

Why Chicago Matters

Chicago is a great American city with a lot going for it. I say “American” because Chicago is very much the vision of how we have built cities over the past decade. In the late 1800’s the city was largely destroyed by fire and Chicago has essentially rebuilt itself from scratch over the last 100 years or so. In the early 1900’s, noted city planner and architect Daniel Burnham authored The Chicago Plan to shape the redevelopment and expansion of Chicago. It is one of the most comprehensive and over-arching city planning documents ever completed for an American city. Many elements of Burnham’s plan have been implemented and Chicago is an attractive city in several aspects. It does in fact feel very “planned” and logically organized, thus making it easy to visit and get around. It has one of the great urban park systems in the world and has utilized its waterfront in a beautiful way. Millennium Park is probably the most well known urban park of the past couple of decades and is a great example of how to create active and meaningful public space. The Chicago Riverwalk is the newest public space and it is extremely well done. In many ways, because of the opportunity to “build new”, Chicago is the centerpiece of American architecture. Many architectural and engineering innovations, especially related to high-rise construction, are rooted in Chicago. However, this also led to some undesirable characteristics. Modern and post-modern architects that were active in Chicago were notoriously uninterested in the public realm. Some parts of Chicago seem very institutional and plain. Chicago has mass transit, but it is underwhelming for a city of this size and is not connected to large parts of the city. While there are many positives, and some negatives, the best thing is that Chicago does care deeply about itself as a city and planning, design and architecture are valued. The Chicago Architecture Foundation is a great community asset. It offers a variety of tours and a wonderful gift shop and it is the most comprehensive city architecture and design organization that I’ve ever seen. Chicago has many great restaurants and shops, but it does lack a certain grit, diversity or creativity as compared to some other great American cities. And then there is the weather. In a city with great parks and some outstanding “urban walks”, it can be very cold and windy for several months of the year so pay attention to when you visit.

Hotels

Pendry Hotel Chicago (great art-deco renovation, ideal location)
230 North Michigan Avenue
312.777.9000
www.pendry.com/chicago

The Emily Hotel Chicago (Fulton Market)
311 North Morgan Street
312.764.1919
www.emilyhotel.com

Park Hyatt Chicago (contemporary classic, feels like a big city apartment, great views, right on Michigan Avenue/Magnificent Mile)
800 North Michigan Avenue
312.335.1234
www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/illinois/park-hyatt-chicago/chiph

Hotels (continued)

Sofitel (contemporary architecture, near bars and restaurants on Rush Street)

20 East Chestnut Street

312.324.4000

www.softiel-chicago.com

Swissotel (modern, great architecture, convenient location between River North and Grant Park)

323 East Upper Wacker Drive

312.565.0565

www.swissotel.com/hotels/chicago

The Drake (historic, classic, great lobby for piano bar and drinks even if you don't stay here)

140 East Walton Street

312.787.2200

www.thedrakehotel.com

The Gwen (previously Conrad Chicago, great location, in River North adjacent to Magnificent Mile)

521 North Rush Street

312.645.1500

www.starwoodhotels.com/TheGwen

Kimpton Hotel Gray (contemporary renovation of historic building, in "The Loop" downtown)

122 West Monroe Street

312.750.9012

www.grayhotelchicago.com

Jazz and Blues

Need to ask hotel concierge where to go. I never can remember the names, but there are a couple of good ones on Rush Street and I have been to Blue Chicago a few times.

Restaurants

Aba Mediterranean, Fulton Market

302 North Green Street 3rd Floor

773.645.1400

www.abarestaurants.com

Barrio Mexican

65 West Kinzie Street

312.940.9900

www.barriochicago.com

Restaurants (continued)

Bavette's Steakhouse
218 West Kinzie Street
312.624.8154
www.bavettessteakhouse.com/chicago

Cabra Restaurant, Fulton Market
200 North Green Street
312.761.1717
www.cabrachicago.com

Chicago Cut Steakhouse
300 North La Salle Street
312.329.1800
www.chicagocutsteakhouse.com

Flat Top Grill (lunch)
30 South Wabash Avenue
312.726.8400
www.flattopgrill.com

Frontera Grill (Mexican, great chef, not "tex mex")
445 North Clark Street
312.661.1434
www.frontera-grill.com

