



Mural Challenge
Lexington has imaginative and thought-provoking street art at nearly every turn. Find five of our amazing murals and we'll send you a free poster!

More information, including maps, is available at VisitLEX.com.



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

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN LEXINGTON WALK



ARCHITECTURE in the Bluegrass represents a journey through time – from pioneer cabins to modern glass skyscrapers, buildings in Lexington reflect over 200 years of heritage. If you're interested in architecture, you'll enjoy exploring the downtown historic districts, including Gratz Park and South Hill neighborhoods, as well as the Bluegrass countryside with its many farms and country estates. The BGT plaques you will see signify historic structures and are awarded by the Bluegrass Trust for Historic Preservation. Contact the Visitors Center for more information about historic sites and historic houses open for tour.

Today, Lexington is Kentucky's second largest city. The merged Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government serves a population of about 323,000 people. The Lexington metropolitan area (Fayette County and five adjoining counties) has a population of about 517,000. The Bluegrass is famous for horses, tobacco, bourbon and Southern hospitality, but an increasing variety of products and services contribute to its healthy economy and continuing growth. Higher education, printers and automotive manufacturing are some of the major industries of the modern Bluegrass. For visitors and residents, Lexington offers the best of today and yesterday.

gained the nickname "Athens of the West." Mountains, and so cultured was its lifestyle that it the largest and wealthiest towns west of the Allegheny rapid growth. By 1820, Lexington, Kentucky, was one of paper, hemp and corn products fueled the town's early, Retail commerce and the manufacturing of such items as

until 1792.) Assembly of Virginia. (Kentucky was a part of Virginia 1782, the town was officially established by the General near what is now the corner of Main and Mill streets. In four years later that the first log blockhouse was built, and named their campsite Lexington. It wasn't until the American Revolution at Lexington, Massachusetts, frontiersmen in the area got news of the first battle of

INSIGHTS

WHEN IT COMES TO TOURS, LEXINGTON DOESN'T JUST TALK THE TALK. WE WALK THE WALK.

There's so many things to see and do here that don't require any more than a spirit of adventure and your own two feet. So put on a comfortable pair of shoes and get to stepping.

Ask our Visitor Center staff about seasonal guided walking tours of beautiful Downtown Lexington. Or set out on your own with these fun self-guided options.



Big Lex Scavenger Hunt
Find ten sites related to Lexington's legendary blue mascot and we'll reward you with a special prize!



African American Heritage Tour
Learn about the local people, places, and events that played a significant role in the advancement of racial equality, shaping Lexington into the progressive city it is today.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN LEXINGTON WALK

Walk through downtown Lexington and you'll not only discover a modern, busy metropolitan center, but you'll also get a sense of what Lexington was like 50, 100 or even 200 years ago. In total the tour is a little less than two miles in length, with plenty of resting places along the way.

The tour begins at Triangle Park at the intersection of North Broadway and Main Street. Parking is available in numerous lots in the area, including the lot on High St. across from Rupp Arena at Central Bank Center, and an indoor parking complex on Short St. between North Broadway and Mill St. From High St. walk north on Broadway two blocks to West Main St. to reach Triangle Park.

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

At the intersection of Main St. and Broadway, cross Main St. to get a close-up view of The Square.

2. THE SQUARE. This block of late 19th century and early 20th century commercial buildings was given new life in the 1980s and houses retail stores, galleries, restaurants and office space. The renovation and preservation of its historic façade won national and local awards. The Square is also home to the Explorium of Lexington and the Lexington Children's Theatre. *At Algonquin St. take a look across the street to the Central Bank Center.*

3. CENTRAL BANK CENTER/RUPP ARENA. Named for UK Coach Adolph Rupp, who reigned at UK for 42 years, achieving a record of 879 victories and 190 losses, Rupp Arena is the home court for the UK Wildcats. It is also used for major concerts. The surrounding 11-acre complex houses Lexington's Convention Center. A new façade, expanded meeting, exhibition and retail spaces, plus a park are under construction.

4. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH. The large Collegiate Gothic style church to your right constructed of Bedford stone was built in 1913 at the cost of approximately \$125,000. It is the fourth Baptist church at this location and offers seating for 1,500 congregants.

5. MARY TODD LINCOLN HOUSE. Mary Todd, who became First Lady as wife of 16th President Abraham Lincoln, was born in Lexington in 1818. Her father and stepmother moved the family to this 16-room house on your left in 1832. It's said that during visits to the Todd home, Lincoln loved to spend time reading in his father-in-law's extensive library. Seasonal hours. (859) 233-9999 *Turn right on Jefferson St. and continue north for a variety of restaurants, or turn right onto West Short St. to continue your tour.*

6. WESTERN SUBURB HISTORIC DISTRICT. West Short and nearby streets represent a typical middle class neighborhood of the mid-1800s. (If you're particularly interested in residential architecture, turn left instead of right and explore the 600 block of West Short St., with its brick sidewalk, wrought-iron and picket fences and small courtyards.) *Continue walking east (toward Broadway) on West Short St.*

7. PARKER PLACE. 511 West Short Street. The Italianate-style brick house on the left was built in 1871 by a prominent Lexington banker, John B. Wilgus. It was an orphanage from 1907 to 1975. The Parker name refers to Elizabeth Parker (Mary Todd Lincoln's grandmother), who lived in an earlier house at this address. A Parker family cabin from the late 1700's was moved here in 1988 from a location near the Lexington airport.

