

FABULOUS FREEBIES

70 No-Cost Ways to Have Fun in Lexington and the Bluegrass

Who says you have to spend big bucks to have a good time? Not in Lexington and the Bluegrass Region. Here are great ways to have fun without paying admission.

1. Watch an early morning workout at **Keeneland Race Course** or the **Red Mile Harness Track**— or take a self-guided track tour. Keeneland: (859-254-3412 or 800-456-3412) The Red Mile: (859-255-0752)
2. Rev up your knowledge of a new kind of Kentucky horsepower at **Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky, Inc.**, in Georgetown, where Toyota automobiles and engines are made for the world market. (800-866-4485)
3. Explore the spirited Kentucky tradition of bourbon-making by taking a free tour at **Buffalo Trace**, maker of Ancient Age. (502-696-5926 or 800-654-8471)
4. Snap a "photo finish" at Lexington's **Thoroughbred Park**, Main and Midland streets, where realistic, life-size bronze horse statues race and graze.
5. Thrill to our version of "Palisades Park" — the 734-acre **Raven Run Nature Sanctuary**, where hiking trails wind through meadows, woodlands and along streams in the scenic Kentucky River Palisades area. (859-272-6105)
6. Admire Old Masters, American and Kentucky masterpieces and some of the nation's best traveling art exhibits at **The Art Museum at the University of Kentucky**. (859-257-5716)
7. Take a memorable (and memorial) stroll through **Lexington Cemetery**, nationally recognized for its arboretum and gardens, and final resting place of Henry Clay, Confederate General John Hunt Morgan, basketball coach Adolph Rupp and other famous Lexingtonians. (859-255-5522)
8. Do some water-watching (and people-watching), day or night, in front of the cascading wall of fountains at downtown's **Triangle Park**, corner of Main and Broadway. Or stop at the unique fountains in front of the courthouses on North Limestone for more water wonders.
9. Sneak a peak through a special viewing window into **Rupp Arena**, home court of national basketball champs, the University of Kentucky Wildcats. (859-233-4567)
10. Explore the area at your own pace using the Lexington Walk and Bluegrass Country Driving Tour, available at the Lexington Visitors Center, 401 West Main Street. (859-233-7299 or 800-845-3959)
11. Act like a kid again at one of Lexington's incredible Creative Playground structures, in Jacobson and Shillito parks. (859-288-2900)
12. Learn all about "Big Blue" traditions (in education and sports) with free guided tours Monday through Friday, morning and afternoon, of the Lexington campus of the **University of Kentucky**, Kentucky's largest university. (859-257-3595)

13. Schedule a free tour and tasting at **Boone Creek Cremery**. Meet one of the few urban artisan cheese makers in the entire country. Visit the Hobbit Cave where the cheeses are aged, and become an honorary Cheese Minion by having your picture taken in a cheese making pot! (859-402-2364)

14. Share the visions of Lexington artists at **Loudoun House**, 209 Castlewood Dr., the home of the Lexington Art League. The house, a Gothic villa built in 1852, is itself a work of art. (859-254-7024)

15. Stroll back in time in **Gratz Park**, Lexington's poshest neighborhood of the early 1800s and still a scenic and charming place to live. (North Mill and Market streets between Second and Third.)

16. Go to the source of Lexington, **McConnell Springs**, where in 1775, frontier explorers got word of the first battle of the American Revolution at Lexington, Massachusetts, and decided to name their campsite in its honor. On Rebman Lane, off Old Frankfort Pike. (859-225-4073)

17. Drive or bike along **Old Frankfort Pike** (KY 1681), officially designated one of America's Scenic Byways.

18. Stroll through Lexington's colorful Farmers' Market on a Saturday, spring through fall, at Cheapside Park off Main Street, next to the Old County Courthouse. (859-608-2655)

19. Take a "plant walk across Kentucky" and view other gardens at the **Arboretum**, Alumni Drive in Lexington. (859-257-6955)

20. Promenade through a formal **English parterre garden**, or stroll grounds once walked by the "Great Compromiser" himself, Henry Clay, at Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate, 120 Sycamore Road in Lexington. (859-266-8581)

21. Jog or walk through **Masterson Station Park**, or follow the fitness trail at **Shillito Park**, both in Lexington. (859-288-2900)

22. Picnic where pioneer Daniel Boone once lived at **Boone Station State Historic Site**, Gentry Rd. (I-75 exit 104) near Athens.

