



Tourism

YEAR
IN

Review



2025



What

WE DO

As the city's primary marketer, Louisville Tourism looks for strategic ways to attract more visitors to experience our authentic hospitality. Visitor traffic drives economic development through tourism. More outside spending in our community sustains and creates jobs and raises the quality of life for those living here. And unless you were born here, everyone is a visitor first.

Who

WE ARE

As one of the oldest official Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) in America, our mission is to enhance Louisville's economy through tourism. We work to raise awareness of Louisville's brand worldwide to inspire people to visit – whether for a meeting, convention, trade show, special event, group tour, or personal leisure.

How WE DO IT

MARKETING

We work to build and maintain Louisville's brand and image worldwide through programming, PR, storytelling, and innovative advertising campaigns.

We develop strategic plans to attract visitors from top regional, national, and international target markets as well as emerging markets. We leverage the city's authenticity by focusing our messaging around our primary brand pillars: Bourbon, Culinary, Southernness, and Unique.

CONNECTION

We bring the hospitality industry together – connecting partners with visitors and with each other to create a world-class destination that supports our local business community and delivers memorable experiences for guests.

VISITOR

EXPERIENCES

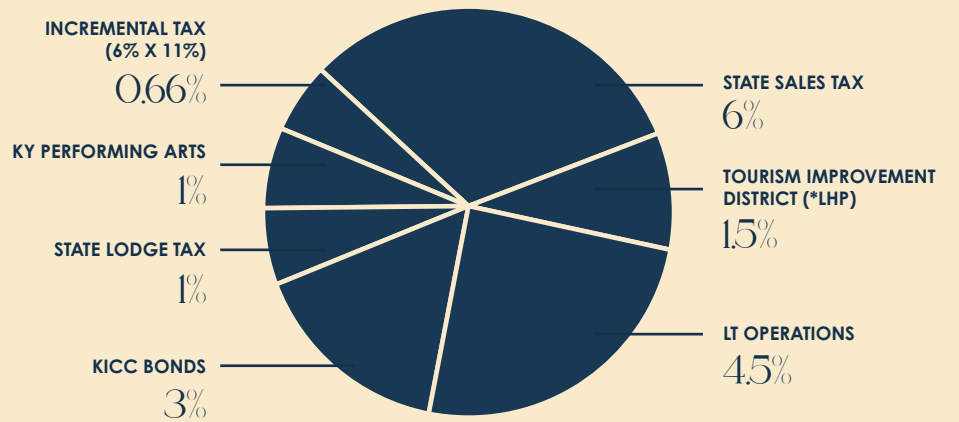
Louisville Tourism operates one mobile and two stationary visitor information centers with resources to help guide travelers wanting to experience Bourbon City's hotels, attractions, and culinary offerings.

SALES

Louisville Tourism employs sales professionals to promote and sell the city as a destination for leisure travel, conventions, trade shows, meetings, and events ranging in size, length, and structure. The team works directly with meeting planners, tour operators, and group sales professionals to achieve annual hotel overnight room goals in partnership with other local businesses and venues.

