The 74 best places to eat, sleep and play in Chicago this summer

With more than 5 million reviews and opinions, TripAdvisor makes travel planning a snap for the 20 million travelers visiting our site each month.
INTRODUCTION

TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 20 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides to 25 top summer destinations. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you’ll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the summer travel guides for all 25 destinations at www.tripadvisor.com/triptips.

Every time you download a guide, you’ll be entered for a chance to win one of 10 trips worth up to $5,000 to one of our top summer destinations.

PACKING TIPS

1. Bring swimwear so you can dip more than a toe into Lake Michigan at Loyola Leone beach.
2. You’ll need sunglasses for the glare from Lake Michigan, whether strolling Navy Pier or on a cruise.
3. Pack bike locks and teeter round the brink of the lake on a tandem bicycle.

Inside CHICAGO

One of the world’s most appetizing restaurant cities, the birthplace of Cracker Jacks and Twinkies has a lot more cooking than just delicious deep-dish pizza. Visitors will find a scintillating selection of activities in the Windy City.

Explore the wealth of attractions in Lincoln Park and Museum Campus, including the zoo, Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum and the Art Institute. Admire the impressive skyline from an architecture cruise on Lake Michigan. Fly a kite or take up kitesurfing from one of 30 city beaches. Saunter and shop between skyscrapers along the Magnificent Mile. Investigate vibrant neighborhoods such as Lincoln Square and Wicker Park. Catch Chicago’s beloved Cubs at “the friendly confines,” historic Wrigley Field. Be entertained by hot jazz, cool blues or a Second City revue.

This thrilling city has an abundance of delights for visitors. Once you’ve had a taste of Chicago, you’ll want to come back for more.

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**CHICAGO’S BEST VIEWS**

The **John Hancock Observatory**, 94 stories up in Chicago’s third-tallest building, offers a 360-degree, 80-mile view. “Best view in the city—especially at night.”
—TripAdvisor Member, Illinois

**John Hancock Observatory, 875 N. Michigan Ave., 888 875 8439**

A unique way to see the Chicago skyline and Lake Michigan is from the 150-foot Ferris wheel at **Navy Pier**. The pace is leisurely, so you’ll be able to look around comfortably.

**Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave., 312-595-PIER**

If you are heading from Hyde Park to downtown on **South Lake Shore Drive**, keep your eyes open for remarkable views of the skyline and Lake Michigan.

**South Lake Shore Drive**

“Just outside the **Lincoln Park Zoo**, at the entrance of the swan-boat dock behind **Café Brauer**, look back south at the skyline, especially during a beautiful summer’s day when people are enjoying paddling on the lagoon.”
—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

**Lincoln Park Zoo: 2001 N. Clark St., 312-742-2000**

**Café Brauer: 2021 Stockton Dr., 312-742-2480**

To view Chicago’s architecture from the water, take a cruise on Lake Michigan or on the Chicago River (many options are available). A less expensive approach is to hop on a harbor taxi that shuttles passengers between Navy Pier and Shedd Aquarium, or a river taxi with a Navy Pier-Sears Tower route.

**Shoreline Sightseeing: 312-222-9328**

**TOP 10 Attractions**

1. **Art Institute of Chicago**, 111 S. Michigan Ave., 312 443 3600
2. **Field Museum**, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr., 312 922 9410
3. **Museum of Science and Industry**, 57th St. and Lake Shore Dr., 773 684 1414
4. **Millennium Park**, 55 N. Michigan Ave., 312 742 1168
5. **Sears Tower**, 233 S. Wacker Dr., 312 875 9696
6. **Shedd Aquarium**, S. Lakeshore Dr., 312 939 2438
7. **Navy Pier**, 600 E. Grand Ave., 312 595-PIER
8. **Lincoln Park Zoo**, 2001 N. Clark St., 312 742 2000
9. **John Hancock Center**, 875 N. Michigan Ave., 888 875 8439
10. **Supernatural Chicago**, Excalibur Nightclub, 632 N. Dearborn Ave., 312 266 1944

**FAMILIES**

**Navy Pier**, one of Chicago’s top tourist attraction, offers 50 acres of parks, gardens (beer and botanical), shops, restaurants, attractions and a 150-foot Ferris wheel.

**Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave., 312-595-PIER**

**Wrigley Field** “is a Mecca for ballpark enthusiasts, being only one of a couple of the old-time ballparks still in existence.”
—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

**Wrigley Field, 1060 W. Addison St., 773-404-2827**

See one of the largest and most diverse shark exhibits in North America at **Shedd Aquarium**, home to 22,000 aquatic animals. “Outstanding! Tip: Purchase the ‘City Pass,’ which will provide a discount to this and other Chicago attractions.”
—TripAdvisor Member, Pittsburgh, Penn.

**Shedd Aquarium, S. Lakeshore Dr., 312-939-2426**

**ROMANCE**

Toast to the way it was at Al Capone’s old haunt, **Green Mill Jazz Club**, where “you will hear some of the best jazz in Chicago. It is a small place, so if you want somewhere to sit, come early or stay late.”
—TripAdvisor Member, Sandpoint, Idaho

**Green Mill Jazz Club, 4802 N. Broadway Ave., 773-878-5552**

From live performances and video fountains to stunning skyline reflections in the Cloud Gate’s mercurial surface, **Millennium Park** “has something to make your Chicago visit memorable.”
—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

**Millennium Park, 55 N. Michigan Ave., 312-742-1168**

Ninety-six floors above the city, the **Signature Lounge** “offers the most breathtaking views of Chicago imaginable. Lush leather booths, low lights and floor-to-ceiling windows give the place an elegant atmosphere. Drinks and food can be a bit pricey, but the spectacular views make it worth it.”
—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

**Signature Lounge, 875 N. Michigan Ave., 312-787-9596**

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**Where to PLAY**

**BUDGET**

“Lincoln Park”s highlights include the (free) Lincoln Park Zoo, the Lincoln Park Conservatory, a Nature Museum and Café Brauer, where you can rent swan and other paddle-boats.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Lincoln Park, 2001 N. Clark St., 312-742-2000

Chicago’s historic Water Tower survived the 1871 fire. It now houses the city’s official photo gallery with exhibitions about Chicago by Chicago photographers.

City Gallery, Historic Water Tower, 806 N. Michigan Ave., 312-742-0808

Ride your bike, take a swim or watch the parade of people on Oak Street Beach one of Chicago’s most popular sandy strips.

Oak Street Beach, 1000 N. Lakeshore Dr., 312-742-5121

**ADVENTURE**

Experience Chicago from alongside the waves. Rent a tandem from the Bike Chicago kiosk on Navy Pier and wobble off along the lakeshore path. Beaches, botanical gardens and museums are en route.

Bike Chicago, Navy Pier, 312-595-9600

Get a firm grip on a new extreme sport at Chicago Kitesurfing. Lake Michigan’s calm waters are ideal for self-propelled take-offs.

Chicago Kitesurfing, Montrose Harbor, www.chicagokitesurfing.com

It’s estimated Lake Michigan has more shipwrecks than all the other Great Lakes combined. Peer at these eerie treasures with N Pursuit Charters. It’s a 25-minute drive from Chicago, across the Indiana line.

N Pursuit Charters, Pastrick Marina, Indiana, 219-942-5767

**EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL**

Visit the Field Museum, one of America’s premier natural history museums. “Great for both kids and adults,” the Field presents “thousands of artifacts to be seen, in a really cool setting,” including “dozens of mummies!”—TripAdvisor Member, Orlando, Fla.

Field Museum, 1400 S. Lakeshore Dr., 312-922-9410

Taking a Chicago Architecture Foundation River Cruise is “the best two hours you can spend in Chicago—learning of the history and architecture of the city.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Chicago Architecture Foundation River Cruise, Michigan Ave. Bridge at Wacker Dr., 312-922-3432 x226

The Art Institute of Chicago boasts one of the world’s great art collections, including Grant Wood’s American Gothic.

