Kentucky: The 5 Bs of Big Boys' Bonanzas

If you have a landmark birthday with the boys on the horizon or maybe even a stag do to plot, forget the clay pigeons and go karts - do something different and pack your glad bags for Kentucky. The thoroughbred state has plenty to offer boys who just wanna have fun, but with a touch of style too. And with those big boys' breaks in mind, it's all about the Bs...

**Bourbon!**

If it ain't from Kentucky, it probably ain't bourbon. The state produces 95% of America's only 'native spirit', so there's nowhere better to get acquainted with it. The state was once home to hundreds of distilleries, now there are **just seven left,** so you should have little trouble touring them all and getting heady insights into how the hard stuff is made. At Buffalo Trace you can sample their vodka, (Moonshiney) Raw Dog and even Bailey's-like liqueur varieties and see how their premium, small batch product, Blanton's Special Reserve gets from barrel to bottle.

Once you've developed an appreciation for how the sweet libation is distilled and packaged to the world, you'll probably want to chase it down in its natural habitat, one of 9 bars and restaurants on [**Louisville's Urban Bourbon Trail**](http://www.justaddbourbon.com/planavisit/urbantrail.aspx). To qualify for a slot on the hallowed Trail an outlet must stock a minimum of 50 varieties, serve up bourbon tasting flights and mix bourbon cocktails. See how many of these your boys can neck during the trip, but just take our word for it when we say that the distillery tours are best left to those hangover free days!

**Betting!**

The miles of lush, rolling, green hills and the limestone in the soil has made Kentucky the ideal horse breeding ground gifting Louisville one of America's premier sporting events, the Kentucky Derby. Held each May, the Derby represents one of the country's most hotly anticipated 2 minutes of equine exhilaration. Admittedly tickets are about as easy to come by as a seven foot jockey, but you can still suck up some of the fervour with a behind the scenes' visit to Churchill Downs where you can watch the elegant horses trotting out for their early morning training run while you scoff their 'Backside Breakfast', which is much tastier than it sounds!

Churchill holds smaller race meets throughout the season, or alternatively you could gallop across to Lexington's Keeneland Club for a flutter at one of their races held throughout April and October. The minimum bet is $2 and with up to 9 races daily you'll have plenty of chances to work up your own system while knocking back a Mint Julep or two track side in one of their three elegant bars and dining rooms. Remember to come suited and booted for America's answer to Ascot, preferably with your best ten gallon number.

**Bluegrass!**

Home to hearty hoe downs and furious fiddlers, Kentucky put bluegrass music on the map. Banish all thoughts of *Deliverance* from your mind and open your ears to the joyous hillbilly harmonies which ring around the state. Start off in Owensboro to gen up on the music's roots at the International Bluegrass Music Museum, visit the birthplace of the music's father Bill Monroe in nearby Rosine or simply catch one of over 20 festivals happening across the state year-round.

**Baseball & Boxing!**

OK, OK so this one is a little less 'hands on' that it first sounds, but at least you won't be taking any sport injuries back home with you. We're talking about two of the state's best interactive museums, The Muhammad Ali Centre and the Slugger Baseball Bat Factory & Museum, both in Louisville.

Living Louisville legend Muhammad Ali needs no introduction, but this knock out tribute to one of the world's great pugilists, performers and poets gives us all a handy refresher anyway. As well as watching the man's classic bouts and celebrity appearances on film, you can shadow box with the champ, work his punch bag and size up artworks made in his honour.

From one of the world's great sluggers to another, Louisville is home to the Slugger bat, favoured by many of baseball's star swingers over the years, including Babe Ruth. You can see exactly how it's made, finished and branded with this fun, factory floor tour and catch some of the bat's biggest hits from history in the on-site museum. Just why the local team has not yet changed their name from the Louisville Bats to the Sluggers remains a mystery!

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