

FALL + WINTER 2025-2026

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middle
of
everything



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DISCOVER PEORIA

DOORWAY TO DISCOVERY





THE MIDDLE
OF EVERYTHING

WELCOME

Shorter days and cooler temperatures usher in another season of wonder—ready to be discovered. Like a warm hug from an old friend, fall in Illinois rekindles the soul with its comforting embrace. And there's so much to catch up on.

Start with a statewide trek through Illinois' ecological treasures. Wander among craggy trees, cascading waterfalls and ancient canyons for a front-row seat to the state's showstopping scenery in "Falling for Natural Beauty" (*page 51*).

In this issue, you'll meet two Illinois powerhouses: Bobbi Brown and Preston Jackson. A makeup artist, author and entrepreneur, Brown's Midwestern upbringing and creativity inspires her popular cosmetics line (*page 28*). Jackson, a renowned sculptor, painter and professor, grew up in Decatur, but you'll find his monumental works throughout the state and beyond (*page 58*).

If your tastes lean more toward design, the city of Quincy delivers charming boulevards and an array of architectural styles (*page 62*). A stroll along Maine Street reveals just some of the town's structures on the National Register of Historic Places.

Celebrating the holidays in Chicago is simply magnificent. Feel the magic of the season with our whimsical wayfaring guide featuring festive traditions, can't-miss tea parties, and all the gifts and goodies you need to complete your shopping list ahead of schedule (*page 40*). And this year, you won't have to worry about the post-holiday blues; there's "snow" much fun to be had with an Illinois winter getaway (*page 64*). Cold-weather adventures—such as carving turns or shredding the slopes in Galena, catching a Broadway show in Chicago, or spotting bald eagles by a river—abound throughout the state.

This fall and winter, we invite you to experience for yourself why Illinois truly is the Middle of Everything.

Safe and happy travels!

enjoy
illinois

FALL + WINTER
2025–2026

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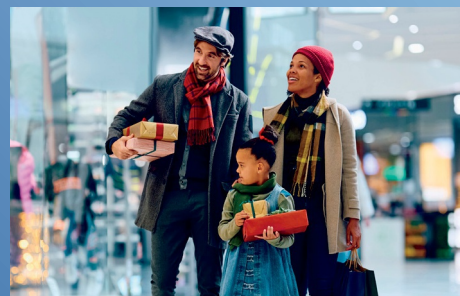
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SCAN TO PLAN
YOUR VISIT!



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EAT PLAY STAY

GUIDEBOOK

*Night of the Luminaria and
Living Windows, Galena*



Scan the code
for places to go.



PHOTOGRAPH: GALENA COUNTRY TOURISM/HAAS AND HAAS PHOTOGRAPHY

**FALL
+
WINTER
2025-2026**

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Stay in Style

Lavish Illinois lodgings come in many shapes, sizes and settings. Whether it's a downtown Chicago hotel or a unique downstate dwelling, luxury is in the eye of the key holder.

CAMP ARAMONI

Tonica

If your kind of campground has hotel rooms, you'll love this boutique version at a former brickyard on the banks of the Vermillion River. Safari-style tents (they look more like cabins or cottages) come with comfy beds, en suite baths, decks, firepits and AC/heat. Stays include breakfast and dinner served in The Barn, plus gourmet s'mores and firewood. The Burlington bar, a converted Airstream, serves beer, wine and cocktails. Hike, bike, canoe and fish along the river.





CHICAGO

VOTED BEST BIG CITY
IN THE U.S. 8 YEARS IN A ROW

chicago
CHOOSE CHICAGO



DISCOVER YOUR
CHICAGO STYLE

ILLINOIS INSIDER The chocolate brownie was invented in 1893 by the Palmer House Hotel, one of downtown Chicago's oldest operating hotels.



GALENA GLAM
Overlooking the Mississippi River, Galena is known for its small-town charm, historic downtown and luxury overnights, including the Inn at Irish Hollow, the Jail Hill Inn, the Goldmoor Inn, and the Ulysses Suites.

DEER PATH INN
Lake Forest

For nearly a century, this stately Tudor-style hotel on Chicago's North Shore has transported guests to an English country manor. Rooms and suites boast original art, floor-to-ceiling drapes, stone-surface baths and luxe linens. Afternoon tea in the elegant English Room is a cherished tradition. Dine there, too, in the bright and fragrant Garden Room or secluded courtyard. Borrow a bike to explore the neighborhood and enjoy cookies in the lobby each afternoon.

THE DOME AT BLUEBERRY HILL
Cobden

Find your thrill while gleefully glamping in a geodesic dome that pops up on two secluded acres along the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail. The fully insulated dome (with both heat and AC) has a sitting/dining area, two queen bedrooms (one is a loft), a private bath, kitchenette, laundry space and a private patio with a hot tub. Just steps away, a barn stocked with games and activities features an attached covered picnic area adjacent to a grill.

DRAGONFLY LAKES CABINS
Dahinda

Escape to a cabin in the wilderness east of Galesburg without roughing it—these timber-frame dwellings, sustainably built from wood found on-site, are rustic yet refined. Amenities include woodburning fireplaces, fully equipped kitchens, baths with roomy showers, quality linens and bedding.

High-speed internet and a smart TV help you check in on civilization. Roast hot dogs and toast marshmallows over your private campfire, and do some serious stargazing under a super-dark sky. The fall colors here are spectacular.

THE DRAKE HOTEL
Chicago

Live like a royal in Suite 550, the Princess Diana Suite—it's where she stayed for three days in 1996, and it retains the aura of her beauty and glamour. Hold court in the 1,500-square-foot space, which comprises a living room, kitchenette, reading room, a large bedroom and one-and-a-half baths. Palatial windows frame majestic views of Lake Michigan and skyscrapers. Have afternoon tea at iconic Palm Court, which hosted both Diana and Queen Elizabeth II.

THE GWEN HOTEL
Chicago

Sleep under the sky (scrapers) in a luxury tent pitched on a private 16th-floor terrace overlooking Michigan Avenue. The urban glamping experience is an option (through September 30) when you book the hotel's Gwen Lux Suite, which comes with a 1,000-square-foot outdoor living space. The 16-foot-diameter Lotus Belle tent features a plush queen bed and eclectic Bohemian decor. And you're never far from the suite's

dining room, living room, wet bar and two-and-a-half baths.

HAVISHAM HOUSE
Alto Pass

Stay your way in a charming Southern Illinois town surrounded by Shawnee National Forest. Rent the grand and spacious 1892 Main House to get a full modern kitchen, sunlit breakfast room and elegant bath (antique vanity, roomy soaking tub, glass shower enclosure and stained-glass windows). Book the adjacent Carriage House, also built in 1892 and recently renovated, for a cozy blend of old and new. Or hide out in one of two posh suites above the swanky Bourbon Bar.

INN AT IRISH HOLLOW
Galena

This pastoral paradise celebrates its 35th year. Hidden in the hills outside of town, the inn beckons with six private cottages, each generating its own vintage romantic vibe, but all blessed with gorgeous decor, focal-point fireplaces and spa-like baths. A stay includes a bountiful country breakfast (handmade with local, seasonal and natural ingredients) delivered to your door, a multicourse dinner one evening, and 500 acres of farm estate to roam—paths lead through pastures, forests, wildflower fields and wetlands. Or enjoy the view from your private screen porch.

JAIL HILL INN
Galena

Spending time in the old Jo Daviess County lockup is anything but punishment—innkeeper Matthew Carroll turned the four-story brick building into a maximum-

amenity bed-and-breakfast. Cramped, spartan quarters for the sheriff and inmates became six spacious, stylish suites with custom king beds, fireplaces, massaging bathtubs and dual-head showers. Savor gourmet breakfast in the dining room. (Or have it delivered.) Late afternoon brings wine and a tray of goodies. Galena's historic retail district is down the hill.

THE RITZ-CARLTON
Chicago

You'll be puttin' on the ritz when you upgrade to a room or suite with Club Lounge access. The hotel's exclusive 15th-floor lounge offers complimentary food and beverages five times a day—breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, hors d'oeuvres-cocktail time, and evening desserts-cordials. Club status also earns you a dedicated concierge team to help with dinner reservations and activities, plus in-room amenities, such as a shoeshine and same-day pressing of two garments.

THE ST. REGIS CHICAGO

In 1904, the brand was first to install a telephone in every room. Today, use it to summon a personal butler who'll help you unpack, deliver free coffee and press your clothes. Dine on the terrace at Miru restaurant, share in a sunset champagne ritual and relax at The St. Regis Spa. The hotel resides in a 101-story Lakeshore East building, the world's tallest designed by a woman, Jeanne Gang. Floor-to-ceiling windows maximize views of the Chicago River, Navy Pier and Lake Michigan.



The Gwen Hotel, Chicago



Dragonfly Lakes Cabins, Dahinda



Inn at Irish Hollow, Galena



Jail Hill Inn, Galena

LUXURY
TREAT YOURSELF



TREEHOUSES AT STARVED ROCK *Ottawa*

If you never had a tree house as a kid, now's your chance. The first elevated dwellings are open year-round at a 26-acre resort along a sandstone bluff on the edge of Starved Rock State Park. Sleep among the trees in a king-size bed, plus enjoy a full kitchen and bath, screen porch, multilevel deck, and bonfire pit. Step out of your tree house and onto trails that lead to the park. In the fall, paddle a creek to the Illinois River. (Rent kayaks, canoes and hydrobikes on-site.) In the winter, hike 13 miles of trails, explore frozen waterfalls, cross-country ski and ice climb.



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*Celebrate
the anniversary of
the Declaration
of Independence.*

America the Beautiful

*July 4, 2026, marks the United States' 250th birthday.
Celebrate the occasion with an enlightening tour
of historic landmarks and destinations in Illinois that
have contributed to the nation's story.*

Iconic Architecture

CAHOKIA COURTHOUSE STATE HISTORIC SITE

Cahokia

The state's oldest courthouse bears a French vertical-log construction style. Exhibits detail cases decided in the 1800s.

CHICAGO HISTORIC WATER TOWER

Chicago

A Gothic Revival limestone building that once protected a standpipe now houses a gallery showing local artists' work.

NAUVOO ILLINOIS TEMPLE

Nauvoo

Hand-painted murals adorn several rooms in this temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This 160-foot-tall rebuilt version of an 1840s temple overlooks the Mississippi River.

OLD STATE CAPITOL STATE HISTORIC SITE

Springfield

A terra-cotta-color dome caps the Greek Revival reconstruction of Illinois' mid-1800s statehouse, where Lincoln gave his "House Divided" speech.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

About 145 years after explorers Louis Jolliet and Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette followed the Illinois River past the land that is now Chicago, Illinois became the 21st state December 3, 1818.



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Historic Displays

ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Springfield

Young Abe reading in a log cabin. Lincoln's inauguration. Elaborate sets re-create key moments in the 16th president's life.

THE DUSABLE BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM AND EDUCATION CENTER

Chicago

Transatlantic slave-trade shackles, Ida B. Wells' writing desk, and Black Panther posters trace the perseverance of America's African American residents.

ILLINOIS AMISH HERITAGE CENTER

near Arthur

Two traditional Amish homes and a schoolhouse show how residents at the 1865 settlement lived.

ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S MANSION

Springfield

Interpreters guide tours through the Italianate-style estate. One highlight? A room with wood-block-printed wallpaper showing scenes of early America.

ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM AND EDUCATION CENTER

Skokie

Visit the Chicago suburb location for a virtual reality tour of a concentration

camp. The Skokie building partially reopens in January 2026 after renovations.

ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM

Springfield

Touching a giant short-faced bear skull and walking through a model glacier tunnel illuminate Illinois' 500-million-year transformation.

JANE ADDAMS HULL-HOUSE MUSEUM

Chicago

A settlement designed for community service only has two buildings remaining. Tour them on the University of Illinois Chicago campus and explore the history of social activism (free).