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Ave., 312-443-3600

**RELAXATION**

Chicago has a smorgasbord of shops, spas and speakeasies. “Renowned for its world-class shopping, upscale designers and myriad boutiques, the Magnificent Mile is the premier shopper’s destination in Chicago.”—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Magnificent Mile, N. Michigan Ave.

Buddy Guy’s Legends showcases an amazing array of local and national blues performers.

Buddy Guy’s Legends, 754 S. Wabash Ave., 312-427-1190

Ride your bike, take a swim or watch the parade of people on Oak Street Beach one of Chicago’s most popular sandy strips.

Oak Street Beach, 1000 N. Lakeshore Dr., 312-742-5121

If the Windy City takes the wind right out of your sails, recharge at Kiva day spa. It’s “a wonderful place to relax, unwind and feel brand new.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Kiva, 196 E. Pearson St., 312 840 8120

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tripadvisor.com
Chicago Transit Authority’s Blue Line “L” trains provide easy 24-hour access from O’Hare to downtown. The trip takes 45 minutes and costs $2.

Chicago’s Free Trolleys are a great way to see the city’s most popular destinations. They run Memorial Day through Labor Day, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.

Buy CTA one, two, three or five-day Visitor Passes and enjoy unlimited CTA bus and train rides. Passes are activated on first use.

Want more information on Chicago? TripAdvisor.com offers free weekly e-mail updates filled with new deals, reviews and articles for Chicago or any other destination you choose.

WHERE to eat

**TOP 10 Restaurants**

1. Les Nomades, 222 E. Ontario St., 312-649-9010
3. Spring, 2039 W. North Ave., 773-395-7100
4. Fogo de Chao, 661 N. La Salle Dr., 312-932-9330
5. NoMi, Park Hyatt Hotel, 800 N. Michigan Ave., 312-239-4030

6. Tre Kronor, 3258 W. Foster Ave., 773-267-9888
7. Red Rooster Wine Bar & Cafe, 2100 N. Halsted St., 773-929-7660
8. India House, 59 W. Grand Ave., 312-645-9500
9. Mangino’s, 29 N. Wacker Dr., 312-443-8485
10. Sweet Thang, 1921 W. North Ave., 773-772-4166

**FAMILIES**

**Toast** serves up classic American breakfasts and lunches and its perfect-for-doodling tables are covered with butcher-block paper (crayons provided for artists of all ages). “Everything is fantastic. Make sure you have your entire party ready to go when you are up.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

**Arun’s** is out of the way but worth the search; the 12-course chef’s menu is your only option, with different tables receiving different dishes on a given night. “Foodies know to go here for high-end Thai food.”—TripAdvisor Member

**South Water Kitchen** dishes up a children’s menu and coloring books; for you, it dishes up “attentive service, excellent food, beautifully presented and priced appropriately for the quality.”—TripAdvisor Member, Indianapolis, Ind.

**South Water Kitchen**, 225 N. Wabash Ave., 312-236-9300

“Dress to impress” and head to **Sushi Samba Rio**. For those who find sushi a bit fishy, “there are plenty of Asian and Latin-inspired dishes on the menu.” Arrive early for outdoor patio seating and “delicious drinks at the bar.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

**Sushi Samba Rio**, 504 N. Wells St., 312-595-2300

Kids can have tea with their special friends at **American Girl Place Café** where dolls are given their own seats and place settings. With a color scheme of “black and white and bright, girly pink,” American Girl Place Café “looks like a page out of a scrapbook.”—TripAdvisor Member, Colorado Springs, Colo.

**American Girl Place Café**, 111 E. Chicago Ave., 877-247-5223

**ROMANCE**

“Dress to impress” and head to **Sushi Samba Rio**. For those who find sushi a bit fishy, “there are plenty of Asian and Latin-inspired dishes on the menu.” Arrive early for outdoor patio seating and “delicious drinks at the bar.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

**Le Colonial**, “we loved the French Vietnamese food and got the kind of service I expect in a high-end establishment. But for a romantic atmosphere definitely ask to be seated on the first floor rather than the second.”—TripAdvisor Member, Indianapolis, Ind.

