



## Southern & Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association

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### DINERS HAVE CULINARY CHOICES GALORE

Mention Kentucky cooking and mouths start watering. It's no wonder. Food is both a tradition and a passion here. The Highlands and Waterways Region of Kentucky has a huge smorgasbord of good cooks spread across the land like smooth butter on a warm biscuit.

Kentuckians delight in serving up delectable food – from country-style cooking to regional recipes to cosmopolitan cuisine. No matter what you're craving, chances are it can be found somewhere in Southern and Eastern Kentucky. Tucked away alongside the graceful old homes, family farmsteads, sheltering mountains and flowing streams, you'll find a virtual paradise for taste buds.

Almost every hill and holler, every main street and dusty back road, every big city and tiny country community has its own special eatery. Ask the locals. They'll tell you where to find the tenderest steak, tastiest catfish, smoothest mashed potatoes, tangiest lemon meringue pie, silkiest chocolate mousse, richest cappuccino, spiciest chili and freshest three-bean salad. Or just glance inside a bustling eatery or packed parking lot and know you've probably found a rewarding eating spot. Often as not, the owner has his or her own table. Invariably, a couple of regulars clad in bibbed overalls will be catching up on news of the day.

The Highlands and Waterways Region has a wealth of places where "mountain country cooking" is served up like it ought to be. The distinctive regional style of mountain country cooking uses recipes shared by time and the spirit of the Appalachian people. You can have this for breakfast, lunch and dinner, usually served in small, family-friendly restaurants, places that offer a glimpse of a simpler way of life that beats a little closer to the heart of America.

Mark Sohn of Pikeville has written a book titled *Mountain Country Cooking*, a nominee for the James Beard Award. A writer, teacher, chef and host of a TV cooking show, *Classic Home Cooking*, Sohn has compiled the best recipes from the region known

as Appalachia – including eastern Kentucky, as well as adjacent parts of North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

The Highlands and Waterways Region of Kentucky is a great place to experience this distinctive American food tradition. In some dining establishments, you order off a menu; others offer a large buffet. Atop a hill outside Renfro Valley, the unassuming Jean's Restaurant has a devoted following for its fried cornbread. The Lighthouse in Sulphur Well brings out some mighty fine country ham. The Rainbow Café in Nicholasville isn't all dolled up on the outside, but if you don't step inside, you'll miss some of the best fresh vegetables in the area. Dooley's Diner in downtown Booneville fills up fast with locals, hankering for the turkey and dressing and ham-seasoned green beans. The Windmill Restaurant in Pikeville makes the best coconut cream pie you've ever had! The Windmill, along with Wilma's Restaurant in Paintsville and the Whistle Stop Café and the Front Porch Steak House Family Restaurant in Louisa, offer good choices for home cooking along the Country Music Highway.

Slow cooked barbecue is another popular specialty, and Tompkinsville in Monroe County is famed for its barbecue throughout Kentucky and neighboring parts of Tennessee. In little Tompkinsville, population about 1,200, there are an amazing ten barbecue restaurants. Plan to spend a sybaritic hour at Frances Barbecue. Or, if you're in a hurry, stop in at The Smoked Pig or any of the others. You won't be disappointed.

Dining delights all the senses in Kentucky. Walk into the Purple Cow in Beattyville and smell the fresh-perked coffee and straight-from-the-oven peanut butter pie. A landmark in town since the 1930s, the Purple Cow has become the traditional headquarters to start the day with a full-sized country breakfast, as well as being the place for a sweet nightcap dessert and hot cup of decaf. At the Courthouse Café in Whitesburg, you might hear old-timey music in the background while you relish food that is good and good for you, such as baked turkey breast sandwiches on whole wheat bread, al dente pasta, and bran muffins with fresh peach preserves for dessert.

Visit one of Kentucky's renowned state resort parks and bask in the winning combination of outstanding beauty and homecooked food. These parks offer some of the nation's best family value lodging and dining experiences. Each state park has its own extraordinary treasures, plus menu favorites including generous buffets and family-style dining. Overlooking the valleys of the Kentucky Ridge State Forest, the dining room of Pine Mountain State Resort Park features a panoramic view of incomparable mountain scenery. A wrap-around glass window allows every diner to enjoy nature's outdoor bounty while partaking in delicious dishes. Specialties include farm-raised catfish, old-fashioned pot roast, turkey and dressing, Southern style pecan pie and Derby pie. At Jenny Wiley State Resort Park, diners have a front row seat for a spectacular view of Dewey Lake, plus such taste treats as prime rib carved on line and the trademark banana pudding with meringue served hot from the oven.

