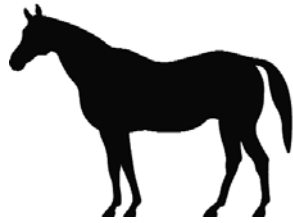


IDEA GUIDE



LEXINGTON CONVENTION
AND VISITORS BUREAU

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NATURAL WONDERS

Agritourism in the Bluegrass

When early pioneers trudged west across the great Appalachian ranges, they found before them a land so rich in natural resources they referred to it as a Garden of Eden. As word spread back east of fertile soil, bubbling springs, abundant wildlife, salt licks, vast pastures and virgin timber, central Kentucky's reputation as the land of milk and honey grew to legendary proportions.

Attracted by the Bluegrass region's plentiful natural resources, white settlers quickly laid claim to the land, and with their first fields of corn, hemp and tobacco, the region's profitable agrarian economy was up and running.

Today, the legendary limestone nourished soil supports a wide variety of agricultural endeavors. You'll find plenty of opportunities to enjoy nature's bounty in and around Lexington and discover our agricultural heritage along the way.

Vineyards Return to the Bluegrass

Over 200 years ago, Jean Jacques Dufour chose a fertile slope in a bend of the Kentucky River and established the first commercial wine grape operation in the United States. The mild climate and mineral-rich soil that attracted Dufour to the Bluegrass are inspiring a new generation of growers to try their hand at viticulture.

Bluegrass Note: Kentuckians have long understood the value of combining pure water with corn, barley and rye under just the right conditions. Bourbon whiskey, named for Bourbon county right here in the Bluegrass and prized the world over, is America's only native spirit. Kentucky produces at least 99% of the world's bourbon. Treat yourself to the sights and smells of a working distillery by touring one of four historic area attractions: Buffalo Trace in Frankfort (502-223-7641), Woodford Reserve Distillery in Versailles (800-542-1812), Wild Turkey in Lawrenceburg (502-839-4544), or Four Roses (502-839-3436), also near Lawrenceburg.

Chrisman Mill Vineyards and Winery. Denise and Chris Nelson planted their first vines in 1997 with the goal of making all their wines from Kentucky-grown fruit. With 3,000 vines producing nine varieties of grapes and fruit from 13 additional growers, Chrisman Mill has won over 24 international wine competition awards. Brunch is served on Saturdays seasonally, and

special Tuscan dinners are offered by advance reservation 2385 Chrisman Mill Road Nicholasville, KY 40356 (859)881-5007. No time for a drive in the country? They also have a shop at Hamburg Pavilion off I-75. (859)264-9463.

Equus Run Vineyards and Winery. The fields of this vineyard roll right down to Elkhorn Creek, making it a popular spot for picnicking and fishing. Special wine dinners and musical and theater events are held

throughout the year. There is a tasting room, a great deck for sipping, a gift shop and amphitheatre. Owner Cynthia Bohn planted the first vines in 1998 and has already won gold medals in international competitions on the East and West Coasts. 1280 Moores Mill Road, Midway, KY 40347 (859) 846-9463.

Chateau du Vieux Corbeau Winery. Winemaking is the latest agricultural endeavor on the historic farm that is also home to Old Crow Inn Bed & Breakfast. The Brousseau family vineyard produces white and red

French-Hybrid grapes for wine and American Table Grapes for eating out of hand. Wines are available for tasting and purchase in the tasting room and gift shop. 471 Stanford Road, Danville, KY 40422 (859) 236-1808.

Talon Winery & Vineyard. This picturesque winery is nestled among Thoroughbred farms. Visitors can stroll the vineyards and sip wine in the 18th century farmhouse. A summer concert series features live music from Motown to Bluegrass. 7086 Tates Creek Road, Lexington, KY 40515 (859)971-3214.

Jean Farris Winery & Bistro. Ben and Jeanie O'Daniel, both from second-generation Kentucky wine families, have now opened their doors under their own label, Jean Farris. A scenic drive down a country lane delivers you to the vineyards and a charming Bistro that serves fantastic Country French Cuisine for lunch and dinner Tuesday through Sunday plus brunch on Saturday and Sunday. Tours are not offered, but you are welcome to take a glass of wine and wander the vineyards. 6825 Old Richmond Road, Lexington, KY 40515 (859) 263-9463.

Acres of Land Winery. Come follow the wine making process all the way through from vine to bottle. Enjoy spectacular views, dine in the restaurant or savor a taste of one of their 11 wines. 2285 Barnes Mill Road - Richmond, KY 40475 (859)328-3000 or (866)714-9463.

Wildside Winery. One of the region's newest wineries, located on a small farm outside of Versailles, had its grand opening on March 25, 2006. Open and ready for complimentary tastings, you can visit Tuesdays through Sundays. Call for hours. 5500 Troy Pike, Versailles, KY 40383. (859)321-5046.

Lovers Leap Vineyards and Winery. With one of the largest vineyards in the state, Lovers Leap uses twenty acres of fertile soil near the Kentucky River to full advantage, producing a line of 13 fine wines. Open seven days a week. 1180 Lanes Mill Road. Lawrenceburg, KY 40342 (502)839-1299.

