



13. THE KENTUCKY CASTLE



“NO VISIT TO THE BLUEGRASS WOULD BE COMPLETE WITHOUT A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH THE FOUR-LEGGED CITIZENRY.”



12. PLANK FENCING



3. THE RED MILE HARNESS TRACK



7. KEENELEND RACECOURSE



5. CALUMET FARM

Did you know that
LEXINGTON
is surrounded by more than
450 HORSE
FARMS?

FENCES, too, are special in the bluegrass. Drive along almost any rural road, and you'll see fences that were built in the mid-1800's of native limestone. Many of these "rock" fences were laid without mortar, kept standing instead by careful selection and balanced placement of individual stones.

HOW TO TALK BLUEGRASS. Versailles is pronounced "ver-Sales" in the Bluegrass - at least when referring to the nearby town by that name. Athens, a small community in Fayette County, is called "A-thins." And if you ask for directions don't be surprised if you are told to follow such-and-such "Pike." This traditional term for "road" dates to the early 1800's when privately built toll roads connected Lexington with surrounding communities; a long pole, or "pike," was placed across the road as a barrier until the fee was paid.

THE BLUEGRASS. The grass isn't really blue in Kentucky's Bluegrass region, but it really is "bluegrasses." The variety of grass by that name produces a small blue flower in early spring, so a field of flowering bluegrass might appear to be bluish-green. In general, bluegrass is green like other grasses, and it turns brown in the winter.

The Bluegrass region's rich soil, partly a result of high phosphorus content from the decomposing limestone beneath it, sets the stage for bluegrass and other grasses to flourish, providing lush pasturage for grazing livestock. The region is renowned as the world's largest equine "nursery." Hundreds of horse farms surround Lexington, giving this modern city a park-like setting.

BARNs of the Bluegrass have their own distinctive architectural beauty. Reflecting the importance of the horse in the hearts of Central Kentuckians, special care has always been given to the design and construction of horse barns. Cupolas, spires, arches, and stall windows of brick or stone; wooden barns are often painted in the farm's "colors." Inside, some are finished with fine woods and brass accents—even chandeliers! Plainer barns are used for hanging and drying tobacco. These barns usually include a series of side vents that can be opened to enhance drying.

INSIGHTS

WELCOME TO LEXINGTON

Whether you have a few days or just a few hours to spend in Lexington, this helpful guide can put you on the path to a memorable experience here in Kentucky's beautiful Bluegrass region. Designed to be followed at your own pace, this self-guided tour can be adapted to your own schedule and interests. So take your time and have fun! If you want to explore more of the Bluegrass, use the SIDE TRIP symbols to expand your adventure to surrounding communities and attractions.

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LEXINGTON, KY

Regal Traditions BLUEGRASS COUNTRY DRIVING TOUR



VISIT LEX



ESPECIALLY FOR HORSE FANS

No visit to the Bluegrass would be complete without a close encounter with the four-legged citizenry. That won't be difficult. Even the police force in Lexington includes horses. A mounted patrol serves the downtown business district.

The Virginia gentlemen farmers who settled the Bluegrass brought their love of fine horses with them. The first Thoroughbred was brought to Lexington in 1779, and within a year there was horse racing on Main Street. The 1789 census counted more horses than people.

The Bluegrass is also the world's most concentrated collection of horse farms. Thoroughbreds, Standardbreds, Arabian, Morgans and Saddlebreds are some of the breeds raised on the beautiful farms surrounding Lexington. If you decide to drive through "horse country," keep in mind that the farms are private property. Unless otherwise noted they are closed to visitors. Exercise "horse sense" - don't pet or feed the horses or climb fences. Drive carefully - some roads are narrow and you may encounter slow-moving farm machinery and horse vans.

One of the best ways to see horses up close is through one of our local tour operators. Contact the Visitors Center (800) 845-3959 or (859) 233-7299 for more information and a list of operators. Farms mentioned on the Driving Tour that are marked with an asterisk can be booked online through www.visithorsecountry.com. All tours must be booked in advance.



REGAL TRADITIONS

Allow at least a morning or an afternoon to take in the spectacular countryside. Lexington's famous racetracks, horse farms that have hosted both equine and human royalty—even a castle!—are included in this segment of the tour, which begins downtown at Main St. and Broadway. Drive south on South Broadway.

1. TRIANGLE PARK. With its impressive rushing fountains and tree-lined promenades, Triangle Park is a favorite gathering place for all ages. The park was built with \$1 million in private donations and designed by internationally-known landscape architect Robert Zion.

2. BROADWAY. The city's principal north-south street was named Main Cross until the mid-1800's. The houses on your left between High and Maxwell streets were fashionable 19th-century homes; some have been renovated for commercial use. Turn right onto Red Mile/Forbes Rd. at stop light.

(For a SIDE TRIP to Shaker Village or Harrodsburg, continue south on Harrodsburg Rd. for approximately 30 miles.)

