

# 2025 Chicago Tourism Guide

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE IHDA TEAM

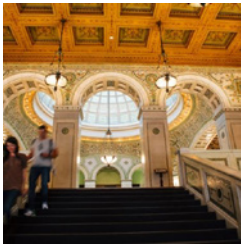
Did you know that Chicago is one of the top tourist destinations in the country? From miles of scenic shoreline to world-class museums, Chicago offers something for everyone. Whether you're visiting for the first time or returning for another adventure, we've explored the city and gathered our top recommendations for must-see sites and attractions.

Looking for outdoor fun? Take a stroll through Millennium Park or spend a relaxing day on the beach. Prefer to unwind? Enjoy a meal at a rooftop bar while soaking in the breathtaking city views. From free experiences to premium outings, there's no shortage of ways to enjoy the Windy City.

Want more ideas? Check out these websites for even more sites and attractions:

- [ChooseChicago.com](https://www.choosechicago.com)
- [Enjoyillinois.com](https://www.enjoyillinois.com)
- [Timeout.com/Chicago](https://www.timeout.com/chicago)

## FREE ACTIVITIES



### **CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER**

#### **78 E. Washington Street**

This historic landmark hosts hundreds of free programs year-round. The building features two stunning stained-glass domes, which can be viewed independently or on a complimentary guided tour. Its many halls regularly host free events, including weekly classical music concerts, blues, jazz, and more. Be sure to check the daily schedule for dance performances, film screenings, seminars, and theatrical events.



### **CHICAGO LAKEFRONT TRAIL**

#### **5800 N. Sheridan Road - 7100 S. South Shore Drive**

Run, walk, bike, or rollerblade along the Lakefront Trail, where Lake Michigan's blue waters border one side and lush parks line the other. The trail features green spaces, beaches, gardens, and recreation areas including playgrounds, soccer fields, volleyball courts, and tennis courts. You'll also find convenient amenities such as restrooms, water fountains, and concession stands.



### **CHICAGO RIVERWALK**

#### **E. Upper Wacker Drive**

Dine, relax, and explore along the award-winning Chicago Riverwalk—a scenic promenade stretching from Lake Street to Lake Michigan.



## FREE ACTIVITIES



### HAROLD WASHINGTON LIBRARY

**400 S. State Street**

One of the world's largest public libraries, this institution spans nearly a million square feet and houses more than 13 million published works. Marvel at its architectural features, including rooftop owl sculptures, the Roman goddess Ceres on the facade, and the sunlit 9th-floor Winter Garden. Explore a notable art collection featuring over 50 local and international artists.



### LINCOLN PARK CONSERVATORY

**2391 N. Stockton Drive**

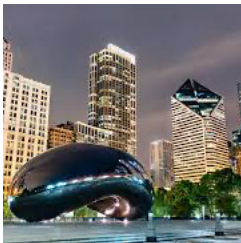
Located in the heart of Lincoln Park, this conservatory showcases breathtaking floral displays and rare plant species. A visit here feels like a stroll through a tropical paradise, regardless of the season.



### LINCOLN PARK ZOO

**2001 N. Clark Street**

One of the few remaining free zoos in the U.S., Lincoln Park Zoo spans more than 35 acres and is home to over 230 animal species. Don't miss the Farm-in-the-Zoo and the scenic Nature Boardwalk for a closer look at the natural world.



### MILLENNIUM PARK

**201 E. Randolph Street**

This iconic park features world-famous public art including Cloud Gate, a.k.a. "The Bean," and Crown Fountain. The Jay Pritzker Pavilion, designed by Frank Gehry, hosts free concerts and movie nights all summer. The lush Lurie Garden offers beauty in every season. Check the Millennium Park schedule for upcoming events and tours.



### NAVY PIER

**600 E. Grand Avenue**

One of Chicago's most famous landmarks, Navy Pier offers stunning lakefront views. In summer, enjoy free fireworks every Wednesday and Saturday night, as well as free outdoor concerts at the Miller Lite Beer Garden.