To Market, to Market....

You don't have to live in the country to enjoy fresh, locally grown products straight from the farm. Farmers' markets are enjoying a resurgence in popularity across the United States. **Lexington's Farmers' Market** runs year round. Every Saturday from mid-April to late fall, Cheapside Park is lined with colorful stalls selling fruits and vegetables, herbs, flowers, jams and jellies, honey, Kentucky specialties

and more. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, you'll find the farmers set up at Maxwell and South Broadway and on Sundays, on Southland Drive near Oleika Shrine Temple. As the weather turns chilly, the market moves indoors to Victorian Square at the corner of Main and Broadway.

You'll find Bluegrass Farmers' Market in the parking lot of Pedal the Planet and Fast Signs at 3450 Richmond Road. Call (859) 624-1020 for days and times. Many towns surrounding Lexington have their own farmers' markets. In addition to farm-fresh produce, you may find homemade cakes, handicrafts, bedding plants, soaps and candles. Call the number beside each city to check on days and hours of operation.

Danville (859) 236-4484. Boyle County Fairgrounds on the 127 Bypass, May through September.

Georgetown (502) 863-2547. Courthouse Square, June through September.

Winchester (859) 744-4682. July through October.

Frankfort (502) 875-8687. River View Park, May to October.

Versailles (859) 684-5778. North Main Street parking lot or Courthouse Square, May through October.

Paris (859) 987-3205. 8th and High, outdoors April to September; indoors the rest of the year.

Wilmore (859) 858-4411. City Hall parking lot, May to October.

Richmond (859) 626-8474 Lowe's parking lot, June through September.

Berea (859) 986-2540. Behind Boone Tavern, May through September.

Talk to the Animals

Several Bluegrass farms can offer visitors close encounters of the barnyard kind. Be sure to call ahead.

Bluegrass Note: Horses produce more revenue for the state than any other agricultural product. (Chickens and cattle follow in second and third places.) Visitors can explore the area's horse industry at a variety of attractions. The Kentucky Horse Park is a 1,200-acre state park dedicated to all breeds of horse. The Thoroughbred Center, a training facility for young race horses, offers regular tours. Attend seasonal live racing at Keeneland Race Course or Red Mile Harness Track, or hit the trails at one of the area riding stables. For the ultimate experience, visit one of the area's visitor friendly private horse farms.

Beaver Creek Suffolks. Who can resist the sight of a newborn lamb? This farm specializes in registered Suffolk sheep. Walking trails are being developed. 3431 HWY 3003, Cynthiana, KY (859) 873-1729.

Old Friends. There are some very special horses who love entertaining visitors at this retirement “home” for thoroughbred super stars. There is even a soccer playing miniature horse. Schedule a tour by calling (502) 863-1775. \$5 for adults. 1841 Paynes Depot Rd., Georgetown, KY.

Serenity Fiber and Living History Farm. This 94-acre farm is home to many animals. Some provide fiber for wearable and decorative items. An

1820’s cabin on the farm is believed to have been the home of a Revolutionary War soldier. 1371 Beverly Lane, Nicholasville, KY (859) 536-5056

Seldom Scene Farm. This farm “grows” alpacas and llamas. You can arrange for a guided nature tour, with trained, family-friendly llamas carrying your things and walking by your side. 3605 Watts Ferry Rd., Frankfort, KY (859) 428-8883.

Fresh from the Fields

Farm markets, produce stands and orchards abound in the Bluegrass. Take a drive through our scenic countryside and stop off for some edible souvenirs. Here’s a list of u-pick operations where you can roll up your sleeves and choose your own produce at the peak of perfection. Call ahead to see what’s ripe, and ask if you should bring your own containers.

Amerson Orchard. 130 McClelland Circle, Georgetown. (502) 863-3799. Green peppers, green beans, okra, eggplant, tomatoes and pumpkins.

Boyd Orchard. 1396 Pinckard Pike, Versailles. (859) 873-3097. Strawberries, blackberries, apples, pumpkins.

Charles Neal’s Blackberries. 1040 Hopewell Road, Harrodsburg. (859) 734-7666. Thornless blackberries.

Evans Orchard. 180 Stone Road, Georgetown. (502) 863-2255. Apples, pears, pumpkins.

Reed Valley Orchard. 239 Lail Lane, Paris. (859) 987-6480. Blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, peaches, pears, nectarines and apples.

Bluegrass Note: Bibb lettuce was created by War of 1812 veteran John Bibb in his Frankfort greenhouse. Another Kentucky creation is the Kentucky Wonder pole bean, known around the world as one of the best green bean varieties of all time.

A Peek at the Past

The first homesteaders across the Cumberland Gap saw a fertile region that promised rich rewards for those willing to work hard. One of the area’s top attractions provides a glimpse of early Kentucky farm life.

