood home of the First Lady, a member of a prominent early Lexington family. Guided tours are given Monday through Saturday, mid-March through November. Admission charged. 233-9999.
- **The Hunt-Morgan House**, northeast of the convention center complex at 201 North Mill St., was built in 1814 by Kentucky’s first millionaire, John

Wesley Hunt. The house includes the Alexander T. Hunt Civil War Museum with items relating to Hunt’s grandson, Confederate General John Morgan. Guided tours are available Wednesday through Sunday. Admission charged (253-0362). While in the historic Gratz Park neighborhood you might also want to stroll the campus of the oldest college west of the Alleghenies, **Transylvania University**, Third and Broadway. At 176 N. Mill St. you’ll pass the 19th century **law office of Henry Clay**, the famous U.S. Senator and one of early Lexington’s prominent citizens.

- If you brought your family along (or are just a kid at heart), a must-see attraction is the **Explorium of Lexington**, located in Victorian Square, a complex of 16 restored 19th century commercial buildings at Main and Broadway. The 14,000-square foot museum features a

Bluegrass Note: One of the best ways to tour the historic downtown area is by horse-drawn carriage. The Lexington Livery Co. offers half-hour tours nightly, weather permitting. Call 259-0000 for reservations or catch a carriage at the corner of Broadway and Main after 7:30 p.m. Charge is \$35 for four people.

Blue Note: Getting to and from downtown Lexington is easy. Blue Grass Airport is about a 10-minute drive away (as are those famous horse farms, golf courses and major attractions such as the Kentucky Horse Park).

variety of hands-on activities, from an “archaeological dig” to giant soap bubbles. Open Tuesday through Sunday all year. Admission charged. 258-3258.

• That 30-story glass office building towering over Main Street is **Lexington Financial Center** (“Big Blue” to locals) and the city’s tallest building.

For a detailed, self-guided downtown walking tour, contact the **Lexington Convention and Visitors Bureau**, 301 E. Vine St. 233-7299. For an entertaining guided walk, contact

Lexington Walking Tours at 825-8702. Ask about their seasonal “Creepy Crawl.” Caroline Hackworth operates **Historic Downtown Walking Tours** with guided walking tours of downtown Lexington on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Learn about the history of downtown as reflected in historic commercial buildings, churches and homes. Call 321-5897.

Shopping

Whether looking for high quality men’s and women’s clothing, decorative accessories, artwork, fine jewelry or distinctly -Lexington souvenirs, you’ll find an excellent

Blue Note: An interesting used book store is located in the basement of the Lexington Public Library, 140 E. Main St. The library also offers an art gallery, computers with Internet access and a good view of downtown from the upper floors. 231-5500.

variety of stores at **Victorian Square** and **The Shops at Lexington Center**.

Connected by covered ped-way, these two com-

plexes feature some 50 specialty shops. Check out the new **Kentucky Proud Market**. You’ll also find exclusively Lexington shops such as **Parisienne** for unique fashion, **Old Kentucky Chocolates** candy store; **Artique**, a gallery of quality handmade jewelry and gift items; and **Kentucky Korner**, with just about everything emblazoned with Kentucky symbols or the University of Kentucky logo. **Artists Attic**, on the fourth floor of Victorian Square, features the studios of more than 30 area artisans. Most Center and Victorian Square shops are open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Bluegrass Note: Lexington is also a city *with* parks. Try these relaxing urban green spaces for an impromptu picnic or restful break: Just across Main Street from Lexington Center is **Triangle Park**, beautiful day and night with its stepped, lighted fountains. **Gratz Park**, 3rd at Mill, is located in a lovely historic residential neighborhood. Pause at **Cheapside Park**, historically the site of slave auctions, abolitionists’ speeches and “Court Days” trading. **Phoenix Park** is next to Lexington Public Library on Main Street. At the east end of downtown is **Thoroughbred Park**, where life-size bronze horses “race” and “graze.” (On a walking or jogging regimen? From Triangle Park to Thoroughbred Park and back along Main Street is about 1 1/2 miles.)