The small mountain foothills community of Hyden is the location of the Frontier Nursing Service, founded by Mary Breckenridge. Today, her home, the Wendover Big House, is an inn that offers wonderful home cooked meals. It's a favorite with folks looking for a place to "drop out" for a couple of days, to rejuvenate and feed their souls on the peaceful surroundings and their bodies on the great food.

Stop by one of the region's many festivals and enjoy a wide array of food choices along with some top entertainment. Slow down the hectic pace of modern life by

enjoying a scoop of fresh churned strawberry ice cream while listening to the high lonesome sound of a bluegrass band or the foot-stomping merriment of straight-out fiddlers and banjo pickers.

The annual Poke Sallet Festival in Harlan has paid homage to pokeweed for nearly 50 years. Held the first weekend in June, the festival is rooted in an old folk remedy. Mountain folk believed that ills accumulated over the winter could be cured with a good helping of poke each spring. As the famous '60s song, *Poke Salad Annie* notes, poke is a plant that grows out in the woods and looks something like a turnip green. Each spring, Harlan Countians harvest poke just as their ancestors did. One of the city's restaurants volunteers to cook it and hundreds of folks line up to fill their plates with the cooked greens and accompaniments like boiled eggs, fatback bacon, corn cakes, green onions and buttermilk.

Knott County celebrates its Gingerbread Festival in Hindman when election day rolls around. The festival is a nod to the mountain tradition of "encouraging" citizens to vote for a particular candidate by giving away gingerbread made by one of the best bakers in the community. Today, you can still sample some of these old time recipes during the Gingerbread Festival. Each year local folks vie for the title of Knott County's best cook, bringing samples of their tastiest stack cakes and shucky beans and gingerbread. The Saturday parade features the world's largest gingerbread man, at last count more than 12 feet tall. Not a crumb of that gingerbread goes to waste either. Gingerbread connoisseurs are always on hand for a sample.

One of the most exotic Kentucky food celebrations has to be the Mountain Mushroom Festival in Irvine in late April. Up to 20,000 people show up in this town of 2,800 with mushrooms on their minds – grilled, fried, baked and en casserole mushrooms. Locally, these delicacies are called landfish for their somewhat fishy taste. For generations, folks in Estill County have gone into the woods each spring to hunt for the morels or wild mushrooms that pop up in poplar thickets and apple orchards. The festival includes contests to see who can find the biggest morel, cook the best mushroom recipe and run the fastest in the Fungus Run.

Kentucky Fried Chicken is known the world over and you can eat where it all began – at Colonel Sander's original restaurant in Corbin. Carefully restored and placed on the National Register of Historic Places, the diner is like stepping back in time to the 1940s when the Colonel created his secret blend of 11 herbs and spices for that finger lickin' good chicken. To walk off the meal, you can view the exhibits featuring artifacts and memorabilia from the early days of KFC. Chicken is also the theme at the London Chicken Festival each September where you can sample some of the fried chicken from the world's largest stainless steel skillet – weighing in at a whopping 700 pounds.

The perfect place to glimpse Kentucky's rich heritage and some outstanding food is at the Cumberland Inn on the campus of Cumberland College in Williamsburg. Regional entrees and an abundance of the freshest vegetables are a highlight for even the most seasoned traveler. Order off the menu at the Athenaeum Restaurant or have one of the famed buffets. The popular Saturday night buffet features down home cooking. Drawing on regional recipes are menu favorites like country ham steak prepared in a cast iron skillet and served with authentic redeye gravy.

History and fabulous dining also go together at the Benham School House Inn, saved from the wrecking ball and turned into a popular restaurant and comfortable bed and

breakfast by some dedicated alumni. The Apple Room restaurant in the 1926 building features favorites like stuffed tomatoes, ham steak, orange almond butter chicken and east Kentucky farm-raised rainbow trout, raised right up the road at the Southeast Community College's Aquaculture Center.

Where else could you take a trip back in time to visit the region's coal mining heritage and eat a true Kentucky meal within sight and sound of the historic Big South Fork Scenic Railway? At Blue Heron Coal Mining Camp, you can work up an appetite learning the history of coal mining and exploring the beautiful Blue Heron park. Enjoy the great outdoors while eating a hearty lunch seated at a picnic table at the carryout restaurant. At Barthell Coal Mining Camp, visitors spend the day at the reconstructed coal mine with its antique cars, museum, wild flowers, Paunch Creek and breathtaking vistas. The Coal Miner's Diner serves three meals a day with such favorites as pinto beans and cornbread, saw mill gravy, pasties (similar to a potpie with chicken or beef and vegetables), blueberry cobbler and fried apple pies.