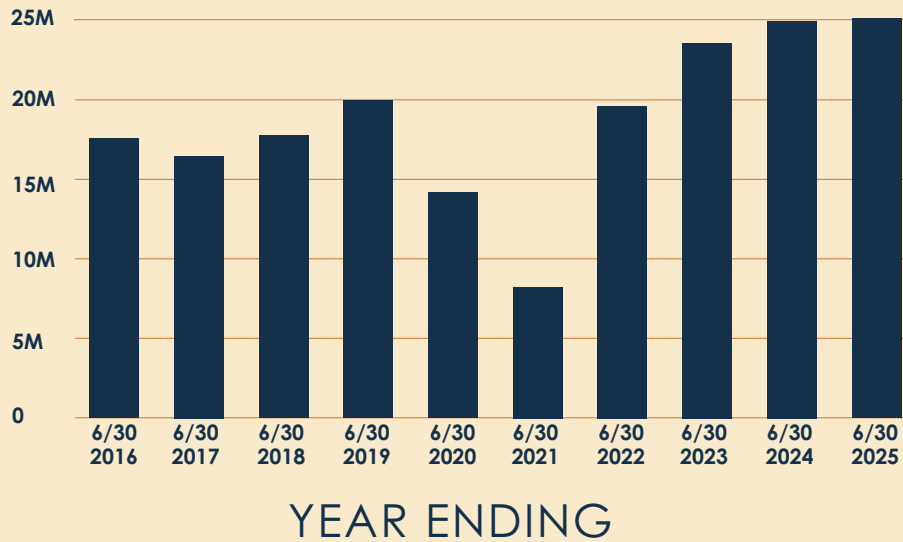
ROOM TAX AND FEES BREAKDOWN

Total Room Tax and Fees = 17.66%
1% = Approximately \$6 million



LOUISVILLE TOURISM ROOM TAX

2025 Fiscal Year room tax: \$25,036,727



Funding

Louisville's lodging tax remains the primary funding source, representing over 85% of the agency's revenues. Our total room tax is 17.66%, of which 4.5% is used by Louisville Tourism to market the city. Other revenue comes from advertising, services and fees, grants, and partnership dues.





Why Tourism Matters

In pursuit of our mission, Louisville Tourism generates visitor
spending, job creation, and local tax receipts.

RESIDENT TAX SAVINGS

Visitors not only contribute to our community by their direct spending on lodging, dining, transportation, entertainment, and shopping, but they also pay a 17.66% transient room tax on their accommodations each night. Tourism creates over \$300 million in state and local tax revenue, saving each household in Louisville an average of \$800 on its state and local tax bill.

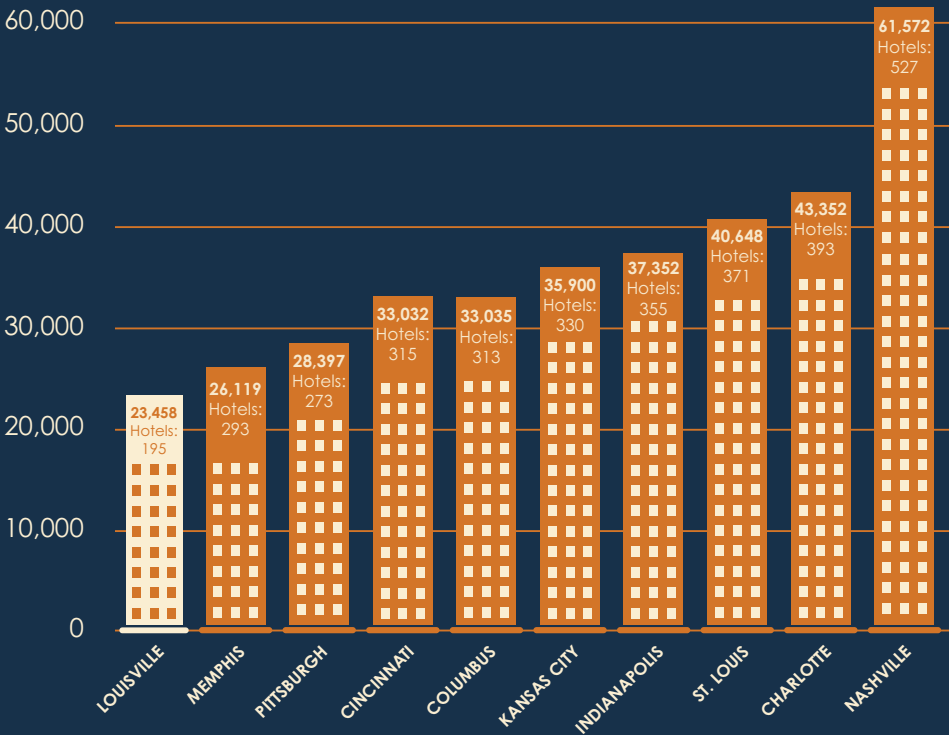
VISITATION

Tourism is the third-largest industry in the state. Visitation: 19M in the greater Louisville area. Visitors spend an average of 3.1 days in Louisville and most commonly visit restaurants, followed by shopping, state or local parks, museums, Bourbon tastings, cultural attractions, and distillery tours.