23. Rub elbows with sheiks, movie stars and the horse

set at **horse sales** at Keeneland and Fasig-Tipton. (But don't bid or you could spend millions!) Major sales in September, November and January. Keeneland: 859-254-3412; Fasig Tipton: 859-255-1555

24. Sample the sweets and see how candy is made at **Old Kentucky Chocolates** in Lexington. (800-786-0579)

25. See a pioneer cabin, outstanding Greek Revival architecture and a collection of early medical instruments — plus learn about a legendary curse — on the campus of **Transylvania University**, first college west of the Alleghenies. By appointment only. 300 North Broadway in Lexington. (859-233-8242)



26. Cast your line in the lake at Lexington's **Jacobson Park** off Richmond Road. (No charge to fish, but state fishing license required.) (859-288-2900)

27. Gawk at a real honest-to-goodness turreted castle, on US 60 (Versailles Road) west of Lexington. Drive-by viewing is free, but if you really want a good look at it, make a reservation at the restaurant or stay overnight. It is now operated as **The Kentucky Castle**. Room rates start at \$195. (859-256-0322)

28. Do the **Big Lex Scavenger Hunt**. At the root of the legend of the blue horse is the famous horse of the mid 1800s named Lexington. The hunt covers ten sites related to the horse behind the legend. Learn more at www.visitlex.com/scavengerhunt.php. (859-233-7299)

29. Ponder Lexington's Civil War-era history on the grounds of the newly restored Fayette County Courthouse, where you'll find **Cheapside Park**, site of one of the South's largest slave markets.

30. Enjoy one of Lexington's most interesting interior views — a five-story atrium with the world's largest ceiling clock at the **Lexington Public Library**, 140 East Main Street. (The view of downtown out the upper floor windows isn't bad either.) (859-231-5500)

31. Browse to your heart's content, ride the escalators, preview your music purchases, or relax by the fireplace at **Joseph-Beth Booksellers**, one of the region's largest bookstores — and one of Lexingtonians' favorite places to meet and mingle. The Mall at Lexington Green, Nicholasville Road. (859-273-2911)

32. iPhone and Android users can download the free **LexArch Tour** app. It guides you to points of historic and architectural interest in downtown Lexington.

33. Need some quiet time? Lose yourself in the outdoor labyrinth at the **Old Episcopal Burying Ground**, 3rd and Elm Tree Lane. Just call ahead. (859-254-4497)

34. Enjoy the fruits of a lesser known Kentucky tradition: **winemaking**. Central Kentucky was the site of the very first commercial vineyard in the United States. Tour First Vineyard Winery (859-885-9359), Talon Winery (859-971-3214) or Equus Run (859-846-9463).

35. Walk or bike the 12 mile **Legacy Trail**, an interpretive trail and public art venue that runs from downtown Lexington to the Kentucky Horse Park. (859-288-2988)

36. Tour Kentucky's 1810 Beaux Arts style **Capitol** and see murals of historic figures, a collection of dolls dressed in replicas of Kentucky First Lady inaugural gowns, and, if your timing's right, Kentucky legislators in action. Groups of ten or more must make a reservation. 700 Capital Avenue, Frankfort. (502-564-3449)

37. Take in a panoramic view of Frankfort and the Capitol rotunda from the **scenic overlook** off US 60 west of downtown Frankfort.

38. Have a blooming good time at one of the nation's most unusual gardens, the **Floral Clock** on the lawn of the Capitol grounds in Frankfort. (502-564-3449)

39. Tour Kentucky's **Governor's Mansion**, modeled after Petit Trianon, Marie Antoinette's summer villa. Located next to the Capitol in Frankfort. Call for days and times. (502-564-3449)

40. Meet at the **Kentucky River View Park** landing and take a pontoon boat down the Kentucky River for a unique perspective on Frankfort and its history. The boat seats 10. Call (502) 229-1887 May through October.

41. Visit the gravesites of Kentucky pioneers **Daniel and Rebecca Boone** and other notables, overlooking the Kentucky River in Frankfort Cemetery. 215 East Main Street, Frankfort. (502-227-2403)

42. View military history in a more personal light at the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial**, a sundial memorial to

Kentuckians killed in Vietnam. The point of the gnomon's shadow touches each veteran's name on the anniversary of his death. Vernon Cooper Drive, Frankfort.

43. Visit the **Vest-Lindsey** house, a 19th-century Federal-style house and boyhood home of dog's best friend, U.S. Senator George Graham Vest, who coined the phrase "dog is man's best friend." 401 Wapping Street, Frankfort. (502-564-6980)



44. Thrill to **Berry Hill Mansion**, with its elaborate music room featuring a massive cathedral organ and intricately carved wood ornamentation. 700 Louisville Road, Frankfort. (502-564-3000)

45. Visit the "**birthplace of bourbon**" and Kentucky's biggest spring at Royal Spring Park in downtown Georgetown. It's thought that Baptist minister Elijah Craig made the first batch of Kentucky bourbon here in 1789. (502-863-7865)

46. Discover bridges to the past: Drive across one of Kentucky's 13 remaining **covered bridges**, the Colville Covered Bridge, on KY 3118 northwest of Millersburg. In Fleming County, northeast of Lexington, you can admire not just one, but three, lovely old covered bridges.

