FIVE REASONS TO VISIT LOUISVILLE IN 2017

Being the home of the Kentucky Derby is undeniably Louisville’s claim to fame as an incentive for a place that people want to visit. And, while we know that the Derby is a pretty great reason, there are a multitude of other events, attractions, bourbon, food and just plain fun, that should have a visit to Louisville at the top of your travel plans. And if these aren’t enough, TripAdvisor just named Louisville a TripAdvisor Traveler’s Choice Award for being a Top 10 U.S. Destination on the Rise.

Here are five of those reasons that will inspire you to make it to Louisville in 2017.

BOURBON

Bourbon may belong to the Commonwealth of Kentucky, but the spirit has a special place in the heart of Louisville. From distillery tours and tastings, to hitting the stops along the Urban Bourbon Trail, there’s no better place, or time, too experience the magic of America’s native spirit. There are now five bourbon distilleries open with more scheduled to open soon. In 2013, the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience became the first distillery to open on Louisville’s historic Whiskey Row since Prohibition. It was also the first that the public could tour in Louisville; several others soon followed. The Bulleit Frontier Whiskey Experience opened at the historic Stitzel-Weller Distillery. The father and son team of Carson & Corky Taylor resurrected a family label with the opening of the Peerless Distillery and the Jim Beam Urban Stillhouse opened in downtown’s entertainment district. Angel’s Envy Distillery is the newest distillery to open. And, Old Forester plans a distillery and visitor experience in two former barrel warehouses dating back to the 1850’s. The new Whiskey Row attraction will open in 2017. Rabbit Hole Distillery is scheduled to open in 2017 in Louisville’s NuLu neighborhood.

Copper and Kings brings brandy to “bourbon country,” distilling brandy in used bourbon barrels in the historic Butchertown neighborhood. The pub crawl that is the Urban Bourbon Trail continues to grow alongside the popularity of bourbon with over 30 stops, each well-stocked with at least 50 bourbons; some as many as 150.

HUNGER GAMES EXHIBITION STOPS IN LOUISVILLE

The Hunger Games: The Exhibition will open on April 1 at the Frazier History Museum. Visitors are invited to step inside and explore the world of Panem and follow Katniss Everdeen’s inspirational journey, from her humble beginnings in District 12 to her emergence as the Mockingjay. The exhibit will feature seven galleries including District 12, Tribute Train, The Capitol, Making the Games, District 13, Fan Gallery and Katniss’s Journey. Highlights include iconic costumes from the films, such as the Girl on Fire dress, the Mockingjay dress and the Mockingjay armor; key artifacts including the Mockingjay pin, Cinnà’s sketchbook and Katniss’s bow; and interactives, including an explorable map of Panem, gamemaker’s control table and a stunt choreography interactive.

OUTDOOR MUSIC FESTIVALS

Just like food and drink is more appetizing in Louisville, live music sounds better when it’s experienced at one of the city’s two premier outdoor annual music festivals. Forecastle will celebrate its 15th year when it returns to the Louisville Waterfront in summer. What began as a neighborhood event has grown in to one of the country’s most anticipated summer festivals. This home-grown, three-day festival is about music, art and activism. Weezer, Odesa and Cage the Elephant, plus numerous others, have already been announced in the 2017 lineup of performers. Long live rock and roll at the Louder Than Life festival in the fall. In addition to a line-up of music legends, Louder Than Life spotlights bourbon, craft beer and local cuisine.
GREEN SPACE AND FRESH AIR

Sometimes the best getaway is one spent in the great outdoors. Known for its numerous parks, Louisville has always known the importance of beautiful greenspace. The city’s park system was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, undoubtedly the most prominent landscape architect of our time. Louisville’s Waterfront Park stands as the gold-standard for other cities looking to reclaim public space. Louisville is so committed to understanding the value of its parks it wants to be known as the “City of Parks.” The city’s newest park, The Parklands of Floyds Fork, recently completed its final phase. The Parklands is a systemic world-class addition to Louisville parks. It includes four major parks linked by a park drive, a world-class urban trail system and a remarkable water trail, all tracing Floyds Fork, a classic Kentucky stream. This nearly 4,000-acre development began in 2011. Louisville is also home to Jefferson Memorial Forest. At over 6,000 acres, it’s the largest municipal urban forest in the United States. Outdoor activities, such as fishing, hiking, camping, biking, environmental education and team building are available, as well as enjoying nature itself at its most spectacular.

GOOD FOOD: NEW SOUTHERN CUISINE

New Southern cuisine is one of the most popular food movements in the country right now. It has been for years. It’s taking traditional, regional Southern dishes and putting your own unique twist on them. One of the cities currently making the most noise in the movement is Louisville. We’re teaching it in our culinary schools. We’re pushing it to new extremes in our restaurants. Adding Korean, Vietnamese, French and Italian influences to it. Our chefs are experimenting with it on television, writing books filled with savory new creations, and introducing it boldly to new places around the world. No, Louisville did not invent New Southern Cuisine. We’ve tweaked it. Fried it. Poached it. And, most importantly, added Bourbon. So, welcome to an entirely new, New Southern Cuisine experience. Bon Appétit has called Louisville “One of the best foodie small towns in America.” Zagat says, “Louisville is one of the 7 up and coming foodie towns in America.” Southern Living named Louisville “One of the top 10 tastiest towns.” And Food & Wine magazine calls Louisville’s East Market Street “One of the 10 Best Foodie Streets in America.” Now’s the time to come and get a bite.