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America’s favorite small town.
Galena, Illinois.
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ON THE COVER
Shedd Aquarium, Chicago
Credit: Ackerman and Gruber
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CHICAGO VOTED BEST BIG CITY IN THE U.S.
6 YEARS IN A ROW
EAT, STAY & PLAY

GUIDEBOOK

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PHOTOGRAPH: APRIL JOHNSON
CENTRALIA BALLOON FEST, CENTRALIA

ENJOYILLINOIS.COM 5
major-league joy

Take the family out to a minor league ball game. Frequent fireworks, quirky mascots, kid-centric activities and budget-friendly promotions make it fun for everyone.

Baseball season reignites passion for the national pastime in Illinois, especially among fans of the Chicago Cubs and Chicago White Sox. But they’re not the only games in town. Minor league teams play an exciting brand of ball in fun, fan-friendly venues that cater to kids. Though Major League Baseball’s restructuring of the minors caused some teams to change leagues and levels, a day or night at the ballpark remains an affordable, enjoyable tradition for families.

Gateway Grizzlies

Baseball’s Best Burger—thick beef sandwiched by a glazed doughnut and topped with bacon and sharp cheddar—leads the nationally famous food lineup at GCS Credit Union Ballpark in Sauget (near St. Louis), where the Grizzlies host their Frontier League opponents. The Philly cheesesteak nachos hit a home run too. The season is loaded with promotions (like Crazy Game Show Night and Food Truck Night), culminating with the last home game’s Greatest Night in Baseball, when fans get to TP the stadium.
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Kane County Cougars
These cats with bats prowl the American Association, an independent Major League Baseball Partner League. They play their home games at Northwestern Medicine Field in Geneva, where a KidZone behind the right-field deck entertains young fans (and their parents) with an inflatable slide, bounce house, T-ball, basketball, soccer and other activities, plus a Snack Shack. Kids can also sign up for experiences like being a guest PA announcer or shagging balls during batting practice.

Chicago Dogs
Fireworks and theme nights on Saturdays—it’s the kind of double play you’ll see at Impact Field in Rosemont, home of the American Association club named for the culinary classic. Look for weekly pyrotechnics and promotions like Family Sundays, when you and the kids can play catch on the field, get autographs, and share bottomless popcorn and pop. On Wiener Wednesdays, the Dogs become the WienerBolts—players in special jerseys while fans devour $1 hot dogs.

Peoria Chiefs
Downtown’s up-and-coming Warehouse District provides a fitting setting for major league prospects to show their potential. The Chiefs, a Midwest League affiliate of the St. Louis Cardinals, play at Dozer Park (named for Caterpillar). Stay for fireworks on select nights, and chuckle when the Chiefs don alt jerseys—last season they played a few games as the Peoria Orange Barrels (in honor of roadwork season) and the Peoria Pork Tenderloins (for a fave local sandwich).

Joliet Slammers
With a name inspired by Jollet’s historic Old Joliet Prison (of The Blues Brothers movie fame), the Slammers take no prisoners when facing Frontier League foes at Duly Health and Care Field. Friday nights at the ballpark mean post-game fireworks, while Sundays are Family Fun Day—get autographs from the team and enjoy balloon animals, face painting and yard games. On Tuesdays, fans can enjoy a game for just $2 a ticket. Kids can also run the bases after non-fireworks games, weather permitting.

Schaumburg Boomers
Concessions at Wintrust Field go beyond peanuts and Cracker Jack. Build your own taco at the Walking Taco or indulge in the Bases Loaded Burger. No word if they’ll be adding greater prairie chicken to the menu—that’s the native Illinois bird (nicknamed “boomer”) that inspired the team’s name. The male bird makes a booming sound to assert its dominance.

Windy City ThunderBolts
Take a seat in the upper deck—one of the few in Minor League Baseball—at Ozinga Field in Crestwood to watch the Bolts battle their Frontier League rivals. Kids will love seeing a playground right as they walk into the ballpark. Parents will appreciate Family Sunday’s bargain deal on tickets, concessions and souvenirs for four, plus face painting and a live in-game animal show. Everyone will ooh and ah at the post-game fireworks on Friday and Saturday nights. They’re also hosting the leagues’ all-star game (July 12).

BLACK BASEBALL MATTERS
Chicago helped give birth to the Negro Leagues, Black baseball players’ alternative to the long-segregated major leagues. Rube Foster, a black star pitcher who became owner and manager of the Chicago American Giants—the top Black team—led the founding of the Negro National League in 1920.

Today, the American Association’s Chicago Dogs host a Negro Leagues Tribute game, wearing Chicago American Giants jerseys (1922 team at right) and playing the Kansas City Monarchs, who are named for another famous Negro Leagues team.
In Chicago’s backyard, there’s a place where American architecture was born: Oak Park. Explore breathtaking treasures like Frank Lloyd Wright’s Home and Studio and the beautifully restored Unity Temple. Pedal along a pathway of discovery and witness the world’s largest collection of Wright’s masterpieces. Your adventure is waiting.

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all-star mascots

A minor league mascot plays many positions: cheerleader, comedian, dancer and goodwill ambassador. Here’s the scouting report on this lovable lineup.

**OZZIE T. **& **ANNIE T.**
KANE COUNTY COUGARS

Ozzie T. and Annie T. are brother and sister felines (Ozzie's older), a rare sibling act among sports mascots. Prior to joining the family biz, Annie focused on school and traveling around the country.

**IZZY**
GATEWAY GRIZZLIES

Izzy the grizzly bear's birthday is a special day at the ballpark, with Izzy choosing on-the-field games and mascot friends making appearances. Izzy turns 22 this year.

**SQUEEZE**
CHICAGO DOGS

Squeeze is a friendly yellowish creature who resembles a mustard bottle. You may also see the evil-looking Ketchup.

**J.L. BIRD & SPIKES**
JOLIET SLAMMERS

Spikes is a lovable, long-eared dog that kids adore, while J.L. Bird is a mischievous sort who wears old-school prison stripes (including a round hat). Somehow, they get along.

**KETCHUP**
The red stuff is a no-no on true Chicago hot dogs.

**HOMER**
PÉORIA CHIEFS

Homer the Fire Chief Dalmatian was once “suspended” for allegedly squirting an umpire with a water gun. (It was all a doggone publicity stunt.)

**COOP**
SCHAUMBURG BOOMERS

Coop the Boomer likes to break into his Booming Dance, a variation of the moves an actual male greater prairie chicken makes in the wild during mating season.

**BOOMER**
WINDY CITY THUNDERBOLTS

Boomer attributes his round waist to his favorite foods: Beggar's Pizza, hot dogs and foul balls. Off the field, his favorite toy is a boomerang and he likes the TV show Blues Clues.
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Geneva Arts Fair July 29 & 30
Explore LaSalle County

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 and craft beer, there’s an adventure awaiting you in LaSalle County.

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- **KISHAUWAU CABINS** - Family-friendly four season cabins near Starved Rock
- **STARVED ROCK COUNTRY WELCOME CENTER** - Browse brochures and the Illinois Made Gift Shoppe
- **DOWNTOWN OTTAWA** - Vibrant downtown and family-friendly fests
- **HEGELER CARUS MANSION** - Step back into history
- **STARVED ROCK STATE PARK** - Beautiful trails for all experience levels
- **STARVED ROCK LODGE** - Cabins, hikes, tours, & outdoor dining

Find or request more information at [enjoylasallecounty.com](http://enjoylasallecounty.com)
women at work

Meet four diverse entrepreneurs who pour passion into their craft, whether that’s making bread, pounding metal, raising alpacas or baking sweet treats.