THE NEWBERRY

Chicago

Delve into history and the humanities at the noncirculating library. Built in 1887, the free library offers tours four times a week.

PEORIA RIVERFRONT MUSEUM

Peoria

An exhibit from guest curator Ken Burns brings a 1776 edition of the Declaration of Independence and other artifacts to Peoria for America's 250th anniversary.

PULLMAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Chicago

At the visitors center in the old clock tower, learn about the Pullman Company industrial community and the labor movement that started here.

Peoria Riverfront Museum



Memorial and Monuments

EMMETT TILL AND MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT

Chicago

Pay your respects outside of the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, the location of the murdered 14-year-old's funeral.

MOUND CITY NATIONAL CEMETERY

Mound City

The Illinois State Soldiers and Sailors Monument honors 2,637 unknown servicemen buried here who died during the Civil War.

TRIBUTE TO FREEDOM AND WATER WALL

Chicago

Members of the armed forces and their families relax by Lake Michigan in this bronze-cast scene by Soldier Field.



Scan the code to learn more about America 250 Illinois events.

Legendary Routes

BRONZEVILLE WALK OF FAME

Chicago

Bronze plaques along a 10-block stretch of the neighborhood celebrate iconic residents of Chicago's "Black Metropolis," including Nat King Cole.

CONSTITUTION TRAIL

Bloomington-Normal

Bike the 40-plus-mile trail that partially follows the old Illinois Central Gulf Railroad route and was built for the 200th birthday of the United States.

I+M CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

LaSalle

Board an 1840s, mule-towed boat to discover how the canal transformed transportation by connecting Lake Michigan to the Illinois River.

LEWIS AND CLARK STATE HISTORIC SITE

Hartford

Peer into a life-size replica of the keelboat, in which the explorers traveled, and a camp re-created from William Clark's notes.



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Explore an architectural marvel and step back in time



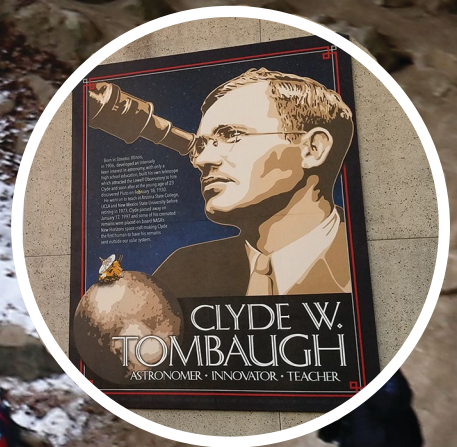
Starved Rock Lodge

Home to cabins, hikes & dining with panoramic views



Camp Aramoni

Boutique accommodations and events in a scenic setting



Streator's Arts Tour

Experience Streator's history told through beautiful murals



Big Plans on Campus

*You don't have to be a student, parent or alum
to enjoy these Illinois college towns.
Audit attractions on and off campus, including
major spots to eat and drink.*



Memorial Stadium, Champaign

University of Illinois Urbana- Champaign

With nearly 60,000 students, it's one of the largest U.S. college campuses. Art enriches a vibrant culture.

As you tour the sprawling, bustling campus, relax and reflect in the **Arboretum**, an oasis of ornamental gardens that's particularly beautiful in fall. **Krannert Art Museum** is famous for its Andean, European and American art, plus its post-Modernist architecture. The **Spurlock Museum** celebrates cultures spanning the globe and historical eras, drawing on artifacts from six continents. Longtime Champaign eateries please college crowds: **Murphy's Pub** has served Irish fare since 1969, **Golden Harbor** started dishing up Chinese cuisine in 1996, and **Papa Del's Pizza Factory** rolled out its first pies in 1970. **I Hotel and Illinois Conference Center** is well situated for campus visitors, especially Fighting Illini football and basketball fans and concertgoers—it's just south of **Memorial Stadium** and **State Farm Center**.

FOR FOOTBALL FANS

After the Fighting Illini's historically successful 2024 season—10 wins, a bowl game victory and a national ranking—expectations for 2025 are high.

SELFIE SPOT

At the west entrance to campus, take a pic with beloved **Alma Mater**, a 5-ton bronze statue depicting a woman in academic robes.

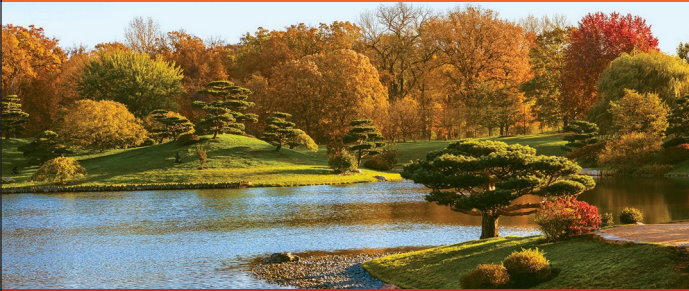
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Northwestern University, Evanston

The suburban Chicago school is serious about academics—and seriously close to Lake Michigan.

A campus visit should include **Alice Millar Chapel**, with its spectacular stained-glass windows.

Dearborn Observatory is open for tours on Friday evenings—peer through the big telescope. Students hang out at **Norris University Center**, where there's a bookstore, dining and a Starbucks (aka Norbucks). The **Block Museum of Art** is free and open to all Wednesdays through Sundays. Look for an exhibit on Helen Frankenthaler's experimental prints.

Near campus, reflect and meditate at **Bahá'í House of Worship**, the only one in North America; **Hewn** bakery masters the art of bread, pastries and sandwiches; **Soul and Smoke** tempts with bold barbecue; and **Stacked and Folded** plates fresh takes on burgers, tacos and wraps. **Graduate by Hilton Evanston** provides classy accommodations.

FOR FOOTBALL FANS

While **Ryan Field** undergoes renovations, the Northwestern Wildcats will play two home games (November 15 and 22) at Chicago's **Wrigley Field**.

SELFIE SPOT That which we call a rose grows in the **Shakespeare Garden**, which contains plants mentioned in The Bard's works.



ILLINOIS INSIDER The state has 70-plus four-year colleges and universities. The oldest public one is Illinois State University, founded in 1857. Abraham Lincoln drafted the bond and bill of sale documents for the property that would become the university.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (NORTHWESTERN) NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY; (SOUL AND SMOKE) COURTESY OF SOUL AND SMOKE; (HEWN) JOHN LEE

Illinois State University, Bloomington-Normal

The state's first public university retains a small-campus feel that fosters a strong sense of community.

History permeates campus and nearby attractions, including the **David Davis Mansion**, the Victorian home of Abraham Lincoln's close friend and political ally. Another impressive manor home from the 1920s, **Ewing Cultural Center** is surrounded by lush gardens. Discover more natural beauty on a walking tour of campus—**Fell Arboretum** features thousands of trees. Or take a walk on **Constitution Trail**, a 45-mile paved route through Bloomington-Normal. **Hyatt Place Bloomington-Normal** puts you close to campus and in the heart of the **Uptown Normal** district, where **Medici** beckons with an eclectic menu and a 30-foot mulberry tree that's inside the restaurant. Down the street, **The Rock Restaurant** rocks a Mediterranean vibe.

SELFIE SPOT Head to Redbird Plaza to find the school's Redbird mascot. It's a tradition to rub the beak.



Medici, Normal



Constitution Trail, Bloomington-Normal



Scan the code for more road trip itineraries.

Shawnee National Forest

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Set near the Shawnee National Forest, SIU is an outdoor-oriented campus with a down-to-earth disposition.

Make **Home2 Suites by Hilton Carbondale** your base camp for on- and off-campus adventures. It's close to SIU and fixtures like **Quatro's** deep-pan pizza, opened in 1975 by four guys from Chicago, and **Harbaugh's Cafe**, the go-to place for a hearty breakfast or lunch since 2000. Relative newcomer **Underground Public House**

showcases artisanal meats, local produce, innovative cocktails and craft beers—owner-butchers Josh Klarer grew up in Carbondale. On campus, exhibits at the **Sharp Museum** cover the arts, sciences and humanities. See paintings, geological specimens, cultural artifacts and more. SIU's **Touch of Nature** education center offers

immersive outdoor experiences, including trails and lodging. It's a gateway to the wonders of the **Shawnee National Forest**.

SELFIE SPOT A statue of three Salukis, the dog breed that serves as SIU's mascot, graces Saluki Alumni Plaza, on the lawn between Pulliam and Woody halls.

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Prairie
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wildlifeprairiepark.org



UNIQUE LODGING INCLUDING OUR TRAIN CABOSES

A Day in Chicago's Little Village

Meander along this vibrant neighborhood's "Mexican Magnificent Mile" and areas nearby to encounter independent shops, cultural centers and restaurants.

National Museum of Mexican Art, Pilsen



ILLINOIS INSIDER Held annually, the 26th Street Mexican Independence Day Parade (September 14) features colorful floats and lively cultural performances to kick off Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations.

Spanning West 26th Street with a welcoming ***Bienvenidos***, the Little Village Arch announces a bustling commercial corridor. Hundreds of locally owned businesses, many rooted in the area's Latino heritage, make La Villita a shopping and dining destination for Spanish and English speakers alike. Often called the Mexico of the Midwest, neighborhood murals and spaces, like the Manuel Perez Jr. Memorial Plaza, celebrate community culture. Explore on your own or reserve a guided group walking tour, free through the Chicago Greeter program.

10:15 a.m. Chilaquiles stand out on the **La Catedral Cafe and Restaurant** menu, which features 16 varieties spanning spice levels. Toppings include scrambled eggs and chicken. On the sunny side? Brunch with an omelette poblano on **Mi Tierra's** expansive patio.

11 a.m. Fortified by fried tortillas, it's time to shop. Marvel at bedazzled quinceañera gowns on display at **Alborada**, or browse instruments and equipment at **Cesar's Music of Illinois**. Hunt for deals on traditional embroidered fashions and jewelry at **Discount Mall**.

1:30 p.m. Sweet teeth should pop into **Dulcelandia** and fill a piñata with candies to savor later. Find Chicago's best conchas (Mexican sweet bread) at **Rosy's Bakery**. Popular **El Churro Shop** pairs fried churros with milkshakes and more.

2 p.m. Nonprofits like **Open Center for the Arts** cultivate creativity. The gallery hosts community workshops. Pick up an array of local handicrafts, including Day of the Dead accessories, at **Artesanías Elena** near the **Manuel Perez Jr. Memorial Plaza**.

3:30 p.m. Collections at nearby Pilsen's **National Museum of Mexican Art** (free!) represent both sides of the border, from pre-Cuahtémoc Meso-American artifacts to contemporary works that include paintings, textiles, photography, sculpture and performance art.

6 p.m. Back in Little Village at **Nuevo Leon Restaurant**, Laura Gutierrez-Ramos continues a family tradition of warm service and fresh flour tortillas made from nearby **El Milagro**. Order the legendary refried beans, vegan-friendly from the restaurant, which opened in 1977.

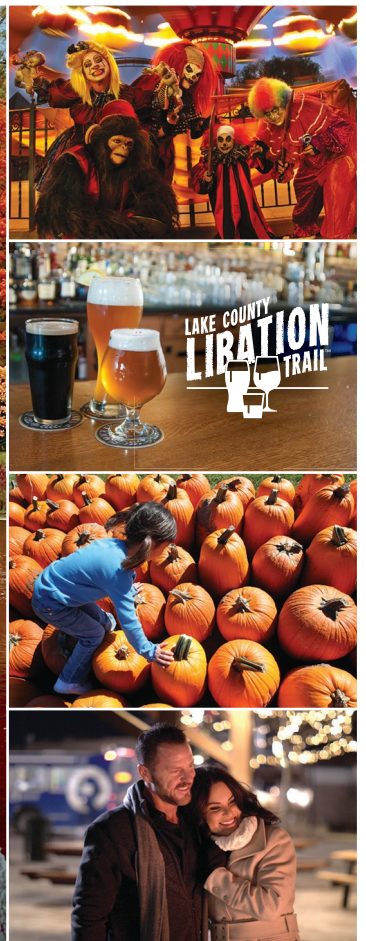
8 p.m. Start the party with a pitcher of El Palomaso at **Osito's Tap**, a modern Latinx speakeasy. Then, shimmy to **La Cueva Nightclub**, Chicago's oldest Latino drag bar. Recover with rice and bean burritos from **Yolanda's Restaurant**, open 24/7.