Shaker Village Historic Farm

Program. The superb agrarian tradition of the Shakers comes alive at the nation’s largest and most completely restored Shaker community. Four acres of corn, tobacco, sorghum and heirloom vegetables are farmed using 19th century horse-drawn machinery. Purebred livestock of the

same breeds the Shakers used are raised and worked throughout the village. From April through October, enactors from the Historic Farm Program allow visitors to witness farm work done as it was in the 1800s. Much of the produce served at the Trustee’s Dining Room is grown in the garden just outside the windows. 3501 Lexington Road, Harrodsburg. (859) 734-5411.

Harvest Celebrations

Fall is a wonderful time to experience the bounty of the Bluegrass. These popular festivals usually start in late September and run every weekend through October.

Bluegrass Note: Fall is also harvest time for Kentucky freshwater shrimp. A fat-free, iodine-free alternative to marine shrimp, these prawns have a taste and texture similar to lobster. You can often buy fresh shrimp pond-side if you’re in the region during September or October. Call ahead to this producer: Bubba Sue’s Shrimp (859-299-2254)

Baldwin Farms. Take some great photos and make memories while wandering the hay maze or corn maze, petting the goats or climbing Dirt Hill. Take home a pumpkin, Baldwin salsa, local honey, apples, cider, mums, Amish jams, sorghum, or fall decorations. 1114 Tates Creek Road, Richmond, KY

(859) 582-5785.

Bi-Water Farm & Greenhouse. At **AutumnFest**, tackle a five-acre corn maze, hop on a hayride, walk through the haunted farm house, visit the Enchanted Barnyard or take a train ride around the farm. You’re bound to find the perfect pumpkin in their 25-acre patch. Fall mums and pansies are available along with fresh fruits and veggies. 877 Cincinnati Pike, Georgetown, KY (502) 863-3676.

Boyd Orchards. Pick the event that most suits your taste. From early September through October, there is a unique festival each weekend. Call for the dates of the popular Scare Crow Fest. 1500 Pinckard Pike, Versailles KY (859) 873-3097.

Evans Orchard. Bring the family for the annual Harvest Celebration. Make your own selection in the pumpkin patch just in time for Halloween. There are pony rides, and always a few surprises--like this year's pumpkin throwing contest! You might want to return in the summer for this farm's famous Sweet Corn. 180 Stone Road, Georgetown, KY 40324. (502) 863-2255.

Stay Down on the Farm

Though you probably won't be asked to pitch in with the morning chores, a farm stay is a great way to get a close-up look at some of the area's most unique agricultural operations. A number of area farms operate B&Bs.

Essence of the Bluegrass, 4343 Mt. Horeb Pike, Lexington, 40511, (859) 255-0067. Experience a gentleman's farm in a modern home nestled among famous horse farms. Children and pets welcome with advance notice. If you are traveling with your horse, he is welcome too! Boarding is available. Located five minutes from the Kentucky Horse Park and fifteen minutes from downtown Lexington.

Swann's Nest at Cygnet Farm, 3463 Rosalie Lane, Lexington, 40510 (859) 226-0095. Situated on a prominent Thoroughbred horse farm just minutes from Keeneland, you can stay in the farm's guest quarters overlooking the broodmare paddocks or in one of three suites located in the Southern Colonial main home.

Jordan Farm, 4091 Newtown Pike, Georgetown, 40324 (502) 863-1944. Three spacious suites and a carriage house are available for guests at this 100-acre horse farm. Some guests have been lucky enough to see mares foaling. There is a five-acre fishing lake stocked with catfish, croppie and bass.

Bluegrass Note: Tobacco has been integral to Kentucky's economy for centuries. Only North Carolina produces more leaf tobacco. Burley tobacco is grown in 99 of 120 counties. The Burley Tobacco Growers Association can arrange tours in the Bluegrass. (859) 252-3561

Country Charm Historic Farmhouse, 505 Hutchison Road, Paris, 40361 (859)988-1006. Peace and tranquility are the order of the day on this working cattle farm. The elegant two-story, three-gabled brick farmhouse sits on 65 acres. Wake up to the sound of the birds outside your bedroom window or the distant hum of a tractor.

Baxter House Country Inn, 1677 Lexington Road, Harrodsburg, 40330 (859) 247-0280 or (859) 247-1001. If you'd like, you can get a true farm experience: feed the animals, gather fresh eggs in the morning, comb the donkeys, and work in the vegetable garden. Or just enjoy the scenery; the choice is yours!

Old Friends Bed & Breakfast, 1841 Paynes Depot Road, Georgetown, (502) 863-1775. Stay in the company of retired Thoroughbred champions. Overnight guests are treated to a country breakfast and a tour of Old Friends' 52-acre retirement and rescue facility, close to the Kentucky Horse Park. 

Bluegrass Note: Industrial hemp was once the number one cash crop in Kentucky and created more than one 19th century millionaire. It was the source of a vast array of products from textiles to food products and paper to oils. Unlike its close relative, this versatile plant does not have any psychoactive properties. At this time, hemp cannot be commercially grown in the United States.

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

Written by Lu Ann Pelle September 2003

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