Visit the Makers
Learn more about all the Illinois Makers at IllinoisMade.com
HEWN BAKERY

Co-owners Ellen King and Julie Matthei wanted to create a neighborhood bakery where everything was made fresh daily. Fast forward one decade, and the Evanston bakery still operates on a first-come, first-serve premise (or order ahead). Customers line up for the from-scratch, made-by-hand loaves starring simple ingredients like starter, flour, water and sea salt.

The duo works with local farmers to source dairy, produce and grains. “When you are getting wheat that is grown here, milled here and shipped here, it truly is unique,” King says. Bread lovers can taste the difference in loaves made with heritage grains due to their complex flavor and texture.

FIVE POINTS BLACKSMITH SHOP

Pounding hot metal into alluring and distinctive works of art, Lorelei Sims creates organic, one-of-a-kind pieces resembling things found in nature. Her custom designs include home and garden decor, furniture, and light fixtures. When not wielding a hammer, Sims writes how-to books, teaches and gives demos at her Five Points Blacksmith Shop in Charleston (95 miles southeast of Springfield). View some of her commissions at the Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site (9 miles south of her shop).
ROLLING OAK ALPACA RANCH

In 2011, Morgan Stevenson, who likes to crochet, was on the hunt for softer yarn and could not find any locally. So she and her mother, Judy Hoepker, decided to embark on a mother-daughter venture: raising alpacas. Their 10-acre farm-to-fiber ranch sits just outside of Lick Creek (near Makanda). Stevenson and Hoepker offer tours of their farm (with a reservation) and teach classes. In three- to four-hour sessions, participants can learn about alpaca fiber prep, how to crochet a scarf with alpaca yarn, or heddle loom weaving basics. The gift shop sells a variety of alpaca fiber products such as scarves, hats, toys, yarn, dryer balls and felted soap.

RILEY’S VEGAN SWEETS AND EATS

Riley Greenwood offered vegan sweets occasionally when she opened her Peoria cupcake shop in 2017. But she then transitioned to all-vegan in 2018 after becoming vegan herself and seeing a major increase in demand. She’s become an expert at plant-based substitutes for ingredients such as eggs. Greenwood is known for her inventive cake flavors, like Funfetti Cookie Dough and Chocolate Cake with Strawberry Butter Cream. Fan favorites also include apple cider doughnuts and jumbo cinnamon rolls, which earned her a spot on PETA’s 2022 list of Top 10 Vegan Sweet Treats in the U.S.

A second-generation entrepreneur, Greenwood looks to her mom, Rachael Parker of SweetCakes by Rachael in Peoria, for inspiration.
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.
The Has Bin
The 1950s grain bin comfortably sleeps two people. While on the farm, explore the flower and vegetable gardens, fish in the pond, or relax by the firepit.

upcycled overnights
One-of-a-kind lodgings in reimagined structures intrigue guests with a creative stay and a local connection.

G R A I N  B I N
Formerly used to store grain on this working Alvin farm, The Has Bin Guest House now nestles people. Freshly made baked goods comfort guests, as do a sleeping loft and a clawfoot tub/shower. Stargaze from the upper deck.

T R E E  H O U S E S
Perch in a tree house near Elizabethtown close to Shawnee National Forest with the added luxuries of air-conditioning and indoor plumbing at Timber Ridge Outpost and Cabins. Fill the day with hiking, fishing, birding, grabbing ice cream from the Outpost or simply relaxing.

Inspired by a zipline platform, the handcrafted Ten Acre Treehouses provide an off-the-grid stay in Nauvoo. Come back down to earth by walking the trails weaving around this 28-acre property.

H O B B I T  H O U S E S
Two earthen shelter cabins with living grass roofs are known as Rocky Comfort Cabins in Makanda. Hobbit-style features include round windows and doors, and sun tunnels light the bath and living areas. Walk five minutes to Blue Sky Vineyard.

T R A I N  C A B O O S E S
At Peoria’s Wildlife Prairie Park, three renovated red Santa Fe Caboose delight train enthusiasts of all ages. Each caboose sleeps up to five, and upgrades include creature comforts like a TV, full bathroom, mini fridge and coffee maker. The park has more than 150 animals and 25 miles of hiking trails.
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ENJOY AURORA.com
The former Jo Daviess County Jail (built in 1878) now houses six luxurious and spacious three-room suites and welcomes those seeking a posh stay at Jail Hill Inn. Days begin with a three-course breakfast and finish strong with a wine and cheese reception.

When booking a classroom-size suite at the Davie School Inn, select a room theme according to a school subject, like math or American history. Extracurricular activities include antiquing in and around Anna, plus hiking, biking and traveling Shawnee Hills National Forest and a wine trail.

Discover peace within the Windy City’s bustle. At Monastery of the Holy Cross Guesthouse, simple accommodations welcome all “travelers and pilgrims,” with only a humble suggested donation named for those able to pay. Take advantage of free off-street parking.

Why simply tour a Windy City landmark when you can stay in one? LondonHouse Chicago, Virgin Hotels, the Kimpton Gray Hotel, the Pendry and the SoHo House all had former lives as historic office buildings. Originally the Northwest Tower, The Robey inhabits one of the first skyscrapers built outside of downtown in the nearby Wicker Park neighborhood. The Cambria Hotel occupies the same building as the James M. Nederlander Theatre, an edifice on the National Register of Historic Places.
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What’s unique about this ruby-hued honey is that the hemp isn’t added by human hand. Bees naturally infuse it when they feed on a patented hemp extract organic juice blend developed by Joline Rivera, the Chicago-based founder of Kitchen Toke magazine and Red Belly Honey.

**RED BELLY HONEY**

Chef Rocio Vargas personalizes cocktail hours, family-style dinners and plated meals through her cannabis catering company, Planda. The menu could include Cannabutter Coconut Chicken or CBD kombucha.

**MINDY’S EDIBLES**

Chef Manny Mendoza won an episode of Cooked with Cannabis on Netflix with his Salvadoran short rib pupusas topped with pickled cabbage marinated in CBD chili oil.

**HERBAL NOTES**

Cannabis chefs Jeni Cohen and Rebecca VanderKloot, the female creatives behind Flame Princess Confections, cultivate menus that might include tomato basil spaghetti simmering in a spicy arrabbiata sauce.

For a sit-down restaurant experience that will lift you up, Canna Cafe in the West Loop serves up “baked” mac and cheese and bone-in chicken wings with THC.

In the south suburb of Calumet City, Sunrize Cafe keeps the kitchen buzzing with THC soul food entrees.

These Chicago entrepreneurs are making the most of this new creative space in the culinary world.
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Illinois Grape Growers & Vintners Alliance (IGGVA)
He plays a judge in the Chicago-based TV show 61st Street, but his real-life benchmark for success is in the difference he makes in the lives of young theater-lovers.

