

SPOTLIGHT ON: KENTUCKY

As home of the world-famous Kentucky Derby, Kentucky has a rich sporting history. It's home to phenomenal racing facilities at Keeneland, Churchill Downs and surrounding thoroughbred farms but more than that, The Bluegrass State offers venues to host everything from baseball and soccer to fishing and lacrosse. "We offer top-of-the-line venues for a variety of events and when you pair those offerings with our world-class hospitality, it makes for a great sports destination," said Seth Wheat of the Kentucky Department of Tourism. "From bourbon to bluegrass, the great outdoors and our phenomenal culinary offerings, you'll remember everything about your experience in Kentucky." ■

**USA BMX Derby City
Nationals in Louisville ▶**



Louisville Sports Commission

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green

Bowling Green's state-of-the-art sports facilities make the city a top-notch destination for sporting events. The city was awarded four James Farrell ASA Awards of Excellence in recent years.

Hotel rooms: 3,200

Major facilities: Michael O. Buchanan Park features eight softball fields. Ephram White Park and Basil Griffin Park also offer ball fields. Western Kentucky University has a 22,000-seat stadium and a 7,300-seat arena. Bowling Green Ballpark is a 4,500-seat Minor League ballpark.

Convention center: The Sloan Convention Center is a 60,000-square-foot facility with 35,500 square feet of meeting and pre-convention exhibit space. There are a total of 444 hotel rooms in its immediate area.

Contact: Bowling Green Area CVB, www.visitbgky.com

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Elizabethtown

In the heart of Kentucky is Elizabethtown. The small city is full of family-friendly attractions, a booming downtown area and unique dining.

Hotel rooms: 1,750

Major facility: Elizabethtown Sports Park has 25 fields.

Contact: Elizabethtown Tourism & Convention Bureau, www.touretown.com

Laurel County

Southern Kentucky's Laurel County offers more than 200 miles of smoothly paved cycling routes. In addition to cycling, the city hosts archery tournaments, golf tournaments and triathlons.

Hotel rooms: 1,300

Major facilities: Laurel County Fairgrounds offers four full-size softball fields. Daniel Boone Motocross Park is a premier motocross facility. London-Laurel Optimist Club Sports Center includes a 16,000-square-foot arena, football fields, soccer fields and an outdoor horse show arena.

Contact: London-Laurel County Tourist Commission, www.laurelkytourism.com

Lebanon

Lebanon is situated in the heart of the state, just southeast of Louisville and about an hour southwest of Lexington. Here you'll find great terrain for outdoor sports.

Hotel rooms: 150

Major facilities: The 104-acre Graham Memorial Park includes seven ball diamonds, an 18-hole disc golf course, four tennis courts, a basketball court, three volleyball courts and six soccer fields. Lebanon Aquatic Center houses a 25-meter by 25-yard pool. Marion County Sportsman Club lake is loaded with largemouth and smallmouth bass, catfish, crappie and hybrid bluegill.

Convention center: Centre Square houses a field that hosts soccer, football and other outdoor sports.

Contact: Visit Lebanon KY, www.visitlebanonky.com

Lexington

Lexington sits at the heart of Kentucky's scenic Bluegrass Region. The city offers easy accessibility, first-class facilities and unique attractions. The Kentucky Horse Park is one of Lexington's signature attractions.

Hotel rooms: 7,900

Major facilities: At Kentucky Horse Park, Alltech Arena offers seating for 5,298 in an indoor arena while Rolex Stadium offers covered outdoor seating for 7,338 / expanded bleacher seating for up to 30,000. Kentucky Basketball Academy offers a ▶

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1,000-seat facility with five basketball courts. Memorial Coliseum is an 8,700-seat indoor multipurpose venue.

Contact: VisitLEX, www.visitlex.com

Louisville

Louisville is a city famous for sports icons such as Muhammad Ali, as well as Churchill Downs and Louisville Slugger. It is a city with a thriving sports community that has been home to countless championships.

Hotel rooms: 20,000

Major facilities: Kentucky Exposition Center boasts 1.3 million square feet of space, including the 19,000-seat Freedom Hall and the 6,600-seat Broadbent Arena. The KFC Yum! Center is a 22,000-seat multipurpose arena.

Convention center: The Kentucky International Convention Center will reopen in August 2018 after undergoing a renovation and expansion that will provide more than 200,000 contiguous square feet of space and a new 40,000-square-foot ballroom.

Contact: Louisville Sports Commission, www.louisvillesports.org

Marshall County

Marshall County is located in western Kentucky. The area is home to 2,300 miles of Kentucky Lake shoreline.

Hotel rooms: 600

Major facilities: Kentucky Lake covers 160,000 acres and is home to fishing tournaments every year. Mike Miller County Park offers baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, an 18-hole disc golf course, basketball courts and tennis courts.

Contact: Kentucky Lake CVB, www.kentuckylake.org

Northern Kentucky

Northern Kentucky is within a half-day's drive of most of the east coast, as well as Southern and Midwest populations. The region boasts dozens of baseball fields, soccer fields, golf courses, arenas and stadiums.

Hotel rooms: 7,000

Major facilities: The BB&T Arena at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) is a 10,000-seat multipurpose space. NKU Soccer Stadium has a World Cup-style

field. Florence Freedom Stadium is a Minor League ballpark. Paul Brown Stadium is a 65,000-seat football facility.

Convention center: The Northern Kentucky Convention Center offers 204,000 total square feet of space and is connected to the Marriott at RiverCenter.

Contact: Northern Kentucky CVB, www.meetnky.com

Owensboro

Kentucky's fourth-largest city, Owensboro is conveniently located in western Kentucky between Evansville, Ind., and Louisville. The city hosts more than 20 annual festivals, so there's always something going on.

Hotel rooms: 1,000

Major facilities: Centre Court has six indoor and nine outdoor tennis courts. Combest Pool houses an Olympic-size pool. Horse Fork Creek Park is the largest soccer complex in western Kentucky. Jack C. Fisher Park is a softball complex.

Convention center: The Owensboro Convention Center has a 44,000-square-foot exhibit hall plus 48,000 square feet of additional space.

Contact: Owensboro Daviess County CVB, www.visitowensboro.com

Paducah

Waterskiing championships, fishing tournaments and cycling events are commonly held in Paducah. The western Kentucky city offers many natural features for such events.

Hotel rooms: 2,400

Major facilities: The Ohio River Boat Launch is a lighted facility with a five to six lane boat ramp. J. Polk Brooks Stadium is an 1,800-seat Minor League ballpark. Larry J. Heflin Tennis Center features 12 outdoor courts. Twin Oaks Lake is a 50-acre lake ideal for waterskiing.

Convention center: The Paducah McCracken County Convention & Expo Center offers more than 90,000 square feet of flexible space under one roof. It's in the historic downtown and a new convention hotel is just steps away.

Contact: Paducah CVB, www.paducah.travel ■