

SPRING + SUMMER 2025

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GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY
LAND OF LINCOLN
TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

GET AROUND

Plan your trip to one or more of Illinois' four geographic regions.



ARRIVING TO THE STATE

BY PLANE

Domestic travelers can fly direct to destinations including Belleville, Bloomington-Normal, Champaign-Urbana, 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. transitchicago.com

Regular shuttles to many Chicago downtown hotels leave from each airport. You can also get a taxi or rideshare.

flychicago.com

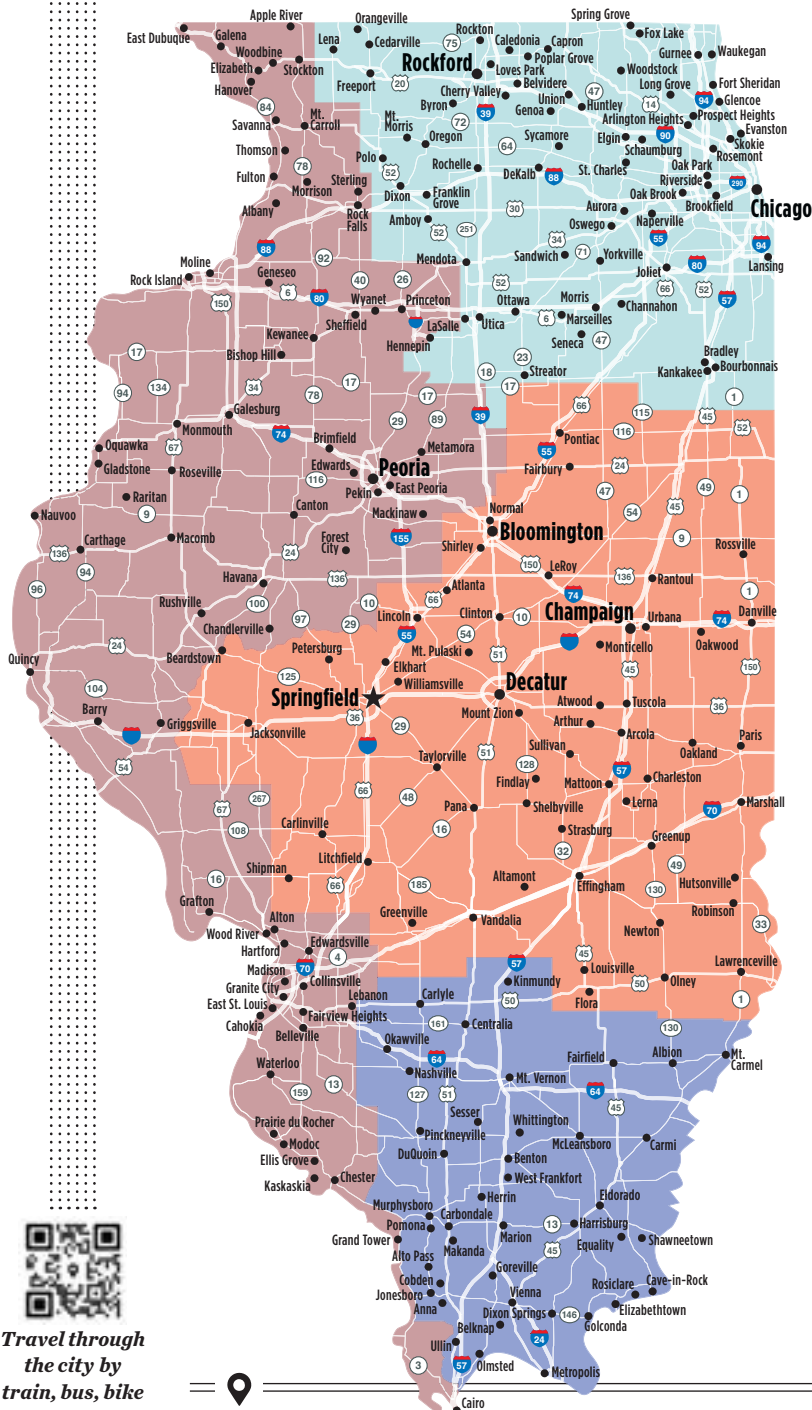
From O'Hare International Airport, the Blue Line elevated train (known as the L) takes passengers to downtown Chicago in about 45 minutes.

