

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW IDEAS FOR HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING

Gifts of Illinois travel for all ages and all pocketbooks

CHICAGO (November 20, 2001) -- The holiday shopping season is here. Time to explore the specialty shops, search the malls and start checking off names. This year, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism is encouraging consumers to add a new entry to the holiday giving mix --- "the gift of travel."

"Giving the 'gift of travel' can be as simple as providing tickets for a special evening out or as luxurious as a stay at a spa or resort," said State Travel Director Cathy Ritter. "Travel is one of the best possible presents. It gives the special people in your life a chance to create one-of-a-kind memories that will last long after that new sweater goes out of style."

Gifts incorporating travel have many shapes and sizes in Illinois. There are gifts for all ages and all pocketbooks, as well as some that are perfect stocking stuffers and others that need a big red bow. This holiday season consider these unique gifts to help loved ones explore, discover, play and indulge in Illinois:

CHICAGO

CityPass, Chicago, www.citypass.com or at participating museums and attractions
Purchase a CityPass for \$33.75/adults, \$25/children (age 3-11) or \$25.00/seniors. Includes admission to the Art Institute of Chicago, the Field Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Shedd Aquarium, the Adler Planetarium and the Sears Tower Skydeck.

Cleopatra, Chicago, 312-922-9410 or www.fieldmuseum.org
Now through March, Chicago's Field Museum presents Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth. Admission is \$10 and must be purchased with basic museum admission as part of a discounted combination ticket.

Opera Immersion Weekend, Chicago, 877-CHICAGO, www.877chicago.com
*Give a romantic weekend in Chicago including a two-night stay at the Hotel Monaco, Friday night tickets to the Chicago Opera Theater's production of *Così fan Tutte*, a Saturday afternoon backstage tour and reception at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, followed by dinner and opera cabaret at Maxim's. Available only on February 15-17, 2002, for \$490 double or \$360 single.*

**Immersion weekends featuring Chicago Blues, Jazz, Theater and Art are also available.*

Gift of Travel/2

Chicago Neighborhood Tours, Chicago, 312-742-1190, www.chgocitytours.com

Give someone special the opportunity to travel the world, in Chicago, one neighborhood at a time. Offering 20 different excursions, prices start at \$25 per person or \$50 per couple.

Odyssey Cruises, Chicago, 888-957-2327 or purchase online at www.PremierYachts.com

Cruise Chicago's world-class skyline while experiencing fine dining and entertainment. Odyssey gift certificates are available for lunch, brunch or dinner cruises, or in \$25 increments. Cruise prices begin at \$46.20 per person.

CHICAGOLAND

Drury Lane Theater, Oakbrook Terrace, 630-530-8300, www.drurylaneoakbrook.com

Two tickets to "Evita" and dinner at the theater, January 16-March 17, 2002. Price: \$80-\$90

Embassy Suites Romance Package, Lombard, 630-969-7500 or 800-EMBASSY

Priced at \$139 plus tax per night, package includes two-room suite, chocolates, champagne, keepsake flutes, breakfast and more.

Gurnee Mills, Gurnee, 847-263-7500, www.gurneemillsmall.com

Stuff someone's stocking with a gift certificate to Gurnee Mills, the Midwest's largest retail and entertainment mall. Certificates of \$5 and up are available and can be used at any of the more than 200 manufacturer and retail outlet stores.

Long Grove, 847-634-0888

The historic village of Long Grove offers gift certificates to more than 90 specialty shops. Call or visit the information center in downtown Long Grove for certificates ... you name the price.

Lynfred Winery, Roselle, 630-529-WINE, www.lynfredwinery.com

Wine and gourmet food/gift baskets priced from \$30 to \$300.

Medieval Nights, Marriott Schaumburg, 847-240-0100

Package priced at \$151 includes one-night accommodations (Friday or Saturday), two tickets to Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament and breakfast for two at Allies American Grill.

Six Flags Great America, Gurnee, 847-249-1776, www.sixflags.com

Give five months of fun to someone special! The Midwest's premier theme park features spectacular roller coasters, stage shows and a variety of attractions. Season passes are \$87.95 per person and \$271.96 for families (up to four people).

