

SPRING + SUMMER 2024

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middle  
of  
everything

GARDEN OF THE GODS,  
SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST

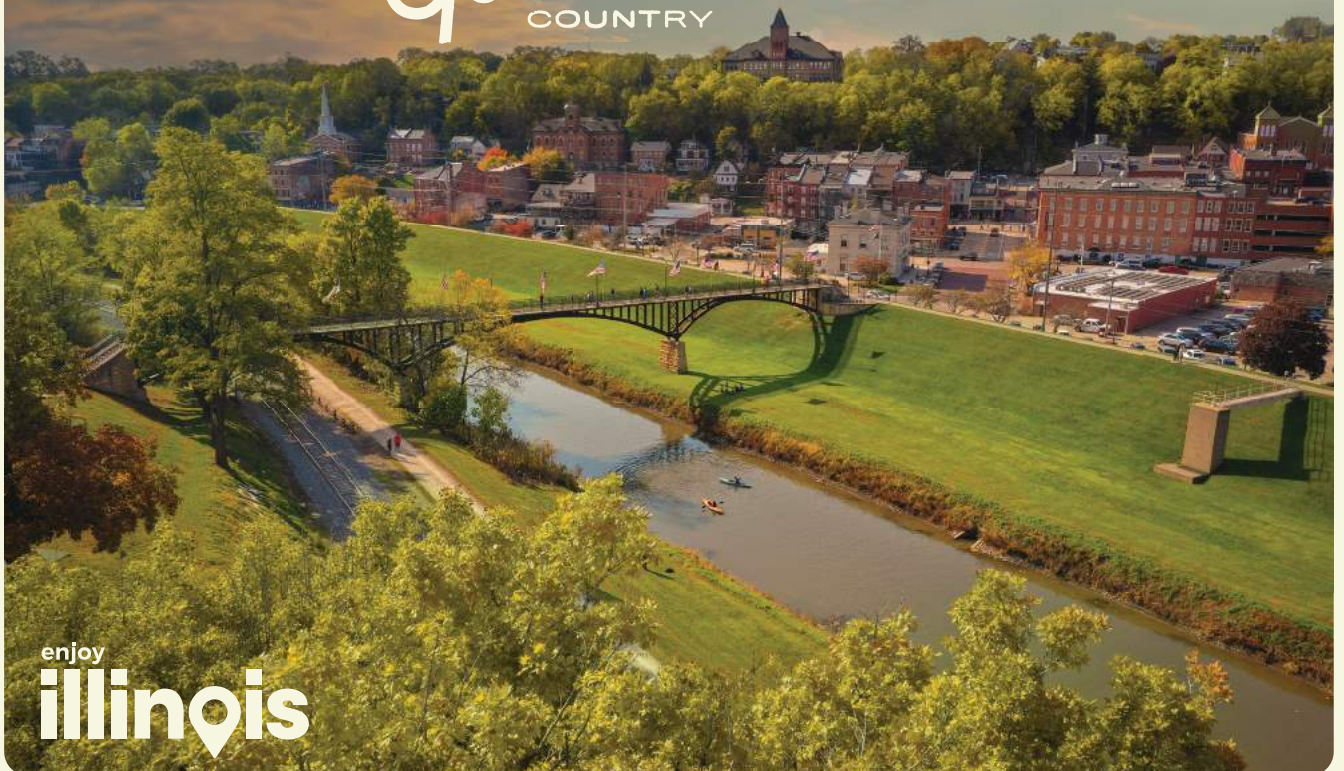
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*Chicago  
Pride  
Parade*  
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PHOTOGRAPH: IOT

📍 **ON THE COVER** Garden of the Gods, Shawnee National Forest. Photograph: Starboard and Port

THE MIDDLE  
OF EVERYTHING

# WELCOME

Whether you're a first-time visitor, a frequent guest or even a proud Illinoisan, there is so much to experience in Illinois, The Middle of Everything.

In this issue, we'll take you for a ride along Chicago's North Shore, a storied route peppered with idyllic small towns, unique upscale restaurants and shops, and an abundance of cultural gems and outdoor activities. Or explore from Oak Park to Edwardsville and find that picture-perfect spot to take the most Instagrammable pics—be sure to tag us #enjoyillinois!

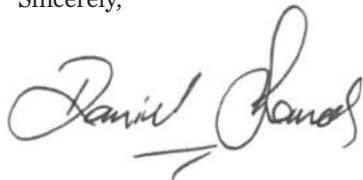
Looking for a delicious way to connect with nature? Check out our Illinois Made feature. Our talented Makers take “locally grown” to another level with fresh produce and artisanal spirits and brews. And of course, everyone deserves an easy-to-plan getaway, so we had local experts do the hard work for you. Peruse this issue's Trip Ideas to Aurora, Bishop Hill, Shelbyville and Carbondale.

In addition to our inspiration guide, I encourage you to visit *EnjoyIllinois.com*, where you'll find over 100 additional road trip ideas. Whether it's a weekend in Galena, an outdoor adventure in Southern Illinois, an exploration of African American heritage, or a guide to the vibrant neighborhoods of Chicago, you'll find the information you need on our website.

With 64 state parks, three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, seven scenic byways, six state forests and our National Forest, there is something for everyone in our 102 counties.

On behalf of the Illinois Office of Tourism, I'd like to officially welcome you to Illinois!

Sincerely,



**DANIEL THOMAS**

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, OFFICE OF TOURISM

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OFFICE OF TOURISM

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# 31

## UNEXPECTED ADVENTURES

Whether your ideal adventure is a leisurely stroll, a wild night of cabaret and comedy, a perfect playground, gourmet foodie specialty bites, eclectic art galleries and home decor shops, history buff tours, a fashionista paradise of high-end designs, or unique whiskey heritage. Discover these unexpected tailor-made adventures.



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**CHICAGO**  
CHOOSE CHICAGO



# CHICAGO VOTED BEST BIG CITY 7 YEARS IN A ROW



SEE WHY



EAT PLAY STAY

# GUIDEBOOK

*Nicholas  
Conservatory  
and Gardens,  
Rockford*



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY AND GARDENS



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SUMMER  
2024

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# Along the Shore

*A collection of vibrant Lake Michigan communities beckons with beautiful beaches and small-town sophistication. It's all here—and just north of Chicago.*



*Downtown Wilmette*



**ANN MARIE SCHEIDLER** is a freelance writer who lives on the North Shore with her husband and five children. She tends to be where her kids are. But if you can't find her there, she's creating content for her eponymous lifestyle blog—a chronicle of all her favorite things.





*Gillson Park*



*Napolita Pizzeria and Wine Bar*



*Sophia Steak*



*Buck Russell's*

- LAKE BLUFF
- LAKE FOREST
- HIGHWOOD
- HIGHLAND PARK
- GLENCOE
- WINNETKA
- WILMETTE
- EVANSTON

## Chicago's North Shore

*Flanked by Lake Michigan on the east and the Windy City to the south, Chicago's North Shore stretches for more than 30 miles from Evanston to Illinois Beach State Park in Zion.*

### THE VIBE

*Playing at the beach and boutiques.*

## WILMETTE AND WINNETKA

Public access makes it a snap to visit **Gillson Park** with its pet-friendly beach and watercraft rentals (kayaks, SUPs and sailboats). After a day splashing and playing in Lake Michigan, head to family-owned **Ridgeview Grill** or pop into **Napolita Pizzeria and Wine Bar** for a piping hot pie. Satisfy your sweet tooth with a Buck Ranger Cookie at **Buck Russell's**. **Sophia Steak**, another downtown option, serves wet-aged cuts of beef. Cruise by the private Winnetka house made famous in *Home Alone* on your way to shop in upscale fashion boutiques **Bunny and Babe** and **Neapolitan Collection**, then kick back at neighborhood bistros **Pomeroy** and **501 Local** or at sushi joint **Jimoto**. Still searching for the perfect eatery? Head north on Green Bay Road for **Spirit Elephant** (all vegan) or **Towne and Oak** (all-day breakfast).



*Michael's Grill and Salad Bar*



*28 Mile Distilling Company*



*Froggy's French Cafe*



*Miramar Bistro*

## NORTH SHORE IN A DAY

*Begin in Lake Forest with coffee and a pastry from Gerhard's Elegant European Desserts, then explore Market Square and the historical homes on the east side of the city. Venture into Highland Park and pop into The Art Center Highland Park to see its newest exhibition, then break for tea at Madame ZuZu's Cafe. Cap off your day with some great boutique shopping in Winnetka—check out Serena and Lily, Neapolitan Collection, and Bunny and Babe. End your adventure with dinner at Pomeroy.*

### THE VIBE

*Savoring the cutting-edge food scene.*

## HIGHLAND PARK AND HIGHWOOD

Start a day of deliciousness with an apple cinnamon pancake at **Walker Brothers** or crepes from **That Little French Guy** bakery before wandering Highland Park's Central Avenue stores. Find small-batch sweets along with gelato at **Terry's Toffee** and get a Chicago-style hot dog (no ketchup) at **Michael's Grill and Salad Bar**. Treat yourself to an afternoon pep-up at

**Madame ZuZu's**, a plant-based tea shop and emporium run by The Smashing Pumpkins founder Billy Corgan. Global flavors shine throughout Highwood with French-inspired **Froggy's French Cafe** and **Miramar Bistro**; Italian favorites **The Del Rio Restaurant** and **Disotto**; Mexican go-to **La Plancha Loca**; and Mexican-inspired quick-serve **The Mean Weiner**. (Don't let the name fool you.) Satisfy your sweet tooth with a house-made HoHo from **Bent Fork Bakery** and melt-in-your-mouth candy from **Toffee Traditions**. End your day at **28 Mile Distilling Company's** cocktail bar.

**ILLINOIS INSIDER** The North Shore was founded more than 100 years ago when Chicago's movers and shakers, wanting a respite from city life, found quiet and beauty along Lake Michigan.



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## NORTH SHORE KNOW-HOW

***What's the best way to get around?*** You can easily explore the North Shore communities by car or Metra train. Parking a car is easy, and all North Shore towns have train stops in the heart of their cities. If you'd like a sportier day, you can pedal the Green Bay Trail, a 9-mile path from Wilmette to Highland Park that runs parallel to Metra's Union Pacific North line.

***Can anyone visit the beaches?*** Yes! One of the best parts of visiting the North Shore is if you'd like to take a walk to the beach, you can. Most beaches are about a mile walk from the train stop. You may have to pay a fee (\$10–\$25) to visit the beach for the day if you're not a local.

***How much time should I plan?*** You can easily explore the North Shore in a day, but it makes a great weekend destination. You'll be most successful if you start from Chicago and head north, or from Lake Forest and head south.

**THE VIBE**

*Connecting with natural beauty.*

**ILLINOIS BEACH STATE PARK**

Yes, **Adeline Jay Geokaris Illinois Beach State Park**, which stretches for 6.5 miles along Lake Michigan near Zion, is known for its dunes and coastline, but the area is packed with more delights. Start with the nature center's interactive exhibits in the South Unit of the park before trekking along 5 miles of trails. You'll also find **The Pavilion** (souvenirs, snacks and beverages), a modern campground, a camp store, and a trailhead for the Zion Bike Trail, which connects to the North Unit with more trails and a nature preserve. Both units offer parking, bathhouses, and plenty of beach and picnic areas. Overnight in the newly renovated **Illinois Beach Hotel** within the park and enjoy the lake views. Inside the hotel, **Nolan's Restaurant** features fresh-made pasta, steaks and sandwiches.



**Deer Path Inn**



**Le Colonial**



**Deseda**



**Illinois Beach State Park**

**LAKE FOREST**

Built as a private home in the 1860s, **Deer Path Inn** offers guests 57 luxe rooms and suites, as well as bicycles to cruise down to **Market Square**, the nation's first planned suburban shopping center designed by Howard Van Doren Shaw in 1916. It's home to the century-old fashion house **The Lake Forest Shop** and **Deseda**, a scarf shop so chic one of its own was worn on *And Just Like That*. Stop by **Gerhard's Elegant European Desserts** for a smile cookie before perusing woman-owned **Lake Forest Book Store**, where you can get personal recommendations. On your way to **Forest Park Beach**, you'll pass some of the city's treasures, like the **Lake Forest Library**, the **History Center of Lake Forest-Lake Bluff** and **Lake Forest College**. Reserve a table for dinner at upscale French-Vietnamese **Le Colonial** or art-inspired **The Gallery** before finishing with an ice cream cone from **Sweet's**.

**THE VIBE**

*Preserving the past with modern touches.*



# MADE FOR WONDER

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A year full of memories awaits you at Navy Pier! Our calendar is packed with exciting events all year-round. Free weekly programming includes outdoor live music, movies, workouts, and captivating dance performances.