From Chicago Midway International Airport, the CTA Orange Line L train takes about 25 minutes to get to downtown Chicago.

AMTRAK / GREYHOUND
Amtrak runs trains to 29 cities in Illinois, and Greyhound Lines serves most major Illinois cities. amtrak.com greyhound.com

Visitor Information Centers

- **TURTLE CREEK**
I-90, rest area southbound, South Beloit
- **PRAIRIE VIEW SOUTH**
I-57, rest area southbound, Monee
- **HOMESTEAD**
I-55, rest area northbound, Hamel
- **CUMBERLAND ROAD**
I-70, rest area westbound, Marshall
- **SALT KETTLE**
I-74, rest area westbound, Oakwood
- **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



Travel through the city by train, bus, bike or foot with these visitor resources.

CHICAGO TRANSIT Metra (metra.com) runs commuter rail services from downtown Chicago to outlying suburbs and surrounding cities. The Regional Transportation Authority (rtachicago.org) serves Chicago and its many suburbs.



MEET THE MAKERS

More than 275 businesses are part of the Illinois Made program, which includes local attractions that amplify visitor experiences along with innovative products that are made by hand and in Illinois.



By the Numbers

*Did you know?
Illinois has ...*

3

UNESCO WORLD
HERITAGE SITES

7

STATE FORESTS

1

NATIONAL FOREST

102

COUNTIES

64

STATE PARKS

Illinois' 7 National Scenic Byways

*No matter which one(s)
you follow, you'll love
the journey as much
as the destination.*

• GREAT RIVER ROAD

The 550-mile byway, from Galena to Cairo, was recently designated an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration, putting it among the country's best National Scenic Byways.

• LINCOLN HIGHWAY

An early transcontinental route that's now a portion of US-30, it stretches 179 miles across northern Illinois from Chicago Heights to the Mississippi River near Fulton.

• HISTORIC ROUTE 66

Get your kicks on Illinois' 301-mile leg of the legendary all-American roadway. It starts in downtown Chicago and ends in East St. Louis.

• ILLINOIS RIVER ROAD

Wind along the wide Illinois River for 150 miles between Ottawa and Havana, hitting 10 counties and more than 100 natural and historic sites.

• MEETING OF THE GREAT RIVERS

This is where the Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois rivers converge. The 33-mile route runs between Hartford and Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton.

• HISTORIC NATIONAL ROAD

The first federally funded road in the U.S. opened Illinois to settlement. Today it covers 164 miles between Marshall and East St. Louis, mirrored by US-40 and Interstate-70.

• OHIO RIVER SCENIC BYWAY

The byway runs parallel to the Ohio River through Southern Illinois for 188 miles, ending at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in Cairo.



*Start planning
now for an epic
celebration—
the Mother
Road turns 100
in 2026.*



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PLUS

TRIP IDEAS
Regional cities and towns to explore
page 70

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BONUS!

Start planning now. Route 66 celebrates its centennial anniversary in 2026. Read all about the historic road in our special insert, "The Mother Road at 100."

Montrose Dog Beach, Chicago







SAFFRON SOCIAL



THE MIDDLE
OF EVERYTHING

WELCOME

Illinois native author Charles Bowden summed it up best when he said, “Summertime is always the best of what might be.” While the Land of Lincoln certainly shines year-round, the warmer weather tends to show off with outdoor adventures, colorful gardens, and festivals and events popping up statewide. It’s also a brilliant time for a road trip. With more than 100 itineraries on enjoyillinois.com, planning your Illinois adventure has never been easier.