**Le Colonial**, 937 N. Rush St., 312-255-0088

TOUR How to Get Around

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tripadvisor.com
**WHERE to eat**

**BUDGET**

“Super cheap and just about as authentic as you can get this far north,” Nuevo Leon’s Mexican cuisine comes with “fast, friendly service” and a “brightly decorated interior and exterior.” It’s “just up the street from the 18th Street stop on the L.”

—TripAdvisor Member, Columbus, Ohio

Nuevo Leon, 1515 W. 18th St., 312-421-1517

**HEALTH-CONSCIOUS**

The food at Alice and Friends’ Vegetarian Café is “focused on light Asian fare, gently cooked to emphasize flavors. Most main dishes are vegan variations on classic Korean and Chinese offerings.”

—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Alice and Friends’ Vegetarian Café, 5812 N. Broadway, 773-275-8797

**HIDDEN GEMS**

Brunch den by day, upscale dining delight Wednesday through Saturday night, Tweet is a non-smoking, BYO, cash only gem. “Shhh, keep this one a secret.”

—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Tweet, 5020 N. Sheridan Rd., 773-728-5576

**Heartland Cafe** is “part restaurant, part nightclub, part casual community center, part newstand and general store. The menu is full of flavorful selections for noncarnivores, but is not exclusively vegetarian.”

—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Heartland Cafe, 7000 N. Glenwood Ave., Rogers Park, 773-465-8005

**Green Zebra** is an “upscale, pricey vegetarian restaurant with a hip, trendy vibe. The inventive, almost entirely vegetarian small-plate menu is among the city’s most sophisticated.”

—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Green Zebra, 1460 W. Chicago Ave., 312-243-7100

**SPECIAL SUMMER EVENTS**

From June 30 to July 9, head to Grant Park for the 26th annual Taste of Chicago Festival. Choose between ethnic, family, exotic and Chicago specialty items.

Taste of Chicago Festival, 877 CHICAGO for special hotel packages, 312-744-3315 for more information

Chinatown Summer Fair returns for its 27th year on July 16, featuring Asian restaurants, gift shops, street vendors and an arts and crafts exhibit.

Chinatown Summer Fair, Wentworth from Cermak to 24th St., 312-326-5320

Between July 18 and August 29, Tuesday evenings mean free classic films at the 7th Annual Chicago Outdoor Film Festival. A 50’ x 34’ screen and state-of-the-art sound system wow moviegoers.

Chicago Outdoor Film Festival, Butler Field, Grant Park at Lake Shore Dr. and Monroe, 312-744-3315

Drop anchor alongside schooners, brigs, ketches and sloops at Tall Ships Chicago from August 3 to August 9. Access to the festival grounds along the Chicago River, DuSable Harbor and Navy Pier is free. Purchase wristbands to board ships.

Tall Ships Chicago, 312-744-3315

The 48th Annual Chicago Air & Water Show spotlights the impressive skills of U.S. Navy Blue Angels and U.S. Army Parachute Team Golden Knights on August 19 to August 20.

Chicago Air & Water Show, North Avenue Beach, 312-744-3315

Make like Ferris Bueller and catch the Von Steuben Day Parade on September 9, part of that weekend’s German American Fest.

Von Steuben Day Parade, Lincoln Ave. and Belle Plaine, 630-653-3018

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**Where to STAY**

**FAMILIES**

**The Peninsula** is “perfectly situated.” The staff is extremely attentive to children and the hotel does kids’ packages.—TripAdvisor Member, Chesapeake, Va.

The Peninsula, 108 E. Superior St., 312-337-2888

**Embassy Suites Lakefront** is steps from Navy Pier and a bounty of kid-friendly eateries. It’s “a clean, comfortable hotel with friendly, courteous and professional staff. Other hotels take note—this is the way a hotel should be run!”—TripAdvisor Member, Council Bluffs, Iowa

Embassy Suites Lakefront, 511 N. Columbus Dr., 312-836-5900

**“Other hotels take note—this is the way a hotel should be run!”**

**BUDGET**

**Courtyard by Marriott Chicago Downtown** is “a very nice three-star hotel in-between the downtown and Michigan Avenue shopping areas. There’s a pool and a subway station is two to three blocks north.”—TripAdvisor Local Expert, Chicago, Ill.

