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Fall Into Illinois For A Truly Unique Autumn Experience

Travel packages and new seasonal magazine help travelers discover Illinois' fall charm

CHICAGO (August 31, 2001) – Experience Illinois this fall and treat yourself to drives on outstanding scenic byways, trips through twisting corn mazes, and an array of festivals and homegrown wineries. As Illinois becomes ablaze with color, visitors and residents alike can enjoy one of the nation's best fall color forecasts.

“Planning that perfect Illinois getaway is easier than ever,” said Cathy Ritter, deputy director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Bureau of Tourism. “This fall we’re offering a collection of more than 200 travel packages, providing a range of excursions for every kind of traveler.”

Along with an outstanding lineup of fall happenings, Illinois is forecasted to offer the most vivid foliage the Midwest has witnessed in years. While below-normal rainfall in much of the nation is expected to dim the show of fall colors, Illinois' plentiful summer rains should bring vibrant, deep reds and oranges, according to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.



FESTIVALS

One of the best reasons to visit Illinois this fall is to experience one-of-a-kind festivals, including Central Illinois' **Broom Corn Festival** in Arcola and Northern Illinois' **Turkey Testicle Festival** in Byron. At the **St. Charles Scarecrow Festival** in the Chicagoland area, families can view more than 100 handmade scarecrows, along with crafts and live entertainment. Music lovers can journey to Southern Illinois for the down-home sounds of the **3rd Annual Bluegrass Festival** in Harrisburg, or head north to experience Celtic culture at Chicago's **5th Annual Celtic Fest** in Grant Park. Illinois also offers a handful of events during October, including **Chicagoween**, the Windy City's month-long celebration of fright, complete with spooky parades and haunted houses.

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SCENIC DRIVES

Illinois also offers hundreds of miles of colorful drives that give travelers a taste of the state's scenic rivers, rocky bluffs and untouched forests. Visitors can spend a leisurely weekend driving along the **Ohio River Scenic Route** in Southern Illinois and stop for a picnic in the Shawnee National Forest, or they can take a road trip along the **Scenic Bluffs of the Great River Road** in Western Illinois, and go antiquing at the Pulford Opera House Antique Mall in Savanna. During the first two weekends in October, travelers can indulge in the **34th Annual Spoon River Fall Festival** and feast upon a variety of homemade treats along the **Spoon River Valley Drive** in Western Illinois.



CORN MAZES

Families looking for a fun escape can lose themselves in one of Illinois' crazy corn mazes. In Central Illinois, **Uhlman's Farm** of Pekin features a maze so challenging that they offer "corn cops" and a walking, talking scarecrow to help lost travelers. Two mazes in Northern Illinois are renowned for their unique designs: The **Udderly Corny Maze** in Sterling is shaped like a cow, and features a petting zoo and pony rides. If you're searching for the "apple of your eye," the **Jonamac Orchard Maze** in Malta may be to your taste; this winding maze covers 2½ miles of trails and is shaped like a blossoming apple tree.



WINERIES & VINEYARDS

For a more relaxing getaway, travelers can savor the crisp fall season with a glass of authentic Illinois wine. Get away to one of Illinois' 23 quaint wineries, such as **Pomona Winery** in the heart of Southern Illinois, where visitors can select unique vintages, including "Once in a Blue Moon," a blueberry dessert wine, or "Orchard Spice," developed from an apple pie recipe. At **Winghill Vineyard** in Cobden, travelers can taste wines named after local birds and view art in the gallery, a stop on Southern Illinois' Art Trail. Also in Southern Illinois is the famed **Shawnee Hills Wine Trail**, a 26-mile drive with stops at five distinct wineries. Featuring a variety of warm reds and crisp whites from the region's

annual grape harvest, the **Shawnee Fest** in Williamson County is a favorite. In Northern Illinois, travelers can experience the true flavor of autumn at the **Galena Cellars Winery**, which features a semi-dry white wine called “October Fest.”



ILLINOIS' FALL TRAVEL TOOLS

The perfect fall getaway is easy to book in Illinois. The state tourism Web site, www.enjoyillinois.com, offers more than 200 travel packages to destinations around the state in 15 categories, such as “Seasonal Fun,” “Romantic Getaways” or “Festivals.” Every package includes hotel accommodations, along with a selection of amenities, ranging from dining options to complimentary admission to attractions. For example, the “**Southern Illinois Limousine Wine Tour**” includes a two-night stay for two at the Sassafras Ridge Bed & Breakfast in Carbondale, full country breakfast, chauffeured transportation to five local wineries, wine tastings and souvenir wine glasses.

Another important fall planning tool is the state’s new seasonal magazine, *Illinois NOW!* The premier issue features fall tips, trips and treasures, including a listing of top fall events and festivals, along with suggestions for picturesque drives, quirky corn mazes, special wines and heart-pounding sporting events.

For complete information on exciting things to do and see this fall throughout Illinois and to inquire about fall packages and/or order a copy of *Illinois NOW!*, call an Illinois travel counselor at 800-2CONNECT or visit the Illinois Bureau of Tourism’s Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com.