There is something for everyone to enjoy at Chicago's top lakefront destination.

Plan your visit at [navypier.org](https://navypier.org).

## NORTH SHORE CLASSICS

*Set your GPS to northbound and consider this your official bucket list of must-see destinations.*

### EVANSTON

#### ***Northwestern University***

The Alice Millar Chapel with its modern stained-glass windows and Dearborn Observatory (open to the public on Fridays after 10 p.m.) are two reasons to take a self-guided tour of the campus, and if classes are in session, stop by Norris University Center for the buzz of students. For questions and maps, pop into the Segal Visitors Center.



*Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center*

### SKOKIE

#### ***Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center***

The permanent collection includes 35,000 artifacts from Holocaust victims as well as survivors who relocated to the Midwest. Hear their stories in two theaters, one with holograms and audio, the other with virtual reality.

### HIGHLAND PARK

#### ***Ravinia Festival***

Since 1904, Ravinia has attracted aficionados of every musical genre to this outdoor venue, which hosts almost 125 concerts from June to September. Sit in the pavilion for views of the stage or on the lawn where you can bring your own table, chairs, food and beverages. Pro tip: Train rides to the grounds are free with a day-of ticket.

### WILMETTE

#### ***The Bahá'í House of Worship***

This striking domed structure is the oldest house of worship still standing for followers of this 19th-century religion. (Only eight remain in the world.) Open to the public, the temple welcomes all to reconnect with their faith, reflect in the stunning auditorium and walk the nine surrounding gardens.

### LAKE FOREST

#### ***Elawa Farm***

Pop into this historic farm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday for just-picked produce and flowers. The gardens are open daily year-round with a robust lineup of events, like Saturday morning yoga, food and cocktail demos, and beekeeping classes. The nearby tallgrass savanna has more than 5 miles of gravel trails for hiking and just over 4 miles for biking.

### GLENCOE

#### ***Chicago Botanic Garden***

Discover what's in bloom in the 385-acre garden along the Skokie River. The expansive park features 28 gardens and four natural areas situated around nine islands. Family favorites include the screened Butterflies and Blooms garden and the Model Railroad Garden with 19 trains traversing landscaped beds.

### WAUKEGAN

#### ***Genesee Theatre***

The opulent theater, built in 1927, hosts live music concerts, children's productions, comedy acts and more. Take a behind-the-scenes tour and learn about the building's history and extensive renovations.



*Elawa Farm*

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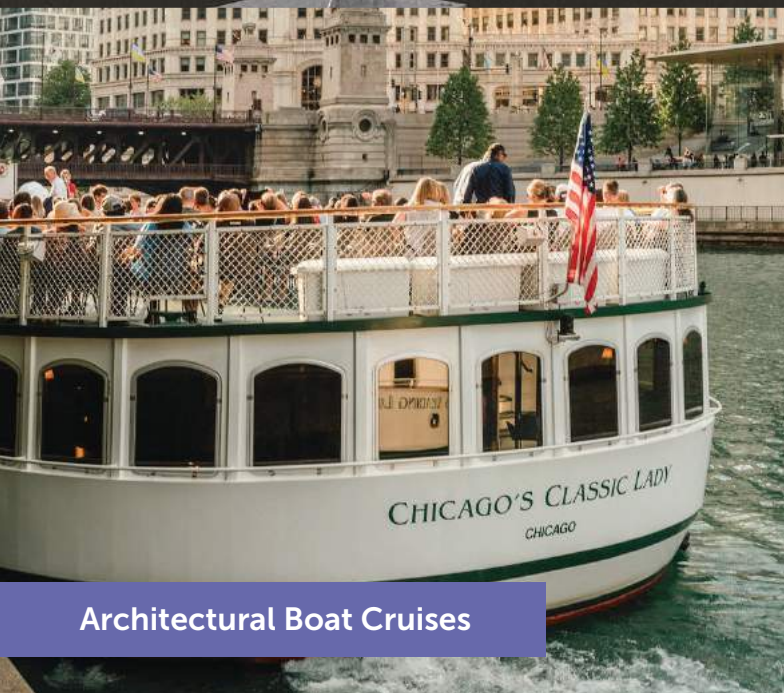
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Escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life; visit LaSalle County. This oasis of unexpected natural wonders is home to the legendary Starved Rock State Park and picturesque small towns, lined with exciting eateries and boutique shopping opportunities. Whether you're looking to tour museums and mansions, or sample locally made wine, there's an adventure awaiting you LaSalle County.



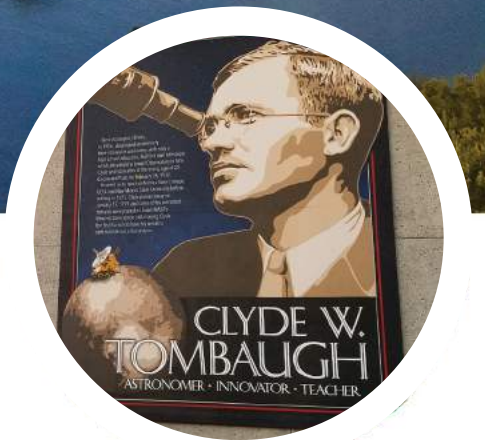
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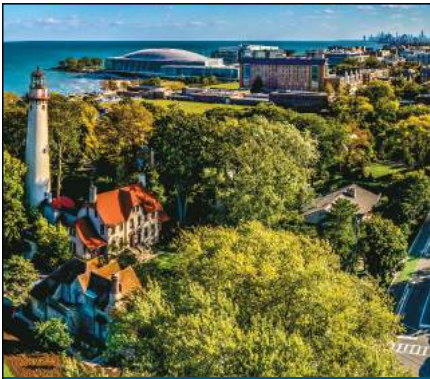
## UNCOVER THE *Possibilities*

Experience the stunning outdoor spaces for biking, hiking, and fishing at Nichols Park and Lake Jacksonville. Rediscover the history of our area at the Jacksonville Area Museum or at the remarkably preserved homes like the Governor Duncan Mansion and Underground Railroad sites. Shop and dine your way through the exclusive boutiques and restaurants that line our gorgeous, historic square. No matter what your idea of a good time is, creating your own experiences comes as easily as discovering a bit of the past.

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**Q**  
**A**

**WITH  
GRACE  
KINSTLER**

*Before wowing American Idol judges and viewers, this Season 19 finalist from Lakewood won over Chicago sports fans with her pregame renditions of the national anthem.*

# BRILLIANT.

food & drink

arts & culture

outdoor adventures

festivals & events

## THIS IS CHAMPAIGN URBANA.

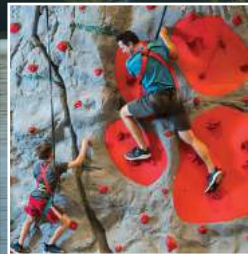


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**EXPERIENCE  
CHAMPAIGN  
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## This summer, make a splash!

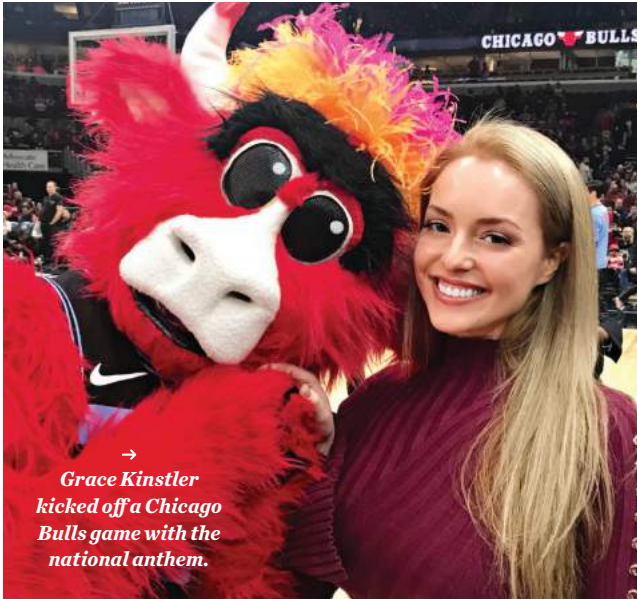
Lake County, just north of Chicago, offers countless ways to enjoy its family-friendly waters. From dozens of delightful lakes to Great Wolf Lodge's amazing indoor water park, there's something for everyone.

Book your stay at [GreatWolf.com/Illinois](http://GreatWolf.com/Illinois). Plan your getaway at [VisitLakeCounty.org](http://VisitLakeCounty.org).



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→ Grace Kinstler kicked off a Chicago Bulls game with the national anthem.

**GRACE KINSTLER WENT FROM BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC STUDENT TO PRIMETIME PERFORMER AFTER LANDING A CAREER-CATAPULTING SPOT ON *AMERICAN IDOL* IN 2021.**

Competing on the show was a dream come true for the singer, who aspired to a life in lights even as a girl growing up in Chicago’s northwestern suburbs.

Millions of viewers who tuned in each week to watch Kinstler cover songs like Sia’s “Elastic Heart,” Adele’s “When We Were Young,” and Kelly Clarkson’s “A Moment Like This” also got to know her deeper story. The second runner-up’s most touching ballad of the season was her take on Demi Lovato’s “Father.” The choice was inspired by the sudden death of Kinstler’s dad, Mitch, just months before her *American Idol* audition.

Continuing to sing has helped Kinstler heal, and life after the competition hasn’t slowed down. She showcased her pipes in Pasadena last January, debuting a single from atop an Illinois-themed float at the Rose Parade, and closed out 2023 starring in an immersive stage production of *Love Actually Live*.

We caught up with the soulful singer (and proud dog mom), who now splits her time between Los Angeles and Austin, Texas, to talk about her hometown favorites—and what’s on her horizon.

**Q** *You didn’t get picked after your first Idol audition. What made you try again?*

**A** I honestly wasn’t going to audition again. But the show reached out to me during the pandemic. I was having a rough time because my dad passed away five months before, and I thought it might take my mind off of things. I didn’t expect my Zoom audition to go as far as it did!

**Q** *How did your parents encourage your interest in music?*

**A** My parents were awesome about bringing me to rehearsals and shows. I got to see incredible live acts with them. They took me to Aerosmith, Billy Joel, Paul McCartney and Sam Smith concerts. When I got to the finals on *Idol*, it meant the world to me to have so many people go out of their way to be supportive. But it was bittersweet because the only person I wanted there was my dad. Ever since I was little, he shared that dream with me. He would print all of my CDs and give them out to people.

**Kinstler’s Iconic Chicago Picks**

When Kinstler plays tourist with her out-of-town boyfriend, she hits her family’s favorites.

**DAY DATE**

**SHEDD AQUARIUM**

I love to watch the fish and animals. The aquarium is one of the first places I took my boyfriend when he came to visit.

**DUDE LUNCH**

**PORTILLO’S**

My dad was a big Italian beef guy. The rest of my family loves it too.

**DEEP-DISH**

**LOU MALNATI’S PIZZERIA**

If you’re a deep-dish person, and I do enjoy the occasional slice, you have to go to Lou Malnati’s.

**Q** *Is your recent role in *Love Actually Live* a signal we should be looking for you onstage?*

**A** The door is open to doing more musical theater. I love the community. That show was an immersive blend of the movie and live performance, which was interesting and technologically advanced. I played Natalie, the prime minister’s love interest. But I think my artistic projects—writing and singing my own music—are going to be my focus. I’d rather tell my own story and be who I am than play a character.

**Q** *You performed your single “Leo” in the Rose Parade. Is an album in the works?*

**A** I have an EP on the way. I’m an independent artist right now, which means I’m not signed to a record label, but I have management.

**Q** *Where is home now?*

**A** All of my family is still in Illinois. I lived in L.A. for two years after *Idol*, but recently moved to Austin, Texas, with my boyfriend. My work is in L.A., so I commute every month. Typically, I can condense my recording projects into a week or two there, then enjoy the balance of having my home, my dogs and my boyfriend back in Austin.

**Q** *If you’re commuting across state lines for love, we need a meet-cute!*

**A** I met Joe in Boston when I was at Berklee College of Music. Our schools were about 10 minutes from each other, and we both were involved in a cappella. He teaches English Language Arts (ELA) now, but you can catch him singing with me on a few of my social media videos.

**Q** *Did you finish up at Berklee or did you leave early to do *Idol*?*

**A** After the show, I had opportunities open up that I didn’t want to miss. In music, a higher degree isn’t necessarily what gets you hired. Performers don’t want to be a flash in the pan, but you want to get in while it’s hot. One of the reasons I went to school was to create connections, and I am grateful for those that I’ve made.