3. THE RED MILE HARNESS TRACK. Since 1875, more harness racing world records have been established on this red clay track than at any other. The Kentucky Futurity, the final race of trotting's "Triple Crown" is run here. Race meet dates are held late in the spring and fall. The entertainment complex includes a wagering floor with 900 Instant Racing Machines® and live music every weekend.

4. STABLE OF MEMORIES/FLORAL HALL. The Red Mile site was previously a fairground and the octagonal building near its entrance was built in 1879 as an exhibit hall for flowers, and later served as a horse barn. It now serves as a special event facility. Continue on Red Mile Rd. The track "backside" will be at your right. Turn left at Versailles Rd. (US 60 West), passing houses, horse supply companies and other commercial development as you drive to the outskirts of town. Calumet Farm is approximately 3 miles on right.

5. CALUMET FARM. One of the most famous farms of the Bluegrass, Calumet dominated Thoroughbred racing between 1931 and 1963. Named for the business of its founder Warren Wright, Calumet Baking Powder Company of Chicago, no farm has ever matched its record of eight Kentucky Derby Winners and two Triple Crown Winners (Whirlaway and Citation). The farm continued operation by Wright family heirs until 1991. It was purchased by the late Count de Kwiatkowski in 1992, and is now owned by Kentuckian Brad Kelly.

6. BLUE GRASS AIRPORT. Inaugurated with the landing of a B-25 bomber in 1942, the airport has offered commercial service since 1943. Surrounding horse farm scenery prompted radio commentator Paul Harvey to dub Lexington America's "most beautiful air approach."

At the intersection of Versailles Rd. and Man O' War, turn right into the first Keeneland track entrance. Caution—traffic during racing season in April and October can be heavy.

7. KEENELAND RACECOURSE. Noted as one of the world's most beautiful racetracks, Keeneland Racecourse held its first call to the post on October 16, 1936. The course was located on the farm of Jack "Oliver" Keene, who had been pursuing a dream of building a track and training center for 20 years. Today the Keeneland Association holds racing meets in April and October. Its annual sales, held in a pavilion on the track grounds, are the world's largest and most prestigious Thoroughbred auctions. Visitors are welcome to stroll the grounds any time of year. You might want to come early to watch the morning workouts on the main track mid-March to mid-November. The public is also welcome at the Track Kitchen.

Return to Versailles Rd. and turn right. Turn right onto Rice Rd. (Hwy. 1969 N) next road on the right.

8. THOROUGHBRED CLUB OF AMERICA. Immediately on the left—Thoroughbred owners, breeders and trainers worldwide belong to this private club headquartered on the Keeneland grounds.

9. KEENELAND GRANDSTAND. To your right is an excellent view of the track and grandstand. Keeneland's 1,043-acre pastoral setting creates an atmosphere unique in the horseracing industry.

10. KEENELAND TRAINING CENTER. On your left, trainers use Keeneland's six-barn, 240-stall center as a training location year-round. Watch for horses crossing the road to the training track on your right.

11. MANCHESTER FARM. This 126-acre Thoroughbred breeding farm takes its name from Manchester Spring, the popular rendezvous point for Kentucky pioneers. Locals say that the antebellum mansion was the inspiration for "Tara" in Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind." Turn right onto Van Meter Rd., passing Manchester's lovely blue and white barns with cupolas and dormers on your right.

12. PLANK FENCING. As you drive along Van Meter, notice that the wooden plank fencing on one side of the road is painted black, the fencing on the other side is painted white. Farm operators disagree over which color is preferable. Some believe that the traditional white provides better visibility to the horses and is more attractive, while black requires less frequent repainting - a valid economic concern since a farm can include miles of fencing to separate paddock areas. Plank fencing costs about \$18,000 a mile before painting. After you've driven about a mile along Van Meter, the buildings of the original Calumet Farm will come into view on your left. You'll travel on Van Meter just under two miles before it dead-ends at US 60. Turn right at US 60, Versailles Rd., passing the airport and Keeneland a second time.

13. THE KENTUCKY CASTLE. Just past the Woodford County line, on your right about three miles out, is one of the Bluegrass region's most unusual structures—an eight-turreted castle with 70-foot high corner towers. Begun in 1969 as the intended private residence of a Lexington developer, it is now a luxury tourist inn and restaurant. Turn right onto Hwy. 1967 North (Pisgah Pike). A good view of the west side of the castle can be found on your right.

14. PISGAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Irish and Scottish settlers in Woodford County organized this church in 1784. Revolutionary War soldiers are buried in the small cemetery adjoining this lovely stone sanctuary. Turn around in the church lot and return to Versailles Rd. via Pisgah Pike. Turn right back onto US 60.

15. CRITTENDEN CABIN. Immediately beyond a golf course, this cabin on your right was built about 1783 by the father of Kentucky Governor John Jorden Crittenden; it was moved to this spot. As you enter the Versailles business district merge right onto US 60 (West).

(For a SIDE TRIP to Versailles, continue straight on Business District US 60.)

Continue on US 60 for approximately 2 miles. You'll pass several businesses and Woodford County High School on your left. Turn right onto US 62 (East).

(For a SIDE TRIP to Frankfort, Kentucky's state capital, continue straight on US 60.)