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Q|A

BOBBI BROWN

Recognized for her groundbreaking beauty brands, this creative visionary traces her unfussy aesthetic and global success to core values instilled during her suburban Chicago upbringing.

When Bobbi Brown asks women, “What do you see when you look in the mirror?” the cosmetics founder hopes responses go more than skin deep. Her compelling question invites real, honest reflection. Brown wants to know what gives women confidence.

Whether chatting with notable guests for her Jones Road Beauty YouTube television series, *I Am Me*, or developing revolutionary products, Brown seeks opportunities to learn and grow. Since launching her first lipstick line in 1990, her quest has empowered generations to embrace a natural look.

Now 68, the Wilmette native tells her story in her memoir, *Still Bobbi*, out this September. Brown’s “Midwest nice” attitude advances her inspirational journey to becoming a makeup artist, mother of three grown boys and multi-hyphenate entrepreneur. Friendly conversations connected Brown with a chemist, press coverage and distribution opportunities that eventually established her as an icon in the industry.

Brown now lives in New Jersey, where she and her husband, Steven Plofker, renovated The George, a boutique hotel. Her career recently came full circle with a brick-and-mortar store, Jones Road Beauty, opening in Chicago’s Bucktown neighborhood. We asked Brown where her passion for beauty was born, who served as early mentors and what’s ahead for her.



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LIGHT UP THE
Holidays

INTERVIEW

ONE-ON-ONE

Q Are your Chicago roots still strong?

A My whole family is still in Chicago, so I visit often. I loved growing up in Wilmette. There were tons of kids in my neighborhood, lots of green space, and we were still minutes away from the city. It was the ideal place to grow up. Chicago is a critical part of my origin story. No matter where my life or career has taken me, I've always tried to remain down-to-earth and authentic to who I am. I'm still Bobbi, a 5-foot-tall Jewish girl from the Chicago suburbs.

Q Were you always interested in cosmetics?

A My mom, Sandra, was the most glamorous woman. She dressed perfectly, and her dark hair was always beautifully coiffed. When she and my dad were getting ready to go out, I would watch her get dressed and do her makeup. She sparked my passion for teaching women how to use makeup—not only to make themselves look more beautiful, but so they feel more confident.

Q How did you turn that early fascination into your influential career?

A I was not a great student. I was struggling to find my way at a traditional college. When I was home one summer complaining that I didn't want to go back to school, my mom asked me: If it was your birthday and you could do anything you wanted to do, what would it be?

Give your face an all-over glow with Miracle Balm.



I answered that I wanted to go and play with the makeup in the beauty department of Marshall Field's. I loved to watch the sales associates and makeup artists working with customers. I paid close attention to how they spoke to women and the way they taught them how to use products.

My mom suggested I find a college that would allow me to study makeup. Emerson College in Boston let me create my own major. I studied photography and theatrical makeup there.

Q What beauty looks did you embrace as a teen?

A When I was growing up in the '60s and '70s, the ideal was actresses and models who were all tall, blonde and blue-eyed. Then in 1970 came Ali MacGraw in *Love Story*. She was a beautiful, dark-haired girl with full eyebrows and natural makeup. It was the first time I saw someone who looked like me, with my aesthetic, portrayed in popular culture.

Q If you could give your younger self in Wilmette advice, what would you tell her?

A Breathe. Go slowly because nothing changes overnight. Find your small posse of friends who will hype you up or give you honest feedback when you need it.

Q Although you haven't lived in Chicago for decades, do you feel its influence?

A I think it's important for people to realize that you are where you came from, and I'm proud that I'm from Chicago. Chicago is bursting with art, incredible architecture and a strong sense of community. You find beauty everywhere you look. It also has a clean, almost industrial feel, which has inspired my design aesthetic. My style is like Chicago: clean and simple with a pop of color. The best part of Chicago, though, is the people. Midwesterners are authentic, approachable and

Family ties:
Bobbi Brown (right)
with her sister and
their dad.



practical. That approach to life and work has guided me. To me, beauty should be easy and effective. Makeup should make you look like yourself on your very best day.

Q Who were your early mentors?

A My family. Our Midwestern values of being authentic, honest and keeping things simple have informed my life and career. My grandfather, Papa Sam, had car dealerships throughout Chicago. Everyone called him Cadillac Sam. I consider him to be the best businessman and entrepreneur I've known. My Dad, Joe, retired from law to become a children's author. Now in his 90s, he's still writing and takes boxing lessons twice a week. My Aunt Alice has been my go-to person throughout my career. I even gave her an advice column when I was the editor of *Yahoo Beauty*.

Q Tell us about your fragrance line.

A Our first scent, Shower, smells so clean and fresh. BKLYN, our second fragrance, gives off an air of casual confidence with notes of lemon, neroli oil and sandalwood. Brooklyn—a borough of Manhattan known for being cool without trying—is the inspiration.

Q You've written nine books. What made you want to write your memoir, *Still Bobbi*?

A I absolutely love the process of creating content that helps women look and feel better about themselves. I have always shared tidbits about my life and career on my social media channels, but my previous books have all been instructional. I haven't told my full story all in one place until now. I'm hoping *Still Bobbi* urges readers to embrace their own potential and pursue their dreams with confidence and clarity of purpose.



A Style Icon's Chicago Go-Tos

When Bobbi Brown visits Chicago, the beauty entrepreneur soaks up the skyline and immerses herself in good design.

RL CHICAGO

115 E. Chicago Ave.

Brown says Ralph Lauren's refined restaurant serves the best Dover sole in town.

SOHO HOUSE CHICAGO

113-125 N. Green St.

Brown calls this private club her "home away from home" when she visits. The former belt factory has an industrial-chic feel.

ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

111 S. Michigan Ave.

Find inspiration with a self-guided tour of the galleries or linger to appreciate the museum's vast collection.

CHICAGO LAKEFRONT TRAIL

Ardmore Ave. south to 71st St.

Brown starts her day with a walk along the 19-mile paved path that hugs Lake Michigan.

JONES ROAD BUCKTOWN

1655 N. Damen Ave.

Brown fell in love with the cool vibe and neighborhood feel of Bucktown.

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FILM LOCATION OF *GROUNDHOG DAY*

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Teatro ZinZanni, Chicago

Dinner and a Show

Dinner theater has bolstered Illinois communities for decades, and you can still revel in their comedy, music and even acrobatics as you enjoy a gourmet multicourse meal. At this motley mix of venues, the show does, indeed, go on.

*The Barn III,
Goodfield*





STORY: AUSTIN CANNON. PHOTOGRAPHS: (ZINZANNI) COURTESY OF TEATRO ZINZANNI. (BARN) COURTESY OF THE BARN. (PLAYHOUSE) COURTESY OF WHITE PINES LODGE PLAYHOUSE THEATER



White Pines Lodge Playhouse Theater, Mount Morris



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Speakeasy-Style Theater

In downtown Galena, **Amelia's Under the Lamplight Dinner Theater** pairs a supper-club atmosphere with interactive entertainment. Comedy shows fill weekend nights with laughter and intrigue, and everyone is a suspect during the themed murder mystery dinners. After dessert, stick around for a ghost tour.

Rebuilt Red Cattle Barn

Goodfield has enjoyed decades of cornfield-adjacent performances, a history that dates back to Halloween 1975, when the fledgling dinner theater's tables were built mere hours before the debut production. The latest iteration of its venue, **The Barn III**, is an ideal spot for a birthday or anniversary—celebrations that earn you a classic, whipped-cream-covered barn cake. Plan your visit for productions of *Arsenic and Old Lace* (October 3–November 2) and *Plaid Tidings* (November 15–December 31).

Ornate Historic Venue

The three-story Art Deco Fort Armstrong Theatre opened in 1921, originally as a downtown movie house for silent films, in Rock Island. More than a century later, **Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse** calls the grand theater home, hosting more than 250 productions since it took over in 1977. The best part? Along with dinner, your ticket actually

earns two performances: a preshow from the singing waitstaff, the Bootleggers, and the main production. Upcoming shows include several Broadway favorites, including *Come From Away* (September 10–November 1).

Upscale Circus Atmosphere

Teatro ZinZanni's eye-catching, circus-inspired spectacle awaits inside an antique Belgian Spiegeltent (a large tent with mirrors) in Chicago's Theatre District. Don't miss a moment as you savor your four-course meal: a trapeze duo soaring overhead and an aerial artist keeping multiple hoops spinning as she ascends toward the ceiling. Back on the ground, acclaimed singers, dancers and improvisational artists do their part to deliver a show you won't soon forget.

State Park Wood-Beam Lodge

Tunes from your favorite bands and artists have drawn crowds to the **White Pines Lodge Playhouse Theater** since 1989 in Mount Morris, and this year is no different. Pair a lunch buffet with tribute acts performing the best of Barry Manilow and Johnny Cash. In December, catch matinee or evening performances of a White Pines tradition: *Scrooge the Comedy*, an outlandish, comical take on the Dickens classic that relies on audience participation.



Eat, Drink and Be Cozy

Handcrafted whiskey, cuddly alpaca wovens and decorate-them-yourself sugar cookies are just three memorable ways to banish winter's chill with feel-good delights from Illinois artisans.

COZY EATS

17TH STREET BBQ

Murphysboro

An order of baby back ribs might be the epitome of feel-good food. The legendary racks are pit-cooked for six hours in the smoke of cherrywood and applewood, then sprinkled with the restaurant's own Magic Dust seasoning. Amateur pit masters can purchase the seasoning mix along with sauces for at-home smoking.

INCREDIBLY DELICIOUS

Springfield

For the joy and nostalgia of decorating sugar cookies without the hassle of rolling, cutting out and baking, stop by this French-inspired bakery-cafe on the first floor of a historic mansion. Owner, pastry chef and Springfield native Patrick Groth creates holiday DIY kits with all the essentials (baked cookies, frosting, colorful sprinkles and other decorative flourishes).

VOILÁ! MACARONS

Peoria

Owner Diana Natale creates art you can eat, some only for the over-21 crowd. Spiked buttercream and ganache sits between crunchy-on-the-outside yet chewy-on-the-inside colorful macarons. Choose from brunch-worthy flavors (mimosa, peach bellini), classics (French vanilla, chocolate), or standouts (piña colada, Guinness).

Add a taste of 17th Street BBQ to your next home cookout.



← ETHEREAL CRAFT CHOCOLATE

Woodstock

Co-owners and bean-to-bar chocolate makers Sara Miller, Mary Ervin and Michael Ervin tempt with flavors such as Yes Way Rosé and Caramel Me Crazy. Choosing a small-batch bar monthly subscription will challenge the "chococurious." Sweeten the deal by adding limited-edition truffles to your delivery.



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Savor the flavors of apple cider donuts or stroll through gardens ablaze in fall colors. And when the temps drop, cozy up with hot chocolate and bask in the glow of holiday lights. Plus, dive into our vibrant cultural scene and join the fun at holiday events and family festivities!

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Photo by
Kevin Schamber

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Go behind the scenes on a distillery and tasting tour at **Blaum Bros.**



Learn more about coffee while roasting a batch of beans on a 90-minute tour at **Mad Goat Coffee.**



COZY DRINKS

BLAUM BROS. DISTILLING COMPANY

Galena

Siblings Matt and Mike Blaum channeled their passion for craft distilling into a full-time business more than 10 years ago. Other spirits vie for attention, but their bourbon reigns supreme. Breathe in notes of buttered cornbread, vanilla and clove before sipping hints of toffee, caramel and cinnamon-laced cherry.