**Q** Which hometown team has your loyalty?

**A** My family is super sporty, and I grew up cheering for the White Sox. I sang the national anthem at a Sox game for the first time when I was 14, then a few other times. Just before *Idol*, I sang “The Star-Spangled Banner” for a Bulls game too. We hosted people at our house for football Sundays, so we were all fans of the Bears. Not a hometown team, but I also sang at a Kansas City Chiefs game, and Sheryl Crow was there. She gave me a sweet hug and words of encouragement.

**Q** Was that your first time meeting her?

**A** I first met Sheryl when I was on *Idol*. She is a woman who supports women, and that’s incredibly important. It can get so competitive that sometimes we forget we’re all in this together and we’re all fighting the same battle. It’s great when female artists support other female artists.

**Q** Who did you listen to, growing up?

**A** When I was younger, I listened to a lot of pop—whatever was catchy. By the time I turned 12, I started paying attention to vocalists: Kelly Clarkson, Christina Aguilera, Whitney Houston, Jennifer Hudson. I wanted to listen to people who could flat-out sing. Those are the women I looked up to as I started to work on my own sound. I still look up to them.

**Q** You mentioned seeing *Idol* judge Katy Perry perform when you were young. Was that in Chicago?

**A** Yes, I saw her California Dreams Tour at Allstate Arena. Because I knew what I wanted to do at such a young age, it was so cool to see someone who I looked up to perform live.

## Kinstler’s Taste of the Suburbs

Kinstler and her family stuck close to Chicago’s northwestern suburbs, where dining options abound. Here’s what tickles Kinstler’s taste buds on trips home:

### BENEDICT’S LA STRATA

It’s a cute little brunch spot in Crystal Lake. I’m pretty sure they make the noodles in their chicken soup from scratch. Pop into the Color Me Mine pottery studio next door and make it a painting date.

### CUCINA BELLA

This remains my family’s go-to spot for Italian food in Algonquin. Try the espresso martini too.


### KYOTO

This Japanese steakhouse and sushi bar in Crystal Lake is a fun place to celebrate with a group.


### EL COCHINO

The tacos at this Mexican-fusion place in Lake in the Hills are good, but they also have delicious garlic hot chicken wings that I love.


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# EXPLORE EVENTS IN THE ELGIN AREA



Explore Elgin Area is your resource for everything to do in the Elgin Area! See events and attractions on our website:

enjoy illinois

ExploreElginArea.com

# Ravinia Festival

*For more than a century, this outdoor music series has been hosting some of the world's greatest performers—across all genres—throughout the summer.*



## THEN

In 1904, Ravinia Festival opened as an upscale amusement park with the goal of enticing Chicagoans to ride the train north to Highland Park, where they would find fresh air and forests at the outdoor music pavilion.

## NOW

Today, the train still stops in front of the park's entrance. Festivalgoers can ride Metra's Union Pacific North Line for free with proof of a dated concert ticket. For a traditional experience, get tickets for the 3,300-seat open-air covered pavilion or for the full effect, sit on the lawn with space for several thousand.



### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

#### WHAT TO BRING

If you plan to sit on the lawn, bring chairs or blankets, plus what you can carry (while navigating crowds), such as a cooler with food and drinks.

#### WHERE TO PARK

There is on-site parking, but it's limited and quickly fills up. Another option—park in the Metra station lot and take the free shuttle to the gate.

#### WHERE TO EAT

The park offers three sit-down restaurants as well as concession carts and the Ravinia Market for grab-and-go food and beverages.





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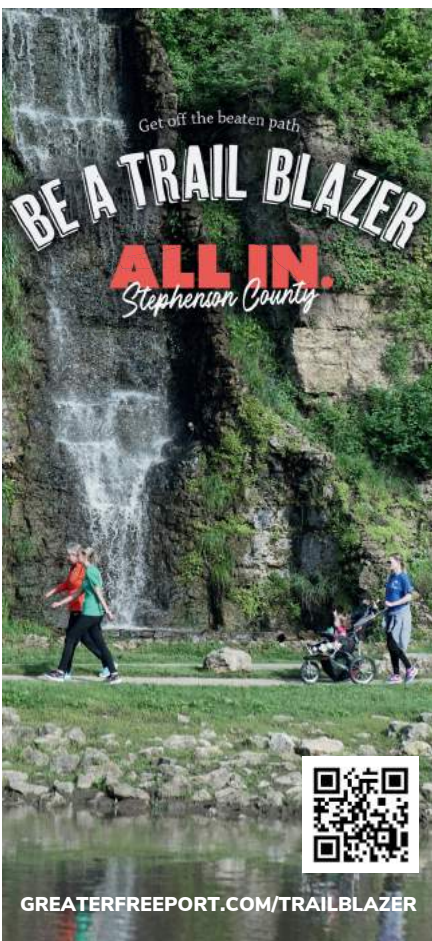


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# Buzz-Worthy Views

*From rooftop to riverside—and to the world's largest Starbucks—these venues serve a bevy of beverages with a side of stunning scenery.*



## GRAFTON

### ***The Terrace, Aerie's Resort***

Ride an enclosed gondola on the Grafton SkyTour to The Terrace—an expansive open-air deck—at the top of a hill. Here cold beers and local wines come with panoramic vistas of the bluffs above the confluence of the mighty Mississippi and Illinois rivers.

## PEORIA

### ***Obed and Isaac's Microbrewery and Eatery***

Stained-glass windows line the 1889 church-turned-brewery. The beers rotate, but in the summer, look for fruity brews like blueberry wheat and strawberry blonde. Or go for a classic Peoria Skyline IPA.

↑  
**OBED  
AND  
ISAAC'S**  
*Playgames,  
like bocce, while  
hanging out in  
the beer garden  
(Peoria and  
Springfield).*

## ROCKFORD

### ***Fresco at the Gardens, Anderson Japanese Gardens***

Winding footpaths through exotic flowering shrubs and past waterfalls and colorful koi ponds lead to a blackberry mimosa brunch at Fresco. Their bar also serves music-lovers on Tuesday evenings with summer concerts.

## NORMAL

### ***Medici in Normal***

With 32 tap handles, many of which are devoted to small-batch Midwestern brews, this two-level restaurant draws craft beer enthusiasts to its rooftop patio. Patrons lounge on furniture sourced from the owner's tree farm while admiring the 30-foot mulberry tree growing inside the restaurant.

## CHICAGO

### ***Starbucks Reserve Roastery***

The world's biggest Starbucks pairs people-watching with luxe coffee cocktails, like the vanilla-spiked Oleato Golden Foam Espresso Martini. Even a classic cup of joe tastes swanky while gazing onto the Magnificent Mile from the rooftop patio.

**ILLINOIS INSIDER** Furry friends (the four-legged kind on a leash) love the patio at Obed and Isaac's, where Bowser Beer and spelt-grain biscuits are made just for dogs.

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- Great Solar Eclipse • April 8
- Superman Celebration • June 7 - 9
- ASA IL Pro/AM • June 27 - 30
- Hometown Celebration • July 5
- Super City Brew Fest • Sept. 7
- Fort Massac Encampment • Oct. 19 - 20

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# On the Farm

*These family-owned farms will feed your sense of adventure, while allowing you to follow the journey locally grown products take before reaching you.*

## **RENDELMAN ORCHARDS**

### **ALTO PASS**

Since 1873, vision and adaptation have produced sweet returns on this family farm in Southern Illinois' Shawnee National Forest. The original 88-acre livestock farm has increased to more than 800 acres, where peaches, nectarines, apples, pumpkins and flowers are grown. "We are grateful for the outpouring of support from the region and state for our 150 years of farming," says Michelle Sirles, who with her husband, Wayne, represents the fifth generation to own and operate Rendleman Orchards. The farm offers several U-pick fields, including colorful zinnias, wispy cosmos, pastel-hue strawflowers, bright sunflowers and giant mums; nature's pollinators get their own 6-acre farm too. Summer days bring peach smoothies and the Farm Market, which is open for visitors who want hand-picked fruit, jars of jam and other specialty items.



*Strawflower Field*



←  
*Michelle and Wayne Sirles are fifth-generation owners.*

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2024



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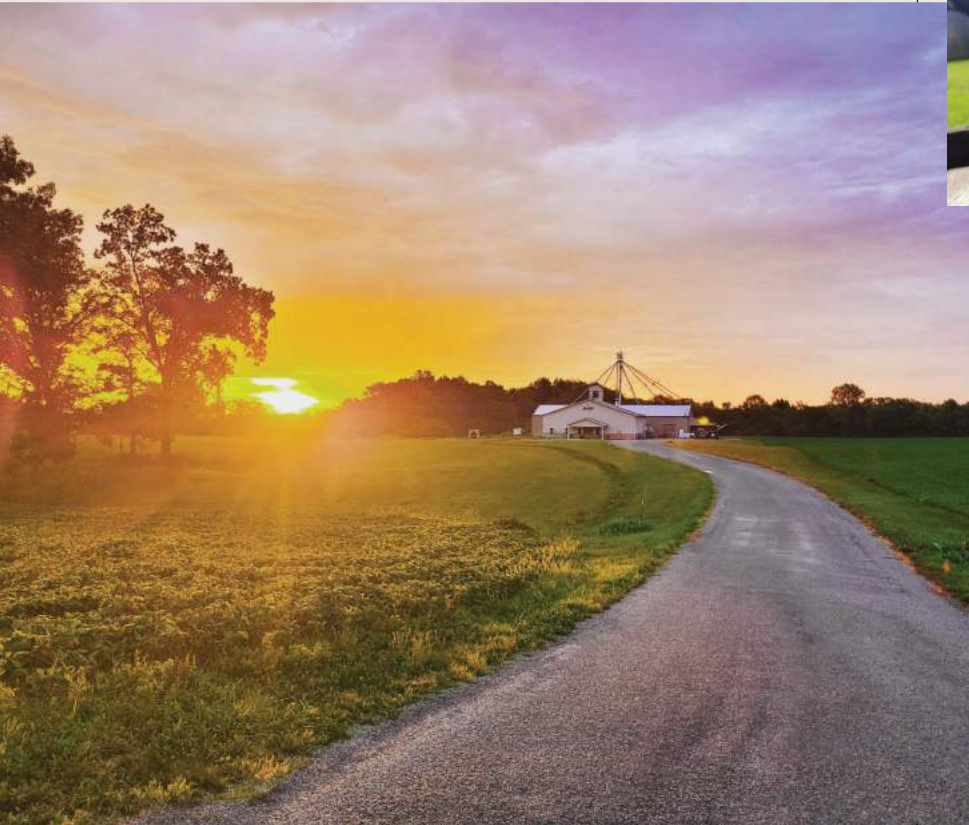
## Shoreline SIGHTSEEING

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## **STUMPY'S SPIRITS**

### **COLUMBIA**

Adam Stumpf traces his family's history in this area to the Civil War era. As the eighth generation, he and his wife, Laura, expanded the farm to include a distillery, Stumpy's Spirits. Boasting grain-to-glass capabilities, all the corn, wheat, rye and barley used for the namesake bourbon, vodka, gin and whiskey grows on the land. "We love having visitors to the distillery, tasting with us," Laura says. To provide a better guest experience, the Stumpfs are opening a new 300-person wedding venue, tasting room and bar. Open Thursday through Sunday, the distillery pours samples of favorites, such as Old Monroe Bourbon, Pecan Pie Whiskey, and Unbroken Peach Vodka. Advance reservations are required for the one-hour tours, which include six samples, a complimentary glass and a cocktail.

*Get a taste of  
the region at this  
farm owned  
by Adam and  
Laura Stumpf.*



## **WISHPFUL ACRES FARM AND BREWERY**

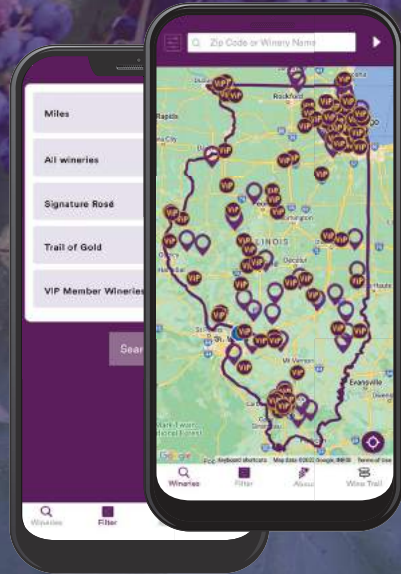
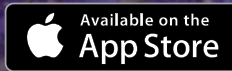
### **LENA**

One farmer and one brewer, Penny and Nate Peterson, make up the duo who own and operate this 10-acre farm in northwest Illinois. "It's just the two of us—we do it all," says Penny, who grows more than 100 varieties of organic fruits, vegetables and hops. The produce fills presold Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) orders, while the hops undergo fermentation along with homegrown ingredients like basil, hot peppers and fruit. Taste the results in the taproom barn or venture outside to the orchard beer garden. The weekend-only brewery has a dozen taps with a variety of beers like Peach Mango and Jalapeño Ale, plus hard lemonade, frozen slushies and root beer.