To the TV-watching public, he is best known as Dr. Gabriel Fife on the Grey’s Anatomy spin-off, Private Practice. To the disabled community, he is best known as the actor who auditions for—and wins—roles that aren’t written for disabled people.

A cofounder of The Gift Theatre (debut 2001) in his Chicago hometown Jefferson Park neighborhood and a lifelong lover of the stage, Thornton turned to performance and improv to help him heal from two spinal strokes that left him paralyzed. Now he helps to bring the healing art of theater to budding performers in a once artistically underserved area of Chicago.

We chatted with the award-winning performer about his beloved Jefferson Park neighborhood and about navigating Chicago—and the entertainment world—with a wheelchair.
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You still live in the neighborhood where you grew up. What do you love about Chicago?

I do love that Chicago is a mix of what feels like a small town and also a metropolis. There's a hustle to the city but there's also humility, and I find that a rare combination in cities. Chicago is very much a city of neighborhoods. And that means there's an identity and a culture to each neighborhood.

What do you love about your neighborhood?

Jefferson Park is an interesting area. It's simultaneously a neighborhood where people have stayed for generations, with old-school charm, but with young families moving in as well—making it feel revitalized. And it's also accessible, with one of the biggest train and bus depots in the city.

Is that why you chose to open The Gift Theatre there?

I grew up in an area of the city that didn't have a professional arts organization. That was a driving force for putting down roots and staying. For so many people, The Gift's 45-seat storefront theater was their first point of contact for live theater. There are high school kids who have now gone through the two-year apprenticeship program and they're onstage with us. We've certainly changed the trajectory of some lives.

Can you explain the name behind your theater?

The name "The Gift" comes from a book called Towards a Poor Theatre (Per un teatro povero) by Jerzy Grotowski. He ran an ensemble that trained together. The whole idea was that if you trained together, all the egotistical pursuits of being in the arts goes away—trying to be famous and all that nonsense—and what you're really showing up for is to give a gift of yourself to the audience.

The Gift Theatre hosted your return to the stage after your strokes, right?

I got back onstage (in 2006) three years after my strokes when I did a one-person show, The Good Thief, and won the Joseph Jefferson Award. The thing about a spinal stroke is that this crazy thing happens that no one has an explanation for, whatsoever, and then your life is completely changed.

Did your experience at The Second City help the healing process?

I took one class at The Second City called Improv for Actors. I think it was really salubrious, because I was able to be anyone. I didn't actually have to just be the person in the chair. I could be a pilot. I could be whatever I wanted.

What's it like to play a judge in the show 61st Street?

A judge is tricky to play because, as an actor, you have to have a point of view about everything. But as a judge, you have to be neutral. The great thing about playing a judge is that you get to wear pajamas to work; you're wearing a robe, so why not?

Welcome to the Neighborhood

Explore Michael's favorite Jefferson Park hot spots.

Kawayan
This is a great hole-in-the-wall Filipino restaurant.

Pete's Pizza #2
Pete's is my go-to for Chicago-style deep-dish pizza.

Pho No. 1
I was mispronouncing this Vietnamese restaurant for many years. It's supposed to be pronounced "fuuh."
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summer fests
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MAY
MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND
26–28 SUMMER CAMP MUSIC FESTIVAL, CHILlicothe
It’s a weekend to remember as more than 150 acts perform. Most fans camp out at Three Sisters Park.

27 MEMORIAL DAY PARADE, CHICAGO
Spectators line State Street as the parade honors all who died in defense of the United States.

27–28 FINE ART SHOW, ST. CHARLES
Juried works of art from more than 90 artists line Riverside Avenue along with fun activities for the kids.

27–28 SUEÑOS MUSIC FESTIVAL, CHICAGO
One of the Windy City’s largest Latin celebrations takes over Grant Park as more than 20 artists perform.

JUNE
2–3 BLOOMINGTON GOLD, NORMAL
Corvette and Camaro owners show off their Gold-certified vehicles at the 50th annual show.

3 BREWERS FESTIVAL, MT. VERNON
Sip home-brewed beer alongside craft beer made by the pros. Also enjoy local music and food.

3–4 57TH STREET ART FAIR, CHICAGO
In Hyde Park, the Midwest’s oldest juried art fair features 200 artists, food and live music by Buddy Guy’s Legends.

4 ENJOY ILLINOIS 300, MADISON
The 300-mile NASCAR Cup zips long the 125-mile track at the World Wide Technology Raceway.

8–11 CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL, CHICAGO
Blues legends and emerging artists fill the stages at Millennium Park during this free festival.

9–11 ROUTE 66 GARAGE SALE DAYS, LOGAN COUNTY
Discover unique finds and kitschy treasures from more than 100 individual sellers along Route 66.

14–17 TAILGATES N’ TALLBOYS, BLOOMINGTON
One of the state’s largest country music fests includes camping at the fairgrounds.

MID-JUNE SUPERMAN CELEBRATION, METROPOLIS
Celebrity guests visit the Man of Steel’s hometown party and also meet comic book artists and writers.

16–18 GREAT GALENA BALLOON RACE
Look to the sky as more than 20 hot-air balloons ascend. On the ground, meet local artists and wander among classic cars.

ENDLESS SUMMER CELEBRATIONS
RAVINIA, HIGHLAND PARK
May–September
For more than 100 years, the quintessential outdoor music venue presents world-class performances across a spectrum of genres. Picnic on the lawn (bring your own chairs, food and beverages) or purchase a pavilion ticket. (Seating begins 30 minutes before the scheduled event.)

LIVE ON THE LAKE, CHICAGO
May–September
Local and national acts perform every Saturday and Sunday at the Navy Pier Beer Garden.

ILLINOIS SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, BLOOMINGTON
June–August
A Shakespearean summer: The Comedy of Errors, The Book of Will and The Tempest.

MILLENIUM PARK SUMMER MUSIC SERIES, CHICAGO
June–August
Head to the Jay Pritzker Pavilion for free music on Monday and Thursday nights.

SUMMERDANCE, CHICAGO
July–September
Join the group dance lesson (led by professional instructors) before practicing your moves.

STORY: KRISTIN BIENERT. PHOTOGRAPH: IOT
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21–25 73RD ANNUAL SWEDISH DAYS FESTIVAL, GENEVA
Immerse yourself in Scandinavian culture, food and entertainment.

25 PRIDE PARADE, CHICAGO
The colorful parade caps off a month of Pride celebrations as more than 1 million spectators watch.

AUGUST

3–6 LOLLAPALOOZA, CHICAGO
One of the country’s largest music fests takes over Grant Park with 170 bands.

10–12 PORT BYRON TUG FEST, PORT BYRON
Illinois looks to defend its title against Iowa as 11 teams on each side pull a 2,700-foot-long rope across the Mississippi River.

JULY

1–2 NASCAR CHICAGO STREET RACE WEEKEND, CHICAGO
In a first-ever NASCAR Cup Series street race, stock cars zip along the lake and downtown.

6–9 JOHN DEERE CLASSIC PGA TOUR, SILVIS
TPC Deere Run hosts the annual PGA tournament drawing big names.

10–20 ILLINOIS STATE FAIR, SPRINGFIELD
While the state’s blue ribbon event focuses on agriculture, there’s also big-name entertainers, carnival rides and food.

19–20 CHICAGO AIR AND WATER SHOW, CHICAGO
Military and civilian jets buzz downtown and the lakefront.

