

ROADTRIPS

The Ultimate in Sports Travel

PRESENTS

A GUIDE TO
LOUISVILLE

Louisville



Things to Know about Louisville

We've spent a lot of time in Louisville over the years but it didn't take long for this fun-loving city to win us over. Each year, we still get excited to visit Louisville and all that it has to offer. It boasts all the benefits of being Kentucky's largest city but it still manages to retain that small town feel. The locals are friendly and welcoming; it's a really easy place to feel at home.

Louisville also has a knack for throwing a great party, the Kentucky Derby being our favorite example of this. It's a go big or go home kind of attitude and it certainly makes for a good time. Louisvillians love any excuse for a celebration and you're likely to find a festival going on whatever time of year you visit. There's plenty more to enjoy in this city though too: it has heaps of wonderful museums, unique tours, and it's become quite a destination for foodies. We've developed a special affinity for Louisville and we're sure you will too!



Meet our Louisville Expert

Lauren Lehotsky



Lauren Lehotsky joined the Roadtrips team in 2008, straight out of university, and has been a valuable member of our event team ever since. She developed the travel bug after a trip to Italy in high school and credits working at Roadtrips with helping her develop and maintain this passion. Through hosting and site inspections for future events, she's been able to visit plenty of bucket list destinations including China, South Africa, England, Brazil, Nicaragua, and France just to

name a few.

She's also hosted at dozens of events in Canada and the U.S. and counts the Kentucky Derby as one of her favorites. She's there almost every year and if you've travelled with us to Derby before, chances are you've had the pleasure of meeting her. "The Kentucky Derby is just a ton of fun: getting fancy, drinking mint juleps and taking in the atmosphere around the event," she says. "I just love the tradition of picking out my hat to go with my Derby outfit! It's a great way to start the trip: settle into downtown Louisville and start shopping for the perfect, locally-designed hat or fascinator to get into the spirit of the Derby and join in on the pageantry."

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Our Top 5 Things to do in Louisville

I. Explore NuLu

Nulu (standing for New Louisville) is located in the East Market District of downtown and has recently become a favorite gathering spot in the city. Boasting unique art galleries, specialty boutiques, and award-winning eateries, it's a fun place to visit in Louisville. You'll find another vibrant area about a mile away at Fourth Street Live. Both areas are known for their restaurants and entertainment and are buzzing on Derby weekend..





2. Check out a Museum

Downtown Louisville has a number of cool museums to check out on and around Main Street. Some of our favorites include the Louisville Slugger Museum (just look for the giant bat), Muhammad Ali Center (you can also check out the legend's childhood home on Grand Avenue), and the Frazier History Museum.

3. Imbibe

There are dozens of distilleries in bourbon country and we're happy to arrange a tour that will escort you to some of the best in the region. Not only is it a fun way to spend a day, you'll actually learn a lot about the bourbon culture. If you don't want to leave the city, check out the Urban Bourbon Trail (a series of bars and restaurants) in downtown Louisville, but don't forget to download the *Urban Bourbon Trail Passport App* before you go.

4. All the Pretty Horses

Kentucky has been called the horse capital of the world and is an absolute paradise for equine enthusiasts. Take a tour of horse country and the thoroughbred farms, go horseback riding, or visit the most famous horse racing facility in the world...

5. Churchill Downs

It's a must see for any race fan. If you're in Louisville for the Kentucky Derby, you'll get to see this legendary track in all its glory. If you're not, you can take a number of different tours of the venue (the Behind the Scenes tour is a good one to start with) and check out the Kentucky Derby Museum (please note the museum is closed Derby weekend, starting on Thursday).



Our Kentucky Derby Tips

If you're in Louisville for the Kentucky Derby, you may find yourself overwhelmed with all the things to see and do during the city's biggest and most anticipated event. After many years of experience, we've nailed down our best pieces of advice for anyone attending.





Bring Some Cash

It's a good idea to have cash on hand for tips and if you plan to place a bet (due to state law, credit card payments are not permitted for betting).

What to Wear

One of the highlights of Derby is dressing up in a fashionable dress, fancy heels and a great hat. Our best tip: bring a pair of flip-flops or ballet flats to change into later in the day. After a day of walking between the paddock, spectator seating and the refreshment areas, your feet will thank you. If the forecast calls for rain, be sure to prepare accordingly. Pack a poncho (umbrellas are not allowed), and invest in a rain cover for your hat.