16. LANE'S END FARM.* The cream-colored barns with tan roofs on your right are part of the farm of William S. Farish, who was appointed Ambassador to Great Britain by President George W. Bush. The farm's guests have included such distinguished figures as Queen Elizabeth II of England and President Bush. The farm's roster of leading stallions has included 1985 Kentucky Derby winner Spend A Buck, 1988 Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner and Horse of the Year, Alysheba, and 1988 Belmont winner Bet Twice.

17. ORAN LITTLE RESEARCH FARM. Just past Lane's End on the other side of US 60 is an animal research farm operated by the University of Kentucky. UK farms in the Lexington area conduct research in the areas of beef and dairy cattle, sheep and horses. You'll continue to pass beautiful horse farms as you approach the intersection of US 62 and Hwy. 1681.

18. OFFUTT-COLE TAVERN. On your left at the intersection: travelers stopped for rest and repast here beginning in 1804, when William Dailey opened a stagecoach inn. William Offutt added the brick section in 1802; the log section dates to the 1700's. Turn right onto Hwy. 1681 (Old Frankfort Pike); you'll pass horse farms on both sides of the road.

(For a SIDE TRIP to historic Midway continue straight on US 62.)

19. THREE CHIMNEYS FARM.* This farm seen on both sides of the road has been home to many top Thoroughbreds, including 1977 Triple Crown winner Seattle Slew and 1997 Derby winner Silver Charm.

20. MT. VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH. Organized in 1822, the church on your left replaced a log building with this brick one in 1905. The pulpit was made from a single 62-foot-long log from the older church.

21. SUMMERHILL FARM. The Thoroughbred farm on the left has been in the same family since the 1800's; the house dates to the 1860's.

22. HEADLEY-WHITNEY MUSEUM. The late George Headley, a fine arts collector, created this eclectic, three-building museum. Oriental porcelains, paintings, masks, a "Shell Grotto," and Headley's specialty—unusual jeweled bibelots—are featured. Call (859) 255-6653 for information on museum hours. Admission charged.

23. DONAMIRE. The 620-acre Thoroughbred breeding farm on the left was built in the early 1980's and includes its own training center.

24. STONESTREET.* The Fustok family built the elegant farm on the right in 1979. The now 1,800-acre Thoroughbred mare and foal operation includes beautiful oak barns and a Roman arch bridge over a small lake. It was purchased in 2005 by the co-proprietors of Jackson Family Wines. A dedicated team continues the vision of Jess Jackson and his wife, Barbara Banke.

25. DARBY DAN FARM. Built by the late Ohio real estate magnate and onetime Pittsburgh Pirates owner John Galbreath, this 750-acre farm on the left has been the home of Thoroughbred champions such as Kentucky Derby winners Chateaugay and Proud Clarion and Epsom Derby winner Roberto. The farm is now owned by John Phillips.

26. OLD BRADLEY PLACE. This 658-acre farm on the right used to be the Thoroughbred division of King Ranch of Texas. For a while Texas Santa Getrudis cattle were also raised here. The farm is now a division of Three Chimneys Farm.

27. SECRETARIAT STATUE. Installed in October 2019, this bronze statue depicts Secretariat in full stride, his weight on two legs only, the way he looked when racing home as the Derby winner in 1973, the first leg of his Triple Crown journey. Sculptor Jocelyn Russell used a red patina over the statue to replicate Secretariat's chestnut color and give a nod to his nickname "Big Red." At the traffic circle, take the second right to stay straight on Old Frankfort Pike and head back into town. Just after the Forbes Rd. intersection, you'll notice The Lexington Distillery District on your right. Stop in for bourbon tours, local ice cream and eateries, breweries and shops.

SIDE TRIPS

HARRODSBURG. (Southwest of Lexington via US 68, 7 miles southwest of Shaker Village.) Home to Old Fort Harrod State Park, a replica of Kentucky's first permanent settlement. Dine or unwind at early 20th century Beaumont Inn and explore this historic town's art, history, boutique shopping and dining.

SHAKER VILLAGE OF PLEASANT HILL. (Southwest of Lexington via US 68.) This restored 19th-century Shaker community includes 33 buildings, craft-making exhibits and, spring through fall, paddlewheel boat excursions on the Kentucky River. Food and rooms available, reservations needed.

VERSAILLES. (West of Lexington via US 60.) Bourbon distilleries, the 1797 Jack Jouett House and Bluegrass Railroad train excursions are features of the Woodford county seat.

MIDWAY. (West of Lexington via I-64, US 421 or US 62.) Built beside railroad tracks and named for its location midpoint between Lexington and Frankfort, this charming town features antiques and specialty shops on historic Railroad St. Just east of town on US 421 is Weisenberger Mill, a flour and grain mill operated by the same family since 1865.

FRANKFORT. (West of Lexington via I-64, US 60 or US 421.) Kentucky's capital city features the Capitol rotunda, a huge floral clock, Old State Capitol, Kentucky History Center, Kentucky Military History Museum, Daniel Boone's grave and Buffalo Trace Distillery, where you can see bourbon whiskey made.

