



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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HAVE A WINTER BLAST IN ILLINOIS

Season offers a flurry of both indoor and outdoor winter fun in Illinois

CHICAGO – Whether travelers to Illinois this season wish to enjoy the warmth of the indoors or revel in the snow outside, they can indulge in a variety of winter activities statewide. With a seasonal lineup that includes events as varied as a chocolate festival, a visit to a reindeer ranch and eagle watching, Illinois' winter forecast calls for travelers to explore the state to find a wealth of seasonal fun.

Outdoor Events and Festivals

Visitors can stroll along walkways ablaze with more than one million lights at Lincoln Park Zoo's annual **ZooLights**, November 25-January 1. **ZooLights** features hundreds of decorated trees, a laser light show, ice carvers, nighttime musical entertainment and chance to visit with Santa. (Chicago)

For more information, contact Lincoln Park Zoo (312-742-2000, www.lpzoo.org).

Light Nights on the Magnificent Mile, January 14-March 4, invites spectators to celebrate the season well beyond New Year's Day and see the stunning lighted skyscrapers, luminous orb sculptures and the signature one million tree lights along the Magnificent Mile. Every Saturday evening, visitors are treated to a spectacular fireworks show. And in addition, they can stop by Pioneer Court at 401 N. Michigan Avenue to get free holographic firework viewing glasses, and enjoy holiday music, winter giveaways and family fun. (Chicago)

For more information, contact the Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (312-642-3570, www.themagnificentmile.com).

Palos Heights' **Winterfest**, on January 28, features an obstacle course that will give revelers an adrenaline rush to ease the winter chill, while hay rides and folk music performances offer a chance to sit back and relax. Winterfest's main event is the annual dog sledding competition between statewide racing teams competing for the coveted dog sledding champion title. (Chicagoland)

For more information, contact the city of Palos Heights (708-361-1873, www.palosheights.org).

Chestnut Mountain Resort, rated the no. 1 ski resort in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa by *Ski Magazine*, will open its slopes for the season late in November. Located in historic Galena, Chestnut Mountain offers 17 downhill runs ranging in level for the novice to experienced skier, as well as offers a diverse snowboard terrain park. Ideal for a romantic

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Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

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getaway or family trip, the resort's 120-room lodge offers easy access to the slopes, as well as ski lessons and onsite restaurants and shopping. (Northern)

For more information, contact the Chestnut Mountain Resort (815-777-1320, www.chestnutmtn.com).

Get a North Pole experience right here in Illinois! **Hardy's Reindeer Ranch** in Rantoul is open November 18-December 28 and provides guests a chance to see nearly 20 Alaskan reindeer. While at the ranch, visitors can also pick their perfect tree at the Christmas tree farm and enjoy holiday shopping at the old-fashioned Country Barn Gift Shop. (Central)

For more information, contact Hardy's Reindeer Ranch (217-893-3407, www.reindeerranch.com).

Any day can be a snow day during **Ski Snowstar Winter Sports Park's** season, December 17-March 7. This 28-acre park is located near the Quad Cities in Andalusia and offers customized lessons, ski clinics, night skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing and a cozy fireplace where skiers can warm up after a long day on the slopes. (Western)

For more information, contact Ski Snowstar (800-383-4002, www.skisnowstar.com) or the Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau (800-747-7800, www.visitquadcities.com).

Outdoor adventure-seekers can head out to **Giant City State Park** to enjoy a winter hike or bird watching at this 4,000-acre park located in the Shawnee National Forest. The park features more than 18 miles of hiking trails and is known for its beautiful sandstone bluffs. Visitors can wind down for the evening at the Giant City Lodge in front of the grand fireplace, enjoy a delicious fried chicken dinner or stay at one of the peaceful guest cabins onsite. (Southern)

For more information, contact the Giant City State Park (618-457-4836, www.dnr.state.il.us) or Giant City Lodge (618-457-4921, www.giantcitylodge.com).

With more than 1,000 eagles migrating from the Northern United States and Canada to Southwest Illinois each year, Alton's Great River Road shoreline is an ideal spot to view bald eagles. Travelers to the area can enjoy the **Alton Eagle Meet & Greet** at World Bird Sanctuary, which offers the opportunity to view a live bald eagle up close every Saturday throughout the month of January. (Southwest)

For more information, contact the Alton Convention and Visitors Bureau (1-800-ALTON-IL, www.visitalton.com).