Check out the Paddock Area

This large, open space is a place to see and be seen, and visitors can get surprisingly close to the horses as they're paraded through the paddock pre-race. It's also a great location to photograph the spectacular hats and colorful outfits of the spectators.

Celebrities

For those hoping for a celebrity sighting, check out the Derby Red Carpet, where many celebrities will walk on their way up to their VIP seats. If you want to get closer to the celebs, you may want to consider attending the Barnstable Brown Gala, the most exclusive event of the weekend.

VIP Seating Options

Speaking of VIP seating, those seats aren't just for celebrities. If you want the ultimate Derby experience, we can arrange for a spot for you in one of the premium viewing areas including Millionaires Row, the Turf Club, the Finish Line Suites Balcony, and the Stakes Room. If you simply want to make sure you have a covered seat to protect you from the elements, our team can advise on which sections will best suit your needs.

Food and Drink

No visit to Louisville would be complete without two things: sipping a mint julep and having a hot brown: an open-faced sandwich with sliced turkey, bacon and

mornay sauce. As far as we're concerned, there's no better place to try your first mint julep than at Churchill Downs during the Kentucky Derby. As for the Hot Brown, we suggest trying the original at the historic Brown Hotel, one of our luxury properties.

Experience Thurby

A popular event with locals, Thursday at Churchill Downs (aptly named Thurby) offers a different experience than Friday or Saturday. There are races of course but there are also musical performances and other entertainment acts. Thurby also provides guests with a great opportunity to explore Churchill Downs.



How to Add to Your Derby Experience

Obviously Derby is the main event, but there's a ton of other stuff going on in the week preceding it.

For starters, the Derby's not the only race that weekend. There's also the Kentucky Oaks on Friday, which includes the Kentucky Oaks Fashion Contest, one of the weekend's most beloved traditions.

If you're in town on Thursday, there are a couple of fun events to check out. The Sunset Social takes place at Hermitage Farm, where you'll enjoy a sunset tour of the picturesque property followed by a delicious farm-to-table dinner and drinks. Another option is Taste of Derby, an upscale social evening where you can savor the exquisite Kentucky flavors of nationally renowned chefs as they compete in a live cooking showdown..

And then there's the hottest party of the year, the Barnstable Brown Gala. If you follow pop culture at all (and likely even if you don't), you're familiar with this one. This black-tie party is attended by some of the biggest names in sport and entertainment. The celebrity guest list is long, the entertainment is fantastic, and it's all for a great cause.



Best Places to Sleep

Louisville has some wonderful accommodation options and we are proud to offer our guests some of the best.

There's no Louisville property more iconic than the Brown Hotel. Well located in downtown Louisville, this legend has been the home of VIP visitors to the city for over 100 years. Elegant and luxurious, it's hard to find any fault with this gorgeous property.

The Galt House Hotel is another of Louisville's best known properties. The official hotel of the Kentucky Derby, this one is always a popular choice with visitors. It's the only hotel in the city on the Ohio River and also boasts a 25th floor revolving restaurant which offers some amazing views of the city.



Best Eats in Louisville

We're big fans of the food in Louisville but in case you need more convincing, Louisville has been receiving a lot of attention lately for its restaurant scene. In fact, Louisville was recently named one of "The Best Food Cities in the U.S." by Travel + Leisure magazine..

We look forward to going back to Louisville every year to visit our favorite eateries and check out the new additions. We've handpicked a few of our favorites below to get you started. Many of these will require reservations well in advance, particularly during Derby week. It is important to note that many restaurants have a strict reservation policy during big events like the Kentucky Derby and may require a credit card or a deposit to guarantee a booking. We are unable to arrange reservations on our guests' behalf, though we are happy to assist with recommendations.





Jeff Ruby's

📍 325 W. Main Street

☎ 502.584.0102 ↗ jeffruby.com/louisville

Quite simply, it's one of the best places to get a steak in Louisville. It's upscale but not stuffy with a cool art deco interior. Go for the steak, stay for the fun atmosphere. It can get a bit loud which may be a good thing, depending on the vibe you're after.

Doc Crow's

📍 127 W. Main Street

☎ 502.587.1626 ↗ doccrows.com

An easy block away from our Galt House guests, Doc Crow's is a self-described Southern smokehouse and raw bar. It's a casual type of joint with great, flavorful food. It's also got a loooooong bourbon list to choose from. We're partial to the shrimp po-boy but also recommend the smokehouse sampler if you love BBQ too much to make a decision.

