



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 Mountain Parkway Trails

Day One

Coming north from Knoxville or departing from Lexington, travel east on the Bert T. Combs Mountain Parkway to the Red River Gorge Geological Area, a National Natural Landmark in the Daniel Boone National Forest. Drive through the gorge on KY 715, a national scenic byway, stopping at scenic overlooks and the Gladie Creek Historic Site visitor center. View exhibits about the Daniel Boone National Forest, the Red River Gorge, and the logging history of Kentucky. The scenic byway is a beautiful drive anytime of year; it is also one of the outstanding fall foliage drives in the state.

Drive to Natural Bridge State Resort Park for lunch at the buffet in the park's full-service restaurant. An option is to have a picnic lunch prepared in advance by Miguel's Pizza & Climb Shop, famous among rock climbers and backpackers in the Gorge for vegetarian pizzas made with fresh produce from his family's own garden.

After lunch, hike to Natural Bridge, the famous sandstone arch from which the park takes its name, or ride the sky-lift up to see the bridge, accompanied by the Park Naturalist who will explain the geology and point out interesting scenery. (Note: There are more than 200 arch-like natural bridges in the Red River Gorge—more than anywhere else in the U.S. except Arches National Park in Utah.) Visit the Kentucky Reptile Zoo, which has one of the largest venomous snake collections in the East. Then, check in at Natural Bridge State Resort Park.

Drive to the Via Ferrata for dinner at Mark's Mountain Barbecue. The Via Ferrata is the most successful rock climbing adventure in the European Alps which is now available for the first time in the United States here in the Red River Gorge. Try climbing or watch other climbers from the comfort of Mark's observation decks. Take a short hike to Torrent Falls or just relax. After dinner (on summer weekends) visit the outdoor music stage on Hoedown Island at the park. Listen to some local country music or join in the line dancing. Options include dinner at the full-service restaurant in the park and enjoying park facilities, including a large swimming pool, or special educational programs about the natural history of the area that can be arranged for groups. Red River Outdoors can arrange canoeing for small groups (or portions of larger groups) on Mill Creek Lake or, depending upon the time of year, on the Red River. They also conduct moderately strenuous guided hikes in the Gorge.

Day Two

After breakfast, take the Mountain Parkway to Salyersville and visit the Pioneer Village, a collection of log homes and other buildings from c. 1810 to 1868 representing the early settlement of eastern Kentucky. Drive on to the Mountain Home Place, a reconstructed early 1800s Scotch-Irish settlers' farmstead with costumed interpreters near Paintsville. View a special showing of the 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, drive to Morehead for a guided tour of the Kentucky Folk Art Center, which has a fabulous permanent collection of contemporary and older folk art from all over the state, as well as frequently changing exhibits. The Museum Store sells original art works by contemporary folk artists, including many of those whose work is shown in the Museum.

Finish the day with a brief visit to the Moonlight School and then check in to one of the nearby motels at Exit 137 on I-64 (including Best Western, Days Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Ramada Inn, and Super 8). Dine at one of the many restaurants in the city. For smaller groups, D's Main Street Bistro provides some of the finest cuisine in eastern Kentucky.

Depending upon the time of year, Morehead presents some of the finest festivals in the state, including Bluegrass 'n More in early June, the Poppy Mountain Bluegrass Festival the third weekend in September—the largest traditional bluegrass festival in the U.S.—the Cave Run Storytelling Festival in late September, and the Appalachian Holiday Arts & Crafts Market the first Saturday in September. The Kentucky Center for Traditional Music (KCTM) presents programs of traditional music on the Morehead State University campus throughout the year. Nearby Cave Run Lake is a famous fishing and boating destination. The Minor Clark State Fish Hatchery on KY 801 is one of the largest warmwater hatcheries and is open weekdays for public tours.



Options & Extensions

Multiple days can be added to your itinerary. En route to the Red River Gorge Geological Area, off I-64 near Winchester is Fort Boonesborough State Historic Site, a reconstruction of the original wilderness settlement founded by Daniel Boone on the Kentucky River in 1775.

From Morehead, return to Lexington via I-64 or take I-64 east to Ashland on the Ohio River and visit the Highlands Museum and Discovery center, which has exhibits on the history and the country music scene of eastern Kentucky. Visit the Ashland Area Art Gallery, the Jesse Stuart Foundation, Central Park with Indian mounds dating from 800 B.C. to A.D. 800, and attend a live performance at the Paramount Arts Center where Billy Ray Cyrus' video "Achy Breaky Heart" was filmed. Spend the night at one of the many motels in the Ashland area, including several at Exit 185 on I-64.

From Ashland, drive south on US 23, the Country Music Highway, and visit Butcher Hollow and the Mountain Home Place near Paintsville. Attend a live performance of the Kentucky Opry at the Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg. Visit the Mayo Mansion and Mayo Methodist Memorial Church in Paintsville, both built by eastern Kentucky's first coal baron. In Prestonsburg, visit the 1817 Samuel May House in Prestonsburg.

Learn about the 1861 Civil War Battle of Ivy Mountain that took place in the meadow below the house.

Ashland, Butcher Hollow, and the Mountain Arts center are all on Kentucky's Music Trail. Renfro Valley south of Lexington on I-75 is another important stop on the Trail. Visit here first. Attend a performance of mountain country music at the Barn, have a boarding house style dinner with good country cooking, visit the shops of Renfro Valley, and spend the night at the Country Hearth Inn next door. The Renfro Valley Entertainment Center is set up to cater to groups. From here, return to the Mountain Parkway and visit the Red River Gorge and the Morehead area.