



Photo courtesy of Kentucky Department of Travel and Tourism



Photo by GLINTstudio courtesy of Proof on Main



Kentucky at its Finest

Kentucky is known for its bourbon, horse races, and bluegrass, but recently it has become a culinary destination for those seeking locally sourced food. From innovative Southern dishes to European bistros, beer cheese to bourbon chocolates, Kentucky has something to offer for every taste preference. Here, we've highlighted our favorite places to chow down if you find yourself in this delicious state! By Julia Sayers

Local Eats in Lexington

In the heart of Bluegrass Country lies Lexington, a city known for its toe-tapping music, beautiful horse farms, and now, its local food scene. In part through the efforts of Beyond Grits, a movement to promote Lexington's local restaurants, residents and visitors alike are realizing just how many tastes the city has to offer.

If you're visiting Lexington,

make sure to stop by North Lime Coffee and Donuts for breakfast one day. They offer made-from-scratch doughnuts and fresh roasted coffee. These aren't your typical doughnuts, though—they feature different, experimental flavors every day, including Maple Bacon, Dublin Double Chocolate Stout (made with local beer), and Blueberry Cheesecake. They even made a Paula Deen Butter Pecan doughnuts once!

For lunch, check out County Club in the thriving Jefferson

Street corridor area of Lexington. Located in a renovated service station, County Club is known for their smoked meats. Following the American tradition of smoking meats using hardwoods and low temperatures, County Club boasts a wide selection, including smoked whole hog, brisket, chicken, and even oysters. Order the Chopped Pork Sandwich or Smoked Meat Sandwich and pair it with one of the specialty table sauces.

If you're looking for four-star dining but in a casual atmosphere, you'll find it at Coles 735 Main. A native of Lexington, Chef Cole Arimes opened the restaurant about a year and a half ago after gaining experience working as a chef in Cincinnati. At Coles, you'll find a diverse yet simplified menu, not limited to any certain theme. Cole uses locally sourced ingredients to craft dishes influenced by global cuisines, such as Asian Braised Baby Back Ribs, Moroccan Butternut Squash Stew, and Shrimp and Grits. They also offer a bar menu of smaller tapas-like plates.

Venture a little way out of town and you'll come across Jean Farris Winery and Bistro, set in the rolling green hills of horse country. Owned by husband-and-wife Jean and Ben O'Daniel, Jean Farris offers a wide variety of wines. Participate in a wine tasting, and make sure to try the Red Head, a dessert wine aged for two years in used bourbon barrels. Ben is also executive chef at the Bistro, where dishes are prepared to complement and showcase the wines. Herbs and produce are grown in a garden at the winery, and the menu changes to reflect the seasons and what the region has to offer.



Photo by Tim Jones for County Club



Photo by Shaun Ring for Jean Farris Winery and Bistro



Photo by Shandon Cundiff for Coles 735 Main



Photo courtesy of North Lime Coffee and Donuts

Photo by Shaun Ring for Jean Farris Winery and Bistro



Photo by Robert Glasnovic for Bourbons Bistro

Louisville: A City Inspired by Bourbon

In a city where bourbon is king, it only makes sense that it would influence the cuisine offered in this tasty town. Louisville has been home to many distilleries since Evan Williams started marketing their whiskey in 1780. Until the 1920s, a portion of Main Street was home to more than 50 distilleries, known as Whiskey Row. Today, as work continues to bring back distillery tours to downtown, you can enjoy and celebrate Louisville's bourbon history at numerous bourbon bars throughout the city. Louisville even has the Urban Bourbon Trail, where you'll sip on classic and modern cocktails, listen to live music, and taste bourbon-inspired cuisine at the restaurants and bars along the trail.

Some of our favorite stops on the trail include Proof on Main and Bourbons Bistro. Located in the 21c Museum Hotel, Proof on Main features more than 75 Kentucky bourbons and a rotating list of craft cocktails. Order the Charred Octopus to start your meal, and try the Smoked Heritage Pork Chop for dinner. The preparation of the chop changes to reflect what's in season, so the dish is always a favorite.

