LOUISVILLE'S
WEST MAIN STREET
WALKING TOUR

More things to see than you can shake a six-story stick at.

Welcome to West Main Street,

Louisville's favorite historic Walking Tour! More than 200 years

in the making, it's a short stroll spiced with slices of Louisville's exciting heritage. Start anywhere! You'll find fascinating bits of the past, intriguing glimpses into the future, and

lots of good food, fun, and entertainment every day! Self-guided tours are available. Call (502) 568.2200 for details.

100

The 100 Block

A block of Main Street whose face hasn't changed since the 19th century, but is about to. This block, known as Whiskey Row because it once housed whiskey and bourbon distillers, is already home to new bars and restaurants, event space, and residential lofts – with much more to come. The building façades are exactly as they were in the mid-1800s.

1 Arena Plaza–KFC Yum! Center

This state-of-the-art arena opened October 2010 in the heart of downtown Louisville. Seating 22,708 and featuring over 700,000 square feet of space, it's no wonder it's the new home of the University of Louisville Cardinals basketball.

200

George Rogers Clark Memorial Bridge

aka the Second Street Bridge. From here, it's a one-mile walk to Indiana. The art deco entrance was designed in 1929 by Paul Cret, architect of Cincinnati's Union Station.

300

Third & Main–One Corporate Plaza

The city's most "powerful" business is headquartered here–LG&E and KU Energy, LLC. With origins dating back to 1838, it is one of the oldest utility companies in the U.S.

304-320 West Main

Tony award winning Actors Theatre of Louisville is best known for its Humana Festival of New American Plays and other ingenious stage productions, but the building is a landmark in its own right. The stone-columned portion is one of the oldest buildings on Main Street (1837) and one of the finest examples of small-scale Greek revival architecture in the U.S.

Inside this national historic landmark you will find the Sara Shallenberger Brown Lobby and the Pamela Brown Auditorium. Next door is another 19th century building, with the intimate Victor Jory Theatre, an atrium, and the Bingham Theatre–all connected to a parking garage. (502) 584-1205.

Main Street Trolley

The Main Street trolleys run Monday through Saturday on Main from Campbell Street on the east to 10th Street on the west, then returns to Campbell Street via Market Street. There is no charge to ride the trolley. (502) 585-1234.

400

Fourth & Main

The sprawling Galt House Hotels complex includes offices, apartments, retail spaces, restaurants, and the city's largest hotel convention facilities. The twin office towers are topped with whimsical rotating search lights. (502) 589-5200.

3 Riverfront Plaza

Climb the steps and touch the American Life & Accident building designed by architect Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe, a champion of the International style. Its originally unpainted Cor-Ten steel was designed to rust to a beautiful bronze hue but was eventually painted.

500

Place Montpellier & Main/Entrance to the Belvedere Park

Here you are only a few steps from a great park overlooking the Ohio River. Find the statue of Louisville founder George Rogers Clark on the plaza and you will learn the secret of the city's beginnings. Follow the blue bricks to trace the outline of the Ohio River. Access to Waterfront Park and the riverfront elevator are only steps away.

Fifth & Main

Across the street is National City Tower, 40 stories of glass, steel, and booming business designed by Harrison & Abromowitz of New York in 1972. Prior to being acquired by PNC Bank, First National Bank of Louisville–the first national bank south of the Mason-Dixon Line–was headquartered here. Nearly 200 years ago, naturalist John J. Audubon lived on this site when it hosted the Indian Queen Hostelry.

Magnet Magic

Take a "magnetic" tour. A magnet will stick to buildings whose facades are cast iron. Over a century ago, cast iron made it possible to build beautiful decorative features that were too expensive to carve out of stone. Main Street is one of the largest assemblies of cast-iron fronted buildings in the U.S.! See the sidewalk bricks in front of the columns? They are placed sideways and flecked with iron to make it easy to identify the cast iron buildings.

500 West Main

The post-modern Humana Building, designed by Michael Graves, pays homage to its River City location with waterwall fountains and steel bridgework. The graduated facade complements the smaller 1800s-era buildings that adjoin it. Step inside the lobby to see a combination of classical art and fascinating architecture.