Indoor Winter Events

Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art features **The Fluidity of Time**, November 25-February 25. This exhibition displays works by several generations of artists who made significant contributions to the landscape of modern art. The show includes key works from the 1960s, '70s and '80s, as well as notable works of today. (Chicago)

For more information, contact the Museum of Contemporary Art (312-280-2660, www.mcachicago.org).

Winter Delights 2006, January 6-February 27, presents travelers with the opportunity to experience Chicago's best in dining, theater, shopping and accommodations through pre-planned cultural itineraries. This year, Winter Delights offers unique culturally themed travel experiences complete with entertainment, VIP access to events, backstage tours and conversations with arts experts. (Chicago)

For more information, contact the Chicago Convention and Visitors Bureau (877-CHICAGO, www.877chicago.com).

Centre East at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie presents the **Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats** February 4 and 5. Visitors will be dazzled during the show as acrobats perform spellbinding feats of physical courage and grace. The entertainers represent the best of this time-honored tradition, mixing traditional dance, amazing costumes and thrilling acrobatics. (Chicagoland)

For more information, contact the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts (847-673-6300, www.northshorecenter.org).

Warm up at **Grizzly Jack's Enchanted Forest**, the new indoor amusement park at Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Lodge and Indoor Water Park in Utica. Scheduled to host its enchanted forest grand opening in February, this attraction will add even more excitement to the state's only indoor water park and will feature 10 carnival-style rides, including a carousel, Tilt-A-Whirl and bumper cars. The enchanted forest will also feature midway games, large TV screens, a pizza parlor and more. (Northern)

For more information, contact the Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Lodge (866-399-FUNN, www.grandbearlodge.com).

Central Illinois will be home to sizzling jazz this winter as hundreds of people from around the country gather in Decatur for the 31st annual **Central Illinois Jazz Festival**, February 3-5. One of the longest running jazz festivals in the U.S., it consistently features an all-star lineup; this year the Cornet Chop Suey Jazz Band and Connie Jones and Crescent City Jazz Band are scheduled to perform. (Central)

For more information, contact Juvae Jazz Society (217-877-4114, www.juvaejazz.com).

Visitors to the **Galesburg Historical Society Chocolate Festival** should prepare themselves for a sweet treat February 10-12. Located at the Galesburg's Antique Mall, the event presents a seemingly endless selection of chocolate and offers tastings of homemade pies, cakes, tortes and creams. (Western)

For more information, contact the Galesburg Convention and Visitors Bureau (309-343-2485, www.visitgalesburg.com).

White County Historical Society in Carmi presents **Key Ingredients: America By Food**, a Smithsonian traveling exhibit, November 18-January 1. The exhibit explores 500 years of American food culture and the influence of historical, social and regional traditions on daily meals and celebrations. Visitors will discover the connections between Americans and the foods they produce, prepare, preserve and present at the table. (Southern)

For more information, contact the Carmi Chamber of Commerce (618-382-7606, www.cityofcarmi.com) or the Southeastern Illinois Convention and Visitors Bureau (877-273-4554, www.southeastillinois.com).

Fete du Bon Vieux Temps (Festival of the Good Old Days) at Cahokia Courthouse, February 25, is a French Colonial Mardi Gras. Volunteers dressed in authentic period costumes take visitors on candlelit tours of 18th century historic sites such as the Martin-Boismenu House, built in 1790, and the Holy Family Parish Log Church, dedicated in 1799. (Southwest)

For more information, contact the Cahokia Courthouse State Historic Site (618-332-1782) or the Tourism Bureau of Southwestern Illinois (800-442-1488, www.thetourismbureau.org).

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers free travel resources with additional information on **3-Day Getaways**, winter festivals, events and attractions. All are available by calling **1-800-2-CONNECT** to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or by visiting the Bureau's Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Media materials and downloadable images are now available on the Illinois Bureau of Tourism's online media center at www.illinoismediacenter.com. Additional photography, available electronically or in slide format, may be obtained by contacting Katie Markese at katie.markese@edelman.com, 312-297-7561 or Julie Connolly at julie.connolly@edelman.com, 312-233-1246.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.