Proof on Main

📍 702 W. Main Street

☎ 502.217.6360 ↗ proofonmain.com

Located inside the 21c Museum Hotel, Proof on Main is open for breakfast, brunch/ lunch, and dinner. It's worth trying Proof for any (or all) of those meals or even just a drink in the bar. Keeping in sync with the rest of the property, the dishes are thoughtful and creative. If you're feeling adventurous, try the charred octopus, one of the restaurant's signature dishes.

Brendon's Catch 23

📍 505 S. Fourth Street

☎ 502.909.0053 ↗ bcatch23.com

Brendon's Catch 23 is a perennial guest favorite. A fantastic seafood restaurant in downtown Louisville may be a bit unexpected but Brendon's delivers. Bonus: they also have a vegetarian and a gluten-free menu.

Wild Eggs

📍 121 S. Floyd Street

☎ 502.690.5925 ↗ wildeggs.com

A local favorite, this is our pick for a hearty breakfast or brunch. Wild Eggs opens early and the earlier you get there, the better luck you'll have finding a table. It seems to be always packed so be prepared to wait. It's worth it though, the menu is extensive, the food is well prepared and the service is great too. Don't leave without trying the freshly squeezed orange juice.

Mayan Café

📍 813 E. Market Street

☎ 502.566.0651 ↗ themayancafe.com

Mayan chef Bruce Ucán creates Mayan-inspired dishes using local, sustainable ingredients at this wonderful NuLu eatery. It's unique, flavorful, and creative. It's a popular place and has limited seating; we highly recommend booking this one in advance. Gluten-free and vegan friendly.



610 Magnolia

📍 610 Magnolia Avenue

☎ 502.636.0783 ↗ 610magnolia.com

If you really want to impress someone, bring them here for dinner. The restaurant, run by celebrity chef Edward Lee, offers a 4-course or 6-course tasting menu that can be accompanied with wine or bourbon pairings. It's the perfect place to celebrate a special occasion (or not). Reservations are required.

Swizzle

📍 140 N. Fourth Street

☎ 502.252.2500 ↗ swizzle25.com

Our Galt House guests just need to take the elevator up to the 25th floor to enjoy a unique dining experience. Swizzle is a revolving restaurant that offers some of the best views in the city. This "retro-style supper club for the modern diner" serves up classics with plenty of steak and seafood options.

Vincenzo's

📍 150 S. Fifth Street

☎ 502.580.1350 ↗ vincenzositalianrestaurant.com

Vincenzo's is a traditional upscale Italian restaurant with great food and great service. It's the kind of place you'd go to celebrate an anniversary and then keep going back to over and over because the food is so wonderful.

Best Place for a Cocktail

You won't have trouble finding a drink in Louisville. As we've mentioned, the city loves to party and many bars stay open until 4am (6am during Derby week). For a really cool experience, we suggest heading to Proof Bar in the 21c Museum Hotel. It's classy and vibey with great drinks and great bartenders. Fantastic people watching too!

Best Spot to Grab a Coffee

Louisville is a great destination for coffee lovers. There are lots of great cafés around downtown and throughout the city. For something uniquely Louisvillian, pick up a cup at Sunergos on 5th Street. You'll have to take it to go as there are no seats here but if you love coffee, you won't want to miss out. They've won all kinds of awards to prove their worthiness.



Best Place to Shop

Just east of downtown, you'll find NuLu, also known as the East Market District. We love the specialty boutiques here and there's also some wonderful antique shops and great restaurants, most of which focus on sustainable, locally-sourced ingredients.

For Derby goers, you may be wondering where you should shop for your Derby hat. Well, you're likely to have plenty of options. The Hat Girls (thehatgirls.com) is one of the bigger names and is an option for online custom orders. Etsy is worth checking out too. In addition, pop-up hat shops abound in downtown Louisville during Derby week. There's usually at least one option in our Brown Hotel and Galt House properties and your onsite hosts can direct you where else to go to find that perfect headpiece.





Getting to Louisville

The primary airport serving Louisville is the Louisville International Airport (SDF). Just 7 miles south of downtown, it's a short ride to the city center.

Louisville International Airport offers plenty of domestic flight possibilities for visitors. For Derby weekend, flights will be in high demand and we recommend booking early to secure your preferred routing and schedule.

Fun Fact: Louisville Airport is the worldwide hub of UPS.



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