MAD GOAT COFFEE

Danville and Champaign

Co-owner and manager Sam George brews craft-roasted beans and community at Mad Goat. Grab a bag of Fireside Blend for decadent chocolate notes and serious warming vibes. Keep your java hot in a retro ceramic logo mug or take your joe to go in an insulated tumbler.

ALTO VINEYARDS

Alto Pass and Champaign

Prohibition halted wine production in Southern Illinois, but Guy Renzaglia brought it back to the region in 1982. Generations later, Renzaglia's family enriches the tradition with new skills and cultivars. Sweet rosé Heartland Blush, and the sparkling version, Heartland Buzz, pair well with charcuterie boards.

← THE IRIE CUP

Huntley

Irie, a Jamaican phrase expressing contentment and well-being, describes how the married duo Joseph and LaShanda Lewis hope you feel when sipping custom fusions at their tea shop. Steep your way through their fall collection, starting with black apple spice tea.

Metropolis

JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

Treat yourself to a living tour of history at Fort Massac Encampment on Oct. 18th - 19th, 2025, only in Metropolis, Illinois.



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Christmas Walk Dec. 5
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COZY COMFORTS

WATER SWEETS SOAP COMPANY

Edwardsville

The mother-son company uses the fewest and simplest ingredients to make vegan skin-care products designed to soothe seasonal discomforts. Winter blues are no match for their citrus-packed energy bath bomb and sugar scrub.

PRAIRIE FRUITS FARM AND CREAMERY

Champaign

Herbs from the garden scent goat-milk soap prized for its moisturizing powers. Lather your way through unusual scents, including Pine Scotch, Mint and Mocha, Lemongrass, Coffee Scrub, and Sage.

MAGIC MEADOWS ALPACAS

Wonder Lake

Entrepreneurs Sally and Mike Kazanis collaborate with a local mill to transform what they dub the Fiber of the Gods into wearable art. Silky-soft headbands and hats snuggle your ears. Upcycled sweaters become one-of-a-kind double-layered mittens.

C'S BEES

Anna

Crystal Housman, a retired educator, now indulges her fascination with bees and their keeping by integrating local beeswax from Union County into her products. Handmade lip balms in flavors like mulled wine and rosemary-lemon keep lips sweetly moisturized.

HEMPSTOCK PHARMS

Woodstock

This organic farm grows hemp, found in all of its small-batch CBD products, which helps promote relaxation. The popular buttery-smooth Hard Caramel, taken half an hour before bed, melts in your mouth as you drift off to sleep.



*Goats happily
produce enough
milk for both cheese
and small-batch
soaps at Prairie
Fruits Farm.*



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A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a light green shirt, is looking at a rack of clothing in a store. The background shows shelves with various items, including candles and decorative objects. The text 'UNCOVER THE' is in white, bold, sans-serif font, and 'Possibilities' is in a large, yellow, cursive script font. A small white triangle points downwards between the two lines of text.

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Holiday Season Kickoff

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the North Pole this year?
Don't sweat it.
Chicago's Magnificent
Mile rivals Santa's
workshop for irresistible
holiday spirit.

The Big Parade

The Wintrust Magnificent Mile Lights Festival and its fireworks-filled grand finale arrive the night of November 22, but don't wait for dark to celebrate. Kids flash toothy grins as they pose with Santa and decorate cheesecake at Lights Festival Lane (opens at 11 a.m.). At 5:30 p.m., dancers and marching bands perform alongside floats shepherding characters from Walt Disney World Resort down Michigan Avenue.



Jolly Lodgings

Boozy hot chocolate warms you from the inside out on The Gwen Hotel's rooftop curling court.¹ Skate beneath skyscrapers on The Peninsula Chicago's Sky Rink,² or cannonball into the indoor pool filled with holiday-themed floaties at the Intercontinental Chicago.³ Seasonal cheer suffuses your Four Seasons Hotel Chicago⁴ room, with add-ons like "stuffed snowballs" for indoor tossing and an in-room snow fort (upon request). Gaze upon Lake Michigan during Park Hyatt Chicago's Christmas dining experience.⁵

Stores for Everyone on Your List

Begone, holiday shopping overwhelms. Begin with a boost of caffeine from Starbuck's Reserve Roastery,⁶ the world's largest Starbucks. Pick up Lego kits for your kiddos at Water Tower Place,⁷ and peruse stores at The Shops at North Bridge, like Aesop,⁸ which sells luscious body product stocking stuffers. At Nike's flagship,⁹ snag a pair of Air Jordans for your sporty boo—before a Topgolf session at 900 North Michigan Shops. (That's a stop just for you!)

Magical Memories

Personal shoppers at American Girl Chicago at Water Tower Place¹⁰ can schedule a doll-making session and salon visit for your little one. Those at Bloomingdale's and Neiman Marcus curate wardrobes and coordinate tailoring. Wear your new outfit to afternoon tea at The Drake Hotel's Palm Court,¹¹ The Ritz-Carlton Chicago, or The Peninsula Chicago. Or try The Gwen's Tippy Tea Party, or Sofitel Chicago Magnificent Mile's champagne service¹² for a boozy affair.





CHICAGO



Explore a shopper's paradise filled with style, sparkle, and surprises. From iconic fashion at Woodfield Mall to charming boutiques tucked into vibrant downtowns, Chicago Northwest makes holiday shopping feel like a getaway.



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ROLLING MEADOWS
ROSELLE
SCHAUMBURG
STREAMWOOD
WOOD DALE

NORTHWEST

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SNOWY
CELEBRATIONS

DATEBOOK



*Illumination: Tree Lights at
The Morton Arboretum, Lisle*

WINTER GLOW

*The Land of Lincoln
glitters and glows during
the holiday season. Here's
how to enjoy the lights,
festivals and more.*

November–December **HARDY'S REINDEER RANCH REINDEER EXPERIENCE**

Rantoul
Meet Dancer and
Prancer look-alikes at
this farmstead, where
reindeer from Alaska
hoof it around barns
made of reclaimed
century-old wood.

Early November– late December **MACY'S STATE STREET HOLIDAY WINDOWS**

Chicago
Part of the holiday season
since 1907 and originally
introduced by Marshall
Field's, the festively
decorated windows
entice you to check off
items from your gift list.

Mid-November– early December **THE POLAR EXPRESS**

Monticello
Put on your PJs and be
enthralled by a reading of
the beloved children's
book about the train
departing from the
Monticello Railway
Museum. Santa has a
ticket too.

Mid-November– early January **ILLUMINATION: TREE LIGHTS AT THE MORTON ARBORETUM**

Lisle
Get your Fitbit ready: The
1-mile trail jaunt gets you
clocking around 2,500
steps. Music and lights
pump up the drama.

Mid-November– early January **LIGHTSCAPE, CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN**

Glencoe
Walk through a tunnel
of lights reminiscent of
a cathedral and emerge
ready to see the garden in
its winter glory.

Mid-November– early January **ZOOLIGHTS**

Chicago
Lights take the form of
animals at the Lincoln
Park Zoo—and the result
is wild. Some animal
exhibits stay open late,
offering a great chance
to catch big cats during
non-napping hours.

November 28–30, December 6–7 **JULMARKNAD**

Bishop Hill
Encounter folkloric
Swedish characters
like Tomten (elves), as
they roam a holiday
market, and delight in
the antics of Julbock the
Christmas Goat.

Late November **LIGHTING ON THE COMMONS**

Moline
Meet the jolly guy in red
and hop on a horse-
drawn carriage before a
tree-lighting ceremony
and fireworks display
kick off the holidays.

Late November **THE WINTRUST MAGNIFICENT MILE LIGHTS FESTIVAL**

Chicago
Mickey Mouse and
Minnie Mouse wave to
spectators and marching
bands play as 1 million
lights give the Mag Mile a
holiday glow-up.

Late November– late December **CHRISTKINDL- MARKET**

Chicago and Aurora
Bratwursts sizzle on
the grill at this outdoor
bazaar, where vendors
in timber cabins sell
German-style wares
and crack walnuts in toy
soldier nutcrackers.

Late November– late December **CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND**

Alton
A jewel on the Great
River Road, Rock Spring
Park dazzles with a
drive-through display
of 4 million lights.



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and festivals.

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**Late November–
late December
HOLIDAY
FIREWORKS**

Chicago

Enjoy boom-and-crackle brilliance on Saturday nights at Navy Pier. Don your coziest coat and watch from the pier or from nearby beaches along the Lakefront Trail.

**Late November–
late December
THE LIGHTS: AN
EXHIBITION OF
HOLIDAY MAGIC**

Mt. Vernon

Roast s'mores and sip hot cocoa as glimmering lights reflect on the pond at the Cedarhurst Center for the Arts campus.

**Late November–
late December
SANTA'S ROCK N
LIGHTS**

Geneva

Drive through 1 mile of lights dancing to music. See 3D light sculptures like dinos, polar bears and reindeer.

**Late November–
early January
FESTIVAL OF
LIGHTS WINTER
WONDERLAND**

East Peoria

Drive or take a horse-drawn wagon ride through an electric park with lit-up candy canes and dinosaurs on display.

**Late November–
early January
HOLIDAY MAGIC**

Brookfield

The area's longest-running lights festival, featuring more than 2 million twinkling LED lights and a 3D gingerbread house, almost outshines the animals at Brookfield Zoo Chicago.

**Late November–
early March
ICE SKATING
RIBBON**

Chicago

Take surprising twists and turns at Maggie Daley Park's quarter-mile ice path with skyline views. Rentals available; reservations required.

**Late November–
early March
MCCORMICK
TRIBUNE
ICE RINK**

Chicago

Glide past Millennium Park's iconic *Cloud Gate* sculpture in the shadow of skyscrapers at this free rink (reservations required; rental skate fee).

**December
ILLUMINATED**

Rockford

Stone paths weave past a 40-foot-tall waterfall and a Sukiya-style tea hut at Anderson Japanese Gardens, festively decorated with lights.

**December–March
EAGLE WATCHING**

Gladstone and Alton

Bald eagles migrate to Illinois to fish the open waters around locks and dams. See the majestic birds at Lock and Dam 18 near Gladstone and Melvin Price Lock and Dam in Alton.

**December 1–February 28
GNOME ROAM**

Makanda

Go on a treasure hunt for whimsical gnome sculptures hiding along Giant City State Park's trails.

**December 5–28
THE NUTCRACKER**

Chicago

The Joffrey Ballet dancers leap through the timeless tale, which is set against the backdrop of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair for a magical, local historical flavor.



Winter Carnival, Galena

**December 6
HOLIDAY FIRE
IN THE SKY**

Galena

Fireworks whirl and burst in the sky, officially kicking off the holiday season in the historic town on the Mississippi River.

**December 13
NIGHT OF THE
LUMINARIA AND
LIVING WINDOWS**

Galena

More than 3,500 luminaria and animated store window displays turn the streets into something reminiscent of a Charles Dickens novel.

**January–February
SNOW TUBING**

Rockford

Snowmakers keep the white fluffy stuff going for tube rides at Alpine Hills Adventure Park.

**Late January
ILLINOIS SNOW
SCULPTING
COMPETITION**

Rockford

Spectators can walk or drive through Sinnissippi Park, where teams from across the state take chippers to icy blocks to create fantastical sculptures. The frozen creations last until the weather turns warm or wet.

**Late January–early February
GROUNDHOG DAYS**

Woodstock

Celebrating the town's role as the filming location for the movie *Groundhog Day*, this event brings out Woodstock Willie to predict a late or early spring.

**Early February
POLARPALOOZA
WINTER FESTIVAL**

DeKalb

Hardworking sled dogs strut their stuff, pulling sleds, while tractors pull up to offer hayrides through scenic Hopkins Park. Don't miss the snowman bowling.

**Mid-February
ICE JAM AT
THE DAM**

East Alton

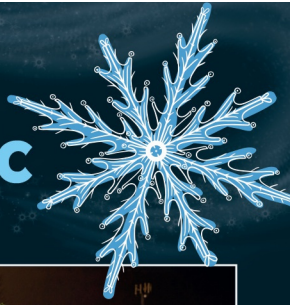
Explore the Melvin Price Locks and Dam on a guided tour, and look up for bald eagles. Meet and greet live animals before roasting s'mores.

**Mid-February
WINTER CARNIVAL**

Galena

Illuminated hot-air balloons glow in the night sky at Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa. A Sasquatch Shuffle and a hand-carved ice bar make holiday stress vanish.

Small Town Lights, Big Holiday Magic



In Southern Illinois, winter wraps you in small-town magic. Downtowns glow with twinkling lights, holiday markets hum with cheer, and cozy cafés offer comfort by the cup. Enjoy carriage rides, festive parades, and cocoa-fueled strolls through the region's decorated streets. It's the kind of winter you've been dreaming of.

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OAK PARK

and Beyond

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Painting Nature's Canvas

A Chicago millionaire channeled his inheritance and love of art into a Monticello landscape that inspires natural and aesthetic contemplation today.



THEN

Chicago-area philanthropist and world traveler Robert Allerton treated this 12,000 acres of rural farmland like a medium of creative expression. His grand opus: A Georgian-style brick mansion, dubbed The Farms, was built in 1900 with a carriage house and marble hallway. The sprawling estate also has ornate gardens. This ambitious project demonstrated Allerton's belief that art as nature can surround every human.



NOW

Gifted to the University of Illinois in 1946, the land still sparks awe, creativity and enrichment. In 2023, Allerton Park and Retreat Center created The Farms: An Allerton Folk School. Visitors to The Farms can explore 16 miles of trails, attend "supper club" dinners from guest chefs in the mansion, and participate in workshops and seasonal events, such as creating fiber art. Book a room in the mansion or in a guesthouse for an overnight escape or rent the entire lodge for a big celebration.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

The Farms: An Allerton Folk School recently launched *Folk Talk* podcast, dedicated to all the colorful happenings at the Allerton Park and Retreat Center. Stream the latest episodes to prep for your visit.



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EVENTS



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FALLING FOR NATURAL BEAUTY

THESE OPEN-AIR ILLINOIS TREASURES HAVE MASS APPEAL. BRING AN ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT—AND CONSIDER A LOCAL GUIDE—TO FIND YOUR WAY TO THE MAGIC.

WRITER BRIANNE SANCHEZ

CULTURAL SITES

The scenic overlooks at **Horseshoe Mound Preserve** in Galena showcase three different state horizons. Plan a sunset visit on the winter solstice for perfect alignment with the preserve's Stonehenge-style Council Ring. Much farther south near Collinsville, Illinois' **Cahokia Mounds World Heritage and State Historic Site** was once the most-populated, pre-Columbian site north of Mexico. Climb the stairway for impressive views.

MISTY MARVELS

Thirsty for nature and movement? Follow the sound of flowing water across the state to these select trails promising cascading payoffs.

A little leg work can make a waterfall all the more rewarding. In **Ferne Clyffe State Park**, a spectrum of lush moss paints the rocky perimeter of a 60-foot intermittent cascade. You can find more than 700 species of plants along the trails in this protected nook in Southern Illinois. Also in the region, the sandstone gorge of **Jackson Falls** lures hikers, horseback riders and technical rock climbers for day trips and camping. Contact **Hiking with Shawn** for in-depth, guided excursions pairing local wisdom with scenic wonder across the Shawnee Hills region.

Let the water-carved contours in stone lead you to French Canyon or 17 other captivating canyons at **Starved Rock State Park** in Oglesby. At least 10 of the canyons feature seasonal waterfalls in Illinois' most popular park. Early risers find stillness among the birds and trickling waters tracing new paths through rock. Book a Fall Color Trolley Tour at **Starved Rock Lodge** for a hot lunch, trolley ride and guided walk to a few iconic park features. Or try the Ghost Tours (October) for a rare after-dark experience with a guide sharing paranormal history and lore.

Giant's Bathtub, Lake Falls and Cascade Falls each make stunning destinations along the 1-mile-long canyon in **Matthiessen State Park** in Oglesby. Water erosion formed the sandstone geological wonderland, which is divided between an upper and a lower section. Visitors can traverse the dynamic terrain on foot, horseback or mountain bikes via 9 miles of multiuse trails.

The combined prairies, savannas and oak-maple woodlands of **Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve** near Lemont hold nearly 750 native plant species. Stop for a photo at the tiered falls, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, then hike above Sawmill Creek. The natural sanctuary even has a model airplane field and a canoe route.

Matthiessen State Park, Oglesby



Ferne Clyffe State Park, Goreville



Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve, Lemont





PHOTOGRAPHS: (MATTHIESSEN) IOT, (FERNE CLYFFED) MEGHAN GARRIOTT, (WATERFALL GLEEN) FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF DUPAGE COUNTY, (STARVED ROCK) ADOBE STOCK



ROCK STARS

Box canyons, fungi-shape geology and rocky streams take center stage in these parts. Choose your own path or waterway to reach each stony showstopper.

Southern Illinois is rock-full of geological surprises. At **Garden of the Gods Recreation Area**, the wonders protrude from the dense forest like massive mushrooms from the soil. Scamper carefully across Camel Rock to find your perfect picnic perch or nook for an unforgettable sunset. The pinnacle overlook is just a quarter-mile walk from the main parking area. For a longer experience, tackle another 5-plus miles of interconnected trails and camp overnight in this crown jewel of Shawnee National Forest.

In the western section of the Shawnee Hills, **Giant City State Park** embodies a natural playground. Make your way through the mossy sandstone features, stony crevices and tunnels to freshwater ponds. The 1-mile Giant City Nature Trail presents a sample platter of highlights. You'll want all your backpacking essentials for the ambitious Red Cedar Trail that weaves 12 scenic miles through the terrain. For more creature

comforts, buy a hot meal or rent a cabin at the park lodge. Newcomers to trekking or the region especially appreciate the expertise of Bart Lane with **Shawnee Guided Hiking Tours**, offering half-day and full-day guided trips.

Autumn leaves steal the seasonal show in Shawnee's **Little Grand Canyon**. The walls of this ancient box canyon soar 300 feet overhead as you traverse through a bottomland forest. Keep your eyes peeled for foxes, raccoons, minks and other locals as you hike out through a rock-dappled streambed.

At **Pomona Natural Bridge**, you'll discover how water and time can join forces in artistic mastery. Millions of years of erosion formed the site's namesake arch spanning 90 feet of leafy forest. Meander on the short $\frac{1}{8}$ -mile loop to savor the mature beeches, oaks and hickories that occupy this sanctuary.

Clear streams, rock faces and green foliage fill out **Bell Smith Springs Recreation Area**. Several massive boulders from the cliff walls once plummeted into Hill Branch Springs Creek, where they're now fixed like a protruding monstrous spine in the waterway. This Devil's Backbone site makes an epic swimming hole or photo spot among the many miles of trails leading to cliff overhangs and daring catwalks.





BRANCH OUT

One visit barely scratches the surface of The Morton Arboretum's sprawling acres west of Chicago in Lisle.

Autumn visitors munch on apple cider doughnuts served on-site. Savor the season with a series of Fall Color Festival events (early October through mid-November), and catch an original Walking Play, *Farewell, Mr. Poe* (weekends October 4-26), featuring actors in multiple natural scenic backdrops.



*Allerton Park,
Monticello*



*Cache River State
Natural Area, Belknap*



*St. Francis Woods,
Libertyville*

WOODED SERENITY

These ancient forest destinations promise to make you slow down and look up, learning from sturdy giants that started growing before we had electricity.

Forest- and water-lovers get the best of both worlds in **Cache River State Natural Area**. Here in Southern Illinois, ancient cypress trees grow straight out of the river. This stretch of the Cache River claims North America's northernmost cypress forest, while marking the start of the Gulf Coastal Plain—spanning 500-plus miles to the Gulf. Get up close and personal with the towering giants on a guided trip with **Cache Bayou Outfitters** (through November) if you want to be sure to meet the oldest, dazzling cypress, estimated at more than 1,000 years old.

Precious few tracts of old-growth forest remain in the U.S. east of the Mississippi River. **Beall Woods State Park** preserves one of them along the banks of the Wabash River near Mount Carmel. The so-called University of Trees shows off its hickories, bottomland oaks and other supersized deciduous hardwoods year-round.

At another Illinois old-growth tract, **St. Francis Woods** boasts some white oaks that sprouted before the birth of the U.S. Combined with a colorful lineup of other beloved natives, the trees create a gorgeous backdrop to the park's lake, part of the Independence Grove Forest Preserve in Libertyville.

Try some forest bathing beneath a canopy of American sycamores, shagbarks, oaks and silver maples in **Allerton Park**. This old-growth beacon near Monticello shares parkland with intricate gardens and a historic mansion, where visitors can spend the night. The forest is part of the homelands of several Indigenous tribes.

Learning the basics of plant identification, frog behavior or maple sugaring takes on immersive (and delicious) layers at **Pilcher Park Nature Center** in Joliet. The log cabin education center is just the entry point alongside unique old-growth forests, miles of trails and Native American mounds.

*Irv Kupcinet Memorial,
Chicago*

KNOWN FOR SCULPTED LANDMARKS,
THIS PROLIFIC ARTIST CONTINUES
CREATING NEW WORKS THAT REFLECT HIS
PERSPECTIVE AND HELP HIDDEN
HISTORIES EMERGE.

WRITER BRIANNE SANCHEZ

A low-angle photograph of the Chicago skyline. The Willis Tower is the central focus, its distinctive bundled-tube design and golden-brown facade clearly visible. To the left, the arm and hand of a bronze statue, identified as Irv Kupcinet, reach out towards the sky. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds. Overlaid on the image is the text 'PRESTON JACKSON'S ARTISTRY' in a large, white, outlined font.

PRESTON JACKSON'S ARTISTRY

↖
***Known as
Mr. Chicago,
Irv Kupcinet was
a longtime writer
for the Chicago
Sun-Times.
Find Preston
Jackson's bronze
statue of him on
the corner of
E. Wacker near
Wabash.***



Surrounded by brightly colored canvases, Preston Jackson exudes creative energy. The renowned artist and performer is back in his studio after refreshing one of his most celebrated works, *Bronzeville to Harlem: An American Story*. “I think of it as a living piece,” Jackson says of the sculptural installation at Peoria Riverfront Museum. “It’s like it’s talking to me, and each season seems to be a different kind of conversation.”

The small-scale cityscape features hundreds of unique bronze and steel buildings, figures and fixtures. Each is carefully positioned to suggest stories found in urban centers, from the Midwest to Manhattan. Jackson’s own family moved to central Illinois as part of the Great Migration (1910–1970). The characters that spring from his imagination share his ancestors’ struggle for equality and hope for the future.

As a young boy growing up in Decatur, Jackson’s artistic talents helped him stand out among 10 siblings. Yet he wasn’t always certain he could financially sustain himself with his artwork. He recalls following in his father’s footsteps as a foundry worker before eventually graduating with his M.F.A. from the University of Illinois. “I began to grow intellectually,” he says. “That’s something I take pride in, because growth of that type leaves an open door so you can go even further.”

Landing faculty roles at Western Illinois University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago also widened

Jackson’s experiences and influenced his artistic development. “Teaching, you learn, especially from your students,” he says.

Jackson’s rising recognition and influence afforded him more opportunities, which he paid forward to his local creative community. In 1995, he opened The Raven Gallery and founded the Contemporary Art Center in Peoria. Three years later, Jackson was selected as a laureate of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois for his creative contributions. But he isn’t resting on those laurels.

At 81, the career artist and educator continues seeking new experiences. He strives to make a statement and share his dreams through massive works and layered paintings. Also an accomplished guitarist, Jackson takes a jazz musician’s approach across mediums. He likens his curiosity to a hungry cat. “It’s all creativity,” Jackson says. “Poetry and music, to me, are very close. They’re woven together.”

Often commissioned to design commemorative public art in Illinois and beyond, he’s known for creating works that reflect his perspective and help reveal forgotten stories. He aims to distill complex ideas into geometric shapes and organic forms people can understand and interpret.

“It’s more demanding now, but my art is one of the tools that I use to make the world better,” Jackson says. “It’s like lighting a candle or a spark. The artist initiates that awareness, and then [the viewer] takes it from there.”

MONUMENTAL WORKS

Find Jackson's sculptures in public spaces.

Often cast in bronze and steel, Jackson's sculptures can weigh tons. Many also convey emotional depth. At the entrance to the Interpretive Center at the **Cahokia Mounds World Heritage and State Historic Site** in Collinsville, the artist's bronze facade and 800-pound doors depict raptors flying over the ancient metropolis' archaeological remains. Walk from the **Peoria Riverfront Museum** to the **Peoria Civic Center** to view *Knockin' on Freedom's Door*, which honors an important station on the Underground Railroad. Another commission, *Acts of Intolerance* (left), commemorates the centennial of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot. The piece, which is located on the **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum** grounds in Springfield, echoes the shape of two charred chimneys. Champaign's **African American Heritage Trail** features more than 30 markers, murals and sculptures, including *Byways to Equality* (this page). The angular exterior points to the sky in hopes of a better future for all. In Alton, the mood lightens. Jackson's statue of the musician in **Miles Davis Memorial Plaza** depicts the jazz trumpeter, mid-performance.



ABUNDANT ARCHITECTURE

Midcentury mod. Craftsman. Queen Anne. Greek Revival. If an architectural style was built between the Civil War and the early 20th century, you'll likely find an example of it in historic Quincy.

This Mississippi River town includes four National Register Historic Districts and more than 3,600 structures on the National Register of Historic Places. One intersection (16th and Maine) captures four world-class architectural styles, including Richardsonian Romanesque. The style, named for architect Henry Hobson Richardson, conveys a sense of grandeur through the use of rough-cut stone, rounded arches, contrasting colors and medieval-inspired embellishments. A prime example is the Newcomb-Stillwell Mansion, which now houses The Quincy Museum (*shown*).

Explore the magnificent 20,800-square-foot home's first floor before heading upstairs to discover dinosaurs, Mississippi wildlife and Native American exhibits. The museum and about a dozen other significant structures are part of the self-guided Maine Street Mile: Quincy's Most Notable Thoroughfare tour. Check out other neighborhoods on a bike; the first two hours are free though Bike Quincy.

STORY: KRISTIN HAGENSON | PHOTOGRAPH: JASON DONNELLY





WINTER WEEKEND ESCAPES



Don't let cabin fever set in. Instead, pack your bags for a three-day getaway, where you can watch eagles soar over open water, ski and snowboard the slopes, or take in a Broadway play or comedy show.

WRITER ANDREA MINARCEK JESSUP

Galena

PHOTOGRAPHS: (PHONE) DRONE MEDIA CHICAGO, (FOOD) COURTESY OF FRITZ AND FRITES



SNOW FUN

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, GALENA

The hills surrounding Galena, in the northwestern tip of the state, are home to two family-friendly resorts that shine in winter. Skiers and snowboarders will find plenty of downhill thrills at **Chestnut Mountain Resort**, and novices can build their skills in group, private and kid-centric “Powder Pups” lessons. The on-site **Summit Food and Spirits** has hearty après-ski fare, local craft beers and views of the Mississippi. Fifteen miles north, at **Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa**, there’s sledding, an outdoor ice-skating rink and snowshoe trails along the shores of Lake Galena, as well as Swedish massages and Hydrafacials at the recently remodeled **Stonedrift Spa**.

Downtown Galena’s well-preserved, 19th-century redbrick storefronts are filled with inviting specialty shops. Browse for women’s clothes; grab a cup of coffee and homemade gelato at **Elle and Becks Lifestyle**

Boutique; pick up Organic Lavender Hand and Body Wash or Patchouli Hand and Body Wash at **Galena Apothecary**; and check out gifts and home decor at **Isabella’s Ltd.** and kitchenware at **The Grateful Gourmet**.

When happy hour hits, head to the three-story **Galena Cellars** to taste Cabernet Franc, honey mead and sparkling wines made at the family-run vineyard outside of town. European dishes star on the menus of two of the town’s most popular restaurants: **Fritz and Frites** features German schnitzel and French roast chicken, and **Fried Green Tomatoes** is known for its lasagna and seafood pasta, served in the 1826 redbrick Dowling House, the oldest house in Galena.



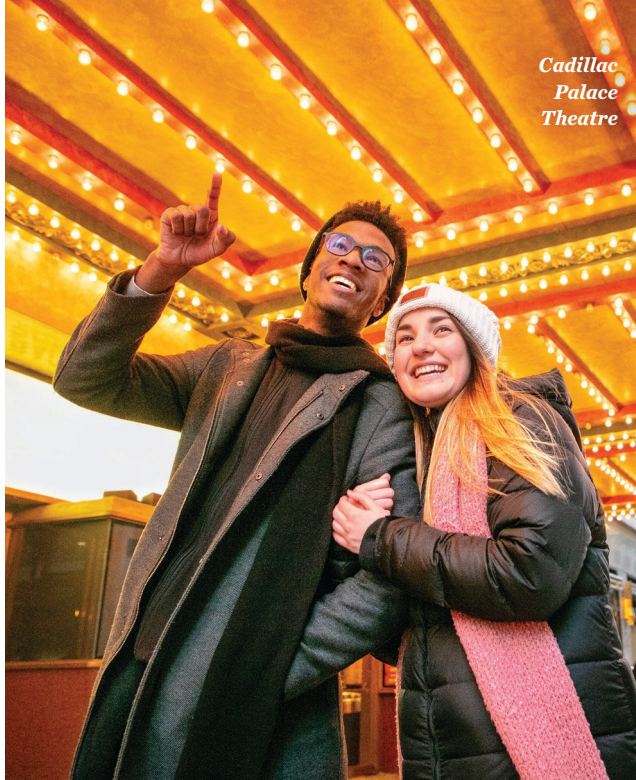
ILLINOIS INSIDER

Chestnut Mountain’s stats are as impressive as its 475-foot vertical drop: The resort has 19 ski and snowboard trails accessible by nine lifts, along with more than 25 rails and features at the 7-acre Farside Terrain Park.





Lyric
Opera
House



Cadillac
Palace
Theatre

ON STAGE

LIVE THEATER, CHICAGO

Chicago is known for its vibrant theater and live-performance scene, and the upcoming season is no exception. *A Beautiful Noise*, about singer Neil Diamond, is playing at the **Cadillac Palace Theatre** (November 1–30), plus *Phantom of the Opera* (December 11–February 1) and *The Outsiders* (February 10–22). The Joffrey Ballet company presents holiday favorite *The Nutcracker* at **Lyric Opera House** (December 5–28). Comedy-lovers can catch a show nearly every night, whether they're in the mood for improv at **The Second City** or fine-tuned stand-up acts at **Zanies Comedy Club Chicago**.

There are opportunities to stand on center stage yourself as well. You can go behind the scenes on tours of **The Chicago Theatre**, where the six-story-high marquee has beckoned visitors since 1921, and **The Auditorium**, an 1889 National Historic Landmark that's hosted U.S. presidents Teddy Roosevelt and Bill Clinton, and stars like Jimi Hendrix and Aretha Franklin.

Centrally located between these two historic auditoriums—and just two blocks from the **Art Institute of Chicago** and Millennium Park—the **Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel** makes a good base camp for seeing shows. The Palmer House is the country's longest continuously operating hotel. Nearby **Petterino's** is an Italian-American mainstay, while **The Grillroom Chophouse and Winebar** specializes in steak.



Mark your calendar for the free Alton Eagle Ice Festival (mid-January), an annual two-day celebration with live music, an eagle meet and greet, food trucks and an ice-carving competition.

ILLINOIS INSIDER You can score discounted tickets to Broadway musicals, comedy shows and more through Hot Tix, a service that supports the nonprofit League of Chicago Theatres. This is a great option for last-minute Chicago trips, as tickets often become available for week-of shows.

EYES ON EAGLES

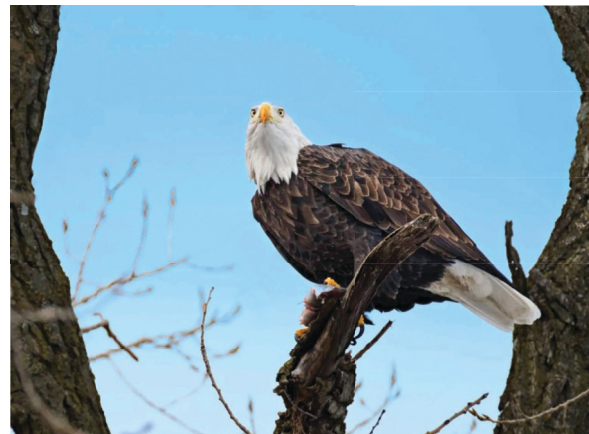
BIRD-WATCHING, ALTON AND GRAFTON

Every winter, just north of St. Louis, a set of Illinois River towns welcomes a skyful of celebrity guests. Hundreds of American bald eagles, as well as trumpeter swans, snowy owls, ducks and geese, migrate here from December through early March.

Pere Marquette Lodge offers a special eagle package that includes meals (the on-site restaurant is beloved for its fried chicken), overnight accommodation and access to

12 miles of wooded trails where eagles often nest nearby. Another good bet for spying the birds of prey is walking across the mile-long, pedestrians-only **Chain of Rocks Bridge** from Granite City over the Mississippi. If you'd rather bird-watch by car, cruise the riverside **Great River Road**, where eagles' 8-foot wingspans are often visible overhead. For a closer look, visit the free **TreeHouse Wildlife Center**, home to five rescued bald eagles, along with foxes, bobcats and snakes.

If all of this puts you in the mood to fly through the air yourself, head to **Aerie's Resort** in Grafton, where you can zoom down hairpin turns on the 4,000-foot-long Alpine Coaster. **The Terrace at Aerie's Resort** has river-bluff views for a great lodging and dining experience. In Alton, **Old Bakery Beer Company** pours a North American lager they dub Eagle Beer.





ILLINOIS INSIDER

Sample the distinctive reds, whites and rosés at bucolic wineries during weekends along the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail around Cobden. You can arrange a safe ride with Shawnee Shuttle or Wrightway Transportation before you go.



SPLISH SPLASH

WATER PARK AND SHOPPING, GURNEE

In the winter, any place in the Midwest that's kept at a balmy 84 degrees is going to be appealing. Add in waterslides, a lazy river and a kid-friendly wave pool, and **Great Wolf Lodge** in Gurnee is a clear family favorite. The suites are spacious and on-site, so you can maximize time exploring the water park.

Nearby, **Gurnee Mills** is the biggest outlet mall in the state, with some 200 stores, including Bass Pro Shops, Nike and Lego. And it's far from just a shopping hub. You'll also find an indoor ice-skating rink, an escape room and the Rainforest Cafe, a kid-centric restaurant with animatronic jungle creatures and a talking tree named Tracy who greets guests. **Launch Family Entertainment**, an indoor trampoline park, is just down the road.

A local hot spot, **Primo Italian American Cuisine**, charbroils steaks in an 1,800-degree oven; the steaks are seasoned with homemade lavender garlic sea salt. The extensive menu also features Italian classics and seafood—save room for the flourless chocolate cake. Steak and seafood are the focus at **Stevens**, a local family-owned option with live music on weekends.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (OT, GURNEE MILLS) VISIT LAKE COUNTY, (GIANT CITY) SOUTHERNMOST ILLINOIS TOURISM BUREAU

RUSTIC RAMBLE

NATURE, MAKANDA

The **River to River Trail** spans 160 miles across Southern Illinois, from the Ohio to the Mississippi rivers, through the Shawnee National Forest. You can trek one of its most scenic stretches outside the town of Makanda, where a wooded 3-mile portion of the trail connects two tranquil lodges—both ideal for a weekend retreat.

The **Makanda Inn** sits on 18 acres of peaceful forest, with a creek running nearby. Known as an eco-retreat, the property was made using sustainable materials and methods. The spacious lodge has a 32-foot-high stone fireplace, knotty-pine ceiling and five guest suites. Three standalone cottages

have living roofs with grass and plants, plus plenty of creature comforts: king-size beds, 600-thread-count sheets and soaking tubs. Breakfast is included, and children under 13 aren't permitted at the inn.

At the other end of the hike, you'll find the **Giant City Nature Trail** and the **Giant City Lodge**, built from sandstone and white-oak timber in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The lodge has 34 cabins available to rent seasonally, from the first Friday of February through mid-December, along with on-site restaurant **Bald Knob Dining Room**, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. The hearty meals seem

designed with long-haul hikers in mind—the fried-chicken dinner, hickory-smoked barbecue chicken feast, Friday fish fry and family-style breakfast are all-you-can-eat.

The old-fashioned and friendly vibe extends to Makanda, where the 1890-era **Makanda Boardwalk** is lined with art galleries and a country store. You'll find more food-and-drink options in nearby Carbondale. **Buckwater Brew Works and Whiskey House** has live music and more than 300 whiskeys and scotches to sample, while **Branch Cafe and Bakery** specializes in house-made scones, cakes and muffins, and some vegetarian and vegan options.



Great Wolf Lodge in Gurnee rings in the holidays during its annual Snowland celebration, with Santa visits, family dance parties and winter games (November 25–January 6). In early January, bundle up and head to Viking Park for sleigh rides, crafts and a hot cocoa bar at the free Frosty Fest.

TRIP IDEAS AROUND



*Scan the
code for more
places to
go and
things to do.*



Shawnee National Forest

STORY: GARY THOMPSON, PHOTOGRAPHS: JOT



CHICAGO & BEYOND
GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY
LAND OF LINCOLN
TRAILS TO ADVENTURE



Celebration Belle, Moline



THE STATE



Oak Park



The Carleton of Oak Park



POPULATION
52,947

OF NOTE

Oak Park was long a dry town, banning the sale of alcohol from 1872 until 1973.

Great Chicago Fire of 1871 played an important role in the village's growth and history, as it pushed people into the suburbs. For a young architect named Frank Lloyd Wright, he felt it offered a balance between urban life and nature. Wright built a home in Oak Park, and also designed more than two dozen structures around town, including the pioneering **Laura Gale House**, which foreshadowed his iconic Fallingwater in Pennsylvania. In 1898, Wright built his studio in Oak Park. One year later and half a mile away, Ernest Hemingway was born.

Oak Park borders Chicago on the west, 9 miles from downtown. The

Today, the Oak Park area beckons Chicago visitors for a side trip that's easy to make by car, L train (Green Line) or Metra train. In addition to visiting Wright-designed buildings, architecture aficionados and history buffs can explore Riverside, a planned community designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, and take a **There Goes the Neighbor Hood** bus tour of gangsters' homes in Oak Park and River Forest. Families gravitate to **Brookfield Zoo Chicago** in nearby Brookfield for animal adventures, and nature-lovers take their pick of parks and trails. In the **Oak Park Arts District**, art appreciators find galleries and boutiques with a creative bent.



CHICAGO & BEYOND

Oak Park Area

With its world-famous architecture and storied past, Oak Park—Chicago's longtime next-door neighbor—has the “Wright” stuff for a getaway focused on connecting with history and nature.

DO

The new James and Elizabeth Bramsen Tropical Forests habitat at **Brookfield Zoo Chicago** mimics the natural homes of gorillas, orangutans and monkeys.

What kind of home does a renowned architect design for his family? See for yourself at the **Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio**. Wright's **Unity Temple**, a concrete church, is nearby.

At the **Ernest Hemingway Birthplace Museum**, tour the Queen Anne Victorian home where “Papa” was born to his mama, Grace.

EAT

In a renovated 1919 bank with a rooftop terrace, **One Lake Brewing** crafts beers (like imperial stout *Been Czar, Done That*) and elevated pub bites.

Invoking Oak Park's original name (Joseph and Betty Kettlestrings settled the area), **Kettlestrings Grove** evokes a speakeasy spirit with its cocktails, charcuterie and small plates.

STAY

For a boutique hotel experience close to historical attractions, book **The Carleton of Oak Park**. They also offer an economical Motor Inn adjacent to the hotel.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

Exotic plants and native flora vie for eyes at Oak Park Conservatory, an urban oasis. Tour the Mediterranean Room, Tropical Room and Desert Room, plus outdoor gardens.



ILLINOIS INSIDER

Bask in the Tropical Sun Garden at the Quad City Botanical Center. An atrium with a 70-foot-tall skylight nurtures fruit-bearing plants like cacao, banana and coffee.

DO

Plow through a hands-on history of farming at the **John Deere Pavilion** in Moline. Sit in the cab of machines big and small and drive heavy equipment simulators. Cruise the Mississippi River aboard the **Celebration Belle**, a paddle-wheeler that departs from Moline (through October).

EAT

Indulge in a hot fudge sundae at **Lagomarcino's** ice cream parlor in Moline—it's been downtown since 1908. They make chocolates in-house and serve deli sandwiches too. Coffee-infused Uncommon Stout is a fave at **Bent River Brewing Company** in Moline and Rock Island. Pair their craft beer with a Get Bent burger, BBQ wings or fried pickle chips.

STAY

Timeless character and modern comforts merge in **The Axis Hotel**, which offers boutique rooms in Moline's ornate 1927 Fifth Avenue Building. Experience open-concept, eco-friendly design at **Element Moline**, set in a 1917 warehouse. Rooms feature kitchens, high-end beds and spa baths. Get your game—and glam—on at **Bally's Quad Cities Casino and Hotel** in Rock Island. Swank suites suit high rollers.



GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY

Quad Cities Region

A river runs through the Quad Cities, a storied region straddling two states. The Illinois side holds military and ag history, plus outdoor rec and tempting flavors.



John Deere Pavilion

Anchored by an east-west bend in the Mississippi River, the Quad Cities region includes the Illinois towns of Rock Island, Moline and East Moline. With Interstate-74, I-80 and I-88 converging in the area, it's easy to reach by car. Rock Island is the namesake of the river's largest isle, now called Arsenal Island, as well as the famed Rock Island Line railroad. Arsenal Island is home to the **Rock Island Arsenal**, a large and active U.S. Army installation that provides equipment and services to all the armed forces. The island also encompasses several historic buildings, military cemeteries and a museum. The Arsenal's golf course,

dating to 1897, recently reopened after a six-year hiatus. You'll need a visitor pass (available on-site) to play. At the island's **Mississippi River Visitor Center**, watch barges navigate Lock and Dam 15.

Moline is headquarters for farm equipment giant John Deere. Take a new self-guided tour, the **John Deere Trail**, to explore the company's local heritage. With help from your phone, you can stop and interact with more than a dozen sites connected to Deere and Company. Also worth following is the 62-mile **Great River Trail**. Hop on it from Rock Island's **Schwiebert Riverfront Park**, where spectacular views await.




POPULATION


98,903 (Rock Island, Moline and East Moline)

OF NOTE

The name and likeness of Black Hawk, a Sauk leader, are ingrained in local culture, including Rock Island's Black Hawk State Historic Site, dedicated to his memory.


POPULATION
4,500 (Arthur)

OF NOTE
Due to their religious beliefs, most Amish prefer you don't take photos showing their faces.

 **ILLINOIS INSIDER**
Family fun and free food samples are part of the Arthur Amish Country Cheese Festival, held every Labor Day weekend. Watch (or enter) the National Cheese Eating Championships.



LAND OF LINCOLN

Amish Country

In Illinois Amish Country, members of the ultratraditional faith community coexist peacefully with modern society, the two worlds sharing an appreciation for handcrafted furniture and small entrepreneurial businesses.

Time travel isn't science fiction in Illinois Amish Country. Amish folks live, farm and work in the countryside surrounding the village of Arthur. Visiting here takes you back to an era when farmers worked the land with teams of horses, artisans crafted beautiful things with their hands, and horse-drawn buggies carried people from place to place. The Amish community surrounding Arthur is the oldest and largest in Illinois. Started in 1865 by a few families, it has grown to include more than 4,500 people. The nearby towns of Arcola, Sullivan and Tuscola serve as gateways to the Amish area.

Farming is still the main way of life for the Amish, but they've also developed cottage industries like baking and furniture making. In Arthur, you can buy handcrafted Amish furniture at **The Wood Loft**, and in Arcola, shop **Yoder's Homestead Shop** and **Kauffman Amish Furniture Outlet**. Along with Amish farms and businesses on the outskirts, you'll find shops and restaurants in downtown Arthur. Just be careful: As you drive in Amish Country, watch out for black buggies, farm equipment and bicycles. Slow down and enjoy your journey back in time.



DO

Pick and grin at **The Great Pumpkin Patch**, south of Arthur, where 300 global varieties of pumpkins, squash and gourds grow on a family farm. Navigate mazes and eat pumpkin ice cream. See the oldest Amish dwelling in Illinois, the 1865 Moses Yoder House, and other historic structures at the **Illinois Amish Heritage Center** east of Arthur. A new museum is in the works.

EAT

Hand-dipped chocolates and homemade ice cream satisfy sweet tooths at **Flesor's Candy Kitchen** in Tuscola, founded in 1901 and reopened in 2004. Anna Herschberger, owner of **Yoder's Kitchen** in Arthur, was raised in an Amish home and learned to cook from her mother. Enjoy a hearty buffet.

STAY

Green Mill Village Hotel and Suites in Arcola, part of the BW Signature Collection, offers free breakfast, a heated indoor pool and a 24-hour exercise facility. Right off I-57, the **Holiday Inn Express** in Tuscola provides the same modern comforts, plus it's pet-friendly.

Great Pumpkin Patch





CHICAGO & BEYOND
GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY
LAND OF LINCOLN
TRAILS TO ADVENTURE



Alto Clay Works

DO

Shop for handmade pottery at **Alto Clay Works**, Steve Grimmer's Alto Pass studio and showroom. He fires his pieces in a wood-burning kiln. For a taste of the 1800s, visit **Saline Creek Pioneer Village Museum** in Harrisburg, where historic structures include cabins, a Quaker church, a post office and a jail.

EAT

Brick House Grill in Anna promises affordable upscale dining. Build a meal around fried catfish fillets with lemon-caper aioli or hand-cut grilled pork chops with goat cheese butter. Dutch babies are a fave at **The Iron Whisk**, a breakfast and lunch spot in Cobden. The puffed pancakes, cooked in an iron skillet, are a cross between omelettes and crepes.

STAY

Suites at **Davie School Inn** in Anna feature king beds, whirlpool tubs, kitchenettes and chalkboards from the building's former life. **The Skoolie**, a rental near Vienna, packs a living room, dining area, full bed and bath (with shower) into a school bus parked near Shawnee National Forest.



Shawnee National Forest



TRAILS TO ADVENTURE Southern Illinois

Go back to school in Southern Illinois—you'll learn a lot, but no grades or homework, and you can spend recess exploring a giant natural playground.

Getting schooled is actually fun in Southern Illinois, where recreation and education meet at several of the region's top attractions. The longtime Alto Pass Grade School, built in 1928, now houses pottery studio **Alto Clay Works**.

A field trip to **Saline Creek Pioneer Village Museum** in Harrisburg is an engaging introductory course on local history. The site includes a one-room schoolhouse. **Davie School Inn** in Anna offers luxury stays in a 1910 building that served elementary students for nearly 90 years. And the **Skoolie** near Vienna is a Blue Bird school bus converted into an A-plus Airbnb.

The region has working schools, too, most notably **Southern Illinois University** in Carbondale. Its cultural curriculum for visitors includes art at the **Sharp Museum**, drama in **McLeod Theater**, concerts at **Shryock Auditorium**, botany at **Marberry Arboretum**, and phys ed (DI college sports) in **SIU Arena**. At recess time, play in nearby **Shawnee National Forest**, with bluffs, waterfalls and lakes beloved by hikers, anglers and wildlife watchers. A highlight is Garden of the Gods, a stretch of rock formations nature started sculpting more than 320 million years ago.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

Drink a Chambourcin, Chocolate Milk Stout or Vienna Lager at Von Jakob Winery and Brewery in Alto Pass, along the Shawnee Wine Trail. Enjoy lunch and dinner (weekends) too.



POPULATION
36,317

OF NOTE
Actor-comedian Jim Belushi is among the more famous graduates of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

EXPLORE

Check out these inspiring places across Illinois.



HEMPSTOCK PHARMS *Working Hemp Farm and Craft Cannabinoid Formulation Center*

Hempstock Pharms is Illinois' first and only year-round, tourable, working hemp farm and craft cannabinoid formulation center. Visit Hempstock's on-farm retail store and education center or the new Hempstock Healing Center. Open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

HempstockPharms.com

[HempstockPharms](#)



TAKE A GREAT RIVER ROAD TRIP

Amazing outdoor recreation opportunities, charming main streets and engaging museums are just a few of the things you'll find along the Great River Road in Illinois, an All-American Road.

GreatRiverRoad-Illinois.com

[ILGreatRiverRoad](#)



CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE IN STEPHENSON COUNTY

Diverse entertainment, cultural spaces, interesting attractions and fantastic food. Choose your adventure in Stephenson County, where miles of trails, historical locales, beautiful parks, unique shopping and fantastic dining await!

GreaterFreeport.com/Visit

[GreaterFreeportPartnership](#)

[@greaterfreeportnow](#)



PLAY IN PONTIAC

Don't just drive Route 66, experience it in Pontiac! Plunge into the history of the Mother Road and more. Snap iconic photos with our murals. Live the good life in the slow lane.

VisitPontiac.org

[VisitPontiacIL](#)



EXPLORE ART AND HISTORY *Elgin Area's Architecture*

Spend a weekend in the Elgin Area, experiencing architecture and art showcased in historic downtowns. Discover an ornate temple and the only farmhouse that Frank Lloyd Wright designed and built.

ExploreElginArea.com/ArchitectureAdventure

[ExploreElgin](#)

[@exploreelginarea1714](#)



IMMERSE YOURSELF IN HISTORY *Naper Settlement, a 13-Acre Outdoor History Museum in Naperville*

Step back in time to visit the blacksmith at the forge, watch living-history demonstrations, explore immersive exhibits, enjoy guided walking tours and more at Naper Settlement, an award-winning outdoor history museum.

NaperSettlement.org

[NaperSettlement](#)

[@napersettlement](#)

[naper-settlement](#)



LAKE SHELBYVILLE

Hike, bike, boat, swim, canoe, kayak, wine, dine, stay, play and so much more.

Explore, relax and rejuvenate while you enjoy the possibilities!

LakeShelbyville.com

[LakeShelbyville](https://www.facebook.com/LakeShelbyville)

[@lakeshelbyville](https://www.instagram.com/@lakeshelbyville)



SIMPLY ARTHUR

We are the heart of the Illinois Amish Country. Experience the rich history and proud tradition of the Arthur area. Discover Amish furniture and shops, wildlife adventures, and other hidden gems!

ArthurIllinois.us

[VisitArthurIllinois](https://www.facebook.com/VisitArthurIllinois)



THE JOHN DEERE PAVILION

Visit the John Deere Pavilion in Moline for equipment you can experience up close, interactive displays and larger-than-life exhibits. Admission is always free!

VisitJohnDeere.com

[JohnDeereUSCA](https://www.facebook.com/JohnDeereUSCA)

[JohnDeere](https://twitter.com/JohnDeere)

[@JohnDeere](https://www.youtube.com/JohnDeere)

[John-Deere](https://www.linkedin.com/company/John-Deere)



CELEBRATION RIVER CRUISES

Experience the Mississippi River in style aboard Moline's family-owned *Celebration Belle*, offering lunch, dinner, sightseeing, themed events, and all-day excursions between the Quad Cities and Dubuque, Iowa. Groups welcome. Charters available.

CelebrationBelle.com

[CelebrationBelle](https://www.facebook.com/CelebrationBelle)



SET YOUR SIGHTS ON ST. CHARLES

Your dream getaway filled with award-winning culinary creations, first-class entertainment and breathtaking natural beauty is waiting for you to arrive in St. Charles.

stcalliance.org

[STCalliance](https://www.facebook.com/STCalliance)

[@travelstcharles](https://www.instagram.com/@travelstcharles)



VOLO MUSEUM

The world-famous Volo Museum is an all-day attraction for all ages. Exhibits include collector and famous cars from movies, a Titanic Museum, an animatronic dinosaur park, boats, planes, trains and more!

VoloFun.com

[VoloMuseum](https://www.youtube.com/VoloMuseum)



Travel Resources

Visitors Bureaus

CHICAGO & BEYOND

Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

630/256-3190,
enjoyaurora.com

Chicago's North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau

847/763-0011,
visitchicagonorthshore.com

Choose Chicago

312/567-8500,
choosechicago.com

DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau

877/335-2521, 815/756-1336,
dekalbcountycvb.com

Discover DuPage

800/232-0502, 630/575-8070,
discoverdupage.com

Explore Elgin Area

847/695-7540,
exploreeelginarea.com

GoRockford

800/521-0849, 815/963-8111,
gorockford.com

Heritage Corridor Destinations

844/944-2282, 800/926-2262,
hcdestinations.com

Meet Chicago Northwest

800/847-4849, 847/490-1010,
chicagonorthwest.com

Naturally McHenry County

815/893-6280,
naturallymchenrycounty.com

Rosemont Convention and Tourism Bureau

847/823-2100, rosemont.com

Visit Chicago Southland

888/895-8233, 708/895-8200,
visitchicagosouthland.com

Visit Kankakee County

815/935-7390,
visitkankakeecounty.com

Visit Lake County

847/662-2700,
visitlakecounty.org

Visit NW Illinois

815/946-2108,
visitnorthwestillinois.com

Visit Oak Park

visitoakpark.com

Tourist Information Centers

Prairie View South I-57,

rest area southbound, Monee

Turtle Creek I-90, rest area

southbound, South Beloit

GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY

Discover Downstate Illinois

618/257-1488, downstateil.org

Discover Peoria

800/747-0302, 309/676-0303,
peoria.org

Explore Henry County

309/937-3426,
explorehenrycounty.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, 618/465-6676,
riversandroutes.com

Macomb Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

309/833-1315,
visitforgottonia.com

See Quincy 800/978-4748,

217/214-3700, seequincy.com

Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau

618/833-9928,
southernmostillinois.com

Visit NW Illinois

815/946-2108,
visitnorthwestillinois.com

Visit Quad Cities

800/747-7800,
visitquadcities.com

Tourist Information Center

Homestead I-55, rest area
northbound, Hamel

LAND OF LINCOLN

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

Discover Downstate Illinois

618/257-1488, downstateil.org

Experience Champaign-Urbana

800/369-6151, 217/351-4133,
experiencecu.org

Jacksonville Area

Convention and Visitors Bureau

800/593-5678, 217/243-5678,
jacksonvilleil.org

Lake Shelbyville Area CVB

800/874-3529; 217/774-2244,
lakeshelbyville.com

Logan County

Tourism Bureau

217/732-8687,
destinationlogancountyil.com

Visit BN 800/433-8226,

309/665-0033, visitbn.org

Visit Effingham

800/772-0750, 217/342-5310,
visiteffinghamil.com

Visit Springfield

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

Tourist Information Centers

Cumberland Road I-70,

rest area westbound, Marshall

Salt Kettle I-74, rest area

westbound, Oakwood

TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

Discover Downstate Illinois

618/257-1488, downstateil.org

Mt. Vernon Tourism

618/242-3151,
enjoymtvernon.com

Rend Lake Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

618/435-4000, rendlake.com

Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau

618/833-9928,
southernmostillinois.com

Visit SI

800/433-7399, 618/997-3690,
visitsi.com

Tourist Information 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-ZPass system.

Drivers who miss tolls have 14 days to pay online. Note the license plate number, 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 53 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, Decatur, 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 metra.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 rtachicago.org

Amtrak runs trains to 31 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 0.08.



Fifteen casinos operate throughout the state; some of these are riverboat casinos.



The Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act legalizes the lawful use of cannabis for adults (21 years and older).



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

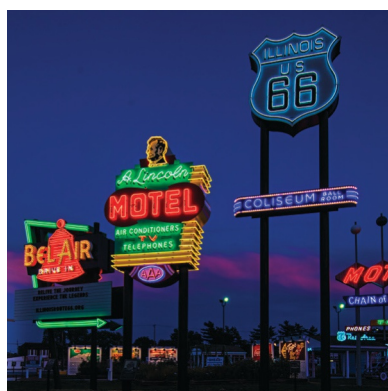
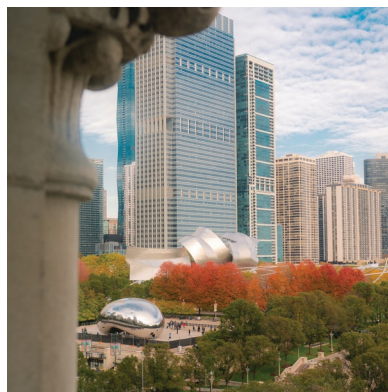
Big Lincoln, an AI travel assistant, is online and ready to help you make plans 24/7. Find him at enjoyillinois.com



#ENJOYILLINOIS

BIG-TIME ART

Follow @enjoyillinois on Instagram to see pics from around the state.
Tag #enjoyillinois for your chance to be featured.



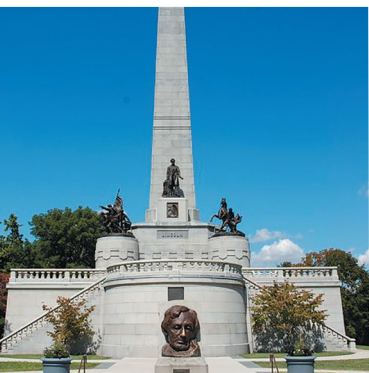
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT → Pink Elephant Antique Mall, Livingston @jerzy.co; Millennium Park, Chicago @dametraveler; Rock Guardians, Rockford @karakoudas_helen; Legends Neon Sign Park at the Illinois State Fair Route 66 Experience, Springfield @carol_highsmith_america; Superman Statue, Metropolis @supermanmuseum; Leaning Tower of Niles @brittwithintent; Railsplitter Covered Wagon, Lincoln @tourloco; Barbershop Pole, Casey @theknottybun.



OVERNIGHT IN THE HEART OF ILLINOIS ROUTE 66

Dozens of Route 66 sites, attractions, murals, wayfinding exhibits and culinary delights, all nestled around world-class Abraham Lincoln sites.

LEGENDARY SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS



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illinois