Speaking of road trips, all roads lead to America’s highway as preparation for its 100th year is underway. “The Mother Road at 100” special insert offers one-stop planning for your centennial celebration getaway. From the bright city lights of Chicago to the neon lights in Springfield and beyond, experience the best of nostalgia and natural beauty along Illinois’ legendary Route 66.

If relaxation and indulgence are more of what you’re seeking, retreat to some of our most luxurious accommodations (*page 12*). Our exclusive hotels boast museum-quality art, award-winning dining and drinks, and bespoke experiences crafted to satisfy even the most discerning travelers.

Looking for something new, handmade and uniquely Illinois? Then “Crafted by Hand” is for you (*page 20*). The backbone of Illinois’ creative capital, our 275-plus Makers inspire with their goods, allowing visitors a chance to enjoy their Illinois travels long after their visits.

In this issue we’re also offering a “pupdate” on pet-friendly locations throughout the state. If you and your canine companion have ever wanted to hike in a state park, explore our many historic sites or kick back on a boat, there is plenty of “Fun Fur You” (*page 8*) here in Illinois. Look for the paw print  throughout the magazine to find places and spaces that welcome four-legged friends.

HAPPY TAILS!

enjoy illinois

SPRING + SUMMER
2025

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE &
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY,
OFFICE OF TOURISM

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DISCOVER

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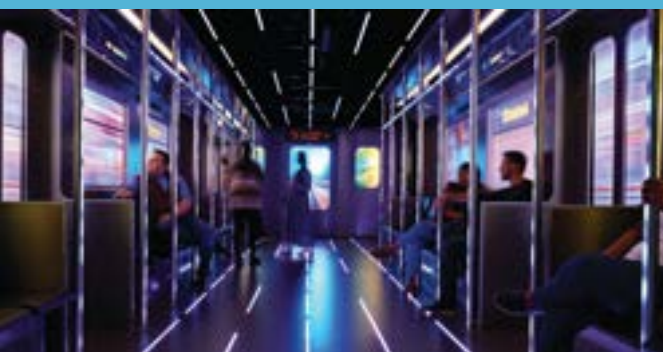
EXPERIENCE

Spectacular photo ops.

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DARE

To step out on **The Ledge** — 1.5" glass floored balconies perched 4.3 feet outside, 103 stories above Chicago.



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📍
EAT PLAY STAY

GUIDEBOOK



Monarch and Lion, Chicago

SPRING
+
SUMMER
2025

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Scan the code
for road trip
itineraries.

Fun Fur You

Who wants to go for a ride? Bring your four-legged friend on your next Illinois adventure and get tails wagging.

Chicago Athletic Association, Chicago



If you and your pet perk up while exploring new places, pack your bags (and bones) and hit the road. The number of pet-friendly destinations and hotels is on the rise across the Land of Lincoln. In the Windy City, the **Chicago Athletic Association** and **Kimpton Gray** hotels love pets just as much as their owners, welcoming all regardless of size, weight and breed at no additional cost.

Throughout Illinois, pets are allowed on leashes in **all state parks**, including Cache River State Natural Area and **Shawnee National Forest** and its Garden of the Gods area.



Throughout the magazine, look for the pet-friendly symbol for more places to take your pooch.



Shawnee National Forest, Illinois



MADE FOR MEMORIES

Experience
Chicago's lakefront
treasure!



Scan to view our full calendar
of events and programs

From breathtaking views high above the clouds on the Centennial Ferris Wheel to a stroll along the lakefront, Navy Pier offers memories to last a lifetime.

With free live music, outdoor movies, fitness classes, and dance performances, there is something new to discover with every visit. Explore 70 restaurants and shops. Take a boat cruise. Splash in the fountain. Adventure is around every corner.

And if you're looking for a little extra sparkle, Navy Pier presents its award-winning fireworks show on Saturdays and Wednesdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day!