Watching the sunset over one of Kentucky's famed rivers and lakes is another great setting to enjoy a meal. Conley Bottom, for instance, has the popular Lighthouse Café with its picturesque view of Lake Cumberland. The café offers a full menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Before heading out for a day of fishing and boating, stop in and stock up on the dockhand favorite – three fluffy pancakes, warm syrup and butter alongside sausage patties and bacon strips. Other pleasers are sausage gravy with biscuits, hot oatmeal with brown sugar, pork tenderloin grilled to perfection, deep-fried jumbo shrimp, golden brown cod fillet, and homemade tuna salad on a croissant. Wisdom Dock on Dale Hollow Lake draws hungry diners to its Lighthouse Restaurant. Settle in for a great view and some great dining choices from a full menu including seafood, steak and breakfasts all day for those late-night owls. At Grider Hill Dock and Indian Creek Lodge the restaurant overlooks Lake Cumberland. In the summer sit out on the terrace, while you eat Jimmie's great home cooking—some of the best in Kentucky. Or maybe you'll want to rent a houseboat and enjoy a to-go meal on the water with a warm summer breeze rippling the current and stars twinkling overhead.

If you're staying at any one of the Highlands and Waterways motels, historic inns or bed and breakfasts, you can be sure that your meals will be every bit as delightful as your stay. Nestled above Colson's Cove on Lake Cumberland, the Raintree Inn welcomes each morning with a full breakfast including a side dish of the inn's famous chocolate gravy. At the Apple Tree Inn Bed & Breakfast in Barbourville, enjoy the majesty of the Appalachian Mountains while eating hearty pancakes with homemade brown sugar syrup. The Lodge Restaurant in Renfro Valley serves boarding-style meals with heaping platters and bowls of such pleasers as chicken and dumplings and stewed tomatoes. Finish off with the traditional bread pudding with raisins. The Snug Hollow Farm & Country Inn is nestled back in the Knobs, a ring of low hills surrounding the Bluegrass region. Barbara Napier is a gourmet vegetarian cook. You can stay there or just make special arrangements to come for dinner—but you'd be missing out if you just had one meal!

The Cumberland House Bed and Breakfast near Burkesville is the fly-fisherman's dream. Set in 40 acres of rolling hills and near the Cumberland River, as well as Dale Hollow Lake, the inn caters specially to fly fishermen. There's a room set aside for fly tying, complete with benches and vises. If the rainbows and browns in the Cumberland

aren't fooled by your best fly creations, you can retreat to a stocked trout pond on the inn's property and practice your casting. The inn itself is the end of elegance, and meals are all gourmet creations served in a comfortable dining room.

If you're drawn more to upscale dining downtown, try Doug Warriner's creations for lunch or dinner at the Vintage House Restaurant on the square in Barbourville, which is home to Union College. The menu changes nearly every night, and Doug likes to prepare interesting new variations on old favorites. This is nouvelle cuisine with a Kentucky twist. Now, Doug has also opened the Vintage House at Woodson Bend, a golf resort, just south of Somerset. The gated resort specializes in vacation rental homes surrounding an 18-hole golf course, but the restaurant is open to the dining public.

In Morehead, another college town, D's Main Street Bistro in the heart of downtown offers elegant dining with creative dishes prepared by owner Denise Patrick, as well as a nice (and frequently changing) selection of wines and a full bar. Sirius Coffee Café & Espresso Bar in Columbia, where Lindsey Wilson College is located, offers a wide selection of pastries and breads baked fresh daily by owner Debra Shaw. She also serves great soups, salads, and sandwiches for lunch and a changing selection of nouvelle cuisine entrees for dinner on weekends. In addition, Debra bakes her own line of special dog biscuits to take home to your best friend!

While you're out discovering off-the-beaten-path gems, stop for snacks at some of the region's general stores, orchards and roadside markets. They won't offer five-course meals but do carry such hunger appeasers as pickled bologna and crispy saltines, farmers' cheese, apple turnovers, pickled hard-boiled eggs, cherry tomatoes, fresh-picked apples, homemade ham salad, apple butter, and such regional treats as a Moon Pie and RC Cola. Pull into a friendly mom-and-pop grocery for a hickory smoke barbecue or, better yet, pick up the fixins for a picnic lunch and dine alfresco at a scenic wayside. At Barton's Foods in Denniston, your nose will tell you what's cooking. It might be hot chowchow relish, old mill molasses, corncob jelly, bourbon jelly, cinnamon pear preserves that taste like apple pie, or Moonshine Jelly that contains 10 percent moonshine. A little gift shop has samples to help you decide your favorite.

For a stick-to-your-ribs Kentucky delicacy, try burgoo. Back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, burgoo was a stew that was popular on ships where it could be made in large quantities. In pioneering Kentucky, burgoo was made with any variety of wild game. Today, burgoo is a staple at horse race tracks and festivals where it is usually prepared with beef, chicken or mutton, along with a combination of vegetables. Look for the beaten biscuits that are a primary part of many a mountain meal. Beaten biscuits are so called because the dough must be vigorously pounded with a rolling pin or other object for 20 to 30 minutes. The biscuits are often served with salty country ham. Fried green tomatoes, cheesy grits, corn relish, jam cake with burnt sugar icing, rice pudding and baked cinnamon apples are other cook choices.