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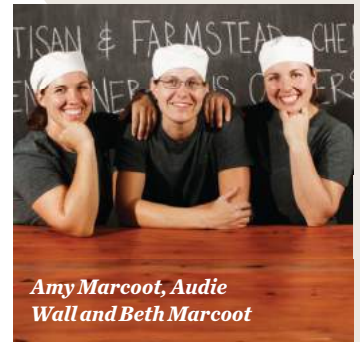
## ILLINOIS MADE MEET THE MAKERS



*Farm-to-Table Gift Set*

### MARCOOT JERSEY CREAMERY

**GREENVILLE**  
What's not to love about adorable animals who create dairy products like delectable cheese and silky ice cream? "We want people to understand where their food comes from by offering a field-to-fork experience," says tour director Laura Wall. Open six days a week, the seventh-generation family farm welcomes visitors to wander through the calf barn (open seasonally), milking parlor and creamery—or go on The Big Cheese Safari, a one-hour guided tour that includes a cheese tasting (open seasonally). All the artisan cheeses, such as Mauna Loa Cheddar and Five-Alarm Gouda, are aged in an underground cave. Grab take-home treats (options are available for your favorite canine) from the Country Store, which also sells honey, beef and homemade ice cream.



*Amy Marcoot, Audie Wall and Beth Marcoot*



*Scan the code to learn more about all the Illinois Made Makers.*

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF MARCOOT JERSEY CREAMERY

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# The Great Chicago Splurge

*The Chicago flag features only four stars, but the city abounds with five-star experiences. Eat, drink and be merrily pampered on a lavish weekend away. We've curated a three-day itinerary.*

## FRIDAY

### AFTERNOON

Check into **The St. Regis Chicago**, part of the upscale Lakeshore East area. At 101 stories, it's the tallest building in the world designed by a woman—Jeanne Gang. From the outside, it's less skyscraper and more sculpture: The undulating exterior features striking geometric shapes and glass in five shades of blue. Inside, floor-to-ceiling windows provide commanding views of the Chicago River, Navy Pier and Lake Michigan. The color palette leans into the 1871 Great Chicago Fire, with copper and rust tones representing flames and industrial rubble. Best of all, every

room is assigned a butler who'll help you unpack and pack, deliver complimentary beverages, and press your clothes.

## EVENING

Begin at **After** in the West Loop. The chic cocktail lounge serves plates small and large by Michelin-starred chef Curtis Duffy. Favorite bites include a Brussels sprout slaw, mushroom risotto, and pork cheek pozole. A rounded marble bar offers front-row seats for performance bartending, as mixologists create concoctions like the A5 Vesper—gin washed in Wagyu beef fat and served with caviar on a puffed beef tendon. For a full multicourse meal by Duffy, go next door to his **Ever** restaurant.



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SATURDAY

MORNING

Take an early walk around the neighborhood (**Millennium Park** is close by) before breakfast at **Goddess and the Baker** on South Wabash Avenue. It's a fun, fast-casual spot with seriously good food. Try the Smoked Salmon Plate or the Acai Bowl.

Cleanse your body and soul at **AIRE Ancient Baths Chicago**, set in a restored 1902 River West factory. The 90-minute Ultimate Bath is a journey of hydration sensations that begins in an ancient-look space lit by hundreds of candles. Move between areas at your leisure. Experiences include an indoor/outdoor bath with a waterfall, a salt bath, exfoliating scrubs, a face mask, steam rooms and cold plunges.

AFTERNOON

Do lunch at **3 Arts Club Cafe** at RH Chicago, the Gold Coast location of the luxury home furnishings retailer. The lush central courtyard setting feels like a European terrace garden.

Double up on fungi delicacies by ordering the truffle grilled cheese with a side of wild mushrooms. House-made chocolate chip cookies indulge sweet tooths.

After lunch, stay on the Gold Coast for high-end shopping in the **Oak Street District**, home to designer outposts for names like Armani, Prada, Chanel and Hermes. If you're on a retail roll, continue to **The Magnificent Mile**, a shopping-dense stretch of North Michigan Avenue.

EVENING

Back at **The St. Regis**, dine amid sparkling city vistas on the terrace of **Miru**, which excels at modern Japanese cuisine with local flavors. Every dish is a work of art, whether it's avocado crispy rice, smoked pork belly skewer or sashimi. Each St. Regis hotel serves a signature Bloody Mary, and Miru's is The 1871, another nod to the Great Fire. The molten mix is poured into a smoking glass rimmed with smoked salt—a perfect cocktail for weekend brunch too. Another St. Regis tradition? The champagne



Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

sabrage—opening a bottle of bubbly with a saber à la Napoleon. Later, relax in the indoor pool or in a sauna at **The Athletic Club**, both with amazing views.

SUNDAY

MORNING

Awaken and indulge your body with a session at **The St. Regis Spa**. The Profound Hydration is a 60-minute deeply hydrating facial that uses ceramides to rejuvenate your skin.

Have brunch at **Little Goat Diner** in its new location on North Southport Avenue in Lakeview. It's worth the drive/ride to taste the creations of James Beard Award-winning chef Stephanie Izard, like This Little Piggy, an elevated egg sandwich with a heavenly cheddar biscuit.

AFTERNOON

The **Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago**, a block off The Mag Mile, has works by modern superstars like Jasper Johns and Cindy Sherman, but also showcases local artists and produces groundbreaking exhibitions in galleries located on four levels.

Take in a matinee at the magnificent **Lyric Opera House** on North Wacker Drive. The grand foyer at this architectural and cultural gem absolutely glows with its bronze doors, gilt cornices, Austrian crystal chandeliers and stenciled ceilings.

More Stellar Options

ESMÉ

Art, culture and fine dining meet at this Lincoln Park restaurant.

TZUCO

Michelin-star chef Carlos Gaytán infuses Mexican cuisine with French twists at this River North eatery.

ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

The venerable venue's collection spans centuries and the globe. See *Georgia O'Keeffe: "My New Yorks"* (June 2–September 22).

FRONTERA GRILL

Try Oaxacan Carne Asada at the flagship River North restaurant of famed chef Rick Bayless.

AU CHEVAL

Eggs are exalted at this West Loop pub-diner hybrid with a coveted cheeseburger.

THE AVIARY

The posh West Loop cocktail spot indulges all your senses with sumptuously presented drinks and small bites.



AIRE Ancient Baths Chicago



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SUMMER  
FESTIVALS &  
EVENTS

# DATEBOOK



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Enjoy Illinois  
Solar Eclipse  
Guide.



## TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

APRIL 8  
AT 1:59 P.M.

**CARBONDALE  
& SOUTHERN  
ILLINOIS**

*Carbondale sits on the centerline, which means viewers can expect four minutes and nine seconds of total darkness, which is almost twice the time in 2017. If you miss this one, the next total solar eclipse (in the U.S.) isn't until 2044.*

←

### APRIL 5-8 CROSSROADS ECLIPSE FESTIVAL

*Carbondale*  
Leading up to the public viewing at Saluki Stadium, Southern Illinois University will host a variety of events, including an eclipse comic con, a concert, an arts and craft fair, and a science and tech expo.

### APRIL 6-7 ECLIPSE ON THE BRICKS

*Albion*  
Join locals on 5th Street for music, food, fun and frivolity before the main event. Saturday's lineup includes family activities like the children's parade and pageants, jump houses, and an '80s dance party. Enjoy trivia and cornhole on Sunday.

### APRIL 8 SHAWNEE HILLS WINE TRAIL

*Southern Illinois*  
The 11 wineries on the trail sit in the heart of the eclipse. Plan on sipping wine and enjoying special events on the day of the eclipse. Some wineries have on-site lodging, and Star View Vineyard allows RV parking.

### APRIL 8 BALD KNOB CROSS OF PEACE

*Alto Pass*  
Overlooking the Shawnee National Forest, the 111-foot-tall Bald Knob Cross sits on one of the highest points in the state. This prime location has two ticket options for day-of viewing; tickets include eclipse glasses and a T-shirt.

Experience

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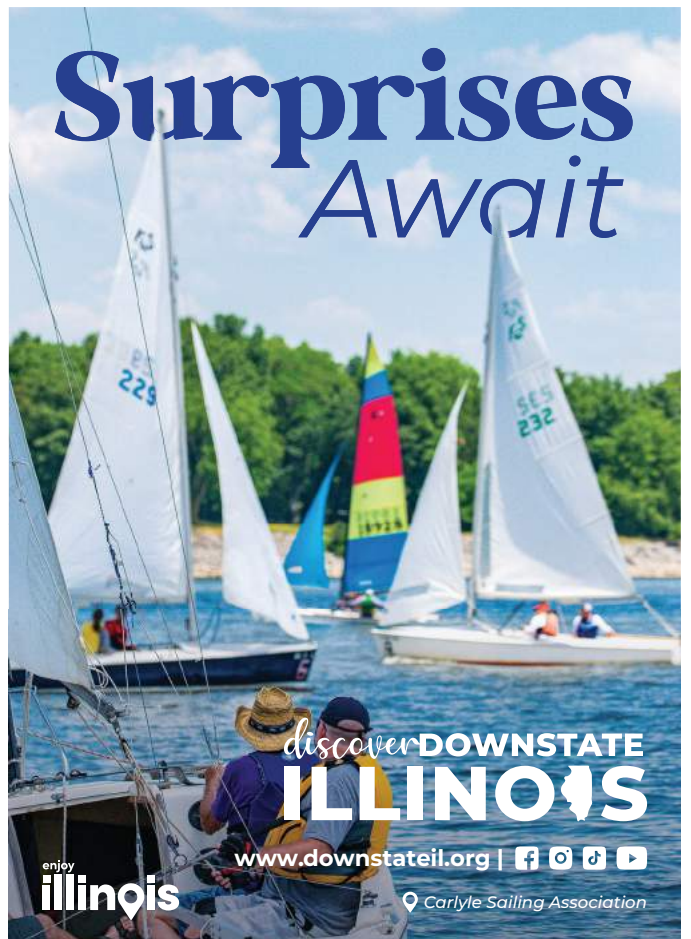
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**DATEBOOK**

**SUMMER FESTIVALS & EVENTS**



**MAY 25 - JUNE 9  
THE SOUTHERN  
ILLINOIS MUSIC  
FESTIVAL**

*Carbondale to Cairo*  
Orchestra and chamber music, plus opera, ballet and jazz performances will be showcased throughout Southern Illinois during the 20th annual SIFest.

**JUNE 1  
PRIDE ALLEY  
PARTY**

*Rockford*  
The outdoor party features food vendors, local bands and other live entertainment, such as pop-up drag shows and drag queen bingo.

**JUNE 2  
ENJOY ILLINOIS  
300**

*Madison*  
This NASCAR Cup Series takes place at World Wide Technology Raceway and features drivers like Kyle Busch, last year's winner.

**JUNE 7 - 9  
SUPERMAN  
CELEBRATION**

*Metropolis*  
The official adopted hometown of Superman celebrates with celebrity guest appearances, along with comic book artists and writers.

**JUNE 19  
JUNETEENTH  
CELEBRATION**

*Rockford*  
Sinnissippi Park hosts the state's longest-running Juneteenth celebration with live music and more.



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PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



**JUNE 22-23  
GREAT GALENA  
BALLOON RACE**  
Throughout the weekend, more than 20 hot-air balloons race above Galena. Kids love the inflatables while adults enjoy the classic car and art shows.

**JUNE 30  
CHICAGO PRIDE  
PARADE**  
One million-plus spectators watch the more than two-hour parade, which caps off a month of Pride celebrations.

**JULY 1-7  
JOHN DEERE  
CLASSIC PGA  
TOUR *Silvis***  
For more than 20 years, TPC Deere Run has played host to the PGA tournament.

**JULY 6-7  
NASCAR CHICAGO  
STREET RACE**  
Stock cars zip around the city's streets near Grant Park in a 12-turn, 2.2-mile course.

**AUGUST 8-18  
ILLINOIS STATE  
FAIR *Springfield***  
This blue-ribbon event boasts top-notch entertainment, a butter cow, rodeos, carnival rides, and a bevy of food and fun for the whole family.

**AUGUST 10-11  
CHICAGO AIR AND  
WATER SHOW**  
Find prime viewing along the lakefront as military and civilian jets buzz downtown.

**AUGUST 16-18  
CENTRALIA  
BALLOON FEST**  
Gaze up as dozens of colorful hot-air balloons fill the sky. On the ground, take in the car and motorcycle show and a craft fair.



Scan the code for more events and festivals throughout the state.

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GUIDE

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# SUMMER IN THE CITY

WHEN IT COMES TO SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVALS, CHICAGO ROCKS WITH ONE PRACTICALLY EVERY WEEK IN GRANT AND MILLENNIUM PARKS ALONG THE SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN.