19–21 CENTRALIA BALLOON FEST, CENTRALIA
Cruise in for the hot-air balloons, stay for the car and motorcycle show and food and craft fair.
ANDY WARHOL PORTFOLIOS: A LIFE IN POP
GLEN ELLYN
June 3–September 10
The works of the top pop culture artist, Andy Warhol (1928–1987), come to the Cleve Carney Museum of Art. This special exhibit includes 94 of his works, plus more than 150 Polaroids and black-and-white photos taken by Warhol. Learn more about the artist through a timeline, interactive mural and Studio 54 experience.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER LABOR DAY WEEKEND

AUGUST 31–SEPTEMBER 3 CHICAGO JAZZ FESTIVAL, CHICAGO
Join the tradition of listening to all kinds of jazz, including local musicians and world-class artists, at Millennium Park.

WHERE DO FESTIVALS FILL EVERY WEEKEND?
QC, THAT’S WHERE!

26 BROOKFIELD ZOO’S ZOOBREW, BROOKFIELD
Say hello to your favorite animals while sipping craft beer from more than 20 breweries.

25–26 BALLOONS OVER 66, LINCOLN
At dusk and dawn, hot-air balloons launch from multiple sites, while dock dogs catch air competing for Big Air and Extreme Vertical wins.

25–26 BALLOONS OVER 66, LINCOLN
At dusk and dawn, hot-air balloons launch from multiple sites, while dock dogs catch air competing for Big Air and Extreme Vertical wins.

VisitQuadCities.com
slide into summer

The Illinois State Fair anchors a season of must-try new adventures and must-celebrate milestones for venerable attractions.

The first Illinois State Fair was held in 1853 at a site on the west side of Springfield. Admission was 25 cents. Various cities hosted the event until 1894, when Springfield became the permanent home. In 2022, a record 636,700 people attended the 11-day celebration. This year’s fair is August 10–20.
Experience
UPTOWN NORMAL
Dine Play Shop Stay

A memorable stop along historic Route 66, Uptown Normal combines world-class cultural attractions, vibrant events, eclectic restaurants, boutique retail shops, premier lodging and state-of-the-art transit with historic main street charm and warm midwestern hospitality.

Visit and discover how we're changing the definition of Normal.

UPTOWN NORMAL
calendar, directory and more at
www.uptownnormal.com

Discover What You Werent Expecting

Summer in Southern Illinois
Williamson Co.

visitSI.com
Relax in luxury and history along the scenic Fox River. Marble-accented baths, custom drapes, plush carpeting and period furnishings—many original to the 1928 downtown landmark—adorn the 53 guest rooms.

The Lincoln Highway, which stretches from New York City to San Francisco, was the first U.S. transcontinental road built for cars. While traveling US-30 through Illinois, plan to overnight at Lincoln Way, a posh inn in Franklin Grove.

The mural in Oswego honors the Boy Scouts, who placed 3,000 markers across the entire route.

The latest ag adventure from regenerative-farm Locavore Farm (about an hour south of downtown Chicago in Kankakee County) will host Dine on the Land dinners and educational experiences, along with overnight retreats, glamping and extended stays in its historic farm cottage.

This new nanobrewery has an artistic bent (just see the walls) and a knack for crafting highly quaffable lagers and ales, like flagship Honey Biscuit, plus a rotating menu of eight to 10 beers.
An Outside of Ordinary experience awaits you in Champaign-Urbana. Plan your getaway with us today.

Where you can experience cultures from around the world through music, art, and food.

VisitChampaignCounty.org

Splash into some summer fun
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.

52 ESSE
EXPE

GARDEN OF THE GODS

36 ENJOYILLINOIS.COM
Get a jump on your warm-weather vacation planning with this to-do list, which includes more than 50 experiences, destinations and events throughout Illinois, plus a roundup of free things to see and do around the Prairie State.
CHICAGO
1. Take a spin on Navy Pier’s Centennial Wheel.
2. Step out on The Ledge at Skydeck Chicago.
3. Go full tilt over the city at 360 Chicago.
4. Swim in Lake Michigan at Oak Street and North Avenue beaches.
5. Eat a Chicago dog during an afternoon White Sox game.
6. Snap a pic of the outfield ivy at Wrigley Field.
7. Pet a stingray at Shedd Aquarium.
9. Sleep in at Emil Bach House, a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home in Rogers Park.
10. Go gaga over Vincent van Gogh at the Art Institute of Chicago.
11. See the largest dino (Máximo) that ever walked the earth at Field Museum.
12. Discover Bronzeville and other neighborhoods with Chicago Historian Dilla on a Chicago Mahogany Tour.
13. Meet Pilipili, an African Lion cub at Lincoln Park Zoo, one of the most established zoos in the country.
BEYOND CHICAGO

1. Picnic on the lawn during Ravinia in Highland Park. 2. Go airborne in a wind tunnel at iFly in Rosemont, Lincoln Park and Naperville. 3. Listen as Holocaust survivors share their stories at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie. 4. Meditate in Bahá’í House of Worship, an architectural wonder in Wilmette. 5. See stunning white stallions at Tempel Farms at Old Mill Creek in Lake County. 6. Rappel from a platform 120 feet in the air at The Forge: Lemont Quarries in Lemont. 7. View the cell houses in Joliet at the Old Joliet Prison. 8. Encounter a penguin and feed a giraffe at Brookfield Zoo in Brookfield. 9. Go from 0 to 78 mph in 2 seconds on Maxx Force at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee. 10. Watch a flick from the comfort of your car at the McHenry Outdoor Theater in McHenry. 11. Ride on a boat pulled by Moe the mule along the B&M Canal in Lockport. 12. Skim across the water while doing tricks on a wakeboard at Quarry Cable Park in Crystal Lake. 13. Cruise the Rock River aboard The Pride of Oregon in Oregon. 14. Go where the bison roam at Nachusa Grasslands in Franklin Grove. 15. Feel small next to a Gemini Giant along Route 66 in Wilmington.
**LAND OF LINCOLN**

- Rub Lincoln's nose for good luck at the Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site in Springfield.
- Send greetings from a 32-foot-tall mailbox, part of Big Things Small Town in Casey.
- Wave hello to a pink elephant at the Pink Elephant Antique Mall in Livingston.
- Ride a scaled replica steam train at the Scovill Zoo in Decatur.
- In Amish Country, dine on broasted chicken and egg noodles at Yoder's Kitchin in Arthur.
- Sit under the stars and hear the Bard during the Illinois Shakespeare Festival (June-August) in Bloomington.
- Meet Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln portrayers at various historic sites during History Comes Alive in Springfield.
- Discover the artwork and public gardens of Allerton Park and Retreat Center; make it a weekend and stay at the on-site mansion in Monticello.
- Learn how historic Woodlawn Farm in Jacksonville became an Underground Railroad site.
GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY

Go to great lengths and heights on the Grafton Alpine Coaster, SkyTour and Zipline at Aerie's Resort in Grafton.