If hunting for treasures from the past is your passion, just head down Main Street. Visit **LaFayette Galleries** in

The Shops at Lexington Center or visit **Heritage Antiques** about five blocks away. (238 E. Main St.; 253-1035). Browse through **Ann Greely Interiors and Antiques** (497 East Main Street; 367-0200) or Lexington Antique Oriental Rugs (660 E. Main St.; 258-9027).

Colorful light hearted gifts, many handmade, are found at **Third Street Stuff**, which in spite of its name is at

257 N. Limestone (255-5301). It’s also a great place to get coffee and a sandwich. Nearby **Mithril Jewelers** has been creating fine custom pieces for 28 years (141 North Limestone; 254-1224).

Dining Out

Downtown is home to many of Lexington’s most popular and creative restaurants. In addition to the excellent hotel restaurants, **Triangle Grill** at the Hilton, **The Glass Garden** at the Hyatt Regency or **Jonathan’s** at Gratz Park Inn, you can walk to a variety of delicious experiences, as fancy or informal as you desire. From the more than 90 places to eat in downtown Lexington, here are a few suggestions:

If you want to grab something fast, visit the **Food Court** at The Shops at Lexington Center, or pick up a deli sandwich at **Courtyard Deli** on Cheapside. Victorian Square is home to two new establishments. **DeVassa** (455-9139) serves lunch and bar food. (DeVassa is Brazilian for “liberated woman”). **Chase Tap Room** (309-9300) occupies the corner space at Broadway and Short making it the perfect place to grab a cocktail before a show at the Lexington Opera House.

Sublime traditional, Sicilian and specialty pizzas are found at **Joe Bologna’s**, 120 W.

Maxwell St. This local favorite also serves pasta and awesome breadsticks. Only orders of more than \$100 are delivered, but you can carry out or dine in. 252-4933.

For sophisticated Italian dining with a California atti-

Bluegrass Note: Early riser? A variety of gourmet coffees and pastries are served at the downtown Starbucks on the corner of Main and Broadway. They open at 5:30 a.m.

tude, try **Portofino's** (249 East Main; 253-9300). **deSha's**, in Victorian Square, offers an extensive and varied menu including regional specialties in a casual setting. Open daily (259-3771). For hearty burgers and other "bar food," try **Sawyer's Bar and Grill** (281-6022) Monday through Saturday, at the corner of Main and Broadway.

At the corner of Main and Esplanade, drop in at the new **Nastasha's Bistro** for international cuisine. There's often live music or theatre performances in the evenings.

Bluegrass Note: Weather permitting, dine outdoors on the patios at Atomic Cafe or Cheapside Bar and Grill. Many downtown restaurants have sidewalk seating as well.

Lexington's beautiful courthouses (no, you're not seeing double!) have given new life to North Limestone. A number of small bistros and fine dining establishments have opened along this revital-

ized downtown corridor. Dine at the very, very French **Le Deauville**, just up the street. 246-0999. At 159 North Limestone St. is an old favorite, **a la lucie**. A popular "special occasion" restaurant for Lexingtonians, lucie's features a romantic atmosphere and inventive Continental menu. 252-5277. The next block up, enjoy a taste of the Caribbean at **Atomic Cafe**, famous for its conch fritters, jerk chicken and sweet potato chips. There's also live music. Dinner only, Tuesday through Saturday. 254-1969.

At the corner of Short and Market is another top Lexington restaurant, **Dudley's**. Located in the historic Northern Bank Building built in 1889, this elegant spot features seafood and Continental specialties, with an excellent wine list and Sunday brunch. 252-1010.

Nightlife

Lexington's hottest nightspots are in the downtown area, offering a wide variety of entertainment and ambiance. In addition to the restaurants mentioned above, here are some current favorites. Some clubs close at 1 a.m.; others are open till 2:30 a.m. Legal drinking age is 21.

Cheapside Bar & Grill on Mill Street offers great food in a casual atmosphere, inside or on the patio, and is the place to be at Happy Hour (254-0046). Make a night of it: stay on for the live music and party till 2:30 a.m.

Long time southern rocker and country crooner Larry Redmon has his own place called...**Redmon's**...downstairs at the corner of Main and Cheapside. 252-5802.