"Unbullievable" Getaway, Radisson Hotel Alsip, 708-371-7300

Package is \$149 per couple, includes two tickets to a Chicago Bulls home game, plus one night in upgraded king room, breakfast for two in Allgauer's Grill.

Woodfield Shopping Center, Schaumburg, 847-330-1537, www.shopwoodfield.com

Purchase gift certificates in increments of \$5, redeemable at more than 300 stores.

Gift of Travel/3

NORTHERN

Cliffbreaker's River Suites & Restaurant, Rockford, 815-282-3033, www.cliffbreakers.com
Gift certificates in any amount are redeemable for rooms and/or meals. Romance packages start at \$120 and include an evening in a deluxe suite, with champagne, chocolates, cocktails, breakfast and more

East State Street Antique Malls I & II, Rockford, 815-226-1566
Gift certificates in any amount, redeemable at two antique malls featuring 320 dealers.

Galena Gift Certificates, Galena, 815-777-9050, www.galenachamber.com
Available in increments of \$10 and redeemable at more than 250 locations including lodging facilities, restaurants, shops, galleries, attractions and recreational facilities.

Hot Air Ballooning, Fox River Grove, 847-639-0550 or purchase online at www.wedofly.com
Flight certificates range in price from \$149 to \$199 per person. Christmas Special: Purchase a flight as a gift and get the regular \$199 flight for \$160 per person.

New American Theater, Rockford, 815-963-9454, www.newamericantheater.com
\$25 gift certificates for performances such as Ain't Misbehavin', Wait Until Dark, Romeo & Juliet.

WESTERN

Bald Eagle Safari, Rock Island, 309-788-8389
Naturalist Bob Motz offers 2-3 hour tours along the Mississippi River to view bald eagles in the wild. Only \$20 per car or van, per hour (two hour minimum). Included in the price are spotting scopes that attach to car/van windows.

Phantom of the Opera, Peoria Civic Center, 309-673-8900, www.peoria.org
The Broadway Company will be playing in Peoria from March 13th through the first week in April. Tickets are \$72.50 per person.

Seminary Street Historic District, Galesburg, 309-342-1000, www.seminarystreet.com
Gift certificates available in any amount for restaurants, bakery, pub, salon and spa, and more than 20 specialty shops. Certificates can be used at any of the Seminary Street businesses.

Ski Snowstar, Taylor Ridge, 309-798-2666, www.skisnowstar.com
Take to the slopes and enjoy eleven ski runs catering to all levels on 28 acres. For the ski enthusiast, purchase the "5 Pack" – five lift tickets for \$80. Other great gifts include private lessons (\$30 per hour) or ski gear from the gift shop.

The Barn Bed and Breakfast, Dahinda, 309-639-4408, www.bbonline.com/il/thebarn/
Spend the night in a true timber frame barn set in 200 acres of woods. Purchase a gift certificate for \$80 and enjoy one night for two with a deluxe continental breakfast.

Gift of Travel/4

CENTRAL

Amishland's Country Village, Tuscola, 217-253-9865, www.amishcountry-il.com
\$50, \$75 or \$100 gift certificates are available towards the purchase of handcrafted Amish and oak furniture

Inn at 835, Springfield, 217-523-4466, www.innat835.com
Give the gift of love with the "Love in Bloom" package. Priced at \$294 plus tax, the package includes one night in the "Rose Suite" plus long-stemmed roses upon arrival, champagne breakfast in bed and more.

Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site, Lerna, 217-345-1845, www.lincolnlogcabin.org
Visit this 1840s farm and home of Abraham Lincoln's parents and purchase a \$25 gift certificate for use in gift shop. The complex also includes the Stephen Sargent Farm and the Reuben Moore Home.

Osage Inn Getaway, Charleston, 217-345-2622
Enjoy a romantic night in this Civil War era log house for \$100 per night, breakfast included.