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.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Attached is a listing of popular fall festivals, scenic drives, corn mazes and wineries in Illinois. For more information on fall happenings, please contact Rebecca Olchawa at 312/729-1710. Additional fall slides are available if needed.

Sampling of Illinois Fall Festivals



Chicagoland

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|--|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| • Annual Apple Festival | Long Grove | October 5-7 | 847/634-0888 |
| • St. Charles Scarecrow Festival | St. Charles | October 12-14 | 800/777-4373 |
| • Chicagoween | Chicago | October 1-31 | 312/744-3315 |
| • 10 th Annual Magnificent Mile Lights Festival | Chicago | November 17-18 | 312/409-5560 |

Northern Illinois



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| • Old Fashioned HarvestFest & Fiddlers Contest | Woodstock | September 16 | 815/338-2436 |
| • 23 rd Annual Turkey Testicle Festival | Byron | October 13 | 815/234-9910 |
| • Spirits of Yesteryear | Freeport | October 20 | 815/232-8419 |
| • Sycamore Pumpkin Festival | Sycamore | October 26-28 | 815/895-5161 |

Central Illinois



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|---|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| • 31 st Annual Broom Corn Festival | Arcola | September 7-9 | 800/336-5456 |
| • Abraham Lincoln National Rail-Splitting Festival | Lincoln | September 15-16 | 217/732-2632 |
| • Candlelight Tour of New Salem | Petersburg | October 5-6 | 217/632-4000 |
| • Blessings of the Table: Thanksgiving at Clover Lawn | Bloomington | November 2-19 | 309/828-1084 |

Western Illinois



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| • Hot-Air Balloon Rally | Macomb | September 7-9 | 309/833-1315 |
| • Labyrinth Medieval Fair | Barry | September 8-9 | 217/335-2670 |
| • 35 th Annual Morton Pumpkin Festival | Morton | September 12-15 | 309/263-2491 |
| • Early Tin Dusters Fall Color Run | Quincy | October 19-21 | 217/964-2426 |

Southern Illinois



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| • <i>Days of Our Lives</i> Fest (meet the cast) | Salem | September 14-16 | 618/548-0878 |
| • Illinois Wine & Art Festival at Rend Lake | Whittington | September 29-30 | 618/629-2220 |
| • 3 rd Annual Bluegrass Festival | Harrisburg | October 6 | 618/253-7342 |
| • Octoberfest | Cobden | October 13-14 | 618/893-2557 |

Southwest Illinois



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| • Victorian Festival | Jerseyville | September 1-3 | 618/498-5590 |
| • The Great Godfrey Maze | Godfrey | September 1-October 31 | 618/466-1483 |
| • Old Settlers Days | Kampsville | October 13-14 | 618/653-4520 |
| • Great American Train Show | Collinsville | November 24-25 | 618/345-8998 |



Sampling of Illinois Scenic Drives



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| • Historic Lincoln Highway | Chicagoland | View the banks of the Fox River, Batavia Riverwalk and Northern Illinois University campus |
| • Spoon River Valley Scenic Drive | Western | View the river valley, an historic mill town and Dickson Mounds |
| • The Great River Road | Western | View the cliffs of Mississippi Palisades State Park, the town of Galena and quaint antique shops |
| • Ohio River Scenic Route | Southern | View the river, Shawnee Forest, Garden of the Gods and Cave-In-Rock State Park |
| • Shelby County Tour | Central | View the Eagle Creek State Park, the Thompson Mill Covered Bridge and the town of Moweaqua |

Illinois Corn Mazes



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| • Udderly Corny Maze | Sterling | Cow shaped maze featuring a petting zoo, pony rides and potato launcher |
| • Jonamac Orchard | Malta | Maze shaped like a spreading apple tree with apple bushels and pumpkins, featuring hay rides and horse-drawn wagon |
| • Uhlman's Farm | Pekin | Maze shaped like the scarecrow from the <i>Wizard of Oz</i> , featuring pumpkin picking, crafts and hay rides |
| • The Great Godfrey Maze | Godfrey | Eagle shaped maze featuring helicopter rides, playground and lake |

Sampling of Illinois Wineries



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| • Pomona Winery | Pomona | Known for its distinctive blueberry wine – “Once in a Blue Moon” | 618-893-2623 |
| • Owl Creek Vineyard | Cobden | Award winning reds and late-harvest dessert wines | 618-893-2557 |
| • Alto Vineyards | Alto Pass | Alto's most popular wine is the “Shawnee Gold” – a sweet white wine | 618-893-4898 |
| • Baxter's Vineyards & Winery | Nauvoo | Illinois' oldest winery and known for its “Concord Wine” – a sweet dessert wine | 800-854-1396 |
| • Galena Cellars Winery | Galena | Produces fruit and table wines including “October Fest” – a semi-dry white wine | 800-397-WINE |
| • Lau-Nae Winery | Red Bud | Awarded a gold medal for its “French Colony” wine | 618-282-WINE |
| • Lynfred Winery | Roselle | Boasts more than 50 varieties including red, white, fruit and spiced wines | 888-298-WINE |