WRITER JEN NILSSON



## LAKEFRONT TRAIL

*The 18-mile-long trail follows the Lake Michigan shore through the heart of downtown.*



**GET IN TUNE** with the Windy City over a long weekend by exploring the world-class museums and captivating neighborhoods near the big event. Our lineup includes places to grab a bite, to kick back and relax between sets, and to keep riffing long after dark.



**STAY OVER** Once an exclusive club, the **Chicago Athletic Association** has thrown open its gilded doors to become a welcoming hotel that's a destination all its own with a wildly popular rooftop bar, James Beard Award-winning restaurant, and a game room complete with shuffleboard and Skee-Ball. Located less than a mile from where Lollapalooza rocks Grant Park and across the street from where the Chicago Blues Festival serenades Millennium Park, it's an ideal headquarters for a festival weekend. At the playful **Moxy Chicago Downtown** in River North, the experience begins with a free cocktail at check-in and continues into the wee hours of the morning with an on-site, late-night taco joint. Rooms come with a view of the hotel's six-story indoor art installation that's perfectly designed for selfies. **The Publishing House Bed and Breakfast** in Chicago's West Loop offers 11 cozy rooms with claw-foot bathtubs and inviting communal spaces. Located in a neighborhood known for its gastronomy, the Press Room, below the B&B, rises to the challenge with a seasonal menu that includes house-made pickles on the cheese and charcuterie board.

↑  
**THE  
PUBLISHING  
HOUSE  
BED AND  
BREAKFAST**  
*Old-school luxury  
meets modern chic  
in this historic  
publishing house  
that is now a B&B.*

## YOUR PLAY LIST

*Must-do destinations while you're in town.*

Pose with the iconic bronze lions outside the **Art Institute of Chicago** before taking a spin through the galleries of one of the largest art museums in the world, with works from masters like Vincent van Gogh and Pablo Picasso. Georgia O'Keefe's summer exhibition, *My New Yorks*, deviates from her usual floral and Southwestern subjects (June 2–September 22). Discover flora under glass at the **Garfield Park Conservatory**. Roaming the eight indoor gardens is free and includes the towering, tropical Palm House and the Fern Room with an indoor lagoon (reservations required). See the thought-provoking collections of the **Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago** and check the events calendar for live-music performances and cutting-edge workshops among the modern-art installations.





**CHICAGO  
ATHLETIC  
ASSOCIATION**  
*Overlooking  
Millennium Park,  
Cindy's sits on the  
13th floor.*

## SEE THE CITY

*Take in the sites on a bike or hike.*

Built along the former elevated Bloomington train line, **The 606** is an urban park that connects the vibrant and diverse neighborhoods of Wicker Park, Bucktown, Humboldt Park and Logan Square and offers a heightened way to see the city. In the heart of urban hustle, **Lincoln Park Zoo**, one of the nation's oldest, stands as a sprawling (and free!) wildlife enclave about a half-mile from the **Lakefront Trail**. Follow the 18-mile sculpture-studded path along Lake Michigan for some of Chicago's most iconic and Instagrammable views. If you're looking for more guidance, let a local show you the way on a Chicago Greeter tour. The free docent-led tours last two to four hours and dive deep into the neighborhoods you select. For a shorter walk, join an Instagreeter tour of the Loop or the **Riverwalk** (no reservations required).

PHOTOGRAPHS: (THE PUBLISHING HOUSE) BOB STEFKO, (CINDY'S) COURTESY OF CHICAGO ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



**MUST-SEE  
SUMMER  
MUSIC  
FESTIVALS**

**MAY 25-26 SUEÑOS MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
More than 25 artists perform in Grant Park during this Latin celebration.

**JUNE 6-9 CHICAGO BLUES FEST**  
Millennium Park welcomes Blues legends and emerging artists to its three main stages (free).



## MEMORABLE MEALS

*Whether dining indoors or alfresco, casual and classy spots dot the city.*

Sip and savor a meal beneath a chandelier in the courtyard of the **3 Arts Club Cafe** within the confines of the RH Chicago showroom in the historic Gold Coast. Go behind the scenes at the world's largest Starbucks with an immersive tour where coffee is paired with chocolate inside the four-story **Starbucks Reserve Roastery** on the Magnificent Mile. In the Fulton Market District, the editors of *Time Out* magazine chose their favorite Chicago cuisine for a curated dining experience in the **Time Out Market** building, which also houses three bars and a terrace for live music. People-watching on the patio pairs perfectly with an enormous Wagyu beef meatball at **Siena Tavern** in River North. At **Bloom Plant Based Kitchen** (above) in Wicker Park, yucca gnocchi brings the flavor of the outdoors to your plate.



→  
**SIENA TAVERN**  
*Dine on delectable house-made pasta at this Italian-inspired restaurant.*



*Time Out Market*

## SWEET TREATS

*Indulge your cravings and satisfy your sweet tooth.*

Stop in Chicago's **Original Rainbow Cone Ice Cream Shop** for a five-flavored treat while strolling Navy Pier. Or peruse the old-fashioned dessert counter at **Sweet Mandy B's** in Lincoln Park.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (SIENA TAVERN) KEVIN J. MIVAZAKI/REDUX; (MARKET) COURTESY OF TIME OUT MARKET; (BLOOM) COURTESY OF BLOOM PLANT-BASED KITCHEN; (CRUISE) CHICAGO'S FIRST LADY CRUISES



**JUNE–AUGUST GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
This classical-music concert series spans 10 weeks with guest performers (free).

**JUNE–AUGUST MILLENNIUM PARK SUMMER MUSIC SERIES**  
Monday and Thursday nights (free).

**JULY–SEPTEMBER CHICAGO SUMMERDANCE**  
Professional instructors lead group dance lessons (free).

## AFTER THE SHOW

When the sun goes down, the city heats up. Start your night on the Chicago River with Chicago's *First Lady* and an unforgettable sunset cruise. With a knowledgeable docent from the Chicago Architecture Center at the microphone, you'll experience the city's history as golden light dances against the surrounding skyscrapers. Then head for **The Salt Shed**, where the old Morton Salt factory has been transformed into a riverside music venue hosting all-star performers. End the night with a good belly laugh during a late-night improv show at **The Second City**, the comedy cabaret that helped launch the careers of John Belushi, Bill Murray, Amy Poehler and Tina Fey.



**CRUISE  
CHICAGO**  
*Knowledgeable  
docents lead  
architecture  
tours.*



**LATE JULY** **PITCHFORK MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
Name-brand and up-and-coming musicians take the stage in Union Park.

**EARLY AUGUST** **LOLLAPALOOZA**  
More than 170 bands fill nine stages at this Grant Park music blowout.

**LABOR DAY WEEKEND** **CHICAGO JAZZ FESTIVAL**  
The tradition continues when jazz greats fill Millennium Park (free).



# LEARN FROM A LOCAL

WRITER JEN NILSSON

Dreaming of a memorable outdoor adventure? Get yourself a guru! Five Illinois experts show you how to fly-fish, zipline, canoe, hike and experience nature.

**STARVED  
ROCK STATE  
PARK**  
*Discover  
13 miles of hiking  
trails and  
eight waterfalls  
(weather  
dependent).*





# WATERFALL HIKES

←  
**FERNE  
CLYFFE  
STATE  
PARK**  
*The Big Rocky  
Hollow Trail, an  
easy 0.75-mile  
loop, leads to a  
100-foot-tall  
intermittent  
waterfall.*

PHOTOGRAPHS: (STARVED ROCK) JOT, (FERNE CLYFFE) STARBOARD AND PORT, (KATHY CASSTEVENS) SANDRA RUIST



**KATHY  
CASSTEVENS**  
*A photographer and  
nature-lover shares  
her passions.*

*“If you’re a  
photographer,  
then this is  
your mecca,”*

says Kathy Casstevens, who has worked at Starved Rock Lodge in Oglesby for almost 20 years and lived in the area most of her life.

It’s on quiet, dewy morning hikes with her camera when Casstevens repeatedly falls in love with Starved Rock. Thanks to a catastrophic flood some 15,000 years ago, the area’s rocky terrain was carved by water, creating 18 scenic canyons, seven of which have seasonal waterfalls you can hike to along 13 miles of marked trails. For visitors who want to learn more about the geology, nature and history of the area, the park offers 3-mile lunch-and-learn hikes on weekend mornings year-round, and a four-hour trolley tour in April and May.

## QUESTION

What is the advantage of joining a guided hike?

## ANSWER

Our guides enhance your experience. We have such a rich cultural, botanical and geological history here, so there’s a lot you can learn.

## QUESTION

What’s the best season for seeing the waterfalls?

## ANSWER

The area is subtly different every season, but in the spring when the waterfalls are more active, there are also more than 200 wildflowers that bloom.

**Find more waterfalls** The waterfalls at Matthiessen State Park (2 miles from Starved Rock) contrast with surrounding prairie. Ferne Clyffe State Park in Goreville boasts a waterfall in the Shawnee National Forest. Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge near Marion features waterfalls and seasonal wildflowers on its Rocky Bluff Trail.

# CANOE

Imagine gliding through cypress swamps where the trees have grown for millennia. The forest canopy vibrates with song from myriad migratory birds while lyrical tree frogs hover above the nutrient-rich waters. In this secluded world, dip your paddle into a soft carpet of jade-green duckweed as you carve a path along the majestic trails of the Cache River Wetlands, what locals call The Hidden Bayou, in the southernmost tip of Illinois.

For an educational—and unforgettable—canoeing or kayaking experience, find Mark Denzer and his team of expert wildlife guides at Cache Bayou Outfitters in the last stilt house on the riverside of Dean Lane in Ullin.

**MARK DENZER**  
*A wilderness guide who grew up in the area leads paddling trips with Cache Bayou Outfitters.*



Cache River Wetlands

## A GUIDE FOR A HIDDEN BAYOU

*As a kid learning the maze of ponds and swamps of the Cache River Wetlands, Denzer knew his canoe was in a special place. “You wouldn’t think it’s Illinois,” he says of the waters where he now leads group tours, including popular sunset and full-moon trips. “It’s out of the way and unsuspecting.” Fourteen years after setting up shop, he knows the nooks and crannies of the Cache and enjoys sharing its historical and geographical secrets with first-time and experienced paddlers.*

## More places to paddle

Explore the calming waters of Little Grassy Lake with kayaks, paddleboards and pontoon boat rentals from Little Grassy Lake Campground and Marina in Makanda. Cruise beneath the Windy City’s famed bridges spanning the Chicago River on a rented kayak from Kayak Chicago. Choose a kayak or party-size paddleboard from Nuts Outdoors and float through charming downtown Galena on its namesake river.



Chicago River

PHOTOGRAPHS: (MARK DENZER) RYAN DONNELL, (CHICAGO RIVER) JOT, (WHITE PINES) JASON DONNELLY, (NORTH POND) BARRY BUTLER, (BRITT BARBOUR) COURTESY OF BRITT BARBOUR

# NATURE WALK

The center of a city might not be your first thought for a wildflower walk, but in the heart of Chicago's famed Lincoln Park, you'll find North Pond Nature Sanctuary, a resplendent, 15-acre wonderland that blooms early spring through late fall.

In addition to ruby-throated hummingbirds and belted kingfishers, nature-lovers, especially the docents who offer guided tours to anyone interested in learning about the area's abundant flora and 200-plus bird species, are attracted to this enclave of native plants.

*“Wildflower walks give people an hour to slow down and enjoy a little more,”*

says Britt Barbour Uhlenhake of the Lincoln Park Conservancy.

“Walking with our docents, who bring their own passions and perspectives, provides a unique experience.”



**BRITT BARBOUR UHLENHAKE**

*Manager of marketing and development at the Lincoln Park Conservancy.*

## A WALK TO REMEMBER

When stay-at-home mom Britt Barbour Uhlenhake took her kids for a walk in the park, she didn't expect it to change her life. But then she read a notice that the Conservancy was seeking docents to engage visitors in the Lincoln Park Conservatory, a historic glasshouse with a global plant collection.

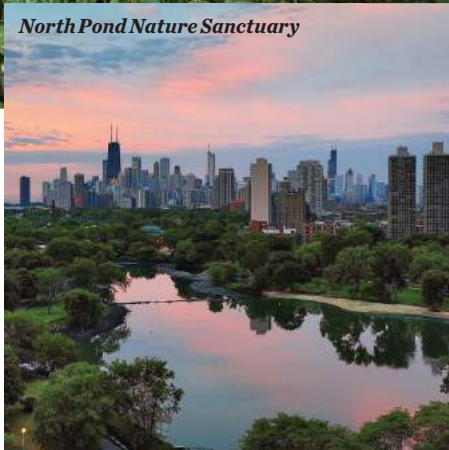
“It gave me this opportunity and, when I got to know the Conservancy, I got more and more involved.” From docent to a key staff member, Uhlenhake is proud to work for an organization that strives to make nature accessible to all.