Sangamon Auditorium, Springfield, 217-206-6160 or 800-207-6960,
www.sangamonauditorium.org
Purchase tickets for an upcoming performance including Harriet Tubman & The Underground Railroad, Romeo & Juliet, Fiddler on the Roof and the Illinois Symphony Orchestra. Prices from \$22 to \$49 per ticket.

Stone Creek Golf Club, Urbana, 217-367-3000
Spend a day golfing at the Stone Creek Golf Club in Champaign County for \$65 per person (weekend rate). For a complete golf package including one round of golf, dinner at Kennedy's Restaurant and an overnight at the Park Inn, contact the Champaign County Convention & Visitors Bureau at 217-351-4133. Complete package is approximately \$295 per couple.

The Heartland Spa, Gilman, 815-683-2182 or 800-545-4853, www.heartlandspa.com
This tranquil retreat offers unique spa and beauty treatments, exercise and stretching classes, cross-country skiing and more. Gift ideas include everything from the \$1,800 per couple (Sunday through Friday) package to a \$50 massage. Day-only packages range from \$100 to \$300 depending on the selected services.

SOUTHWESTERN

Casino Queen, East St. Louis, 800-777-0777, www.casinoqueen.com
Enjoy the variety of gaming while viewing the breathtaking St. Louis skyline. Relax with a great meal in the Queen's Courtyard Buffet in the Visitors Pavilion. Make sure to stay on site at the new luxurious Crown Hotel.

Gateway International Raceway, Madison, 618-482-2400, www.gatewayraceway.com
One of the most exciting and versatile new raceways in the world is right here in Illinois. Take someone special to the races; season runs from March through October.

Vertical Heartland Climbing School, Buncombe, 618-995-1427, www.verticalheartland.com
Purchase a \$150 gift certificate and give a 3½-hour morning or afternoon guided rock climbing adventure for two.

Gift of Travel/5

SOUTHERN

Goose Hunting Trip, Williamson County, 800-GEESE-99

Got an itch to go hunting? Purchase a complete goose hunting trip for two for \$800. Price includes hunting for two days (guide, pit, decoys and dog), two nights lodging, daily breakfast and dinner.

Harrah's Casino, Metropolis, 800-929-5905, www.harrah.com

For a great stocking stuffer, stop by Harrah's Casino, a 1,650-passenger riverboat, and purchase table chips or slot machine tokens in any amount.

Seasons at Rend Lake, Whittington, 800-999-0977, www.rendlake.org

Overnight golf packages are available from \$64 per person, per night (week days only - one night lodging, 18 holes plus cart) to \$99 per person, per night (weekend only - one night lodging, 18 holes plus cart, \$25 voucher for meals at Seasons). Golf course opens March 15th.

STATEWIDE

Illinois Bed & Breakfast Association, 888-523-2406, www.go-illinois.com

Give a gift certificate to a bed & breakfast. Illinois offers a variety including historic inns, rustic ranches and log cabins.

State Park Lodges, www.dnr.state.il.us

Spend a weekend enjoying the great outdoors in one of Illinois' nine state park lodges. Lodges offer fine dining in a casual atmosphere.

Illinois Wine Country, 618-536-4972, www.illinoiswine.org

Visit one of Illinois' 28 wineries and buy your special someone a bottle of award-winning wine. Wineries are located in settings that range from quaint country hillsides and vineyards to larger farms and production facilities.

For more information on the specific travel gifts mentioned above, please contact the travel provider at the number listed. To complete your Illinois travel gift, log onto the Bureau of Tourism's Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com or call an Illinois travel counselor at 800-2CONNECT to request an "Illinois Travel Kit." Included in the kit are the Illinois Travel Guide, an Illinois Road Map, and *Illinois NOW!*, the state's new seasonal travel magazine. Wrap this kit up with the selected gift of travel and surprise someone special.

For more information about travel throughout Illinois, visit the Bureau's Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com or call 800-2CONNECT where travel counselors are waiting to help travelers plan a perfect Illinois getaway.

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The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA), Bureau of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality of life benefits for Illinois residents.