Bourbons Bistro's bourbon-inspired menu also changes seasonally, making it a new experience each time you visit. They offer 130 bourbons regularly, as well as special featured bourbons



Photo by GLINTstudio courtesy of Proof on Main

and a selection of rare and unique bourbons you won't find anywhere else. Attend one of their monthly bourbon dinners to learn more about food and bourbon pairing.

Another hot spot in Louisville is the NuLu (or East Market) District. If you happen to be there on the first Friday of the month, you can participate in the First Friday Trolley Hop where you'll ride a trolley around to the local art galleries, restaurants, and bars of the area. The Flea Off Market also opens each first Friday, offering an eclectic assortment of locally made products, live music, and tasty bites from Louisville's food trucks.

Photo courtesy of Art Eatables



While you're in NuLu, one restaurant not to miss is Rye. Everything they produce is made in-house, from charcuterie to homemade Sally Lunn rolls, served warm with whipped butter and sea salt. The ever-evolving menu is driven by what's available seasonally,

A Taste of Kentucky

Bourbon Barrel Foods, based in Louisville, produces gourmet food products that reflect the heritage of Kentucky's Bourbon Country. All the products offered feature ingredients locally sourced from Kentucky, and all have a unique Kentucky flair. Here, we've included some of our favorite products.

Bluegrass Soy Sauce: Bluegrass Soy Sauce is the only microbrewed soy sauce in the United States, and the only soy sauce in the world aged in bourbon barrels, giving it a smoky, oaky, and slightly sweet taste reminiscent of Kentucky bourbon.

Kentuckyaki: Kentuckyaki is Kentucky's version of teriyaki sauce. Flavored with bourbon and sweetened with sorghum (as opposed to high fructose corn syrup), it's great as a meat marinade, added to a stir-fry, or used as a dipping sauce.

Pure Cane Sweet Sorghum: The majority of sorghum in America is produced in Kentucky, and Bourbon Barrel Foods' Pure Cane Sweet Sorghum is pure (meaning not cut with water) from a single crop from a fourth-generation sorghum grower. Unlike sugar, sorghum contains essential nutrients including potassium, antioxidants, and vitamins.

Bourbon Smoked Spices: Bourbon Barrel Foods also offers a variety of smoked spices. Slow-roasted in bourbon barrels to infuse them with the taste of Kentucky's finest bourbons, these spices include Bourbon Smoked Sea Salt, Bourbon Smoked Paprika, and Bourbon Smoked Pepper.



and everything is fresh, including oysters brought in daily.

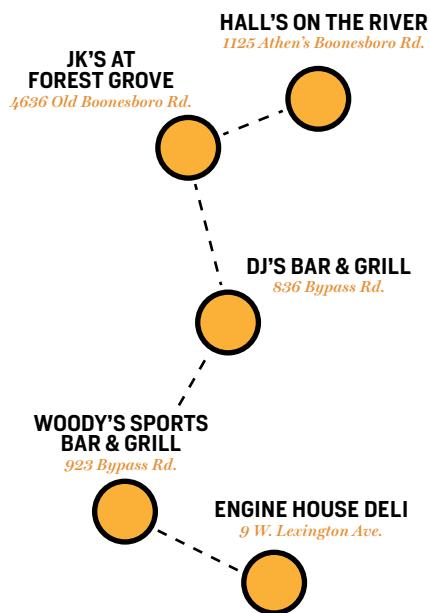
If you need to get your chocolate fix, head over to Art Eatables, a specialty chocolate shop that is home to the Small-Batch Bourbon Truffle™. They feature more than 50 different bourbons in their truffles, each paired with different

chocolates to keep the character of each bourbon. A great introduction to what Art Eatables does is the Taste of the Trail™ collection, which features a bourbon truffle for each of the eight distillers on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail®. Taste them all yourself or bring home a box for your friends and family!

