



EXPERIENCE KENTUCKY:

LAND OF BOURBON, BLUEGRASS & RACING

Kentucky is a star-spangled melting pot of classic Americana, writes Jay Gentile

Few states are as essential to the fabric of American culture as Kentucky. Not only is America's 15th state the birthplace of bluegrass music and the Kentucky Fried Chicken global food chain, it is also the horse-racing capital of the world and the land where more than 95 per cent of the world's bourbon is distilled. From music festivals and distillery tastings to horse farm tours and the world's longest cave system, the Bluegrass State offers travellers a captivating can-do spirit and an endless array of options.

Kentucky is the birthplace of 'Father of Bluegrass' Bill Monroe and his band the Blue Grass Boys, after which the music genre was named. The state also played a key role in the popularisation of blues music, thanks to self-proclaimed 'Father of the Blues' WC Handy, whose legacy is commemorated with the WC Handy Blues & Barbecue Festival, one of America's largest free music festivals.

The state also has a distinguished history of raising championship horses – the annual Kentucky Derby, held at Louisville's Churchill Downs, is one of America's oldest and most important sporting events. Visitors can see thoroughbreds living on horse ranches amid the state's rolling hills – especially in the 'horse capital of the world' Lexington, where behind-the-scenes tours of the daily life of an American saddlebred horse are available.

You won't have to go far for a good drink, either, with more than 6.7 million barrels of

bourbon ageing in warehouses across the state. From famous global brands to craft distilleries, many bourbon makers offer free tastings and tours, sometimes even guided by master distillers. Learn how the state's limestone-filtered waters help provide some of the spirit's unique flavouring.

Meanwhile, take time to enjoy culinary experiences from KFC to traditional Kentucky dishes such as the meaty burgoo stew and the 'hot brown', an open-faced turkey sandwich with bacon and tomato covered in creamy cheese sauce.

INTO THE WILD

Outdoor enthusiasts will find plenty to enjoy in Kentucky, including the world's longest cave system (Mammoth Cave) and more than 4,000sq km of wilderness. Year-round fishing is plentiful in natural lakes and rivers, while hiking, biking, climbing and camping options abound across dozens of wilderness areas.

For details, visit kentuckytourism.com/international/en



Soul of the USA
Hear live music in Kentucky; above, racing at Churchill Downs; below bourbon barrels