Climb into the cab of a combine at John Deere Pavilion in Moline. Eat and drink on a Flavor Tour while exploring Quincy, a historic river town. Watch as dozens of hot-air balloons race over Galena during the Great Galena Balloon Race (June 16–18) or see the sun set while drifting over the trees with Galena on the Fly. Gaze at preserved earthen mounds built by early Native Americans at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Collinsville. Eat an old-fashioned hot fudge sundae at Logomarcino's, a century-old soda fountain in Moline. At the Mississippi River Visitor Center, see freighters roll through the world's largest roller dam at Locks and Dam 10 in Rock Island. Stand in the area where Lewis and Clark began their journey at the Lewis and Clark Confluence Tower in Hartford.

ENJOYILLINOIS.COM
TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

- Rappel off sandstone cliffs in Giant City State Park in Makanda.
- Snap a selfie while scuba diving in Mermet Springs in Belknap.
- Get a taste of small-town Americana at the Cobden Peach Festival (early to mid-August).
- Paddle past 1,000-year-old cypress trees in the Cache River State Natural Area in Belknap.
- Squeeze between massive rock walls at Giant City State Park in the Shawnee National Forest.
- In late May and June, pick aromatic lavender at Shawnee Hills Lavender in Anna.
- Follow a quarter-mile-long trail to towering sandstone rock formations at Garden of the Gods in Shawnee National Forest.
FREE THINGS TO SEE AND DO AROUND THE STATE

Chicago Cultural Center
Built as the city’s first library in 1897, the cultural center boasts two stained-glass domes, including the world’s largest Louis Comfort Tiffany dome. Enjoy complimentary events such as concerts, performances, films and art exhibits.

Chicago Greeter
Let a knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteer take you on a tour! On Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, InstaGreeters take visitors on a one-hour tour of downtown (no registration required). With advance notice (10 days), schedule a two- to four-hour tour based on your interests, neighborhood and language.

Grant Park
Along Lake Michigan, Grant Park is known as Chicago’s Front Yard. Iconic attractions within the park include the Art Institute of Chicago, Buckingham Fountain, Maggie Daley Park, Millennium Park (see below) and the Museum Campus. Adler Planetarium, Field Museum of Natural History, and Shedd Aquarium.

Millennium Park
The almost 25-acre space is home to Cloud Gate (aka the Bean), Crown Fountain, cultural activities and concerts at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, and Lurie Garden.

Garfield Park Conservatory
Step inside a 1908 glass-domed, world-class garden with 10,000 plant varieties.

Lincoln Park Conservatory
Discover ancient ferns, tropical palms, orchids and rotating exhibits within four display houses.

Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool
From the Lincoln Park Conservatory, it’s less than a five-minute walk to this hidden outdoor oasis.

National Museum of Mexican Art
This cultural treasure, the nation’s only nationally accredited museum dedicated to Mexican art and culture, showcases 3,600 years of creativity from both sides of the border, exemplifying the diversity of Mexican culture in the Pilsen neighborhood.

University of Illinois Arboretum, Champaign
In the spring, cherry tree blossoms create a beautiful canopy. For inspiration, visit the Idea Garden, where master gardeners showcase the latest trends, tips and tricks (provide resources) for backyard DIYers.

Lincoln and Civil War Legacy Trail, Alton
Bronze sculptures depict Lincoln and Douglas at the site of their final debate. It’s one of 10 stops on a self-guided tour of Civil War-era adventures. Nab a trail guide from the Alton visitors center or download the Great Rivers and Routes experience pass for the Walk with Lincoln and Civil War Legacy Tour.

Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Springfield
Visit the downtown Greek Revival home where Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln lived for 17 years. This is the only home Lincoln ever owned. Tickets are free, but required, pick them up at the nearby Lincoln Home Visitor Center.

Lincoln’s New Salem State Historic Site, Petersburg
Visit a reconstruction of the town where Lincoln lived during his early adulthood. Start at the Visitors Center and then wander through a dozen log homes, 10 workshops, including a blacksmith shop, a tavern, stores, and one-room school.

The Lincoln Depot, Springfield
See where President-elect Lincoln boarded a train headed to Washington, D.C., in 1861.

Carl Sandburg State Historic Site, Galesburg
Walk in the garden surrounding this Pulitzer Prize-winner’s house and view the final resting place of Carl and his wife, Lilian.

Livingston County War Museum, Pontiac
This hands-on museum features artifacts, weaponry and stories from every U.S. war from WWI to Afghanistan.

Historic Wagner Farm, Glenview
Experience life on a working dairy farm with activities like collecting eggs, observing livestock and helping with chores at the farmhouse. Plus see a two-story silo and 1930s grocery store.

Krannert Art Museum, Champaign
On the University of Illinois campus, this fine arts museum houses nearly 11,000 works from ancient Egyptian to contemporary, including Marilyn, a 1971 Andy Warhol, and No. 13 by Mark Rothko.

National Great Rivers Museum, Alton
Visitors learn about the Mississippi and other rivers through 20 exhibits, such as an indoor simulator that lets visitors guide a barge. After, see the real deal on a 43-minute walking tour of the adjacent Melvin Price Locks and Dam 26 along the Great Rivers Scenic Byway.

PARKS

Casper Bluff Land and Water Reserve, Galena
On the bluffs of the Mississippi River, burial mounds and a 1,000-year-old Thunderbird effigy mound draw history-lovers, while migrating birds and easy hiking paths attract nature fans.

Mississippi Palisades State Park, Savanna
Near the confluence of the Mississippi and Apple rivers, this 2,500-acre park caters to outdoors enthusiasts. Fifteen miles of trails wind to overlooks with bird’s-eye views of the Mississippi, rock formations and wooded ravines.

Pere Marquette State Park, Grafton
Twelve miles of trails lead to Illinois River views in unglaciated terrain in the 8,500-acre park, 5 miles north of Grafton. The park’s 1930s wood-and-stone lodge serves specialties like fried chicken and catfish, stay in one of the rooms.

Starved Rock State Park, Utica
A state park since 1911, this land offers a surprising change of scenery from the farmland around it eight accessible canyons with seasonal waterfalls and more than 13 miles of trails. There’s also a lodge, guided hikes (fee) and 90-minute trolley tours (fee).

Around the State
The Illinois Department of Natural Resources manages more than 130 state parks.

MORE TO EXPLORE!
Hover your phone’s camera over the code for more things to see and do in Illinois.

ENJOYILLINOIS.COM 43
PLUG INTO THE MOTHER ROAD

TRY A NEW WAY OF TRAVELING A HISTORIC ROAD: NETWORK OF EV CHARGING STATIONS MEANS
IN YOUR ELECTRIC VEHICLE. ILLINOIS’ FAST-GROWING
YOU CAN DRIVE ROUTE 66 FULLY POWERED FOR FUN.
EV CHARGING STATIONS
EVERY 40 TO 60 MILES
MAKE IT EASY TO PLOT A TRIP.

BLAST FROM THE PAST
Sure, those early Route 66 travelers needed actual gasoline—no EV options for them. And legacy gas stations are now one of the road’s most photographed attractions. Restored 1930s service stations have taken on a new life as visitors centers at Ambler’s Texaco Gas Station in Dwight and Standard Oil Gas Station in Odell. Visitors centers also are being imagined for the 1931 Sprague’s Super Service in Normal and the 1927 West End Service Station in Edwardsville. Snap pics of the green dinosaur, symbol of Sinclair Oil, on top of the former Sinclair Service Station (now BTI Tire and Alignment) in Wilmington, and of the canopy architecture at Mount Olive’s 1926 Soulsby Service Station (which may have a future life as a museum). Mahan’s Phillips Filling Station, one of the state’s earliest gas stations, formerly part of Shear’s Gas Station and Museum, stands next to Jungenz’s Pizza and Pasta in Springfield. A neon Vic Suhling Gas for Less sign points to Mother Road nostalgia at Litchfield Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center.