8. ST. PAUL ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. 501 West Short Street. This Gothic Revival-Style church, with its graceful 218-foot-tall spire, was dedicated in 1868. The clocks were added in 1883. *Turn left at Broadway and walk north towards West Third St.*

9. LEXINGTON OPERA HOUSE. "The best one-night stand in America" was the reputation this hall gained shortly after its opening in 1887. Al Jolsen, Will Rogers, Fannie Brice, Lillian Russell and the Barrymores are among the stars who have graced its stage. An elaborate 1906 production of "Ben Hur" included an onstage chariot race. Local and touring drama groups and The Lexington Ballet have performed here since it was restored in 1975.

10. BROADWAY. Until the mid-1800s, Lexington's main north-south street was named Main Cross. Lexington's first courthouse was built in 1782 at the northwest corner of Main and Broadway, and this area was the city's early commercial center. Hotels stood at the intersection of Broadway and Short during the mid-1800s.

11. WEST SECOND STREET. A church has stood at the southwest corner of Second and Broadway since 1808. The Broadway Christian Church building now located here was built in 1917. Many of the houses on Broadway between West Second and West Third were built before the Civil War. (To view other residential architecture from 19th-century and early 20th-century Lexington, take a side excursion west on West Second or West Third streets.) *Turn right at West Third St.*

12. TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY. "Transy," established in 1780, is the oldest college west of the Allegheny Mountains. Among its graduates have been 50 U.S. Senators, 101 Representatives, three Speakers of the House, 36 governors, and 34 ambassadors. Famous alumni include Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, and Texas settler Stephen Austin. Campus tours are given by appointment; call (859) 233-8120.

13. PATTERSON CABIN. Built about 1783 by Robert Patterson, one of Lexington's founders and a Transy trustee, this cabin was moved from Lexington to Dayton, Ohio, in 1901 by Patterson's grandson. In 1939, it was brought back and placed on the Transylvania Campus.

14. OLD MORRISON. Transylvania's second administration building was built between 1830 and 1834 to replace an earlier main building that burned. Architect Gideon Shryock, who also designed the original state capitol in Frankfort, is credited with introducing the Greek Revival style to Kentucky. Visitors are welcome. Call ahead at (859) 233-8120 to see a third-floor museum of artifacts from the university's early 19th-century medical school.

Continue walking on Third St. and turn right onto North Upper St.

15. ST. PAUL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH. 251-253 North Upper St. This location has been used for worship since around 1820, when black members of a local Methodist church decided to form their own congregation. They first met in a stable located on this site, a portion of which may still exist in the foundation of this building, which was begun in 1830. The building's eclectic style reflects expansions and additions made in 1850, 1877, 1906, and 1986. St. Paul A.M.E. is the oldest of African Methodist Episcopal churches founded in Fayette County in the years after the Civil War, when many freed rural slaves moved to Lexington.

Turn right onto Mechanic St.

16. GRATZ PARK. Originally the campus lawn of Transylvania University, this park was the focal point of one of Lexington's most prosperous early 1800s-neighborhoods. The park is named for 19th-century hemp manufacturer and Transy trustee Benjamin Gratz, who bought the house at 231 North Mill St. in 1824. The house remained in the Gratz family for 160 years. The fountain at the north end of the park was built in 1933, with funds left for "a gift to Lexington's children" in the will of best-selling 19th-century Kentucky author and Lexington native James Lane Allen.

17. THE KITCHEN. The one-story structure in the middle of Gratz Park is the only surviving building of the original Transylvania University campus. It is known as "the Kitchen" by students and locals. Historians believe it probably was not a kitchen because the fireplaces are too small for cooking. *Walk south on Market St. toward downtown.*

18. BODLEY-BULLOCK HOUSE. On your left at 200 North Market St. early Lexington civic leader General Thomas Bodley paid \$10,000 for this house in 1814. During the Civil War, this house was headquarters for Union troops; troops camped in the park. Prominent physician Waller Bullock and his wife bought the house in 1912. Today the house is headquarters of the Junior League of Lexington. *Turn right onto Second St.*

19. OLD LEXINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY. Lexington formed a library in 1795, but the books were housed at various locations around town until this building was completed in 1905. The building was partly financed by an Andrew Carnegie gift of \$50,000. This was the city's main public library until 1989, when a new library opened on Main St. The building now houses the Carnegie Literacy Center.