Gene & Georgetti (old school steak)
500 North Franklin Street
312.527.3718
www.geneandgeorgetti.com

Gibson's Italia
233 North Canal Street
312.414.1100
www.gibsonsitalia.com

Gibson's Steakhouse (best steakhouse in the city)
1028 North Rush Street
312.266.8999
www.gibsonssteakhouse.com

Girl & the Goat
809 West Randolph Street
312.492.6262
www.girlandthegoat.com

Restaurants (continued)

Goddess & the Baker (breakfast)
225 North LaSalle Street
312.374.3625
www.goddessandthebaker.com

Green Street Smoked Meats, Fulton Market (lunch)
112 North Green Street
312.754.0431
www.greenstreetmeats.com

GT Prime Steakhouse
707 North Wells Street
312.600.6305
www.gtprimerestaurant.com

Hugo's Frog Bar and Fish House (next to Gibson's, more casual)
1024 North Rush Street
312.640.0999
www.hugosfrogbar.com

Lyra Greek, Fulton Market
905 West Fulton Market
312.660.7722
www.lyrarestaurant.com

Miller's Pub (old school pub, The Loop)
134 South Wabash Avenue
312.263.4988
www.millerspub.com

NoMi Kitchen (in Park Hyatt, nice restaurant and wonderful outdoor terrace)
800 North Michigan Avenue
312.239.4030
www.nomichicago.com

Revival Food Hall, The Loop
125 South Clark Street
773.999.9411
www.revivalfoodhall.com

RPM Italian
52 West Illinois Street
312.222.1888
www.rpmitalian.com

Restaurants (continued)

RPM Seafood
317 North Clark Street
312.900.9035
www.rpmrestaurants.com/rpm-seafood-chicago

Swift & Sons Steakhouse
1000 West Fulton Market
312.733.9420
www.swiftandsonschicago.com

Velvet Taco (lunch)
1110 North State Street
312.763.2654
www.velvettaco.com

Drinks & Cocktails

Boleo at Kimpton Gray Hotel (rooftop)
122 West Monroe Street
312.750.9012
www.boleochicago.com

Cindy's Rooftop at Chicago Athletic Club Hotel
12 South Michigan Street
312.792.3502
www.cindysrooftop.com

Coq d'Or at the Drake (old school)
140 East Walton Place
312.932.4346
www.thedrakehotel.com/dining/coq-d-or

Nico Osteria at Thompson Hotel (across the street from Gibson's Steakhouse)
1015 North Rush Street
312.994.7100
www.nicoosteria.com

RL Bar & Grill
115 East Chicago Avenue
312.475.1100
www.rlrestaurant.com

Drinks & Cocktails (continued)

Siena Tavern
51 West Kinzie Street
312.595.1322
www.sienatavern.com

Somerset at Viceroy Hotel
1112 North State Street
312.586.2150
www.somersetchicago.com

Tavern on Rush (in the middle of the Rush Street district where there are lots of good restaurants)
1031 North Rush Street
312.664.9600
www.tavernonrush.com

Torali Bar at the Ritz Carlton Chicago
160 East Pearson Street
312.573.5160
www.toralichicago.com

Places to see

Art Institute Chicago

Chicago Architecture Foundation, best river cruises (an architecture river cruise is a must)

Grant Park, Buckingham Fountain

Millennium Park, Cloud Gate (the “Bean”) and Crown Fountain

Lakefront, Navy Pier, Oak Street Beach, North Avenue Beach, you can walk or bike (use Divvy bike share) the entire waterfront and this is the best part of Chicago

Museum of Contemporary Art (just off Magnificent Mile, towards the lakefront)

Second City Comedy Club, an improve-based sketch comedy club (famous alumni John Belushi, Gilda Radner and Mike Myers)

Shopping on North Michigan Avenue, Magnificent Mile

Lincoln Park Neighborhood, Armitage Avenue, Halsted Street (lunch or cookies at Summer House)

Bucktown / Wicker Park Neighborhood

The 606 / Bloomingdale Trail & Park

Places to see (continued)

Chicago Riverwalk

Cubs game – Wrigley Field (take the “L” to Wrigleyville/Addison Station)

Willis Tower

Navy Pier – Ferris Wheel

Fulton Market District, West Randolph Street, West Loop