### THE 606

**1610 W. Bloomingdale Avenue**

One of Chicago's newest green spaces sits above four different neighborhoods of the city on what used to be a railroad line. As train traffic slowed on the near northwest side in the 1990s, people began to rethink how this land could be used for the people of the neighborhoods it served. The result is The 606, an elevated linear trail and park system that runs along the Bloomingdale Trail for 2.7 miles.



**ADLER PLANETARIUM**

**1300 S. Lake Shore Drive**

America's first planetarium, the Adler invites visitors to explore the universe through engaging exhibits and sky shows. Located on the scenic Museum Campus, it's a must for space lovers.



**ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO**

**111 S. Michigan Avenue**

Home to the largest collection of Impressionist art outside Paris, the Art Institute features works by Monet, Van Gogh, Renoir, and Seurat. Explore modern masterpieces by Chagall, Dalí, Matisse, and Pollock in the Renzo Piano-designed Modern Wing. Don't miss the Ryan Learning Center, offering free family art activities.



**BIG BUS TOURS CHICAGO**

**98 E. Upper Wacker Drive**

See the city from a double-decker bus! These hop-on, hop-off tours provide panoramic views and live commentary on Chicago's iconic landmarks. With stops near major attractions like the Shedd Aquarium and Field Museum, it's a flexible and fun way to explore the city.



**BUDDY GUY'S LEGENDS**

**700 S. Wabash Avenue**

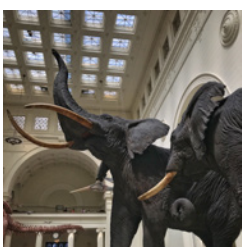
Known for its intimate atmosphere, authentic Southern cuisine, and world-class live music, Buddy Guy's regularly hosts both established and up-and-coming blues artists. It's a must-visit spot for anyone seeking a true taste of Chicago's deep blues heritage.



**CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BOAT TOUR**

**400 N. Michigan Avenue**

Named the #1 boat tour in North America by USA Today's Readers' Choice Awards, this 90-minute river cruise showcases over 50 notable buildings with stories told by certified guides. Learn how Chicago evolved from frontier town to global city through its architecture.



**FIELD MUSEUM**

**1400 S. Lake Shore Drive**

One of the world's premier natural history museums, the Field Museum offers a vast collection of artifacts and exhibits – from ancient mummies to towering dinosaurs.



## PAID ENTRY



### **JOHN HANCOCK CENTER & 360 CHICAGO**

**875 N. Michigan Avenue**

Located on the 94th floor, 360 CHICAGO offers some of the best panoramic views in the country. The John Hancock Center is a Chicago architectural icon, recognizable for its X-bracing structure. Travel + Leisure named this one of America's best views.



### **MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY**

**5700 S. Lake Shore Drive**

With more than 400,000 square feet of hands-on exhibits, this massive museum inspires curiosity in science, engineering, and technology for visitors of all ages.



### **NATIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING MUSEUM**

**919 S. Ada Street**

Opened in early 2025 at the historic Jane Addams Homes in Chicago's Near West Side, the museum preserves the collective voices, memories, and the histories of public housing nationwide.



### **SECOND CITY**

**1616 N. Wells Street**

The world's premier comedy club and improv theater has launched the careers of many famous comedians. Enjoy nightly live performances or sketch shows.



### **SHEDD AQUARIUM**

**1200 S. Lake Shore Drive**

Shedd Aquarium blends historic charm with modern innovation. Explore marine life from across the globe in immersive habitats, all inside a stunning early-20th-century building.



### **SKYDECK AT SEARS TOWER**

**233 S. Wacker Drive**

Dare to step out on The Ledge—glass boxes that extend 4.3 feet from the 103rd floor—offering a thrilling view 1,353 feet straight down. The Skydeck offers 360-degree views spanning up to 50 miles and four states. The elevator ride features one of the fastest ascents in the world, paired with interactive exhibits and a full Chicago experience.