Plan your visit today at navypier.org.

Capitol Canines

Abraham Lincoln's hometown loves dogs and welcomes leashed pups on the grounds of many Lincoln-related sites, including the family home where Mary Todd and her husband raised their children and dog Fido. Throughout downtown, five sculptures, part of Fido's Puppies Sculpture Project, can be found on the sidewalk, steps and even a window ledge. The adorable mischief makers will make you smile. After dark, you and your pupper can learn more about the 16th president on the Lincoln Ghost Walk, a 90-minute tour.



FROM TOP
Fido's Puppies,
Springfield
Navy Pier, Chicago
Allerton Park
and Retreat Center,
Monticello

Four for Four-Legged Travelers

Explore a quartet of attractions open to leashed canines and their companions.

1. Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden **Rockford**
Wide paved paths and 3 miles of woodland trails attract pets and their parents to these colorful gardens.

2. Navy Pier **Chicago**
Dogs can join any Shoreline Sightseeing cruise, plus they're welcome at all outdoor spaces and patios at this lakefront treasure.

3. Allerton Park and Retreat Center **Monticello**
This expansive historic property includes 15 miles of trails for pups and people.

4. Cahokia Mounds World Heritage and State Historic Site **Collinsville**
Walk with your leashed canine companion through the United States' largest pre-Columbian Native American city that dates from 1050 to 1350 A.D.



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Sophisticated Stays

The Windy City continues to wow visitors with high-end hotels that deliver more than just sumptuous rooms and exceptional customer service. Heckle in and check out their museum-worthy art collections, award-winning restaurants, and stunning swimming pools and spas.



Art Collections

Iconic landmarks, historic architecture and extraordinary museums shape Chicago's world-class art scene. It's no wonder that the art elevates overnights at these lavish lodging options.

Browse exhibits from local artists in residence alongside the works of modern masters like Dale Chihuly and Henri Matisse at NoMI Art Gallery, a 2023 addition to the **Park Hyatt Chicago**. It's only a two-minute walk from the Gold Coast's **The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago** to the nearby Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, but you can see Roy Lichtenstein pieces before you leave the hotel's curated lobby. The swanky **Sophy Hotel** in Hyde Park spotlights one-of-a-kind art pieces made for the boutique hotel, which celebrate the neighborhood's rich cultural history.

Lobby and Restaurants

Stay in the Windy City all but guarantees access to exceptional food and drink, especially at these stylish spots in Chicago's hip neighborhoods.

Pendry Chicago is home to **Le Entoux** (a French-inspired oyster bar) and **Bar Pendry** (a polished take on the classic lobby bar), serving handcrafted cocktails and upscale comfort food, such as their version of a Chicago-style hot dog served on Japanese milk bread and topped with truffle aioli. The **Chicago Athletic Association** has more than just posh guest rooms inside their historic downtown building. Choose from seven on-site bars and restaurants, including the plush Cherry Circle Room, which won a James Beard Award for restaurant design.



Chicago Athletic Association



London House Chicago



Venteu Cafe at Landry Chicago

Outdoor Spaces

Even the loveliest accommodations can compete with skyline and shoreline views. These hotels serve up outdoor amñience while also tucking you away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Chicago.

The Rooftop bar at **Hotel RIU Plaza Chicago** opened its doors in 2024 for custom cocktails and sweeping scenery. Step out onto the glass balcony installed on the 27th-floor rooftop patio for an adrenaline-pumping look at the city below. Another thrilling rooftop bar is the 22nd-floor terrace LH Rooftop at **LondonHouse Chicago**, a must-see with unobstructed river views.