For a true Irish Pub go to **McCarthy's Irish Bar**, 117 S.

Upper. 258-2181. For the latest music and sports bar action, try **Bar Lexington**, 367 E. Main. There's even a volleyball court. 523-7694. If you are a pool shark in search of billiard tables, head to **Yesterday's** at The Shops at Lexington Center, 231-8889.

Keep an eye on an exciting new area of downtown: the Distillery District. It is home to **Buster's Billiards and Backroom**. They feature a fantastic lineup of live bands in the renovated 11,000 square foot Old Tarr Distillery warehouse built in 1860.

For Sports Fans

Lexington's passion for basketball is legendary, and Rupp Arena in Lexington Center is home court to one of the top programs in college basketball, the **University of Kentucky Wildcats**. Tickets are difficult to obtain but you may call the UK ticket office at 257-1818 to check availability. Hard-core fans make a point to take a peek at Rupp Arena through a viewing window outside the Lexington Center offices. 233-4567.

Basketball isn't the only game in town though. The **Lexington Legends**, an affiliate of the Houston Astros,

play at Lexington's new state-of-the-art baseball stadium on North Broadway. Tickets are usually available at the box office on game day. 422-7867.

Cultural Attractions

Today, as historically, downtown is the center of cultural life in Lexington. Touring professional theater, ballet, Lexington Philharmonic concerts and

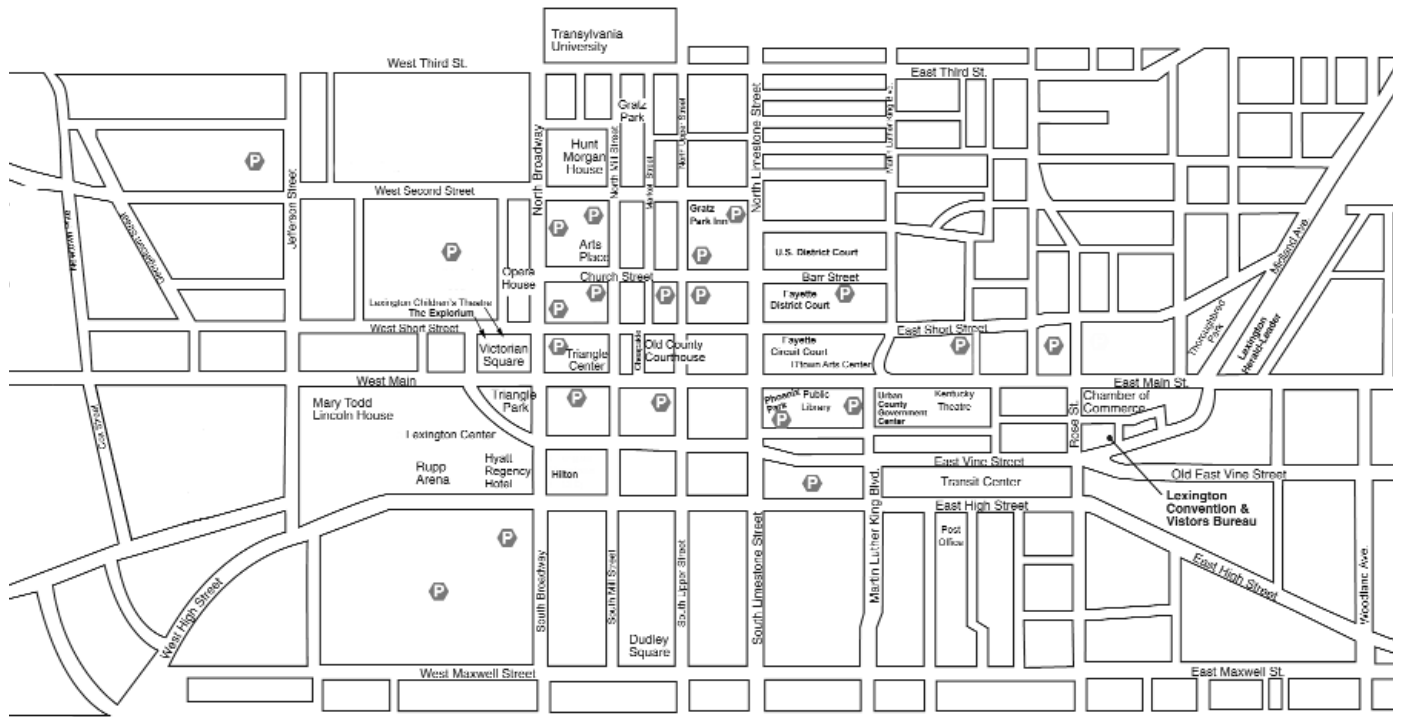
other arts performances are on the bill at the restored 1887 **Lexington Opera House**, Broadway and Short streets; call 233-4567 for ticket information.