DINERS, DRIVE-INS AND DEPOTS
Fuel up on history, comfort food and kitsch along Illinois’ 305-mile stretch of Route 66, a road that carried a nation from Chicago to Los Angeles starting in 1926. While its highway days ended in 1985, the allure of Route 66 remains at stops like Braidwood’s Polka-Dot Drive In (with an Elvis statue and others outside); Wilmington’s Launching Pad and its landmark Gemini Giant statue; Springfield’s throwback Route 66 Twin Drive In theater; and historic train depots in Dwight, Divernon and Springfield.

GO GREEN
Reflect on your Mother Road journey at Chicago’s Grant Park (the start of Route 66), then head to the Route 66 Park in Joliet. Also in town: the Blues Brothers dance on the roof of the Rich and Creamy ice cream shop, and a path leads to an overlook of the Old Joliet Prison. In Pontiac, cross one of the town’s three swinging bridges at Bismarck-Riverside Park.
WHERE TO GET A CHARGE—AND MORE—ON **ROUTE 66**.

**Chicago**  
Route 66 begins near the Art Institute of Chicago. Before heading out, check out some of the city’s famous destinations: Millennium Park; Cloud Gate, aka The Bean; Navy Pier; and Wrigley Reid.  

**Plainfield**  
Browse restaurants and shops in the pedestrian-friendly Downtown Historic District.  

**Dwight**  
Strike a pose by old yellow Shell pumps in front of a Ferrari mural.  

**Pontiac**  
The global art group Waldogs painted many of the town’s 23 colorful outdoor murals.  

**Bloomington—Normal**  
Stretch your legs at Miller Park, home to a zoo and minigolf.  

**Lincoln**  
The Mill Museum on 66, which dates to 1929, holds Route 66 memorabilia.  

**Springfield**  
Crunch into a corn dog with a side of nostalgia at Cozy Dog Drive In.  

**Carlinville**  
The “Million Dollar Courthouse” is famous both for its architecture and tales of corruption.  

**Edwardsville**  
Check out the Route 66 mural on South Main, part of a new Mural Trail in Southern Illinois.  

**Collinsville**  
Home to the World’s Largest Catsup Bottle, Collinsville’s water tower can’t be missed. Refuel at the Old Herald Brewery and Distillery. After dining, wander around to look at memorabilia in the former newspaper building.

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**CAR CULTURE**  
For another obligatory Mother Road pic, park your ride in front of the Shield Mural at Pontiac’s Route 66 Association Hall of Fame and Museum. Take time to explore both the Route 66 museum, which traces the storied road’s history, as well as the nearby Pontiac-Oakland Automobile Museum and Resource Center, where a changing lineup reveals vehicles from rare Pontiac Buggies to Pontiac automobiles of every vintage, including iconic GTOs and Firebirds. Car buffs will also want to make an appointment to admire the pristine Corvair cars, vans and trucks at the Corvair Museum in Gienarm. In the mood for something a little quirkier? In Staunton, hop to Henry’s Rabbit Ranch, where a row of VW Rabbits juts out of the ground, styled after Cadillac Ranch on the Texas stretch of Route 66. Henry’s is also home to a vintage Volkswagen once owned by Route 66 legend Bob Waldmire, founder of the Cozy Dog Drive In in Springfield and occasional guest at the ranch. And yes, you’ll find actual rabbits on the grounds too.

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**TAKE A MODERN ROAD TRIP ALONG ILLINOIS’ MOST ICONIC HIGHWAY.**

PHOTOGRAPHS: PHIL DODEN, BILL LEISTNER, HERITAGE CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL HISTORY; ILLUSTRATION: STEVE SAVAGE, NAVY PRESS; BOOK COVER DESIGN: HOWARD PERRY IMAGES
outdoor ADVENTURE
1 Starved Rock State Park The waterfall at French Canyon, one of eight you can hike to, sits less than a half-mile from the visitors center in Oglesby. 2 Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve Discover 11 miles of trails open to hikers, bikers and horseback riders, plus Rocky Glen Waterfall and a bluff overlook in Lemont. 3 Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge During migration season, open water, wetlands and abundant food draw thousands of white pelicans and other birds to this refuge in Havana. 4 Grafton Lighthouse The 47-foot-tall structure was erected as a symbol of resilience after a 1993 Mississippi River flood damaged most of Grafton. 5 Grant Park Plan a picnic, play basketball or walk your pet; the park named for hometown son—the 18th U.S. president—sits alongside the Galena River in downtown Galena. 6 Lake Springfield Anglers, boaters, swimmers (in designated areas) and water sport enthusiasts enjoy this central Illinois lake with 57 miles of shoreline. 7 Cave-in-Rock State Park In addition to the 55-foot-wide cave carved by water thousands of years ago, the wooded park has moderate to difficult hiking trails along the Ohio River in Southern Illinois. 8 Island Park A footbridge over the Kankakee River connects Maple Street to the wooded park in Momence.
Decompress with mindful walks in the woods, slow yoga sessions surrounded by gardens and meditative laps in rooftop pools.
**nature strolls**

Rejuvenate the soul and the soles with these walks in the woods.

**Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe**

With 385 acres of blooming landscape, this is one of the largest public gardens in the world. Walk among wildflowers and native plants while crisscrossing the arching bridges of nine interconnected islands.

**Hoof It Goat Treks, Galena**

Wander through woods and prairies on a guided trek with friendly bleating goats. The hike takes about 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the goats’ energy, which improves with hand-fed treats.

**The Morton Arboretum, Lisle**

Lose yourself in a winding maze garden lined with fragrant arborvitae hedges. Feel the satisfying crunch of gravel beneath your feet as you meander toward the giant sycamore tree at the center of this 1-acre puzzle in nature.

**Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Wilmington**

Once a U.S. Army arsenal, this restored site boasts 30 miles of hiking trails through the largest tallgrass prairie east of the Mississippi. Bring binoculars to spot a herd of 70-plus bison or hike to the preserve’s bison overlook.

BASK IN THE SERENE SOUND OF FALLING WATER.

JACKSON FALLS, SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST
Listening to the sound of water as it tumbles over rocks is magical.

Bell Smith Springs Recreation Area, Ozark
Descend a stone staircase to discover this network of cool streams and striking rock formations tucked into Shawnee National Forest. Follow a trail that traces a sandstone cliff to see beautiful Boulder Falls.

Starved Rock State Park, Oglesby
The 18 towering canyons—eight of which you can hike to—are dotted with seasonal waterfalls. Explore the 13 miles of well-marked trails solo or join a guided group hike.

Matthiessen State Park, Utica
Walk through a mile-long canyon to Lake Falls, where the water plunges 45 feet into the Lower Dells and then Cascade Falls. Notice the colorful patterns on the surrounding sandstone cliffs made by minerals in the water.

