Louisville, the largest city in Kentucky, is located along the Ohio River on the Kentucky and Indiana border. The city was founded by George Rogers Clark in 1778 and was named for King Louis XVI of France in appreciation of his assistance during the Revolutionary War. Recognized by the 120-foot-tall World’s Largest Baseball Bat leaning against the building, the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory is located on Museum Row and offers factory and museum tours. Exhibits at the Frazier Museum, also on Museum Row, explore American history. The 21c Museum Hotel collects and displays only 21st-century art. The Kentucky Science Center features the KentuckyShow! large-screen multimedia experience. Contemporary art and craft are the focus of KMAC. The Muhammad Ali Center is a multicultural center that has an interactive museum dedicated to its namesake’s life. Other Louisville museums include the Filson Historical Society, which contains documents, books, and museum items about Kentucky and the Ohio Valley region. The collection at the Speed Art Museum spans from the works of ancient cultures to contemporary art. The Portland Museum focuses on Louisville’s river heritage and focuses in the Portland neighborhood. Historic home museums include Locust Grove, the Georgian mansion built in 1792; the 1837 Farnsley-Moremen House, which focuses on the role of Ohio River agriculture; the 1850s shotgun-style Thomas Edison House, which exhibits many of his inventions; and the Victorian Conrad-Caldwell House Museum, which was built in the 1890s and contains a large collection of antiques.

The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts (which includes Whitney Hall, Bomhard Theater, MeX Theater, W.L. Lyons Brown Theater, and Old Forester’s Paristown Hall) is home to the Louisville Orchestra, Kentucky Opera, Louisville Ballet, Stage One Family Theatre, and PNC Bank Broadway in Louisville, as well as many community theaters and Kentucky Center Production performances. Actors Theatre of Louisville presents a year-round season of contemporary and classical shows. The Louisville Palace Theater offers touring Broadway attractions; local, national, and international performing arts presentations; classic films; and a variety of musical concert engagements. The free summertime Kentucky Shakespeare Festival is held at the historic Central Park C. Douglass Ramey Amphitheater. The Iroquois Amphitheater located in Iroquois Park hosts live bands, movies, and experimental theater.

Neighborhoods

As a result of their 2003 merger, Louisville encompasses all of Jefferson County in its Metro government. Situated within the Watterson Expressway loop, downtown Louisville is bisected by an interstate highway. Mixed-use multifamily developments are located on the east side of the highway near many of the city’s hospitals and on the west side near the Ohio River. Also within the loop, the Old Louisville preservation district consists of about 48 city blocks and features narrow lots with large homes built in Richardsonian Romanesque, Italian Renaissance Revival, and Colonial Revival styles. It also includes smaller homes in Queen Anne and Craftsman styles. Clifton, another preservation district, grew over a long period beginning in the 1850s; houses there range from one to three stories and reflect such architectural styles as shotgun, American Foursquare, Italianate, Queen Anne, Tudor Gothic, and Bungalow Craftsman. Crescent Hill developed between 1890 and 1920 and offers a mix of Victorian, Bungalow, Foursquare, and Craftsman housing styles. Architectural styles in the Highlands neighborhoods include Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Tudor. The Cherokee Triangle preservation district offers rolling topography and Cherokee Park amidst a variety of housing styles.

Outside the Watterson Expressway loop, Norton Commons is a new traditional neighborhood built to resemble an old-fashioned urban community. Houses are situated on small lots with front porches and a village center. The lakes and wide and winding golf course communities of Polo Fields and Lake Forest offer luxury homes and other amenities. Houses in the Springhurst subdivision are primarily traditional two-story styles with an occasional ranch-style house; sculptures decorate its White Blossom Boulevard.

Parks and Recreation

Metro Parks consists of 120 parks and amenities that include 14 community centers, two art centers, 10 public golf courses, and playgrounds. Two outdoor pools: 30 spraygrounds and sprayspots; an indoor aquatics facility; basketball and tennis courts; baseball and football fields; hockey rinks; 30 miles of trails for hiking, trail running, mountain biking, and horseback riding; the Eva Bandman Cyclocross Venue; the David Armstrong Louisville Extreme Skatepark; and Zipline Kingdom in Jefferson Memorial Forest are other park amenities.

At approximately 6,500 acres of steep slopes covered with mature trees, Jefferson Memorial Forest is a woodland retreat for hikers and veterans. It provides a fishing lake, outdoor recreational facilities, scenic trails, and small streams. The historic Churchill Downs Racetrack hosts the annual Kentucky Derby in May and other horse races during the year. The Kentucky Derby Museum follows every stage of a thoroughbred’s life and contains artifacts and library materials covering the history and traditions of the Derby. The Audubon Oaks Garden Terrace permanent stable houses the resident miniature horse and a thoroughbred. Held during the 2 weeks preceding the Derby, the Kentucky Derby Festival celebrates spring and the Derby with more than 70 special events.

More than 1,100 animals are exhibited in natural settings at the Louisville Zoological Gardens. Famous for its bourbon, Louisville’s Urban Bourbon Trail is centered in the downtown, with stops in other neighborhoods. It includes historic hotel properties that served Al Capone and F. Scott Fitzgerald, as well as new establishments. Professional sports teams include the Louisville Bats (baseball) and Louisville City (soccer).

Education

Jefferson County Public Schools educate more than 100,000 students in 91 elementary schools, 22 middle schools, 18 high schools, 10 special education schools, and 14 other schools. The district has eight community schools that are open year-round for all ages and offer a variety of educational and recreational activities that reflect the requests of the community’s members. The University of Louisville is a public university that offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs in schools of medicine, dentistry, law, and business. Bellarmine University and Spalding University have Roman Catholic affiliations and offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Sullivan University is a private, for-profit institution that offers certificates and associate’s and bachelor’s degree programs. Jefferson Community and Technical College offers associate’s degrees, diplomas, and certificate programs in the areas of allied health, business, engineering technologies, and general education transfer studies.

Health Care

Louisville is served by the following hospitals:

- Baptist Health Louisville: 519 licensed acute care beds
- Central State Hospital: 192 licensed psychiatric beds
- Kindred Hospital Louisville: 337 licensed acute care beds
- Norton Audubon Hospital: 432 licensed acute care beds
- Norton Brownsboro Hospital: 197 licensed acute care beds
- Norton Hospital/Norton Medical Pavilion/Norton Children’s Hospital: 1,133 licensed acute care beds
- Norton Women’s and Children’s Hospital: 373 licensed acute care beds
- The Brook–DuPont: 88 licensed psychiatric beds
- University of Louisville Hospital: 404 licensed acute care beds
- UofL Health–Frazier Rehabilitation Institute: 135 licensed rehabilitation beds
- UofL Health–Jeffish Hospital: 462 licensed acute care beds
- UofL Health–Mary and Elizabeth Hospital: 298 licensed acute care beds
- UofL Health–Peace Hospital: 396 licensed psychiatric beds
- UofL Health–Peace Hospital: 462 licensed acute care beds
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City Stats

City Population: 618,495
Metropolitan Statistical Area Population: 1,264,908
Per Capita Personal Income, Louisville/Jefferson County, MSA: $50,101

Photograph courtesy of Noah Rough.