5 Riverfront Plaza–The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts

Five major arts groups delight the senses with music, dance, theater, drama, and more, while its mirrored exterior reflects the city that surrounds it. Opened in 1983, the Center has multiple performance venues for the Louisville Ballet, Louisville Orchestra, Kentucky Opera, The Broadway Series, Stage One: The Louisville Children's Theatre, and extraordinary local, national, and international talents. Enjoy the dramatic sculptures and works by Calder and Dubuffet and pieces by Nevelson, Chamberlain, Morley, and Miro. Tickets to all performances available at box office. Schedule (502) 584-7777.

Famous Footsteps

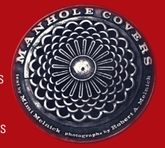
You are walking where famous feet have trod. Over the years, Daniel Boone, Abraham Lincoln, U.S. Grant, Thomas Edison, Charles Dickens, John James Audubon, D.W. Griffith, Muhammad Ali, Pee Wee Reese, Mary Anderson, and other great personalities have walked along Main Street.

600

Sixth Avenue Building

"Everybody" slept here. Once the Seelbach European Hotel, it later became the Old Louisville Inn (1905).

600-700 Blocks



You step into the past when you walk these blocks listed on the National Trust for Historic Places, second only to New York City's Soho district in terms of number of cast-iron facades. Can you identify them? Remember to read the bricks. Clues are everywhere: Ironwood trees grow in front of cast-iron buildings, surrounded by replicas of authentic coal hole covers (six originals are in front of the 730 building). A stand of three trees planted together indicates the building is masonry (brick). Study the cast-iron walking sticks and tree rings for hints as to the original uses of nearby buildings. If you need help, the stone doormats have the answers. Even the sidewalk tells a tale. The bricks in front of cast-iron buildings are flecked with iron and run to the curb, precisely as wide as the columns they shadow!

144 North 6th Street–Muhammad Ali Center

The Ali Center is a destination site and international education and cultural center inspired by the ideals of its founder, Muhammad Ali. Serving as a "global gathering place," the Center features 2 ½ levels of interactive exhibits, captivating multi-media presentations; themed pavilions; a five-screen orientation film, historic Civil Rights era media footage, video-on-demand of Ali's fights, hands-on boxing fun, two changing exhibit galleries, children's Hope and Dream wall, retail store and more. (502) 584-9254. www.Alicenter.org

As you walk, lift your eyes to the upper floors or you will miss the artistry and imagery of craftspeople of another time. Don't miss:

620 West Main – Doe-Anderson Building

Behind the handsome white stone façade with its Romanesque arches, this circa-1890 structure, sensitively renovated in 1993, houses Kentucky's longest-standing (and the USA's fourth-oldest) advertising agency, Doe-Anderson.

623 West Main

The Fund for the Arts, the first and oldest community fund of its kind in the U.S., was the brainchild of former Mayor Charles P. Farnsley (1949-53). Look for him "sitting" in front of the Fund's headquarters. (502) 582-0100.

626 and 637 West Main

Terra cotta man and beasts, cast-iron ivy and vegetables, and more wit and whimsy from 19th century architects. Look up–it's all in the details.

624 West Main Street–PYRO Gallery

An artist cooperative currently representing 17 contemporary artists, the gallery is owned and managed by its membership. Disciplines include painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, fiber art, ceramics and mixed media. New exhibits are scheduled every 6 weeks and may include guest artists. (502) 587-0106. www.Pyrogallery.com

Chapman-Friedman Gallery

International contemporary fine art and art objects, plus exclusive collections of teapots and ceramics. (502) 584-7954.

626 West Main Street–Brown-Forman Corp.

Built in 1872 and constructed of wood, sandstone, and brick, the building has been totally renovated and includes an atrium, reception area, and meeting and office space. Morton's, The Steakhouse, is on the lower level.