Jackson Falls, Shawnee National Forest
The trail winds from the top of Jackson Falls to the bottom, where a quiet ravine awaits with a welcoming pool and stunning view of the soaring bluffs above.

Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve, Lemont
Among the prairies, savannas and tree-lined trails sits a fascinating tiered waterfall created in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Night Skies
Stay where the stars are the main event.

Camp Aramoni, Tonica
This is where cozy and luxury are inextricably intertwined. Expansive safari-style tents with soft beds covered in luxury linens invite comfortable nights beneath the stars. Cook gourmet s’mores at your private bonfire while the cool breeze brought by the nearby Vermilion River stokes the flames.

Kinnikinnick Farm, Caledonia
The family behind this farmstead is passionate about providing a weekend of serenity for guests of the popular farm-stay program. Kids collect eggs, feed chickens and pigs, and milk goats. Adults master the fine art of unwinding and brewing morning coffee over a woodstove while the kids do the farm chores.

Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, Penfield
By day, this is an outdoor wonderland, where wildflowers abound on restored prairies. By night, this is the first International Dark Sky Park designated in Illinois. Gather around the campfire at the Harry L. Swartz Campground to experience the enduring sparkle of a sky untouched by city lights.
Find inner calm with moving meditations that inspire mindfulness.

farm-to-table dinners

Dine surrounded by the fields and crops that define the menu.

**Firefly Grill, Effingham**
Named for the fireflies that cofounder Kristie Campbell once chased around the Effingham backyard of her grandparents, this restaurant stays true to its symbol. Firefly is a beacon of nourishment for customers, staff members, and the surrounding sustainable crops and farmlands that supply the kitchen.

**Epiphany Farms, Downs**
With 75 acres of farmland, orchards and vineyards, and with a team dedicated to regenerative farming techniques, it’s the crops grown here that sustain four restaurants (Epiphany Farms Restaurant, Anju Above, Bakery and Pickle, and Harmony) in nearby Bloomington. Visit one of those sustainable dining rooms or swing by the farm for an interactive tour and a family-style dinner.

**Locavore Farm, Grant Park**
Only 43 miles south of Chicago, this family-owned farmstead feels a world away. A four-hour Dine on the Land experience brings guests together at a 107-foot-long table in the garden. The evening is augmented with live music, dancing in the grass and roasted marshmallows.
Nurture your soul and let nature inspire your workout.

Anderson Japanese Gardens, Rockford
Find balance and serenity on the mat (and in life) with slow-moving yoga sequences surrounded by the beauty of the gardens. You can also take a tai chi class or embark on an awareness walk.

Goat Yoga, Galena
“Baaah-maste” is the mantra at the family-run Silver Linings Farm, where you can roll out your yoga mat among friendly goats on a historical property. The farmhouse was an original redbrick stagecoach stop.

Magic Meadows Alpacas, Wonder Lake
Mingle with the calming energy of alpacas in a guided Yogapaca class. Bring the whole crew for a family-style experience, or join for yoga and a glass of wine at Wine(d) Down Wednesdays.

Viceroy Chicago, Chicago
Hotel guests can jump into a quiet morning swim in a rooftop pool with panoramic views. Enjoy cocktails and small bites with a view at Devereaux, the rooftop lounge.

Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel, Chicago
The Olympic-size, rooftop pool is surrounded by the city skyline and welcomes guests for a cool and meditative swim. Sun soakers will enjoy the poolside cabanas.
A year full of memories are ready to be made at Navy Pier.

There is something for everyone to enjoy at Chicago's top lakefront destination. Our calendar is packed with exciting events all year. Free weekly programming includes live music, DJs, movies, workouts and dance performances. For a special end to your evening, don’t miss Navy Pier’s iconic fireworks display that lights up the sky every Wednesday and Saturday all Summer long.

View our full calendar and plan your visit at navypier.org.
TRIP IDEAS AROUND THE STATE

DEVLIN'S BACKBONE, BELL SMITH SPRINGS, OZARK

SHEDD AQUARIUM, CHICAGO

DANA-THOMAS HOUSE, SPRINGFIELD

HIGHWAY 20 BREWING COMPANY, ELIZABETH

STORY: GARY THOMPSON. PHOTOGRAPHS: ACKERMAN AND GRUBER, DEVIL'S BACKBONE, STARBOARD AND PORT, DODA-THOMAS HOUSE, BOB STEFKO.
Chicago & Beyond
Home to the team that inspired A League of Their Own, Rockford scores with Peaches history and more: gardens, outdoor thrills and a vibrant riverfront.

In this Rock River city 90 miles northwest of Chicago, a fan trail tells the story of the Rockford Peaches, the tenacious 1940s women’s baseball team that inspired both a movie and a hit series. Explore The Girls of Summer exhibit at Midway Village Museum. Afterward, picnic at Sinnissippi Park, once known for Peaches’ pickup games and now for its band shell and concerts (many of them free) under the stars.

Whether you’re looking for passive or active activities, Rockford delivers. Stroll through Anderson Japanese Gardens or Klehm Arboretum. Walk, run or road-bike along the Rock River Recreation Path. Or amp up the adrenaline while wakeboarding at LeVings Lake, mountain biking at Ahwood Park and horseback riding at Lockwood Park.

In the revitalized downtown, discover a restored brewery that survived Prohibition, a cabinet-hardware factory that’s now a hotel, plus shops and restaurants. Culinary artisans wow with cuisine ranging from Thai to Filipino to Peruvian. At an emerging food hall, scratch-made cruffins are a go-to.

In mid-April, downtown businesses—including the Laurent House, the only building Frank Lloyd Wright designed for wheelchairs—celebrate local artists.
Great Rivers Country

Play in Peoria, a river city with a scenic outlook that will improve your outlook and attractions that honor a spirited past.

Halfway between Chicago and St. Louis, Peoria is the largest city on the Illinois River, anchoring a metro area of more than 400,000 people.

Peoria surprises visitors with its skyline, cosmopolitan cuisine and refined riverfront attractions. While not the tallest skyline building, the Peoria Marriott Pere Marquette neon sign shines bright. Another spot with a commanding view comes from a stretch of high ground that’s now Grandview Drive. The 2.5-mile route and adjacent park look out over the river valley, providing vistas that stretch more than 50 miles on a clear day. It’s a beautiful drive, bike ride or walk.

Before Prohibition, Peoria was known as the Whiskey Capital of the World for its production of bourbon. It was also an important stop for vaudeville acts, giving rise to the famous question, “Will it play in Peoria?”

The city became a hub of industry and innovation as the home of Caterpillar Inc. Today, you’ll find reminders of that history in places such as Black Band Distillery, the Caterpillar Visitors Center and the Peoria Riverfront Museum. The riverfront hosts festivals and celebrations, and the revitalized Warehouse District is attracting shops, restaurants, artists and urban dwellers.

**DO**

**PEORIA RIVERFRONT MUSEUM**
Picasso, Plato and Frank Lloyd Wright play parts in this Smithsonian affiliate’s mash-up of art, science and history. There’s also a planetarium and a giant-screen theater.

**CATERPILLAR VISITORS CENTER**
Take a virtual ride in a two-and-a-half story mining truck, design your own Cat machine and test your skills on a simulator.

**EAT**

**JIM’S STEAK HOUSE**
A downtown stalwart, it’s a classic steak place—white tablecloths, candy bar piano bar and blue ribbon beef. Dine here before a show at the nearby Civic Center.