The **Kentucky Theatre**, 214 E. Main Street, is a restored 1920s movie house that shows classics, foreign and some first-run films, with occasional concerts. 231-6997. It is also home to "**WoodSongs Old Time Radio Hour**," an internationally syndicated live radio show. 252-8888.

ArtsPlace, 161 N. Mill St., is headquarters to many Lexington arts groups. A gallery features changing exhibits and Red Barn Radio tapes live Bluegrass shows

Bluegrass Note: Spring through fall, local farmers sell vegetables, fruits, flowers and more at the **Farmer's Market** (Saturdays in Cheapside Park and Tuesdays and Thursdays on Maxwell at Broadway).

Bluegrass Note: Pamper yourself with deep tissue and other massages available at **The Massage Center**, 380 Mill in Dudley Square, 231-1782. If it's a workout you prefer, contact the **Urban Active**, 230 W. Main St. The club has racquetball and squash courts, a running track, sauna and weight rooms, with special day rates for visitors. 281-5110.



P - indicates parking

in the summer. 233-1469.

Around the corner from the new courthouses is the **Downtown Arts Center**. There are frequent musical and theatrical performances. You'll find art exhibits on the second floor and at the adjacent **Ann Tower Gallery**. 141 E. Main St., 233-1469. **Actors Guild**, 523-8476, often performs in the Black Box Theatre at the **Downtown Arts Center**.

Places of Worship

Visitors to Lexington often remark on the many steeples in the downtown area. The beautiful sanctuaries in downtown house some of the area's oldest congregations. For example, **Historic Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church**, 540 W. Maxwell St., was founded in 1790 and is the fourth oldest African-American Baptist church in America. 254-7387. **Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**, 205 E. Short St., traces its roots to the first Christian church in America, founded at nearby Cane Ridge. 233-1551. The Episcopal **Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral** congregation, 166 Market St., dates to 1795; a plaque marks Henry Clay's pew. 254-4497.

Other churches near Lexington Center include:

Calvary Baptist Church, 150 E. High St. 254-3491.

First Baptist Church, 548 W. Main St. (across from Lexington Center). 252-4808.

First Presbyterian Church, 174 N. Mill St. 252-1919.

First United Methodist, 200 W. High St. 233-0545.

Historic St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal

Church, 251 N. Upper St. 255-7945.

St. Paul Roman Catholic Church, 501 W. Short St. 252-0738.

Additional Information

Barber shop — Ginger's Barber Shop, 212 W Maxwell St., (859) 254-4464

Copies, digital photo printing, signs, banners— Fed Ex Office, 24 hr., 33 E. Main St., 253-1360.

Jewelry Repair — Corbett-Frame Jeweler's at the Hilton, 254-1963; Tanya's, Victorian Square, 489-6837.

Nail Repair, hair dresser — J. Allen Studio and Spa, 527 South Upper St., 231-6445.

Post Office — 210 E High St. Lexington, 254-6156.

Racing Forms — Fayette Cigar Store, 137 E. Main St., 252-6267.

Taxi Services — Yellow Cab/Wildcat Cab at 231-8294. or American Taxi Cabs at 381-8294. (Cabs must be phoned to schedule pickup; you cannot hail them on the street.) 🐎

*For more information contact
the Lexington Convention and Visitors Bureau
at 233-7299 or 800-845-3959.*

Written by Teresa Day, a freelance travel writer based in Georgetown.

Updated May 2010

Copyright: Lexington Convention and Visitors Bureau