## More nature walks

Trek the vast prairies and wetlands of the Natural Land Institute in Rockford. Picnic among the blossoming trout lilies in nearby White Pines Forest State Park in Mount Morris, where you can drive through Pine Creek on concrete fords. Wander the wetlands and lakes of Moraine Hills State Park near McHenry.

**WHITE PINES FOREST STATE PARK**  
*Seven hiking trails, each less than 1 mile long, show off the park's colorful spring flowers.*

**North Pond Nature Sanctuary**



# ZIPLINE



## MARC MILES

*An equine veterinarian-turned-zipline tour operator helps folks fly.*



### AN ADVENTUROUS CAREER CHANGE

"I've always wanted to be outdoors, and when I turned 60, I wanted to do something fun."

At the time, Marc Miles had two active grandsons, and his idea of a zipline to distract them from their electronic devices quickly spiraled into an 83-acre treetop adventure. Twelve years later, Miles now has five grandsons. All are proficient zipliners, of course.

Even seasoned zipliners are "blown away" by the Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour in Makanda, says owner Miles. What sets this adrenaline-packed experience above the rest? "It's the speed and the simplicity of it. No towers. No concrete. Just nature," Miles says.

Prior to stepping off the platform, participants gear up and run through a practice session with experienced guides who accompany each group on their excursion. This canopy tour is completely tree-based, with three aerial bridges complementing eight ziplines, the grand finale of which stretches 1,100 feet over a rocky canyon and reaches speeds of nearly 40 mph.

### SHAWNEE BLUFFS CANOPY TOUR

*The outfitter provides free photos, which allows guests to truly enjoy all the thrills.*

**Find more ziplines** The Grafton Zipline at Aerie's Resort gives you the chance to soar between the bluffs near the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. The hilltop trees at Long Hollow Canopy Tours in Galena provide a thrilling time on the six-line zipline course or aerial adventure park. The free-drop Tarzan swing introduces additional surprises at Go Ape Zipline and Adventure Park in Western Springs.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (ZIPLINE) JOT, (MARC MILES) COURTESY OF SHAWNEE BLUFFS CANOPY TOURS, (BIG RIVER) COURTESY OF BIG RIVER FLY FISHING, (WILL WINANS) TAYLOR CASTLE



# FLY-FISH

**WILL WINANS**  
*A passionate angler who grew up along the Kankakee River teaches the finer points of fishing.*

**QUESTION**  
What's the advantage of using a drift boat?

**ANSWER**  
A big part of the experience is that we're not buzzing the river in a motorized boat, so we can sneak up on the fish and wildlife.

**QUESTION**  
Do anglers need experience?

**ANSWER**  
Not at all. Sometimes a blank slate is the best thing a guide can ask for.

←

*"The Kankakee is my home river, and I have a strong attachment to it."*

The Kankakee River carves a bucolic path through northeastern Illinois, where acres of cornfields anchor the riverbanks as drift boats pass by.

Clean and clear with a healthy population of smallmouth bass, the Kankakee is ideal for anglers and guides like Will Winans, owner and founder of Big River Fly Fishing in Kankakee. "I still feel like a kid out there," Winans says.

Winans is on the water nearly every day, marking the change of season by the leaves and the patterns of the river. "Our success rate is determined by the mood of the fish and myriad variables that you have to surrender to," he says of the way fly-fishing tends to calm his guests. "The river keeps us humble."

---

**More fishing holes** The brush-lined shore of Rend Lake near Benton is filled with crappie. Rainbow trout are abundant in Devils Kitchen Lake near Marion, where cozy cabins make it easy to cast a line at morning's first light. Springtime means the Apple River is stocked with keeper-size trout in Apple River Canyon State Park.

EXPLORE THE

# I&M CANAL AT YOUR OWN PACE

*Wrapping up its 175th anniversary year, the Illinois and Michigan Canal is still a transit hub—these days for hikers, cyclists and history buffs. Here are four ways to explore its 96 miles.*

→ Before the Illinois and Michigan Canal opened in 1848, tallgrass prairie blanketed Illinois, and Chicago was little more than a dusty port town. Travel and trade around the Midwest meant a slow and sometimes dangerous overland trek. The I&M Canal changed all that by connecting Lake Michigan by Chicago to the Illinois River at LaSalle, creating an inland water route from the East Coast to the Gulf of Mexico. It became the country's first National Heritage Area. Today, there are more ways than ever to follow the canal, including by boat, bike and even zipline.



## NICE AND SLOW

Experience the I&M Canal the old-fashioned way in LaSalle, where *The Volunteer*, an open-air 1840s-replica boat, plies the canal's waters just as it would have in the I&M's heyday: pulled by a harnessed mule walking along the shore. The leisurely Canal Boat Tours last about an hour and run from mid-May through October. Period-dressed guides will introduce you to kid-friendly Moe the mule beforehand. Back on dry land, hop in your car for the 80-mile LaSalle-to-Hodgkins Silhouette Tour, which connects 48 life-size, Corten steel sculptures based on real historical figures, including fur traders, mule drivers, boat captains and quarry workers, with their stories displayed nearby. The drive passes enticing shops (Prairie Fox Books and antiques store 229 Estates are two local favorites in Ottawa), fishing holes (catfish, walleye and bass are plentiful in the Illinois River within William G. Stratton State Park), and parks (Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve in Darien has hiking trails, the picturesque Rocky Glen waterfall and springtime wildflowers).

## PICK UP THE PACE

When you're ready to stretch your legs, the car-free I&M Canal State Trail makes exploring by bike appealing too. You can rent a two-wheeler by the hour from seven locations along the trail by using your cell phone and the Movatic app. The 15-mile stretch between Morris and Channahon is flat and made of cushiony crushed limestone, ideal for an easy cycle or stroll. You'll pass by the old lock-tender's house, the Aux Sable Creek Aqueduct, and the hardwood forests and wild irises of McKinley Woods. Keep your eyes open for turtles, beavers and deer.

## GO A LITTLE FASTER

Canoe access is plentiful along the canal if you'd rather steer your own ship. You can paddle 15 miles between Gebhard Woods State Park in Morris and Channahon State Park in Channahon. Along the trail, you'll find playgrounds and picnic tables shaded by mature cottonwoods and oaks. BYO boat or rent a kayak from Kayak Morris. From here, you can paddle in a loop, around Sugar Island and back, with just a 25-yard portage in the middle.



*Downtown Lemont*



*The Volunteer, Canal Boat Tours*

## A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING



About 25 miles southwest of Chicago, the small town of Lemont is home to The Forge: Lemont Quarries Adventure Park, where you'll find something to suit every age and energy level. Entry to the park and access to its forested hiking trails are free, and a loaded menu of activities is pay to play. Choose among laser tag, rentable kayaks and canoes (to paddle the Lemont Quarry lake), a toddler-friendly obstacle course, four-person bikes, and a towering rock climbing course crowned with a 1,000-foot-long zipline that slings the adventurous 100-some-feet above Lemont Quarry.



*The Forge: Lemont Quarries Adventure Park*

# PICTURE PERFECT

→ THEY'RE SMALL ENOUGH YOU CAN FIND YOUR WAY AROUND, BUT LARGE ENOUGH TO EXPLORE FOR A DAY OR TWO. IN THE END, YOUR PHONE OR CAMERA WILL BE FILLED WITH SHARE-WORTHY PICS OF DELIGHTFUL SPOTS TO SEE, DINE AND STAY.

WRITER BRIAN KRAMER





**HORSESHOE  
MOUND  
PRESERVE**  
*Take in panoramic  
views of Iowa,  
Wisconsin and Illinois  
from scenic overlooks  
and spotting scopes  
outside Galena.*



PHOTOGRAPH: JOT



## ALTON

Given this river town's rich history (the final Lincoln-Douglas debate, Civil War skirmishes, the birthplace of jazz great Miles Davis), it's no surprise that you can easily lose yourself as you stroll along **Antique Row**, Alton's downtown district with more than 20 shops. Start your time-traveling early or get a midday refuel at **Post Commons**, a U.S. Post Office-turned-coffee shop with on-site coffee roasting and a menu of house-made biscuits and toasts. When you're ready for good times and great people-watching, head for **Fast Eddie's Bon Air**. This beloved bar hosts free live music every day of the week on its enormous covered patio. Soothe your tired dancing feet at **Beall Mansion** bed-and-breakfast, where four of the antiques-appointed rooms have whirlpools for two and the fifth features a clawfoot soaking tub.

### → SUPER SELFIE SPOT

*Rather than the side of a building, you'll find the **Alton Ripple** mural on the asphalt at the intersection of State and Third streets. Repainted in 2023, hundreds of rainbow-hued dots comprise this artsy traffic stopper.*

## CASEY

Go on a hunt for outlandishly outsized objects in Casey, a playful burg whose motto is "**Big Things in a Small Town.**" Download a map (or stop by the Chamber of Commerce for a printed copy) and launch your quest for 12 certified World's Largest Items and nearly 24 additional Big Things. For big-time refreshment, go rural: **Oilfield Illinois** is a petite pie shop with handwritten menu boards, while **Moonshine Store** (technically in Martinsville) is a country store famous for its Moonshine Burgers, half-pound patties made by hand. While you won't find the world's largest feather bed at **Eighteen-Ninety Sleepover**, you can choose from 12 spacious rooms in a former Knights of Pythias meeting hall.

### → SUPER SELFIE SPOT

*Send your stamp of approval from the **World's Largest Mailbox** or any of the other Big Things, all Insta-worthy.*

## GALENA

Your spirits will lift in Galena while dining, shopping and exploring more than 125 boutiques and restaurants downtown. Then they'll truly soar with a chair ride to the top of Chestnut Mountain, followed by your choice of an **Alpine Slide** or **Soaring Eagle Zipline** downhill. **Bread and Vine Bakery** will energize your brunch, lunch or dinner with its eclectic roster of pastries, starters, sandwiches, boards and craft cocktails. Match your overnight to your mood at the renovated **Ulysses Suites** (think luxe bathrooms and tradition-with-a twist furnishings) or with an evening of kickback coziness at **LeFevre Inn and Resort**, hanging out by the welcoming firepit or gazebo.

### → SUPER SELFIE SPOT

*The **Spiroff Overlook** at **Horseshoe Mound Preserve** yields big vistas of the Mississippi River, especially at sunset, from a stone terrace with benches.*

← FROM TOP *Post Commons, Alton; Ulysses Suites, Galena; The Big Birdcage (with a swing), Casey*

## EDWARDSVILLE

Founded in 1818, Edwardsville may be Illinois' third-oldest city, but its attitude is fresh and adventurous. After an eye-opening gallery visit or hands-on art class (check their schedule for free one-day kids' classes) at **Edwardsville Arts Center**, head downtown and dine at **Cleveland Heath** restaurant, known for its artfully presented entrees, or watch a music act or classic film at the renovated **Wilkey Theatre**. A block away, the **Urban Collective Boutique Hotel** offers eight loft-style rooms and suites with unique upholstered beds, exposed brick walls and graphic murals.

### SUPER SELFIE SPOT

*Cruise on down to the **West End Service Station**, which recently reopened as a Route 66 interpretive center with vintage signs and classic car memorabilia.*

# OAK PARK

The name on everybody's lips in this refined town? Frank Lloyd Wright. And rightly so, considering the more than two dozen Wright-designed buildings in the area. Take a guided tour of the **Wright Home and Studio** or **Unity Temple**—or pick up a map and explore on foot or bike so you can stop and snap pics to your heart's content. Shop the vibrant downtown, especially North Marion Street, with its designer boutiques and flavorful cafes. A block south, the historic **Carleton of Oak Park** hotel offers more than 150 elegantly appointed rooms as well as a handsome lobby, stately library and comfy lounge to explore with a cocktail in hand. Snag a seat on the rooftop patio at **One Lake Brewing** or opt for an indoor table on the second level, near the massive chandelier composed of bottles. A themed beer flight lets you explore their latest libations.