47. **Yuko-En on the Elkhorn**, The Official Kentucky-Japan Friendship Garden, is open daily from dawn until dusk. Enjoy paths, waterfalls, Koi ponds, arched bridges, a raked stone garden and more. (502-316-4554)

48. Stop in at **Mims Retirement Haven** in Paris and visit with retired celebrity Thoroughbred broodmares. Visit with great ladies of the industry like 1997 Breeder's Cup Sprint winner Elmhurst. There are family-friendly guided tours seven days a week. Call for an appointment: (859) 227-6304.

49-52. Sample local history and see all kinds of interesting stuff at the **Georgetown & Scott County Museum** (in the old Post Office on Main St., Georgetown, 502-863-6201); the **Woodford County Historical Society Museum** (121 Rose Hill, Versailles, 859-873-6786); the **Cynthiana/Harrison County Museum** (124 South Walnut Street, Cynthiana, 859-234-7179); and the **Old Presbyterian Meeting**

House (325 Main Street in Stanford, 606-365-1216).

53. See one of the world's largest private collections of locks: The **Harry C. Miller Lock Collection** at the Lockmasters Education Center, 2101 John C. Watts Drive, Nicholasville, includes locks going back to the 1300s. (859-887-9633)

54. **Ale-8-One**, the soft drink unique to Kentucky, has been bottled in Winchester since 1926. Tour the plant on any Thursday or Friday. Call in advance. (859-744-3484)

55. Make your own pilgrimage to **Old Cane Ridge Meeting House** in Bourbon County, site of the famous Cane Ridge revival of 1801, when as many as 30,000 people assembled leading to the birth of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Donations appreciated. (859-987-5350)

56. Visit a big backyard you're sure to envy: The **Nannine Clay Wallis Arboretum**, 616 Pleasant Street, Paris, is a four-acre display of landscaping at the headquarters of the Garden Club of Kentucky. Donations appreciated. (859-987-6158)



57. Wander amid woods, wildflowers and wildlife at the 100-acre **Jim Beam Nature Preserve**, off US 27 south of Nicholasville. (859-259-9655)

58. Honor veterans of the Civil War and other wars at **Camp Nelson National Cemetery and Civil War Site**, off US 27 south of Nicholasville. (859-885-5727)

59. Escape the same old grind with a country drive to **Weisenberger Mill**, off Leestown Pike near Midway. There are no tours, but the original 1862 grindstone is on display out front, and across the road grindstones help create one of Central Kentucky's most unusual stone fences. (859-254-5282)

60. Stop by and visit for a while at America's oldest continuously operated country store, **Penn's Store**, on KY 243 near Gravel Switch in Boyle County. (859-332-7706)

61. Zip down to Danville to see the first post office west of the Alleghenies, plus replicas of an early meeting-house and jail at **Constitution Square**, 134 S. 2nd Street. (859-236-7794)

62. Take a **walking tour of Carlisle** and be charmed by more than 350 National Register buildings packed into one of Kentucky's smallest county seats. (877-289-4212)

63. Visit the house that Jack built— Jack Jouett, that is. He was a Revolutionary War hero who rode all night to save Thomas Jefferson from the British. The **Jack Jouett House** is on Craig's Creek Road in Woodford County. Donations accepted. (859-873-7902)


64. Stroll down one of Kentucky's few intact 19th century commercial districts, along **Main Street in Winchester**. (859-744-0556)

65. Tour **Berea College**, founded in 1855 as the first school in the South dedicated to equal education for all races, and today dedicated to educating the youth of Kentucky's mountains. (859-985-3145)

66. Visit the **Kentucky Artisan Center** just outside Berea for wonderful overview of Kentucky's hand crafted heritage. (859-985-5448)

67 and 68. "Re-enact" a Civil War battle in your car. Pick up a driving tour map of the **Battle of Richmond** from the Richmond Visitor Center, 345 Lancaster Ave. (859-624-0013). A driving guide to the Battles of Cynthiana is available at 201 South Main Street, Cynthiana. (859-234-5236)

69. Take a 210 year old short cut. Follow Tates Creek Road out of Lexington and you'll end up on the banks of the Kentucky River. If you want to go any further, you'll have to take the **Valley View Ferry**. The schedule can be affected by weather, so call ahead to make sure it's running. (859-624-4748)

70. Join in the fun of literally hundreds of **free special events** throughout the year, ranging from arts fairs and parades to harvest festivals and Christmas singalongs; contact the Lexington Visitors Center to find out what's going on while you're in town. (859-233-7299 or 800-845-3959.) Or take a trip to www.visitlex.com. 

**For more information
contact VisitLEX, Lexington's convention
and visitors bureau, at (800) 845-3959**

*By Teresa Day, a freelance travel writer based in Lexington, KY
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