Courtyard by Marriott Chicago Downtown, 30 E. Hubbard St., 312-329-2500

**“Buyer Beware? More like, Buyer Be AWARE of this great hotel! You can’t beat Seneca’s price, location, cleanliness and warm staff.”**—TripAdvisor Member, Pennsylvania

Hotel Burnham, 1 W. Washington St., 312-782-1111

**“The B&B for those who don’t like B&B’s.”**

**LUXURY**

**Sofitel Water Tower** was voted one of the Top Luxury Hotels in the city, country and world in TripAdvisor’s Travelers’ Choice Awards. “We were impressed from the moment we walked into the beautifully decorated lobby to the moment we checked out and that is no small feat.”—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Canada

Sofitel Water Tower, 20 E. Chestnut St., 312-324-4000

**Park Hyatt** is a striking contemporary hotel with a winning address. “If you can afford a hotel of this caliber, it would be a mistake on your part to pass it up.”—TripAdvisor Member

Park Hyatt, 800 N. Michigan Ave., 312-335-1234

**Hotel Monaco** pampers people with unusual extras, from in-room pet goldfish and meditation windows to Etch-a-Sketch, stuffed animals and gourmet mini-bar snacks. “Loved the location, the decor and the goldfish!”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Hotel Monaco, 225 N. Wabash St., 312-960-8500

**Hotel Burnham** has “all the romance of a Kimpton along with the service and standards you come to expect from them.”—TripAdvisor Member, Pennsylvania

Hotel Burnham, 1 W. Washington St., 312-782-1111

Located in the Gold Coast neighborhood of Chicago, the **Flemish House of Chicago** features fireplaces, inlaid wood floors, wood-paneled walls and high ceilings. Close to upscale shopping, dining and the Oak Street Beach, it’s “the B&B for those who don’t like B&B’s.”—TripAdvisor Member, San Diego, Calif.

Flemish House of Chicago, 68 E. Cedar St., 312-664-9981

**Club Quarters Hotel Central Loop**’s address “makes this hotel a great starting point for exploring Chicago. The price is unbeatable for this location.”—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Canada

Club Quarters Hotel Central Loop, 75 E. Wacker Dr., 800-649-6331 (to book outside membership) 312-357-6400 (with membership)

**“Park Hyatt is a striking contemporary hotel with a winning address. “If you can afford a hotel of this caliber, it would be a mistake on your part to pass it up.”—TripAdvisor Member”**

**Hilton Garden Inn**. Its location is excellent, too. The free trolley service to Navy Pier “is right across the street.”—TripAdvisor Member, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Hilton Garden Inn, 10 E. Grand Ave., 312-595-0000

**“Other hotels take note—this is the way a hotel should be run!”**

**Have questions about Chicago? Get insider advice from local experts in our forums. The majority of questions get answered within 24 hours.”**

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HIDDEN GEMS

“The staff at The Willows were so helpful. Very comfy rooms, very quiet also. The hotel was almost like an oasis from the hustle and bustle of the city. The tree lined street was lovely! Very conveniently located.”—TripAdvisor Member, Cincinnati, Ohio

The Willows, 555 W. Surf St., 773-528-8400

“A hidden gem with easy access to the El,” the Crowne Plaza Silversmith is “literally just a few steps from the Madison station.” The “great things about this hotel are the top-notch service, cleanliness, free Eli’s cheesecake and other desserts in the lobby each evening.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Crowne Plaza Silversmith, 10 S. Wabash St., 312-372-7696

Near the Magnificent Mile is The Talbott Hotel, an intimate boutique hotel. “It’s like you’ve arrived at Grandma’s—cozy, comforting, and OOOOOOHHHHH the food.”—TripAdvisor Member, Atlanta, Ga.

The Talbott Hotel, 20 E. Delaware Pl., 877-806-5664 or 312-212-8276

“Cozy, comforting, and OOOOOOHHHHH the food.”

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