→

**FROM TOP**  
*Edwardsville Arts Center; Wright Home and Studio, Oak Park; Cleveland Heath, Edwardsville; Wildey Theatre, Edwardsville*



## SUPER SELFIE SPOT

*Artists apply annually to claim 6x12-foot sections of concrete known as the **Oak Park Mini Mural Project**. Follow the CTA Green Line from Harlem Avenue to Austin Boulevard (it's more than 1.5 miles long) to find a creation that matches your mood.*



**ILLINOIS INSIDER** Over the decades, Hollywood has recognized the charms of several Illinois towns, featuring them in movies and television shows: *Oak Park Home Alone* (1990, the McCallister home is in Winnetka); *The Lake House* (2006) • *Geneva Road to Perdition* (2002) • *Woodstock Groundhog Day* (1993); *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* (1987); *Prison Break* (2005–2017, TV series) • *Edwardsville The Lucky Ones* (2008) • *Galena Pennies from Heaven* (1981); *Field of Dreams* (1989) • *Makanda Gone Girl* (2014)

# PETERSBURG

A word to the wise: Visit Petersburg now before this small-town dynamo starts popping up on every must-see list. Built in 1872 to sell hardware, groceries and dry goods, the massive **Broadgauge** building downtown has been lovingly transformed into a restaurant, bar and coffee shop with tasty offerings for quick bites or multicourse meals. For craft beers, like Vanilla Dream Ale, drop into the taproom of **Hand of Fate Brewing Company**. Or step next door for a little shopping and wine sipping at **Ist and 3rd Boutique and Wine Bar**. A similar passion for revitalizing Petersburg led a group of friends to transform the neglected **Three Pines** mansion with high ceilings and tall windows into a gracious eight-room inn.

→ **SUPER SELFIE SPOT**  
*Watch artisans in period garb demonstrate skills like candlemaking and ironworking at **Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site**, then snag a shot in front of your favorite buildings. You have more than 25 to choose from.*



↑  
**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT**  
*Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site, Petersburg; Downtown Petersburg; Nauvoo Illinois Temple, Nauvoo; Heider's Berry Farm, Woodstock*

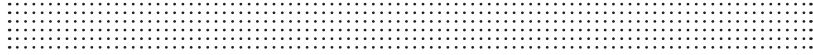


# WOODSTOCK

The buzz in downtown Woodstock often centers on its historic square and Opera House, but the buzzing of bees will lure you to U-pick farms and orchards just outside of town, including family-owned operations like Heider's Berry Farm, Homestead Orchard and more. You may feel an entirely different buzz during a visit to Mixteca, thanks to their tequila-focused cocktail menu and array of spicy tacos, tortas and fajitas. For calming contrast, seek out Cherry Tree Inn B&B, a Queen Anne Victorian with five handsome rooms with private baths and lavish breakfasts.

**SUPER SELFIE SPOT**  
*Think Woodstock looks oddly familiar? It filled in for the town of Punxsutawney in the 1993 movie Groundhog Day. Follow a self-guided walking tour of more than a dozen locations featured in the film.*

PHOTOGRAPHS: RYAN DONNELL, (TEMPLE) JASON DONNELLY, (TREE ARCH) CARSON DOWNING, (BURGER AND SUSHI) COURTESY OF BURGER AND SUSHI HOUSE, (OPERA HOUSE) BOB STEFKO



**FROM TOP** *Rainmaker's Garden, Makanda; Burger and Sushi House, Geneva; Woodstock Opera House, Woodstock*

## GENEVA

This Fox River Valley gem has long been a favorite of hikers, bikers and paddlers, but its historic downtown sparkles with civic pride thanks to ongoing efforts to treat bus shelters, bike racks and even fire hydrants as public art. (The Geneva History Museum's self-guided **Public Art Tour** covers dozens of notable installations.) If you're craving sushi but your dining partner desires a burger, pull up a sleek chair at **B.A.S.H. (Burger and Sushi House)** and sink your chopsticks into dramatically presented rolls and sandwiches. The rooms and suites at **The Oscar Swan**, a country estate-turned-B&B, are named after family and friends and decorated in kick-back cottage style. Breakfast frittata and a mimosa on their brick patio is the perfect launching pad for a day of exploration.

→ **SUPER SELFIE SPOT**  
*Fabyan Japanese Garden* along the river packs a teahouse, water features and artfully tended plants into an acre of land. Snap a shot on the hashi, a traditional arched Japanese bridge.

## MAKANDA

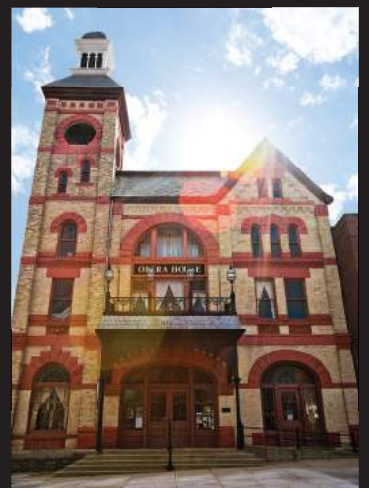
Less than a mile from Giant City State Park, this tiny charmer (population 536) offers a respite from hiking, biking and camping in and around Shawnee National Forest. Saunter along the **Boardwalk off Main Street**, exploring its shops and art galleries. Sip some fruit of the vine at **Blue Sky Vineyard**. A glass of their award-winning Vignoles dry white is a fine introduction to winemaking in southernmost Illinois, but you might think you're in Tuscany while you wander the Italian-inspired buildings and landscape. Step into the lobby of the **Giant City State Park Lodge**, with its log columns and stacked stone fireplace, and let the space envelop you like a warm bear hug, then rent one of three styles of cabins for a memorable night in the big woods.

→ **SUPER SELFIE SPOT**  
*Outdoor art fans flock to Rainmaker Arts and Entertainment* on the Boardwalk, but be sure to step out the back door and into the **Rainmaker's Garden**, an unmarked wonderland of trees, sculptures and wildflowers.

## NAUVOO

Looking out on the Mississippi River from Main Street, you can almost feel the hope of Mormon founder Joseph Smith as he led thousands of his Latter-Day Saints to the bluff in 1840. They renamed the town Nauvoo, and it flourished for seven years before most residents, fleeing persecution, relocated to Salt Lake City. Launch your own journey from **Nauvoo Visitors Center**, which offers horse-drawn wagon or walking tours of more than 30 historic downtown sites. **The Red Front** serves up Breakfastdillas, hearty sandwiches and a popular dessert known as The Brick (a thick block of seasonal ice cream and layers of toppings). After watching the sun disappear, drive 8 miles south to **TenAcre Treehouses** for a night resting high above the ground in one of three adorable rentals.

→ **SUPER SELFIE SPOT**  
*Trek the grounds of Nauvoo Illinois Temple* late in the day and watch the architecture glow and shift colors. (If you're visiting July through early August, you can also watch a cast of actors, dancers and musicians perform in the outdoor **Nauvoo and British Pageants**.)





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enjoy **illinois**



SHOP · DRINK · EAT · STAY · PLAY



## Springtime in Geneva **BRING YOUR BUDS!**

Visit this charming town nestled on the banks of the Fox River, and you'll discover that something fresh is always popping up. Geneva's historic downtown features over 100 specialty stores and eateries. Shop for gifts, enjoy a scoop of ice cream, pick up items you've been longing for, or have lunch or a drink with friends. Pamper yourself and stay the weekend! Call your buds and plan your adventure today at [visitgenevail.com](http://visitgenevail.com).

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**GENEVA**  
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*Experience the Historic  
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Arts · Entertainment · History  
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# GALESBURG

[experiencegalesburg.com](http://experiencegalesburg.com)



CHICAGO & BEYOND  
GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY  
LAND OF LINCOLN  
TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

# TRIP IDEAS AROUND THE STATE



Fox River



Scan the code for more places to go and things to do.



← **ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL** Mark your calendar! The Mother Road, which stretches from Chicago to Los Angeles, turns 100 in 2026. Plan to join the celebration as communities along Route 66 are hosting special events, programs and activities.

STORY: GARY THOMPSON. PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES CARDIS/AURORA AREA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

CHICAGO & BEYOND



# Aurora

*Aurora and its satellite towns are shining stars of the Chicagoland galaxy, beckoning you to stellar entertainment, dining, shopping and outdoor recreation.*

Set along the Fox River about 40 miles west of Chicago, Aurora is the second-largest city in Illinois, and it's part of a wider area that includes smaller communities in neighboring Kendall, Will and DuPage counties. Though a distant runner-up to the Windy City in population, Aurora offers a

←  
**HARDWARE**  
*Saveroom for dessert at this gastropub.*

number of first-rate attractions, starting with a historic and vibrant downtown. That's where you'll find the Paramount Theatre, home to some of Chicagoland's best productions of Broadway musicals and plays. The Art Deco-style palace opened in 1931 and has been restored to its original glamour and glory. Nearby,

a much newer venue, scenic RiverEdge Park, hosts live music events like Blues on the Fox and the Summer Concert Series. Showgoers and other visitors can dine at two spots along the river: Two Brothers Roundhouse is a brewery and supper club located in the country's oldest limestone railroad roundhouse, and Jake's Bagels and Deli makes bagels from scratch daily.

Attention shoppers: Aurora is a retail revelation, whether you're browsing downtown boutiques; Chicago Premium Outlets; the newly redeveloped Fox Valley Mall (now with luxury apartments and green space); or adjacent Pacifica Square, a one-stop Asian lifestyle center with Asian-inspired cuisine, shopping, leisure and entertainment.

## DO

Whet (and wet) your appetite for fun at Yorkville's **Raging Waves**, Illinois' largest outdoor water park. Ride and slide on 32 attractions. Or take to nature's water park, the **Fox River**, in a kayak. A 25-mile run connects Aurora-area communities, and rentals are available from park districts and businesses. Get more great views of the river on a tour of the historic **Edith Farnsworth House** in Plano.

## EAT

The exterior of **Hardware** gastropub and brewery in North Aurora hints at its focus on sustainability. The place grows most ingredients on-site and offers 400 whiskeys from around the world.

## STAY

The **Holiday Inn Express and Suites** puts you within walking distance of the Fox River Trail and several downtown attractions. **Hampton Inn and Suites** offers easy interstate access and appeals to families with its indoor pool, kiddie pool and free hot breakfast.

←  
**EDITH FARNSWORTH HOUSE**  
*Architect Mies van der Rohe's midcentury modern masterpiece features clear glass exterior walls.*

📍  
**POPULATION**  
178,000

**OF NOTE**  
Home to the state's largest outdoor shopping center, near the state's largest water park.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (DESSERT) HARDWARE SUSTAINABLE GASTROPUB AND BREWERY, (FARNSWORTH) AURORA AREA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU, (CONCERT) BISHOP HILL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, (COLONY STORE) JAY WILDE



**VILLAGE PARK**  
**PARK**  
*Listen to summer concerts in the park, home to a reconstructed gazebo and war monuments.*

→

**DO**  
 Catch the area's upbeat vibe with Concerts in the Colony, a series of free family-friendly summer performances at **Village Park** in Bishop Hill, and Concerts in the Park, a live-music lineup at Veterans Park in Kewanee.

**EAT**  
 Have breakfast like—and with—Bishop Hill locals at **Filling Station**, a little place full of character (and characters). Pop into **Krans Kafe** for a midmorning latte, scoop of ice cream or sandwich on ciabatta. Lunch means Swedish meatballs with lingonberries at **P.L. Johnson's Dining Room**. Don't miss a slice of scratch-made pie. (Or take it with you.)

**STAY**  
 Built in 1855 as the Colony Hospital, the **Twinflower Inn** has been lovingly rehabilitated to provide TLC as a bed-and-breakfast with private guest rooms and en suite baths.



**GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY**  
**Bishop Hill**

*The religious colonists who founded Bishop Hill in Henry County inspired waves of Swedish immigrants to settle in Illinois. Their legacy lives on at a smorgasbord of sites.*

Historic villages abound in the Midwest and elsewhere, and they all live up to their billing to some degree, though many sites rely heavily on reproductions, re-creations and relocations. Bishop Hill is the real deal, however, very much the same town you would have encountered riding in on a horse and buggy in 1846, when it was established as a religious colony. Now, the entire Henry County town, about 40 minutes from the Quad Cities, is a National Historic Landmark. But it's also a living, working community (including a mayor and fire department) where people still ply the same crafts and trades of their Swedish ancestors.

Explore Bishop Hill's fascinating history at any of its seven museums, all in buildings original to the town and packed with artifacts. And when you're ready to step back into the present, the city of Kewanee awaits about 20 minutes east with modern amenities wrapped in small-town charm. Downtown is a shopping hub, especially for furniture and home decor. Family-owned Good's Furniture, opened in 1895, is a fixture. New View Furniture, a more recent addition, features locally produced artwork and decor, pieces from major brands, and a specialty line from nearby Green Gables Furniture that makes the furniture seen at Dutton Range on *Yellowstone*.

**COLONY STORE**  
*Purchase gifts, chocolates and other goodies at the 1853 general store.*



**POPULATION**  
 114

**OF NOTE**  
 The entire town is a National Historic Landmark.



**LAKE  
SHELBYVILLE**  
*This massive lake boasts  
172 miles of shoreline,  
three public beaches,  
and numerous hiking  
and biking trails.*



## DO

Sip wine in a Tuscan-style atmosphere at **Willow Ridge Vineyards and Winery**, set on a 150-year-old family farm. Outdoor seating areas let you drink in views and vintages.