JOBS

The hospitality industry's impact on the economy remains a key component of our city's economic viability, with the sector employing 70,500 leisure and hospitality jobs within Jefferson County.

COMPETITIVE SET Hotel Room Totals



NEW IN

BOURBON VISITOR EXPERIENCES: Louisville's Bourbon scene surged toward 26 visitor experiences by year-end. 2025 openings include Circa 1856 (Chicken Cock Whiskey), Green River Distilling Co., Pursuit Spirits (second location on Main Street), Uncle Boogie's Homeplace, and WhistlePig The Vault. Fan favorite Bourbon & Beyond was named Pollstar's "Music Festival of the Year."

LODGING: Hotel Bourré Bonne (Curio Collection by Hilton) opened with upscale amenities, including the signature Bourré Bonne Steakhouse, rooftop pool and bar. Louisville Bourbon Inn was awarded "The Best B&B in the Country" by Tripadvisor's audience. Select Registry Craft Lodging Awards honored Chateau Bourbon as "Innkeeper of the Year," and the Inn at Woodhaven as "New Member of the Year."

CONVENTION CENTER EXPANSION: The Kentucky Exposition Center (KEC) continues its \$460+ million expansion and renovation. A new 350,000-square-foot multipurpose building will make KEC the fifth-largest convention center in the United States. During its fiscal year, KEC was ranked the #1 busiest convention center in the U.S.

VISITOR EXPERIENCES: Louisville Tourism introduced its Mobile Visitor Information Center, bringing Bourbon City's brand, attractions, and culinary experiences on the road to inspire future travel. This innovative mobile unit enhances on-the-go engagement and promotes Louisville as a top destination beyond Kentucky.

OUTDOOR RECREATION: PlayPort debuted as an outdoor experiential learning area honoring the Ohio River's industrial heritage. Kentucky Kingdom unveiled Discovery Meadow with three new rides, and the Speed Art Museum opened its new Elizabeth P. and Frederick K. Cressman Art Park, a three-acre landscape surrounding the Museum that transformed its outdoor space by adding a sculpture garden and 150 trees.

CULINARY: Mash-Up Food Hall opened in NuLu, combining seven diverse food vendors with co-working spaces. Decade was named to USA TODAY's "2025 Restaurants Of The Year," and Chef Noam Bilitzer of MeeshMeesh Mediterranean was nominated for James Beard Foundation's Best Chef in the Southeast. Alongside these accolades, a new wave of standout, independently owned restaurants – such as M. Peppers, Sake A Go Go, YachtSea, Grale Goods, and Murray's Creole Pub – continues to add fresh energy and creativity to the city's culinary landscape.

Just like Bourbon, bluegrass music was born in Kentucky,

deriving from the hills of Appalachia. Kentuckian Bill Monroe, known as the Father of Bluegrass Music, helped shape the sound we know today as “pickin’.” Nearly a century later, bluegrass music continues to thrive in Kentucky’s largest city, creating a microgenre we’ve coined LouGrass.

This initiative includes investing in visitor experiences and local music by organizing consistent seasonal bluegrass sessions in a variety of Bourbon City’s settings, hotels, and attractions, focusing on Thursdays through Saturdays throughout the April-October peak visitation season. 2025 was the second year for LouGrass session programming, building on the early success of leveraging bluegrass music as a cultural and economic asset to attract locals and visitors while enhancing Louisville’s tourism appeal and brand. The long-term goal is to create enough momentum that venues begin booking and promoting bluegrass on their own – embedding LouGrass into the everyday rhythm of the city and giving visitors even more authentic opportunities to experience Kentucky’s signature sound. Due to popular demand, the 2025 season was extended through November, giving audiences even more opportunities to experience Kentucky’s roots music. Programming and a full calendar of events can be found at lougrassmusic.com.