That Certain Style

Architectural buffs delight in the array of styles found on Main St.: Greek revival (columns, pilasters, heavy cornices) at Actors Theater, 316 W. Main; Italianate (decorative cast-iron facades and villa-type character) at the Hart Block Bldg. at 730 W. Main; Richardsonian Romanesque (rounded archways and windows, Limestone and terra cotta construction) at the Doe-Anderson Bldg. at 620 W. Main; International (sleek concrete, glass, and steel) at National City Tower at Fifth and Main; and Post-Modern (new colors, stone, and symbolic ties to environmental features) at the Humana Building, also at Fifth and Main.

627 West Main

Formerly called "Stairways," this building houses the Main Street Visitors Center. One of the street's first restorations, this Junior League project helped spark the Main Street renaissance. (502) 568-2220 or (502) 561-3493.

634 West Main

St. Charles Building. Built in 1832, this building is the oldest on Main. A third generation Main Street building, it was preceded by Fort Nelson, which was followed by log huts. Three-story brick buildings came next and lined the streets at the time of the Civil War.

New Beginnings at the End of the Road

The moat is gone, but between 6th and 8th on Main once stood Fort Nelson, a haven for settlers in the late 1700s. This site was the terminus of the Wilderness Road, the first overland route west from Virginia across the Appalachian Mountains through the Cumberland Gap, and the site of the first permanent settlement in what would become Louisville. Today the northwest corner of 7th and Main is a pocket park, studded with historical markers and architectural cues from nearby structures.

700

700-706 West Main Street–21C Museum Hotel

The original buildings are circa 1890 and have had many different tenants throughout the years. These historic structures have been renovated as a 95,000 square foot project called Project 21C with three components–a boutique hotel, Proof Restaurant, and a contemporary art gallery.

715 West Main Street–Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft

Dedicated to promoting the art and craft heritage of Kentucky, the Gallery has four exhibit spaces and a Gallery Shop. Free admission. (502) 589-0102. www.KentuckyArts.org

727 West Main–Louisville Science Center

Discover worlds of wonder on three floors of fun, fantasy, and science for the whole family, including an IMAX Theater. Constructed of limestone and cast iron as a wholesale dry goods store in 1878, it is an excellent example of adaptive reuse. Cork Marcheschi's geometric kinetic sculpture in front is a stunning street marker day or night–as skies darken, photo-electric sensors activate its colored lights. (502) 561-6100.

730 West Main

Mark your map–this is the "Queen" of cast-iron buildings. Every inch of the beautiful façade of the Hart Block Building was cast in 1884 at a foundry just a block away. This early "pre-fab" construction allowed for larger windows and greater height–the forerunner of today's skyscrapers.

High and Dry

In January 1937, when most of downtown was up to its ears in Ohio River flood waters, Main Street shopkeepers found themselves on the backbone of the "City Island" and were spared. Such flooding is unlikely today thanks to the 15-foot concrete floodwall that parallels Main Street. Giant gates can be installed to close the wall at 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th streets.

800

800 West Main–Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory

Safe at home! The world's largest baseball bat (120 feet tall!) guides you to the Hillerich & Bradsby Louisville Slugger museum and plant. H&B first made wooden bats in Louisville in 1884 and continues to be the major league leader! Factory tours are available. (502) 588-7228.

801 West Main

The Fort Nelson Building. Fire and tornado ravaged this block more than 100 years ago, but this surviving cast iron, brick, and limestone structure with its columns, proud turret, and tower remains one of the most unique on Main. Can you find the stone cannon?

829 West Main Street–Frazier History Museum

Two world-class collections, Britain's Royal Armories, USA, and The Frazier Collection are housed in this 100,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art museum in downtown Louisville's cultural arts district. Thanks to this historical collaboration, The Frazier is the first cultural institution in the world dedicated to telling the complete American story, including its British and European roots. The Frazier brings "History to Life" every day through live performances by costumed interpreters, multi-media presentations, and hands-on learning. (502) 753-5663. www.Fraziermuseum.org

MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION

Louisville
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Main Street Visitor and Information Center; 627 West Main Street; Louisville, KY 40202; (502) 568.2220; www.MainStreetAssociation.com