## EAT

Though **Longbranch Grill** moved, it's still on Main Street in Shelbyville, and the tasty steaks and friendly service came along. Fans love the apps, especially the mozz sticks and onion rings.

## STAY

Enjoy country-cottage ambience in a residential neighborhood at **The Shelby Inn**, or stay downtown at **Atop the Shop**, a spacious loft apartment in a historic building.



LAND OF LINCOLN

# Shelbyville

*Abe Lincoln's legal and political careers brought him to Shelbyville more than once, but it's hard for even his large shadow to compete with the region's vast and versatile lake.*

**POPULATION**  
4,600

**OF NOTE**  
Lake Shelbyville is not natural, rather a reservoir as the result of damming the Kaskaskia River.

Kids of all ages like spending recess at the outdoor playground known as Lake Shelbyville in south-central Illinois. At 11,000-plus acres, it's Illinois' third-largest inland lake, and it comes with 172 miles of shoreline, including beaches, wooded inlets and finger coves.

The water draws anglers, boaters and swimmers, while inland trails reward hikers and mountain bikers with views of wildlife, especially majestic birds like blue heron

and osprey. Golfers can tee it up by the lake at Eagle Creek Golf Course in Findlay, its fairways nestled in the woods and prairies of Eagle Creek

State Park. Get the lay of the land (and water) at the Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center, which includes exhibits about the area, aquariums, terrariums and a butterfly garden. The center is located at the dam in Shelbyville, a town with restaurants, shopping and places to stay. While in town, check out some local history: Boarman's Roxy Theatre, built in the 1800s, was closed for many years until a local businessman, the late Bob Boarman, spearheaded a loving restoration of this grand movie palace. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument, part of Lincoln Public Square, was erected in 1907 to honor those in the military. Shelbyville Memorial Sunken Garden, a botanical oasis in Forest Park, dates to the 1930s.

←  
**THE  
SHELBY  
INN**  
**A1905  
masterpiece.**



**CRAB  
ORCHARD  
NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
REFUGE**  
*The 44,000-  
acre park offers  
12 miles of trails  
at the refuge.*



**DO**

Reconnect with nature at **Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge** in nearby Marion. It's a haven for hiking, canoeing, camping, picnicking and bird-watching.

**EAT**

Some like it hot at **Buckwater Brew Works and Whiskey House**, so the burgers, wings and other bar bites include spicy options. There's even a Mango Lime Habanero Margarita. Speaking of heat, **Flame Grill and Bar** provides a warm and casual atmosphere for its steaks, seafood, fresh-baked bread and beloved lemon cake.

**STAY**

Carbondale straddles the Midwest and South. **Pine Manor Estates** bed-and-breakfast promises Southern-style luxury in the hills between **Giant City State Park** and **Shawnee National Forest**. Or book a berth at **The Train Inn**, a restored 1905 primitive Arts and Crafts bungalow close to the SIU campus.

TRAILS TO ADVENTURE  
**Carbondale**

*Delightfully down to earth—literally—in its coal mining roots and proximity to natural wonders, Carbondale rewards adventure prospectors with a mother lode of treasures.*



Carbondale was named for a large deposit of coal in Southern Illinois—not so glamorous, right? But when you consider that carbon is the building block of all life, then the toponym is quite noble. What's more, the region is called Little Egypt for its geographic resemblance to the cradle of civilization. (Cairo—where the Ohio and Mississippi rivers meet—is named for Egypt's capital in the Nile River Delta.) So this ground is practically hallowed and fertile for exploring. Carbondale is the gateway to sprawling Shawnee National Forest, which wows with nature's rugged beauty and power, and the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail, a 40-mile scenic route

that connects 11 wineries. The town is home to Southern Illinois University, a cultural center with venues like the Sharp Museum (humanities, sciences and arts), McLeod Theater (summer playhouse series), Shryock Auditorium (historic and ornate), and Banterra Center (sports and concerts). Marberry Arboretum, also on campus, is a gem with more than 5,000 species of trees, flowers and wildlife. Off campus, The Varsity Center downtown offers live music, theater and indie films on the site of a historic cinema. The African American Museum of Southern Illinois documents the achievements and experiences of the area's Black community.



**POPULATION**  
22,000

**OF NOTE**

This region is known as Little Egypt for its geographic resemblance to this cradle of civilization.



**BUCKWATER  
BREW WORKS  
AND WHISKEY  
HOUSE**  
*Enjoy burgers,  
Southern-fried fish,  
wings and more  
than 300 whiskeys.*



# Travel Resources

## Visitors Bureaus

### CHICAGO & BEYOND

#### Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

630/256-3190,  
enjoyaurora.com

#### Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau

888/895-8233, 708/895-8200,  
visitchicagosouthland.com

#### Chicago's North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau

847/763-0011,  
visitchicagonorthshore.com

#### Choose Chicago

312/567-8500,  
choosechicago.com

#### DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau

877/335-2521, 815/756-1336,  
dekalbcountycvb.com

#### DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/232-0502, 630/575-8070,  
discoverdupage.com

#### Elgin Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/217-5362, 847/695-7540,  
exploreeginarea.com

#### Heritage Corridor Destinations

844/944-2282, 800/926-2262,  
heritagecorridorcvb.com

#### Kankakee County Convention and Visitors Bureau

815/935-7390,  
visitkankakeecounty.com

#### Meet Chicago Northwest

800/847-4849, 847/490-1010,  
chicagonorthwest.com

#### Naturally McHenry County

815/893-6280,  
naturallymchenrycounty.com

#### Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/521-0849, 815/963-8111,  
gorockford.com

#### Rosemont Convention and Tourism Bureau

847/823-2100, rosemont.com

#### Visit Lake County

847/662-2700,  
visitlakecounty.org

#### Visit NW Illinois

815/946-2108,  
visitnorthwestillinois.com

#### Visit Oak Park

708/524-7800,  
visitoakpark.com

#### Visitor Information Center

*Turtle Creek I-90, rest area southbound, South Beloit*

### GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY

#### Discover Downstate Illinois

618/257-1488, downstateil.org

#### Galena Country Tourism

815/776-9200, visitgalena.org

#### Galesburg Tourism and Visitors Bureau

309/343-2485,  
experiencegalesburg.com

#### Great Rivers and Routes of Southwest Illinois

800/258-6645, 618/465-6676,  
riversandroutessw.com

#### Macomb Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

309/833-1315,  
visitforgttonia.com

#### Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/747-0302, 309/676-0303,  
peoria.org

#### Quincy Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/978-4748, 217/214-3700,  
seequincy.com

#### Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau

800/248-4373, 618/833-9928,  
southernmostillinois.com

#### Visit NW Illinois

815/946-2108,  
visitnorthwestillinois.com

#### Visit Quad Cities

800/747-7800,  
visitquadcities.com

#### Visitor Information Center

*Homestead I-55, rest area northbound, Hamel*

### LAND OF LINCOLN

#### Bloomington-Normal Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/433-8226, 309/665-0033,  
visitbn.org

#### Danville Area Visitors Bureau

800/383-4386, 217/442-2096,  
visitdanvillearea.com

#### Decatur Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/331-4479, 217/423-7000,  
decaturcvb.com

#### Discover Downstate Illinois

618/257-1488, downstateil.org

#### Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/772-0750, 217/342-5310,  
visiteffinghamil.com

#### Experience Champaign-Urbana

800/369-6151, 217/351-4133,  
experiencecu.org

#### Jacksonville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/593-5678, 217/243-5678,  
jacksonvilleil.org

#### Lake Shelbyville Area CVB/Shelby County Tourism

800/874-3529; 217/774-2244,  
lakeshelbyville.com

#### Logan County Tourism Bureau

217/732-8687,  
destinationlogancountyil.com

#### Visit Springfield

800/545-7300, 217/789-2360,  
visitspringfieldillinois.com

#### Visitor Information Centers

*Cumberland Road I-70, rest area westbound, Marshall*

*Salt Kettle I-74, rest area westbound, Oakwood*

### TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

#### Discover Downstate Illinois

618/257-1488,  
downstateil.org

#### Mt. Vernon Convention and Visitors Bureau

618/242-3151,  
enjoymtvernon.com

#### Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau

800/248-4373, 618/833-9928,  
southernmostillinois.com

#### Visit SI

800/433-7399, 618/997-3690,  
visitsi.com

#### Visitor Information Centers

*Fort Massac 5402 Hwy. 45 S, Metropolis*

*Rend Lake North I-57, rest area northbound, Whittington*

*Rend Lake South I-57, rest area southbound, Whittington*

# TRAVELER INFORMATION

## DRIVING IN ILLINOIS

Illinois highways and roads are well maintained and provide posted signage for drivers, so taking a road trip is a breeze. Chicago is a day's drive or less from major cities including Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Toronto.

State law requires you to wear a seatbelt when traveling by car. Speed limits are posted in miles per hour (mph) and vary between 70 mph on rural interstates and freeways and 45 mph on urban interstates and freeways.

You may not use your cell phone for texting while driving, and you must use hands-free technology to make calls.

For construction updates, maps, seasonal road conditions and other information, visit [gettingaroundillinois.com](http://gettingaroundillinois.com)

## ILLINOIS TOLLWAYS

Some northern Illinois highways require tolls for use. Rates vary; not all toll plazas have attendants. Electronic toll collection is available through I-PASS or any transponder that's part of the E-ZPass system.

Drivers who miss tolls have 14 days to pay online. Note the date, time and locations of unpaid tolls—that information will be required when submitting payments online.

For maps, rates, online payment options and other info, visit [illinoistollway.com](http://illinoistollway.com)

## REST AREAS AND WELCOME CENTERS

The state of Illinois serves drivers with 30 rest areas and 11 welcome centers, located on highways throughout the state. Open 24 hours a day, they offer restroom facilities, picnic areas, lighted walkways, maps, security cameras and parking for recreational vehicles, among other services. For locations, visit [idot.illinois.gov](http://idot.illinois.gov)

## ARRIVING BY PLANE

Domestic travelers can fly direct to destinations including Belleville, Bloomington-Normal, Champaign-Urbana, Marion, Moline, Peoria, Quincy, Rockford and Springfield, as well as Chicago.

Once you land at either of Chicago's two major airports, Chicago Transit Authority trains can get you downtown. For info, go to [transitchicago.com](http://transitchicago.com)

Regular shuttles to many Chicago downtown hotels leave from each airport. You can also get a taxi or rideshare. For more information on getting to and from Chicago's airports (including renting vehicles or arranging car services), visit [flychicago.com](http://flychicago.com)

**From O'Hare International Airport**, the Blue Line elevated train (known as the L) takes passengers to downtown Chicago in about 45 minutes. Follow the CTA Trains or Trains to City signs at the airport. If you arrive at the international terminal, follow the signs to the Airport Transit System, where you can get a free ride to Terminal 2 and then catch the L into the city.

**From Chicago Midway International Airport**, the CTA Orange Line L train takes about 25 minutes to get to downtown Chicago.

## OTHER TRANSIT AROUND CHICAGO

Metra runs commuter rail services from downtown Chicago to outlying suburbs and surrounding cities. For maps, schedules, alerts and more, visit [metra.com](http://metra.com)

The Regional Transportation Authority serves Chicago and its many suburbs. Its RTA trip planner can help you figure out how to get where you want to go. Visit [rtachicago.org](http://rtachicago.org)

Amtrak runs trains to 29 cities in Illinois, and Greyhound Lines serves most major Illinois cities. Go to [amtrak.com](http://amtrak.com) or [greyhound.com](http://greyhound.com)

## 21 AND OLDER

*Legal statewide, alcohol, gambling and other substance use by adults may vary by city or municipality.*



If you drink, don't drive. Instead, hail a cab or use a rideshare app. The state's legal limit for blood alcohol is 0.08.



Fifteen casinos operate throughout the state; some of these are riverboat casinos.



The Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act legalizes the lawful use of cannabis for adults (21 years and older).



The Smoke-Free Illinois Act prohibits smoking in most public places, including theaters, museums, casinos, restaurants and bars.

#ENJOYILLINOIS

# FRESH TAKES

Follow @enjoyillinois on Instagram to see snaps from around the state. Tag #enjoyillinois for your chance to be featured.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT → Garden of the Gods @laurel\_supp; Heron Pond, Belknap @midwestnomadfamily; Scratch Brewing Company, Ava @jordyn\_dolan; Chicago @racheljvanhook; Wrigley Field @jolinrivera; Route 66, Mount Olive, Desirée van Welsum/TheLongWayHomeTravels.com; Clara Joyce Flowers, Stockton @clarajoyceflowers; Kinnikinnick Farm, Caledonia @buckeyerene.



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