A CELEBRATION OF KENTUCKY MUSIC

Target Markets



PAID MARKETING IN 23 DOMESTIC MARKETS AND INTERNATIONALLY

CANADA
UNITED KINGDOM
FRANCE
GERMANY
AUSTRALIA

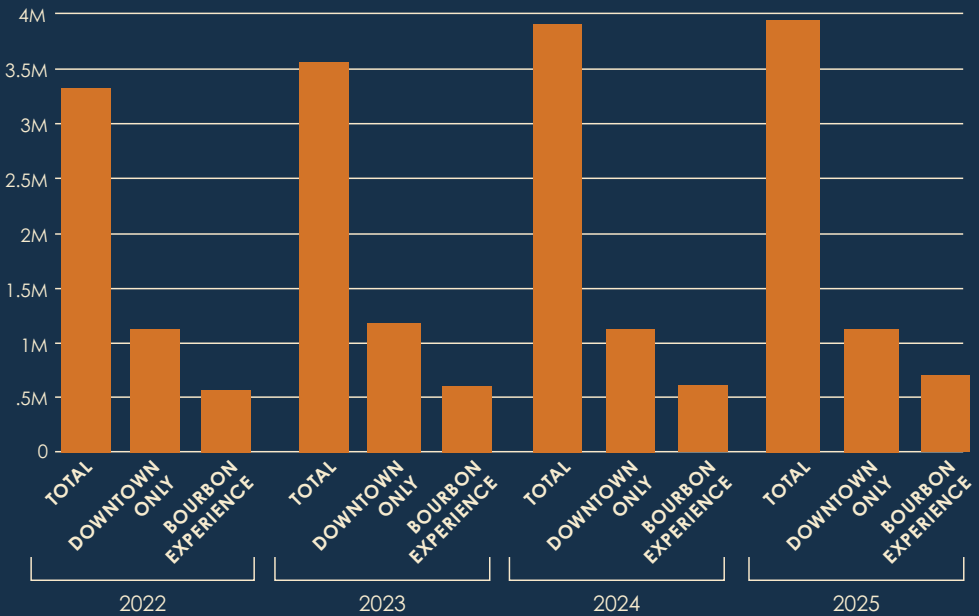
TOP INBOUND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS:

CANADA
UNITED KINGDOM
MEXICO
GERMANY
AUSTRALIA
ASIA

Note: Typically international travelers spend more and stay longer than domestic travelers.

TOTAL Attraction ATTENDANCE

Data is self-reported by participating attractions & distilleries



Note: Tracking process updated July 2025 to reflect new/additional Bourbon Experiences.

NUMBER OF Bourbon ATTRACTIONS

○ : # of Bourbon attractions



Hosted Events

10-YEAR HISTORY			
YEAR	# OF EVENTS	HOSTED ROOM NIGHTS	ATTENDEES
2015	705	699,865	2,076,530
2016	668	661,440	2,509,023
2017	756	641,311	1,931,672
2018	878	653,273	3,568,706
2019	879	819,328	3,517,053
2020*	160	164,025	883,469
2021	362	327,037	2,068,636
2022	623	668,118	2,906,896
2023	587	865,981	3,188,287
2024	608	927,588	3,954,609

*START OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC. MARCH 17 WAS
THE LAST DATE OF A HOSTED CONVENTION/EVENT
UNTIL JULY IN 2020.