The Beer Cheese Trail

Winchester, Kentucky, is known as the birthplace of beer cheese—a creamy, spreadable cheese made from Cheddar, beer, and spices such as red pepper and garlic. It is traditionally served with crackers, carrots, or celery, but can also be incorporated in soups, bratwursts, and burgers. Beer cheese was first introduced in the 1940s by cousins Joe and Johnny Allman at their Kentucky restaurant, the historic Driftwood Inn. Since then, it has spread in popularity across Kentucky and even the nation.

If you visit Winchester, you can participate in the Beer Cheese Trail, a self-guided trail featuring five restaurants where participants order the restaurant's beer cheese offerings and receive a stamp on their cheese log for each place visited. Once you've collected a stamp from each restaurant, you'll receive an official Beer Cheese Trail t-shirt. Check out the graphic at left for participating restaurants and their locations.





Cars and Cuisine in Bowling Green

Located in southern Kentucky, Bowling Green is a city with a lot of history and plenty to see and do. It's home to both Duncan Hines and the Corvette. In fact, it's the only place in the world where Corvettes are made. While you're there, you can visit the Corvette museum to learn how the vehicles are made, see how they've changed over the years, and check out some cool concept cars.

And since Bowling Green is home to Duncan Hines, of course there is a variety of delicious restaurants. Located at 440 Main Street in historic downtown Bowling Green, you'll find a unique dining experience—two restaurant concepts in one location. 440 Main, the first of the two restaurants, serves New Orleans-style dishes in a relaxing atmosphere, accompanied with an extensive wine list. The second is Micki's on Main, a French Quarter-style bar and grill

offering favorite Cajun bar bites, drink specials, and live music. Whether you're in the mood for fine dining or a fun time, you'll find both here.

Bowling Green is also known for its Mediterranean cuisine. About 10 percent of the population is Eastern European, and this is reflected in the restaurants in the town. Just the downtown area alone has seven restaurants featuring the flavors of Eastern



Europe. In a restored historic home in downtown, you'll find The Bistro, a fine-dining Mediterranean restaurant. Executive Chef Sasha Mandrapa, a native of Bosnia, takes inspiration from his home country to craft

sophisticated Mediterranean cuisine, often with a Southern twist. In addition to pastas, pizzas, and a wide variety of entrées, The Bistro also features daily specials such as Pan-Seared Salmon with parsnip and potato purée and topped with cranberry-ginger sauce, Chorizo Burger with Bacon Onion Marmalade, and Drunken Chicken braised in red wine.

A History of Duncan Hines

Duncan Hines, a traveling salesman from Bowling Green, got his start in the food industry by writing restaurant guidebooks. While traveling throughout the country for his job, Hines began to make lists of his favorite places to eat along the road. He would originally send these lists to friends in Christmas cards, but after seeing how much they loved them, Hines published them in a book in 1935 titled *Adventures in Good Eating*. The book featured his favorite restaurants around the country and the best dishes to order at each restaurant. It proved to be a great success, and in 1948, Hines was approached by Roy Park, an advertising agency president who wanted to upgrade American eating habits by creating an easily recognized label that shoppers could associate with good quality. Thus, the Hines-Park Food Corp. was formed, and in 1950, the packaged cake mix we are so familiar with today was introduced.

Bowling Green celebrates the history of Duncan Hines in many ways. If you visit the Kentucky Museum, you'll see the *Recommended by Duncan Hines* exhibit, which features eight sections about Hines's life and work and includes a number of artifacts collected from the Hines family and the Bowling Green Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Each summer, Bowling Green holds the annual Duncan Hines Festival, a beloved event to celebrate his legacy. The event includes a concert, duck derby, brownie eating contest, and, of course, a baking contest. This year's festival will be July 12 at Chaney's Dairy Barn.



Photos courtesy of Bowling Green Area Convention and Visitors Bureau