



# ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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## ILLINOIS ENCOURAGES TRAVELERS TO “BLAZE THEIR OWN TRAIL” THIS FALL

*State’s intriguing history and culture inspire first ‘Presidential Trails’*

CHICAGO – This fall the Illinois Bureau of Tourism encourages travelers to “Blaze Your Own Trail in Illinois” with Presidential Trails itineraries highlighting Illinois’ rich culture and history through the experiences of three presidents – Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant and Ronald Reagan – who lived and made their mark in Illinois.

Celebrating Illinois’ vibrant fall season, each Presidential Trail provides visitors with robust itinerary suggestions related to these three presidents, and a sampling of some points of interest along each route. Travelers can choose the itinerary they would like to follow, and use the site’s mapping technology and bookable 3-Day Getaways for easy and convenient trip planning.

“Many families will be engaged in the world of elections this fall, and with the Presidential Trails, we hope to bring Illinois’ rich political and presidential history to life for them,” said Jan Kostner, deputy director of the Illinois Bureau of Tourism. “These educational and stimulating itineraries underscore the rich cultural offerings and architectural landmarks across the state.”

Hours of operation for some historic sites are subject to change. Please check [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com) for the most up-to-date schedules.

### LINCOLN TRAIL

The mark of the United States’ 16<sup>th</sup> president is evident throughout all of Illinois, but perhaps nowhere is it more prominent than in the central region of the state. Abraham Lincoln moved to Illinois as a 20-something, and more than 30 years later stood waving to the town he considered home as he embarked for the country’s capital and a new career as president. Visitors to these historic sites and surrounding attractions have the unique opportunity to experience Lincoln’s life in a manner that evokes personal reflection and highlights his historical significance.

The Lincoln Trail includes:

- **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum**, Springfield: Mixing 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology with 19<sup>th</sup>-century history, the museum sheds light on one the country’s most influential figures through interactive exhibits and unique theater productions. The 12-million-item library is also home to the world’s largest collection of pre-presidential Lincoln materials.
- **Lincoln’s Ghost Walk: Legends & Lore**, Springfield: An experiential tour highlights historic Lincoln sites as the backdrop for mysterious stories based on and related to Lincoln’s life and death.
- **Lincoln’s New Salem State Historic Site**, Petersburg: A reconstruction of the village where Abraham Lincoln spent six years of his early adulthood that marked a significant turning point in his career. It was in New Salem that Lincoln had clerked in a store, served as postmaster and deputy surveyor, and was elected to the Illinois General Assembly in 1834 and 1836. (Open Wednesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

**Governor Rod R. Blagojevich**

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism

- **Lincoln Home National Historic Site**, Springfield: Purchased in 1944 following the birth of their first child, Robert, Abraham and Mary Lincoln raised their family in this home for seventeen years until Lincoln's election to the Presidency in 1861. (Open Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

### **GRANT TRAIL**

Ulysses S. Grant, the 18<sup>th</sup> president, worked at his father's leather shop in Galena when he was called into service at the outbreak of the Civil War. Grant, a West Point graduate, quickly rose through the ranks of the Union Army to become its commanding general. Following the war he returned to live in Galena until the presidential election in 1868. As president, Grant made several visits to his family's home in Galena.

The Grant Trail includes:

- **Ulysses S. Grant Home State Historic Site**, Galena: Grant's former home was given to him by residents of Galena in appreciation for his war service in 1865. His children donated the home to the city in 1904, and it has since been maintained as a memorial to Grant. (Open Wednesday – Sunday, tours at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.)
- **Galena Historic District**: Encompassing 85 percent of the city, and including more than 1,000 properties built before 1900, this member of the National Register of Historic Places is home to a variety of unique architectural styles and includes some of the country's most impressive examples of Greek Revival. Visitors can take a guided walking tour of the sites, which include the DeSoto House Hotel, recognized as Illinois' oldest operating hotel and previous host to Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Ralph Waldo Emerson. (Hours of operation range for various sites)
- **Galena Cellars Vineyard & Winery**, Galena; **Massbach Ridge Winery**, Elizabeth: The scenic beauty and agriculture of Northwest Illinois is highlighted by two of its popular wineries. Visitors can enjoy the flavors of the region with wine tastings, vineyard tours and winemaking demonstrations.

### **REAGAN TRAIL**

President Ronald Reagan's spent his formative years in Illinois. "Dutch," as his father called him, was born in February 1911, and lived with his family for more than 20 years in Tampico, Monmouth, Galesburg and Chicago, until finally residing in Dixon from 1920 to 1933. While there, Reagan taught Sunday school with his mother, developed his love of music and the arts as a drum major for the YMCA band, and honed his leadership skills on the Eureka College football team.

Trail highlights include:

- **Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home**, Dixon: Mentioned in Reagan's autobiography, the house on 816 S. Hennepin was home to Jack and Nelle Reagan and their two sons, Neil and Ronald, from 1920-1923. By the time Ronald and wife Nancy visited Dixon to celebrate his birthday in 1984, the house had been fully restored to look as it did when the family resided there. (Open Monday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m., through Nov. 1)
- **Dixon Historic Center**, Dixon: A history research and learning center housed in President Ronald Reagan's boyhood South Central School and associated with the Smithsonian Institution. (Open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.)
- **Lowell Park**, Dixon: The riverside park where Reagan was a lifeguard for seven summers and where he is credited to have saved 77 lives. The park is open for picnics, hiking, biking, fishing, and boating.

- **Ronald Reagan Museum and Peace Garden**, Eureka College, Eureka: Reagan's alma mater houses the second largest collection of Reagan memorabilia outside of the Reagan library in California. Artifacts highlight his student days at Eureka College through his presidential years. The nearby Peace Garden commemorates Reagan's 1982 speech at the college entitled, "The Beginning of the End of the Cold War."
- **Knox County Scenic Drive**, Knox County: Historic attractions not typically open to the public will be available for tours and hands-on activities, Oct. 4-5, 11-12. Visitors can explore the rural heritage of some of the towns enjoyed by Reagan's family while they lived in Galesburg. (Hours of operation range for various sites)

To help travelers plan their fall getaways, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers free travel resources with additional information on magnificent 3-Day Getaways, wine trails, fall festivals, events and attractions through the Bureau's Web site, **[www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com)** or its travel counselors at **1-800-2CONNECT**.

Beginning Sept. 15, travelers can check the Illinois Bureau of Tourism's **weekly fall color updates** on **[www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com)** to help them plan and make the most of any Illinois getaway. Together with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Bureau created the updates to report where and when the fall colors are the most brilliant in each of the state's seven regions so that potential travelers can maximize their fall travels.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Media materials and downloadable images are now available on the Illinois Bureau of Tourism online media center at **[www.illinoismediacenter.com](http://www.illinoismediacenter.com)**. Additional photography, available electronically, may be obtained by contacting Andrew Smith at [andrew.smith@edelman.com](mailto:andrew.smith@edelman.com), 312-552-1139.

*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.*