2025

574

NUMBER OF EVENTS

959,455

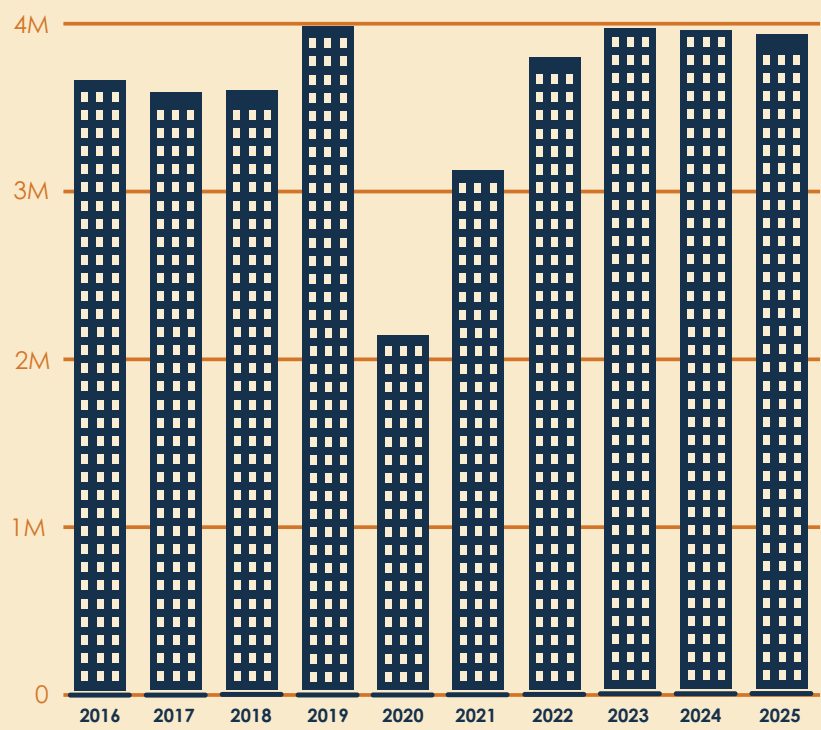
HOSTED ROOM NIGHTS

3,206,984

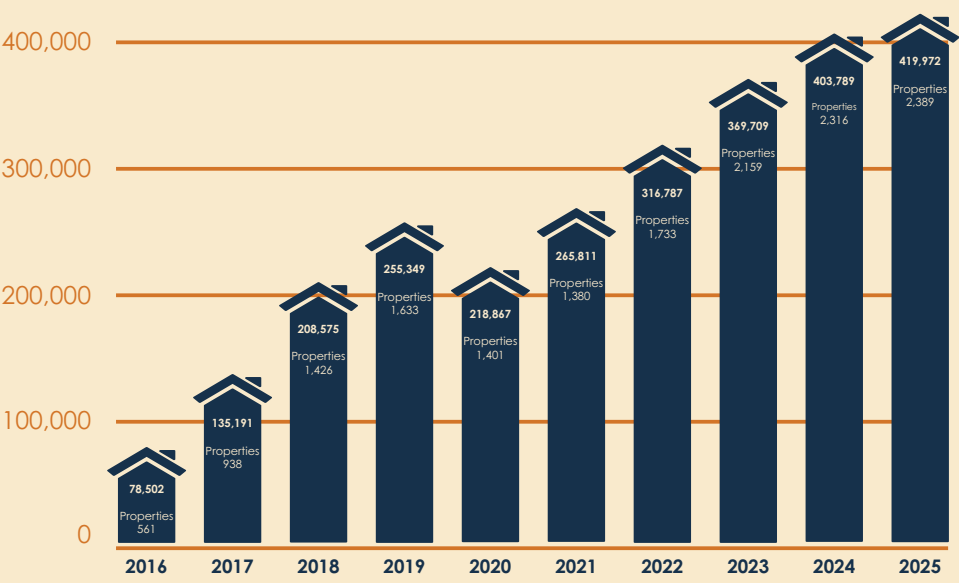
ATTENDEES



Total Hotel Rooms Sold

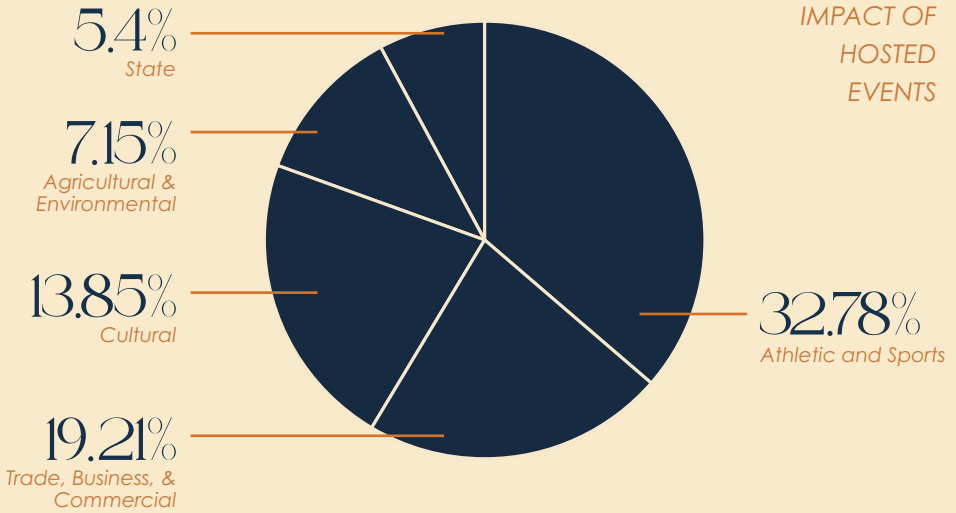


Total Short-Term Rental Rooms Sold



\$1 billion

TOTAL
ECONOMIC
IMPACT OF
HOSTED
EVENTS



Top 5 Markets

2025 Top 20 Events

by economic impact*

EVENT NAME	ATTENDEES	EST. ECONOMIC IMPACT
Kentucky Derby/Kentucky Oaks	248,316	\$423,156,502
TFN Camps & Clinics Run 4 Roses	132,731	\$47,641,966
Outdoor Power Equipment Institute Equip Exposition	29,047	\$31,616,079
Louder Than Life	246,487	\$28,663,043
Mid-America Trucking Show	54,833	\$27,825,113
National Farm Machinery Show and Championship Tractor Pull	300,000	\$27,409,083
Association of Equipment Manufacturers Utility Expo	20,149	\$21,101,059
National Archery in the Schools Program Eastern National Tournament	48,365	\$19,192,731
Junior Volleyball Association World Challenge	38,184	\$18,730,076
Bourbon & Beyond	144,564	\$13,798,817
KIVA Sports Adidas Bluegrass Tournament	43,256	\$13,752,639
North American International Livestock Exposition and Championship Rodeo	154,000	\$11,966,938
Kentucky State Fair & World's Championship Horse Show	590,000	\$14,966,699