20. HOPEMONT. 201 North Mill St. Built about 1814 by Kentucky's first millionaire, John Wesley Hunt, this brick house with an elegant fanlight window over the front door is a lovely example of Federal-style architecture. According to local legend, Hunt's grandson, Confederate General John Hunt Morgan, once rode his horse through the front steps of the house, paused in the hall to kiss his mother, then galloped out the back door---with Union troops in hot pursuit. Thomas Hunt Morgan, Hunt's great grandson, won the Nobel Prize in 1933 for genetics research. Tours offered seasonally. Admission charged. Call (859)253-0362 *Turn left and walk south on North Mill St.*

21. HENRY CLAY LAW OFFICE. 178 North Mill St. Many modern historians consider Henry Clay the greatest U.S. Senator of all time. Known as a brilliant orator and mediator, The Great Compromiser was one of Lexington's most beloved and colorful citizens of the early 1800s. He came here as a 20-year-old lawyer in 1797; and used this office from 1804 to 1810.

22. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. 174 North Mill St. Popular 19th-century Lexington architect Cincinnatus Shryock (Gideon's younger brother) designed this Gothic-style church, completed in 1872. The spire rises 180 feet.

23. ARTSPPLACE. 161 North Mill St. This 1904 Beaux Arts-style building is headquarters for LexArts, greater Lexington's premier cultural development, advocacy and fundraising organization. The first floor houses an art gallery open to the public. *Turn left at Church St. and go one block.*

24. CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL. 160 Market St. Another lovely example of a Gothic Revival-style church, this 1840s building is the fourth at this site. Christ Church, organized in 1796, was the first Episcopal church west of the Alleghenies. Henry Clay attended this church; a bronze tablet marks his pew. *Turn right on Market St., go one block and left on Short St.*

25. FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE. This Richardsonian Romanesque stone courthouse built in 1899 was Lexington's fifth, the fourth located at this address. In 2018 it was lovingly renovated, and is now home to the Lexington Visitors Center, VisitLEX administrative offices, Breeders' Cup headquarters, a restaurant and a special event facility. *Turn right on Upper St., go one block and left on Main St.*

26. FIRST NATIONAL BUILDING. Main at Upper. Lexington's first "skyscraper," designed by the distinguished New York firm of McKim, Meade and White, was "the tallest building between Cincinnati and Atlanta" when completed in 1914. The 15-story tower remained the tallest in town for nearly 60 years, and is now home to the luxury hotel 21c Museum and Hotel.

27. HIGGINS BLOCK. Next door to the First National Bank building, at 145 West Main, is the only remaining part of the 1872 Higgins Block which has a partial cast iron façade designed by John McMurtry to resemble similar details found on Renaissance buildings in Europe. This beautiful façade has been restored and incorporated into the 21c property.

28. FAYETTE CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT COURTHOUSES. The buildings you see facing North Limestone are nearly identical. Ground was broken for the \$62.5 million complex in April 1999. The Robert F. Stephens Courthouse Plaza is the site of many community festivals and features two dramatic fountains. *Cross Main St. at Limestone, or for a short side-trip, continue east on Main St. to see the Downtown Arts Center and Lexington's only surviving grand movie theatre from the Golden Age, the Kentucky Theatre.*

29. LEXINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY. This state-of-the-art library features a five-story rotunda with the world's largest ceiling clock, an auditorium, art gallery and spacious reading rooms with panoramic views of downtown. The adjoining Phoenix Park occupies the former site of the Phoenix Hotel, which "arose from the ashes" of a tavern that burned in 1820. The nomad and camel marker at the corner of the park was Lexington's "zero milestone," originally erected to serve as the starting point for measuring distances from Lexington. *Turn west on Main St. going back the way you came and passing the newly developed City Center block.*

30. McADAMS AND MORFORD BUILDING/ MELODEON HALL. Main and Upper streets. Built in the 1840's by the Norton family, the handsome cast-iron façade was added in the late 1850's. A drugstore operated at the site from the late 1700's to the 1990's.

31. LEXINGTON FINANCIAL CENTER. Lexington's tallest building, this 30-story blue glass office tower was completed in 1988. Locals refer to this building as "Big Blue." *Look across Main St. toward the covered pavilion.*

32. HENRY A. TANDY CENTENNIAL PARK. The small park at the west side of Courthouse Square was originally a wide street, and has been the site of slave auctions, abolitionists' passionate speeches and horse trading. The covered pavilion, erected in 2010, is the focal point for live music events, festivals and the Saturday farmers' market. *Continue west on Main St.*

33. VINE CENTER. Main at Broadway. This office/hotel complex completed in 1983 stands on the site of the city's first log blockhouse (1779). *The tour ends at Triangle Park.*

