

Mountain Country Tour



The Southern & Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association (SEKTDA) can assist groups with reservations, scheduling, hospitality, boxed lunches, or special entertainment if needed. SEKTDA can also put you in touch with other local contacts.

Call toll free 1 888-733-7359 or visit us at www.tourseky.com

Along the Country Music Highway

Day One

Coming north from Knoxville or departing from Lexington, travel east on the Bert T. Combs Mountain Parkway to Mountain Home Place, a reconstructed early 1800s Scotch-Irish settlers' farmstead with costumed interpreters near Paintsville. View a special showing of Mountain Home Place video. Richard Thomas, John-Boy on The Waltons, whose real roots are in these hills, narrates the brief, award-winning, introductory film. Then, tour the grounds of Mountain Home Place.

After a traditional Appalachian meal for lunch, catered by Wilma's restaurant known for good mountain country cooking, continue your tour of the Country Music Highway with a visit to Butcher Hollow (pronounced 'holler') birthplace of country music star Loretta Lynn (and her sister Crystal Gayle). Take a tour with Loretta's brother, Herman Webb. Afterwards, stop back at Webb's Grocery for some refreshment.

Drive to Jenny Wiley State Resort Park for check-in. Dine at the buffet in the park's full-service restaurant. After dinner, attend a performance of the Kentucky Opry at the Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg. Options include overnight at a motel in Prestonsburg or Paintsville along Highway 23 (the Country Music Highway). Depending upon the time of year, an evening option is a performance at the Jenny Wiley Summer Theater. The park offers a schedule of professional summer theater productions aimed at family audiences. Alternatively, enjoy the park facilities, including a large swimming pool and pontoon boat rides on Dewey Lake.

Alternative stops for the day include the Pioneer Village in Salyersville, off the Mountain Parkway before reaching Highway 23.

Day Two

After breakfast, visit the Pioneer Village in Salyersville, a collection of early log buildings, dating from c. 1810 to c. 1868. Then visit David Appalachian Crafts, a craft co-op in the small rural community of David.

Drive on the Country Music Highway to Pikeville for lunch at the Windmill Restaurant, one of the best 'home-cooking' restaurants anywhere in Kentucky. An option is to have lunch with Mark Sohn, author of Mountain Country Cooking, who will talk about the unique foods and flavors of mountain style cooking.

Note: Pikeville and Pike County are Hatfield and McCoy territory. Unfortunately, the museum planned to interpret the Hatfield-McCoy Feud is not yet ready, but there is a driving tour of the sites.

From Pikeville, drive to Breaks Interstate Park, the 'Grand Canyon of the South' for spectacular views into the gorge of the Russell Fork River and across the Cumberland Mountains. Take a guided tour with the Park Interpreter. Breaks is a spectacular fall foliage destination. The mountain laurel and rhododendron are equally beautiful in the spring.

Visit the Railroad Museum in Elkhorn City to learn about the importance of railroads in Appalachia. Then, overnight at Breaks Interstate Park. Another option is to return to Jenny Wiley or motels in the Pikeville or the Prestonsburg area.

Other options include an early birding walk with the Park Naturalist at Jenny Wiley. The extensive forests of Eastern Kentucky are one of the best places in the East to see passerines (songbirds). Depending upon the season, Jenny Wiley also offers early morning elk watch tours.

Options & Extensions

Multiple days can be added to your itinerary. En route to the Country Music Highway visit the Red River Gorge Geological Area, just off the Mountain Parkway. Drive through the gorge on a National Scenic Byway, stopping at the Gladie Historic Site with an interesting visitor center and gift shop operated by the US Forest Service. Ride the sky lift up to Natural Bridge. Spend a night at Natural Bridge State Resort Park and dine at Mark's Mountain Barbecue. The more adventurous can try the Via Ferrata, the most successful rock climbing adventure in the European Alps which is now available for the first time in the United States in the Red River Gorge.

Alternatively, take I-64 from Lexington to Morehead and visit the Kentucky Folk Art Center. The Poppy Mountain Bluegrass Festival, held the third weekend in September in Morehead, is the largest traditional bluegrass festival in the U.S. The Kentucky Center for Traditional Music (KCTM) presents programs of traditional music on the Morehead State University campus throughout the year.

From Breaks Interstate, drive west on the Kingdom Come Parkway (US 119) and visit the Kentucky Coal Mining Museum in Benham and Portal 31 in Lynch. Overnight at the Benham School House Inn. Or, drive to Whitesburg to visit Appalshop and the Cozy Corner, one of the best craft stores in eastern Kentucky. At Appalshop, you can purchase original audio recordings of mountain country music and video documentaries of Appalachian lifeways and mountain country music personalities. Have lunch at the Courthouse Café. After lunch visit the Kentucky Appalachian Artisan Center, the Hindman Settlement School, and the Marie Stewart Craft Shop in Hindman, or the Challenger Learning Center and the new science museum at Hazard Community College in Hazard. Overnight at Buckhorn State Resort Park or motels on the Hal Rogers Parkway in Hazard. Whitesburg, Hazard and Buckhorn are all connected by SR 15. Return to Lexington/Knoxville via the scenic Hal Rogers Parkway. Both US 119 and the Hal Rogers Parkway are very scenic drives, especially in the fall.