Varsity Spirit Dance Super Nationals	19,655	\$8,368,661
National Street Rod Association Street Rod Nationals	50,074	\$7,627,288
TFN Camps & Clinics The Classic	16,450	\$7,403,793
TFN Camps & Clinics The Splash/ National Championship	13,887	\$7,294,903
The Academy Volleyball Club Boys Winter Invitational	14,090	\$6,460,358
Varsity Spirit WSF Grand Nationals	16,000	\$5,699,532
Leadership Team Development Summit	16,000	\$5,483,518
TOTAL	2,196,088	\$748,158,799

*Note that this information is based on a tourism industry standard impact model that estimates "Event Impact" developed by Destinations International and Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics Company. Some events may use different study models with varying numbers for total "Economic Impact." This chart only includes the Destinations International calculations using projected attendance provided by the event producers and eight other industry data points including average hotel rates. For more information, visit www.GoToLouisville.com/EIC.

Visitor Profile*

AVERAGE AGE

47.1
Years old

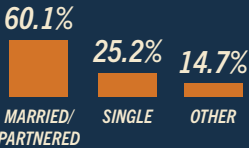
PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18

46.3%

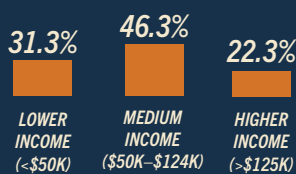
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$85,880