Restaurants and food stores owned by Mennonites are sure to have some tasty recipes. Just ask folks about the Bread of Life Café & Sweet Shop in Liberty, and Yoder's, a bakery and cheese shop in Hindman. Delicious food, along with fresh fruits and vegetables, can be found at farmers' markets, such as Beachy's Apple Basket in Liberty, Haney's Pie Shop in Nancy, and Garrett's Apple Barn in Wayne County.

For diners looking for familiar chain family-style and fast-food restaurants, many of the major ones can be found – Denny's, Arby's, Jerry's, KFC, Fazoli's, Shoney's, Sonny's,

Lee's Famous Recipe, Giovanni's, McDonald's, Burger King, Subway and many others. More localized chains also provide good family dining and value, such as Shiloh in London and Reno's Roadhouse in Corbin, Hazard and Prestonsburg.

If you're in the mood for funky dining, you can find it, too. The Kentucky country music group, the Headhunters, made Brenda's Place in downtown Greensburg famous. This is the home of the famed "slawburger," best served with a Ski, a soft drink produced at the local Cola Bottling Company. Then there's Miguel's Pizza & Climb Shop, on State Road 11, just before Natural Bridge State Resort Park. Folks adore Miquel's homemade pizza adorned with homegrown vegetables.

In the Highlands and Waterways Region of Kentucky, you can unbend, unwind and understand the food forces that have combined to create such unforgettable cuisine. A Methodist minister once described heaven to his congregation as a "Kentucky kind of place." Experience the genuine hospitality and traditional recipes refined through generation after generation, and you might see why so many Kentuckians consider their home a little taste of heaven on earth.

*Check out other taste tempters including:*

*For mountain country cooking:*

Creekside, Campbellsville  
The Country Kitchen, Greensburg  
The Lighthouse Café, Sulphur Well  
Kentucky Depot Restaurant, Stanford  
Jamestown Café, Jamestown  
Loretta's Homestyle Cooking, Jamestown  
Jones Restaurant, Albany  
Triangle Restaurant, Nancy  
VIP's Place, Bronston  
Lakeview Restaurant, Somerset  
Stearns Restaurant, Stearns  
Mike's Landing Restaurant, Sulphur Creek Resort on Dale Hollow Lake  
The Avenue Café & Antiques, Middlesborough  
Rainbow Café, Nicholasville  
Renfro Valley Lodge, Renfro Valley  
Cedar Village Restaurant, Irvine  
Patty's Place, Manchester  
Dooley's Diner, Booneville  
The Feed Store, Jackson  
Wendover Big House, Hyden  
Main Street Café, Harlan  
Rusty Fork, Elkhorn City  
Windmill Family Restaurant, Pikeville  
Top of the Inn, Pikeville  
Wilma's Restaurant, Paintsville  
Dee's Drive Inn, Louisa

Lisa's Front Porch Steak House, Louisa  
Whistle Stop Café, Louisa

*For a little more cosmopolitan dining experience:*

Sirius Coffee Café & Espresso Bar, Columbia  
Java Joe's, Campbellsville  
Cumberland Inn Bed & Breakfast, Burkesville  
The Porch, Russell Springs  
Main Street Station & Deli, Jamestown  
The Vintage House at Woodson Bend, Bronston  
Cumberland Inn, Williamsburg  
The Vintage House Restaurant, Barbourville  
Snug Hollow Farm & Country Inn, Irvine  
The Courthouse Café, Whitesburg  
Pine Mountain Grill, Whitesburg  
Mona's Creative Catering, Pikeville  
Gambill Mansion, Blaine  
Lakeview Hideaway Bed & Breakfast, Yatesville Lake  
D's main Street Bistro, Morehead

*Marinas and restaurants, situated on a lake or river:*

Gator 1 Café at Popplewells Alligator Dock, Lake Cumberland, Russell County  
Indian Hills Resort & Marina, Lake Cumberland, Russell County  
Jamestown Marina, Lake Cumberland, Russell County  
Mike's Landing Restaurant at Sulphur Creek Marina, Dale Hollow Lake  
Wisdom Dock Restaurant, Dale Hollow, Clinton County  
Grider Hill Dock Restaurant, Lake Cumberland, Clinton County  
Harbor Restaurant at Lee's Ford Marina, Somerset  
Arvin's River Restaurant & Marina, Irvine  
Lakeview Restaurant, Lake Cumberland, Somerset

CONSUMER INQUIRIES:

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