**BLACK BAND DISTILLERY**
The craft distillery carries on Peoria’s Whiskey City legacy from a century-old building. Their seasonal food menu stresses farm-to-fork items.

**THYME KITCHEN AND CRAFT BEER**
An eclectic menu includes apps and burgers, plus a tuna poke bowl and more than 250 bourbons and 40 craft beers in the Warehouse District.

**STAY**

**PEORIA MARRIOTT PERE MARQUETTE**
The historic hotel has hosted Hollywood stars and presidents. Renovated rooms and spaces project an aura of glamour.
Land of Lincoln

Rich history lures visitors to Springfield. Abraham Lincoln is the big draw: He moved here in 1837, and the Lincoln Home National Historic Site preserves the only home he ever owned. (Abe later lived in government housing, aka the White House.) But it’s not all about the 16th president. Another POTUS, Barack Obama, spent his early political career in the Illinois State Capitol and launched his first presidential campaign from the Old State Capitol. Both striking buildings are open for free tours.

Though Frank Lloyd Wright didn’t design either capitol, he left Springfield a piece of his architectural legacy: the Dana-Thomas House. And Springfield was a stop on Route 66, the iconic Mother Road that motorists followed between Chicago and Los Angeles before the interstate highway system dominated. Get your kicks and fix of nostalgia at the Route 66 Motorheads Bar, Grill and Museum.

Springfield offers way more history than you can absorb in a day. Dining and lodging options make it easy to extend a stay. While in town, try an iconic horseshoe sandwich and watch for Fritz Klein, the commander in chief of Lincoln reenactors, who not only looks like Abe, but also captures his humor and humanity—did you know Lincoln loved cats?

Sandwich and watch for Fritz Klein, the commander in chief of Lincoln reenactors, who not only looks like Abe, but also captures his humor and humanity—did you know Lincoln loved cats?

Sip microbrews in the beer garden and try the famous horseshoe sandwich: an open-face pile of protein smothered with cheese sauce and fries.

Owner-chef Michael Higgins uses herbs he grows on the roof of this downtown restaurant that opened in 1884.

Owner-chef Michael Higgins uses herbs he grows on the roof of this downtown restaurant that opened in 1884.

This downtown hotel is close to Lincoln attractions. The Globe Tavern (on-site) is named for the boardinghouse where Abe and Mary Todd Lincoln lived.

Today Abe is considered a saintly statesman, but he was a sometimes unpopular president. Walk through the Whispering Gallery to hear derogatory comments.
DO

**SMITH SPRINGS RECREATION AREA**

Hike 8 miles of interconnected trails past rock formations and water features, such as Boulder Falls, one of Shawnee National Forest's most beautiful cascades.

**GARDEN OF THE GODS**

See Devil's Smokestack, a now 30-foot-tall sandstone pillar that was once buried more than a mile deep.

**EAT**

**MURPHY'S PIT BBQ, OZARK**

Stop by John and Phyllis Murphy's red shack for a rib plate (available on Thursdays) and Phyllis's pie.

**THE GAP BAR AND GRILL, HEROD**

Come to this friendly, unpretentious place for beer, burgers and fried sides—like their popular dill pickles. Or load up on the loaded beer-cheese fries.

**STAY**

**VON JAKOB BED AND BREAKFAST, ALTO PASS**

Choose The Wine or The Port house—both overlook Shawnee National Forest. Each of the five suites comes fully furnished and with a complimentary bottle of wine.

**TIMBER RIDGE OUTPOST AND CABINS, KARBERS RIDGE**

Rent a real log cabin (with kitchen) or a tree house in the oaks near Shawnee National Forest. All units are air-conditioned.

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**Trails to Adventure**

Shawnee National Forest is destination central in Southern Illinois. When you’re done exploring, steep amid nature and indulge in barbecue and wine.

Think of Southern Illinois as the state’s backyard—a mostly secluded expanse where you can let your hair down and have fun. And with Shawnee National Forest in your backyard, there’s a lot of fun to be had. Covering 289,000 acres between the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, the forest teems with natural beauty and opportunities for outdoor recreation among its tree-dense hills, soaring bluffs, sandstone canyons, ancient cypress swamps, hidden waterfalls, and languid lakes and creeks. It’s a playground for hikers, bikers, anglers and wildlife-lovers.

Forest highlights include Garden of the Gods, a stretch of striking rock formations that nature started sculpting more than 320 million years ago. It’s one of the state’s most photographed spots. Another favorite is Bell Smith Springs Recreation Area, a string of streams and canyons framed by sandstone cliffs.

Like any good backyard, Southern Illinois is also a place to eat, drink and be merry. The region shares cultural DNA with the South, including great barbecue. You can find some in charming towns such as Ozark. Southern Illinois is also fertile grape-growing territory—taste the proof at any of the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail’s 11 stops on a 40-mile route.
travel resources
VISITORS BUREAUS

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 Oak Park
708/524-7800, visitoakpark.com

Tourism Info Center
Turtle Creek I-90, rest area southbound, South Beloit

Great Rivers Country
Blackhawk Waterways Convention and Visitors Bureau
800/678-2108, 815/946-2108, visitnorthwestillinois.com

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, 618/665-6676, riversandroutes.com

ILLINOISouth Tourism
618/257-1488, illinoisouth.org

Macomb Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
309/833-1515, visitmocomb.org

Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
800/747-0302, 309/676-0303, peoria.org

Quincy Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
800/978-4744, 217/214-3700, seequincy.com

Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau
800/248-4373, 618/833-9928, southernmostillinois.com

Visit Quad Cities
800/747-7800, visitquadcities.com

Land of Lincoln
Bloomington—Normal Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
800/433-8226, 309/665-0033, visitbno.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

Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau
800/772-0750, 217/342-5310, visiteffingham.com

ILLINOISouth Tourism
618/257-1488, illinoisouth.org

Jacksonville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
800/593-5678, 217/243-5678, jacksonvilleil.org

Lake Shelbyville Area
CVB/Shelby County Tourism
800/355-3529, 217/774-2244, lakeshbyville.com

Logan County Tourism Bureau
217/732-8687, destinationlogan.com

Visit Champaign County
800/569-6151, 217/351-4133, visitchampaign.org

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

Tourism Info Centers
Cumberland Road I-70, rest area westbound; Marshall
Salt Kettle I-74, rest area westbound, Oakwood

Trails to Adventure
Carbondale Tourism
618/529-4451, carbondaletourism.org

ILLINOISouth Tourism
618/257-1488, illinoisouth.org

Mount Vernon Convention and Visitors Bureau
618/242-3151, enjoymtvernon.com

Shawnee Forest Country/Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau
800/248-4373, 618/833-9928, southernmostillinois.com

Visit SI
800/433-7399, 618/997-3690, visitSI.com

Tourism Info 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

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-Z Pass 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

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

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

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

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 metrarail.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 rta chicago.org

Amtrak runs trains to 29 cities in Illinois, and Greyhound Lines serves most major Illinois cities. Go to amtrak.com or 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 .08.

Eleven casinos operate throughout the state, some of these are riverboat casinos.

The Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act allows for recreational use of marijuana in the state.

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

For more Illinois government information, visit illinois.gov
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