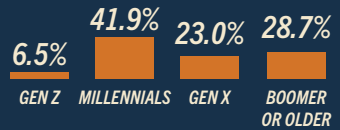
MARITAL STATUS



INCOME BRACKETS



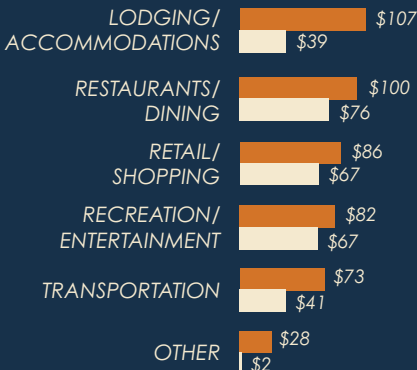
GENERATIONS



2023/24

vs. 2019/20 Study

TRIP SPENDING ■ 2023/24 ■ 2019/20



AVERAGE SPEND

\$476
2023/24

\$293
2019/20

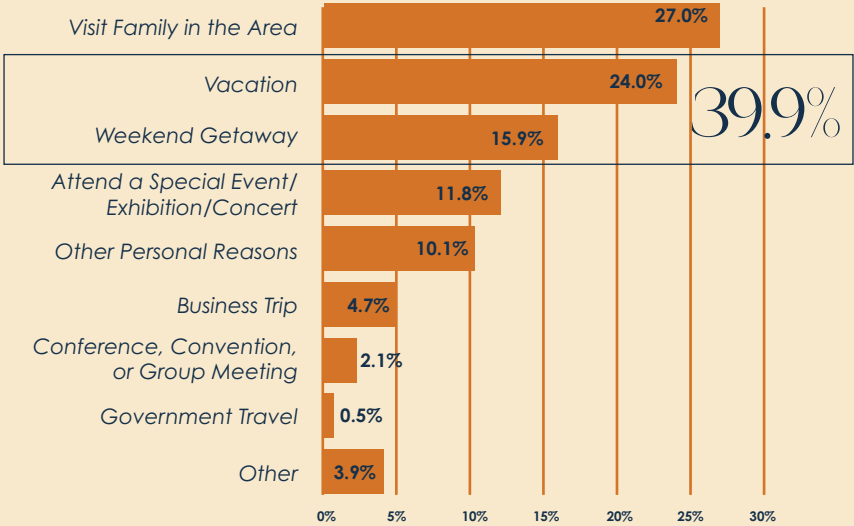
2023/24 MEAN LENGTH OF STAY

3.1 days
2.4 nights

2019/20 MEAN LENGTH OF STAY

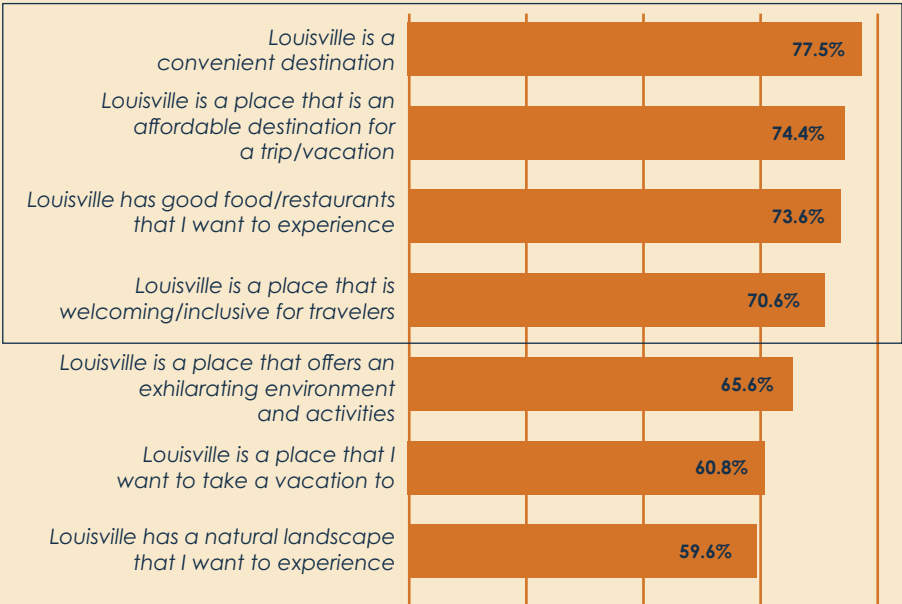
2.6 days
2.1 nights

Primary Reason for Most Recent Visit



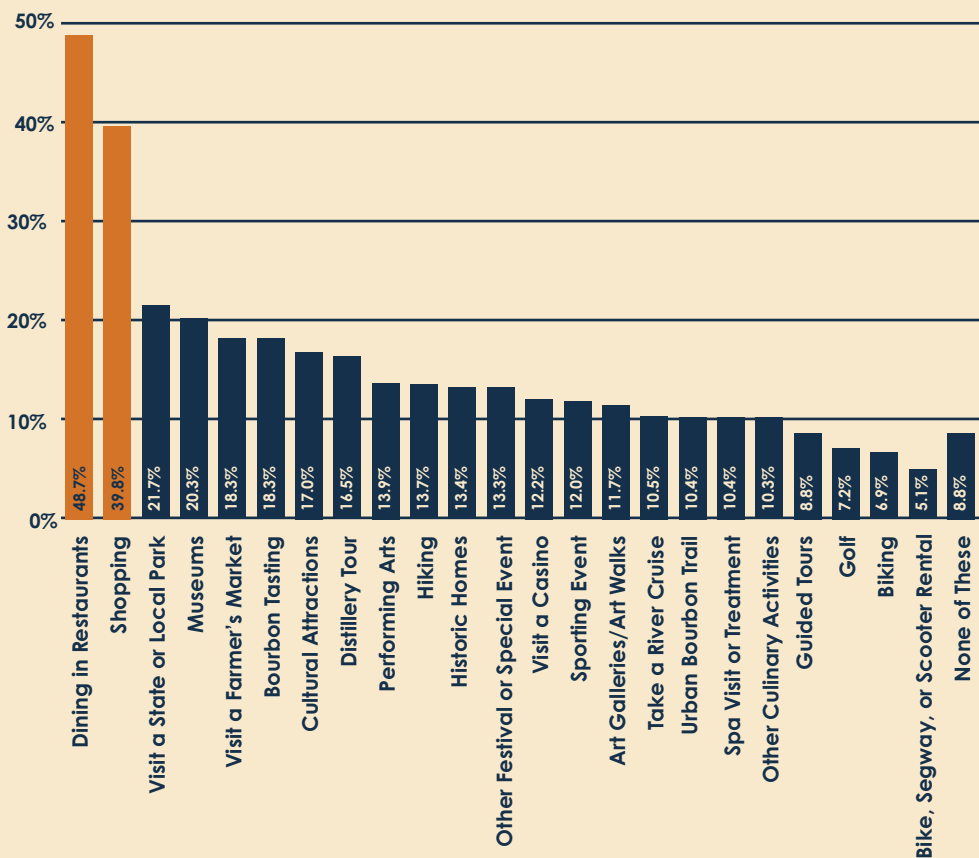
Louisville Brand Perceptions

% SELECTED "4" OR "5 COMPLETELY AGREE"



Activities Visitors Participated In

*LOUISVILLE FUTURE PARTNERS VISITOR PROFILE STUDY 2023-2024. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [GOTLOUISVILLE.COM/RESEARCH](https://gotolouisville.com/research)



OUR CITY'S

Wins

Best Attraction For Sports Fans: Kentucky Derby Museum (#2), Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory (#4), Churchill Downs (#5), and Muhammad Ali Center (#10)

– USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards

"10 Cities That Offer Incredible Food Scenes Without High Costs"

– *Inkl*

"Best Arts Districts In The US For A Creative Escape (NuLu)"

– USA Today 10 Best

"Best Riverwalks Across The US (Waterfront Park, #1)"

– USA Today 10 Best

"25 LGBTQ Travel Destinations for 2025"

– *TravelPulse*

SCAN HERE

TO SEE ALL

OF OUR

2025 PRESS:

