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Garfield Park Conservatory  
Photo By Brian Kinyon Photography

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## WHAT'S ONE THING ON YOUR 2025 BUCKET LIST?



**ERICA BENNETT,**

 [@\\_very\\_eric\\_](https://www.instagram.com/_very_eric_)

"Now that my son is older (he's 10) and more willing to adventure, I want to get outdoors with him a bit more and try new things! We have never been skiing together, so I'd love to take him to Wilmot Ski Resort, just about 60 miles north of the city in Wisconsin."

*"Erica is a Chicago-based content creator and connection coach specializing in fashion, beauty and wellness."*

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OVER-THE-TOP

# Desserts

BY NIKKI ROBERTS

When your sweet tooth is calling and you want something extra special, look no further than these unique desserts in Chicagoland.



**Eiffel Waffle**  
Try their elevated bubble waffles



**Xurro**  
Churros'mores sandwich, anyone?



**BomboBar**  
Chicago

Indulge in BomboBar's S'mores Hotter Chocolate and other sweet treats like stuffed doughnut holes, housemade gelato, and Italian ice at Bar Siena's cozy walk-up dessert joint.



## **Cinnaholic**

### **Various locations in Chicagoland**

This vegan bakery elevates the classic cinnamon roll with creative flavors like Cookie Monster, Campfire S'mores, and Caramel Apple Pie, plus customizable toppings and a selection of Cinnacakes and other treats.

## **Cookie Dough Creations**

### **Naperville**

Skip the bowl and indulge in egg-free cookie dough at Cookie Dough Creations, with flavors like chocolate chip, s'mores, and snickerdoodle, plus options for ice cream pairings and cookie dough sandwiches.

## **Muah Cotton Candy**

### **Chicago**

This dessert shop offers customizable, adorably shaped cotton candy creations like dinosaurs, ducklings and frogs in your choice of flavors and colors.

## **Eiffel Waffle**

### **Various locations in Chicagoland**

Eiffel Waffle elevates bubble waffles with ice cream and fun toppings like Oreos and Fruity Pebbles, plus offers Waffle Towers, Eiffel Minis, milkshakes, and customizable creations.

## **JoJo's Shake BAR**

### **Chicago and Naperville**

JoJo's hip milkshake bar serves outrageous milkshakes topped with cookie crumbles, cotton candy, and marshmallows, with fun seasonal options to try as well.

## **Xurro**

### **Various locations in Chicago**

Xurro offers a variety of churro treats, including ice cream sandwiches, sundaes, milkshakes, and the must-try churro s'mores sandwich, across its city and suburban locations.



## **XO Marshmallow**

### **Chicago**

XO Marshmallow delights with edible cookie dough and seasonal treats like the Oh Dough You Didn't cups and Cosmallow Brownie Cups, featuring vanilla marshmallow, chocolate ganache, and rainbow chips.

# Family Foodie Adventures Your Taste Buds Will Love

BY NIKKI ROBERTS

The next time your tummies are rumbling, follow this Chicagoland foodie guide for an approachable and delicious crash course to some of the city's most iconic dishes.

## Chicago-style hot dog

Order the Depression Dog from Gene & Jude's, which is a true Chicago-style hot dog featuring an all-beef frank on a bun with classic toppings.

## Garrett Popcorn

Try the signature Garrett Mix, a perfect blend of cheddar and caramel popcorn delivering sweet and savory delight.

## Deep dish pizza

Order Lou Malnati's "world-famous" Chicago-style deep dish pizza and try The "Lou" topped with fresh spinach and Roma tomatoes.

## The Original Rainbow Cone

Try the South Side establishment's iconic sliced Rainbow Cone with vibrant layers of colorful, delicious ice cream.



## Italian beef sandwich

Order the dipped Italian beef sandwich from Portillo's for a savory, juicy bite loaded with flavorful goodness.

*Photo by Portillo's*



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**Full Session: June 23–August 1  
Session I: June 23–July 3  
Session II: July 7–July 18  
Session III: July 21–August 1**

**SummerLab.org**



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## KID-FRIENDLY

## THINGS TO DO AROUND CHICAGOLAND IN 2025

BY NIKKI ROBERTS

On your next day out in the city, use this list of 25 kid-friendly things to do in Chicagoland to check off iconic bucket list items or discover a new-to-you hidden gem.

**1 Step out on The Ledge**, a glass balcony on the 103rd floor of the iconic Willis Tower, to experience breathtaking views.

**2 Get your adrenaline pumping at 360 Chicago.** The John Hancock Center's observation deck offers the TILT, leaning guests 1,000 feet over the Magnificent Mile.

**3 Relive Ferris Bueller's Day Off** at the **Art Institute of Chicago**, where kids can admire stained glass and iconic masterpieces..



**1 Skydeck** Photo By Choose Chicago

**4 The Griffin Museum of Science and Industry** offers hands-on learning with 13 labs, a baby chicken hatchery and more engaging exhibits.



**5 Explore The Field Museum**, where your family can journey through ancient civilizations, marvel at dinosaurs, and meet Chicago's beloved Sue the T. rex!

**6 Get your game on!** Chicago is a sports lover's dream, offering major league action from the Cubs, Sox, Bulls, Blackhawks, Bears, and more.





11 Photo By Navy Pier



20 Photo By Superdawg Drive-In

**7 Maggie Daley Park** is a downtown haven for family fun with play structures, spray area, climbing wall, skating ribbon and Chicago-themed mini golf.

**8** Enjoy skyline views, public art, fun activities and yummy eateries along the **Chicago Riverwalk**.

**9 Explore the Lakefront Trail** and discover the parks, beach and neighborhoods that surround it.

**10** Go for a walk or ride bikes along **The 606** elevated trail.

**11** **See a Navy Pier fireworks show.** Enjoy free fireworks over Lake Michigan on summer nights, with perfect views all along the lakefront.

**12 The Chicago Air and Water Show**, the nation's largest free event of its kind, dazzles late-summer crowds along the lakefront with thrilling air-plane stunts over Lake Michigan.

**13 Garfield Park Conservatory** is a free conservatory with lush, tropical greenhouses, outdoor gardens and children's play gardens.

**14** Take the kids to McCormick Place for the **Chicago Auto Show**, the longest running auto exhibition in the country that happens annually in February.

**15 Attend the C2E2 comic convention** where fans can dress up, meet favorite actors and creators, and explore endless vendor treasures.

**16** Immerse yourself in vibrant, interactive installations at **Color Factory** in Willis Tower, then top off your visit with stunning views from the Skydeck for a day full of colorful fun.



**17 Go green** and celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Chicago with vibrant parades and the iconic river dyeing, turning the Chicago River bright green for a month of festive fun.

**18 The Museum of Ice Cream** is a sweet escape for families, offering unique ice cream flavors, fun games, a sprinkle pool, and endless selfie opportunities in a pink wonderland.



**19** Chicago's **summer street festivals** are a family-friendly celebration of art, culture and delicious eats.

**20** **Try a Chicago-style hot dog.** Iconic hot dog spots, like Portillo's and Superdawg, charm kids with playful decor and fun touches for picky eaters.





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# New Family Attractions Coming in 2025

BY KARI ZAFFARANO

It can be difficult to decide which upcoming attractions are worth the hype and which ones your family is better off skipping. Here are the ones we're most excited for!

## Harry Potter Store

Opening in Spring 2025

Chicago

This 12,000-square-foot Harry Potter store, the second in the U.S., features props, photo ops, interactive displays, Honeydukes and Butterbeer.

## Wrath of Rakshasa at Six Flags Great America

Opening in 2025

Gurnee

The Wrath of Rakshasa, a record-breaking dive coaster, features a 171-foot drop, 96-degree plunge, 67 mph speeds and inversions!



## Tropical Forests at the Brookfield Zoo

Opening in 2025

Brookfield

Zoogoers can explore gorilla habitats with lush trees, vines, water features and a state-of-the-art Gorilla Conservation Center for immersive learning indoors and outdoors.





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- Naperville South
- Oak Brook
- Schaumburg
- Warrenville
- Yorktown (Lombard)



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[thegardnerschool.com](http://thegardnerschool.com)



# Score Big on Chicago Sports Family Fun

BY NIKKI ROBERTS

**C**hicago sports fans know game day is about more than cheering on our favorite teams. Next time you visit, check these fun game day activities off your family's bucket list.

## Score autographs at a Chicago Cubs game

Show up early to Wrigley Field to watch batting practice, and you might be able to snag an autograph from your favorite Cubs player as they head back to the locker room after practice.

*Photo by Adam Alexander Photography*



## Catch a thrilling half-time show at a Chicago Bulls game

Chicago Bulls games offer nonstop excitement, including halftime shows featuring Benny the Bull's antics, the Luvabulls dance team, and the Elevators' acrobatic dunk performances.

*Photo by Chicago Bulls*





## Get loud for the national anthem at a Chicago Blackhawks game

Since 1985, Blackhawks' fans have gotten loud for the national anthem. Include your kids in this fun tradition and join in the exciting cheering crescendo at United Center.



## Chuck a puck for charity at a Chicago Wolves game

Chuck a puck onto the ice for a chance to win a prize, all while giving back. Proceeds from puck purchases benefit Chicago Wolves Charities.



## Put your baseball skills to the test at the Chicago White Sox's Kids Zone

Fans ages 13 and under can put their skills to the test at the 15,000-square-foot play zone complete with a mini baseball diamond, coaching clinics, batting and pitching cages and more.



## Attend a theme game at a minor league baseball park

Grab tickets to a fun themed game — some favorites from last season were Wrestling Thursdays with the Windy City Thunderbolts and the Chicago Dogs' Weiner Wednesdays.



## Pick up a commemorative button at your child's first Chicago Bears game

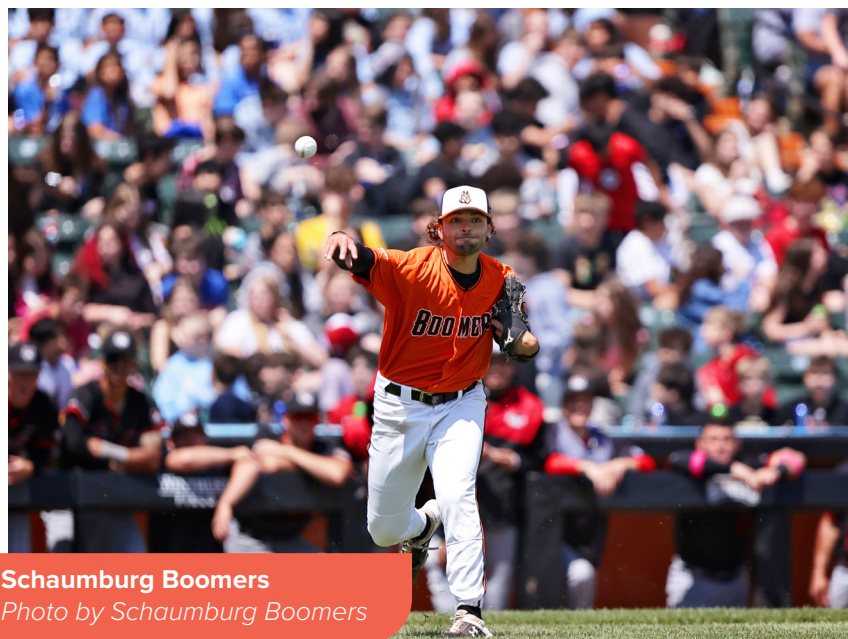
The youngest Bears fans attending their first game at Soldier Field, fans can show their orange and navy pride with a special first game certificate and custom button.



Chicago Dogs  
Photo by Matt Zuro



KidZone  
Photo by Brad Repplinger



Schaumburg Boomers  
Photo by Schaumburg Boomers



# EVENTS

## Chicagoland Family Events to Check Out in 2025

BY KARI ZAFFARANO

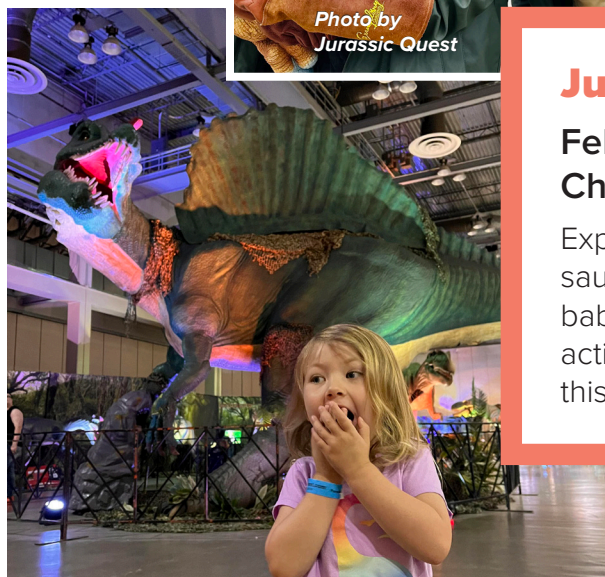
Whether you're looking for a new show to take your kids to or something fun but also educational, there are so many great, family-friendly events in 2025. Check out our list below for some that you will want to make sure you put down on your calendar when planning out your year.



### Jurassic Quest

Feb. 28-March 2, 2025  
Chicago

Explore animatronic dinosaurs, rides, live shows, baby dinos, interactive activities and photo ops at this event.



### Disney On Ice presents Let's Dance!

Jan. 30-Feb. 2, 2025  
Chicago

Sing Disney tunes with your family and enjoy skating, costumes, effects and stunts with characters from *Frozen 2*, *Moana* and more.

### Paw Patrol Live! A Mighty Adventure

April 5-6, 2025  
Chicago

This live stage show features the *Paw Patrol* pups saving Adventure City with songs and interactive fun for all ages.



### FAN EXPO Chicago

Aug. 15-17, 2025  
Rosemont

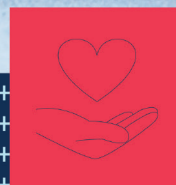
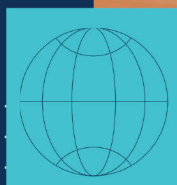
This expo is perfect for anyone who's into anime, comics, gaming, sci-fi, horror or cosplay. Meet celebrities, get autographs, play in the gaming booths, go shopping and more.



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Lake Geneva  
Photos by Visit Lake Geneva

# Family Road Trips for Every Season

BY NIKKI ROBERTS

Chicago is only a drive away from plenty of places that make for the perfect weekend, packed with kid-friendly activities and exciting experiences for the entire family.

## Winter Getaways

### Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

90 minutes from Chicago

Lake Geneva offers skiing, snowboarding, water parks and shows. Visit Winterfest (Jan. 29–Feb. 2, 2025) for snow sculptures and festive fun.





## New Glarus, Wisconsin

2.5 hours from Chicago

New Glarus, America's Little Switzerland, charms with outdoor fun, unique attractions, museums and the famous New Glarus Brewing Company, home of Spotted Cow beer.

## Spring Getaways

### Holland, Michigan

2.5 hours from Chicago

Holland showcases Dutch culture with Windmill Island Gardens and the Tulip Time Festival (May 2–11, 2025), featuring millions of tulips and festivities.

## Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

3 hours from Chicago

Enjoy Spring Break at the Water Park Capital with indoor parks, arcades, axe-throwing, spas and outdoor fun like horseback riding and hiking.



## Summer Getaways

### Saugatuck, Michigan

2.5 hours from Chicago

Saugatuck offers fun at Oval Beach, boat rentals, sand dune rides, plus live shows, dining and shopping indoors.

### Southern Illinois

4+ hours from Chicago

Southern Illinois promises summer adventures with the Garden of the Gods trail, state parks and Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch.



## Fall Getaways

### Galena

3 hours from Chicago

Galena offers vibrant fall foliage, cobblestone streets, unique shops, dining, river hikes, barnyard animals and skiing at Chestnut Mountain.



Shipshewana  
Photo by Kari Zaffarano

### Shipshewana, Indiana

2 hours from Chicago

Shipshewana offers Amish charm with buggy rides, shops, soft pretzels, farm tours, museums and live shows at the Blue Gate Theatre.

# 3 Wacky Sites Worth Seeing in Chicagoland

BY KARI ZAFFARANO

There are many famous (and wacky) landmarks across our country, but be sure to check out some of Chicagoland's weird and wonderful roadside attractions, too.

## 1 Superdawg Drive-In Chicago, Wheeling

This drive-in hot dog joint has been around for decades, so you might have spotted the restaurant's hot dog mascots, Maurie and Flaurie, on the rooftop before.

## 2 Wizard of Oz Statues Chicago

See Wizard of Oz statues and visit Dorothy's Playground, featuring ADA ramps, slides, a climbing wall, jungle gym and more.

## 3 World's Largest Wagon Chicago

Snap a photo with the massive Radio Flyer wagon outside the company's headquarters on Chicago's West Side.



1 Photos by Superdawg Drive-In



2 Photos by Chicago Park District



3 Photos by Radio Flyer Company



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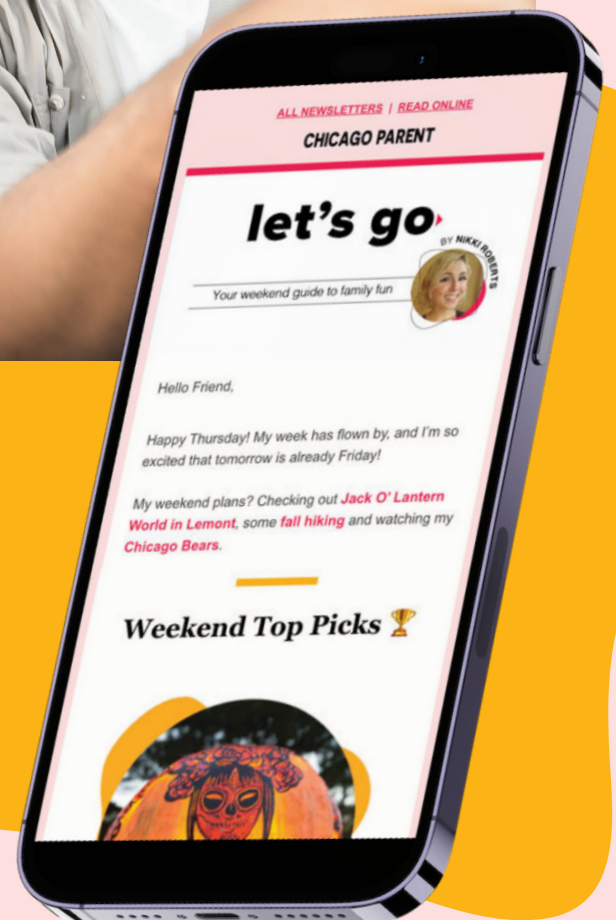




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