At **No. 1 Hotel Chicago**, rooftop eatery, panoramic scenes are always on the menu. Schedule an alfresco brunch at this foodie-favorite hotel patio and savor the sights and sounds of the city while you sip a Japanese Bloody Mary and snack on sliders and sashimi. The Peacock Garden extension at the **Waldorf Astoria Chicago** in the Gold Coast is just off the lobby and transports guests to a chic Parisian-style courtyard with a backdrop of leafy foliage, blooming flowers and privacy hedges.

←
VENTEU CAFE
A Parisian-inspired cafe with magnificent windows overlooks Michigan Avenue.

Enviably Experiences

Level up with luxe add-ons. Charter a private yacht, reserve a heated pool, or an exclusive nighttime spa service, or do all three.

At the **Four Seasons Hotel Chicago**, excursions and upgrades abound. Take in the sights along Lake Michigan from a 55-foot-long private yacht, or splurge on late-night spa treatments complete with champagne, pastries and private access to the heated infinity pool. You might recognize the skylighted pool from the cannonball scene in *Home Alone*. Schedule a private swim time to practice your own.

→
**FOUR
SEASONS**
Discover the
city's skyline with
an architectural
expert aboard a
private yacht.



The Langham,
Chicago



Scan the code
for more luxury
hotels and
experiences.

Spas and Pools

Amper yourself with premium health and beauty treatments, invigorating group fitness classes, or an afternoon at a rooftop pool in the heart of Chicago.

The city's only five-star spa is at **The St. Regis Chicago**, where an entire floor of modern architectural hotel space is dedicated to wellness. Spa services include group yoga and Pilates classes, stress-relief massages, and cupping. Chuan Spa and Pool at **The Langham, Chicago** is a stylish sanctuary where guests can indulge in a full-body massage, acupuncture services, or an opulent caviar and crushed pearl facial before hitting the hydrotherapy hot tub.

The Peninsula Chicago spa and wellness center consists of an indoor pool with 20-foot floor-to-ceiling windows, an outdoor terrace with complimentary fruit-infused water, chilled towels and spa services based on Ayurvedic and Asian philosophies. Look down on Lake Michigan from the seasonal guests-only rooftop pool at **Viceroy Chicago** where verdant plants and streamlined lounge chairs line the 18th-floor oasis.

Off-Site Occasions

Upgrade your getaway with one-of-kind endeavors.

Floral Arranger

Get in touch with your inner floral designer as you choose and arrange stems from an overflowing inventory of gorgeous blossoms or have the pros create a design for you.

Chicago Helicopter Tour

Scan the city skyline on a private helicopter tour of downtown. The Ultimate Date Night Tour flies over landmarks like The Bean, Soldier Field and Millennium Park; it also includes complimentary champagne, roses and photo ops.

Ignite Glass Studios Private Lesson

See the working studio, gallery and outdoor sculpture garden that received a Design Excellence award from The American Institute of Architects, then learn to blow your own piece during a private lesson.



CHICAGO

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

chicago
CHOOSE CHICAGO



DISCOVER YOUR
CHICAGO STYLE

Route 66 legends
Leon Ark, Springfield



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illinois
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THE MOTHER ROAD

XX XX XX XX



IN 2026, ROUTE 66 CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY.
START PLANNING NOW TO BE PART OF THIS HISTORIC EVENT.



Credit novelist John Steinbeck for dubbing Route 66 the Mother Road. He did it in *he rapes of* *rath*, his 1939 tale of Depression-era migrants who saw the highway as a road of opportunities. It still is. Officially called U.S. Highway 66, Route 66 debuted in 1926 as a patchwork path of existing roads (many not paved) stretching 2,400 miles from Chicago to Los Angeles via St. Louis and the Southwest. As the road was improved and its popularity grew, so did opportunities for towns and businesses along the route—travelers needed gas stations, restaurants and motels. Route 66 also created opportunities for family vacations. The hit song “Route 66” and TV series of the same name romanticized the road as a place to “get your kicks.”

Route 66's popularity accelerated its demise—traffic volumes outgrew the mostly two-lane road's capacity. The new interstate highway system gradually bypassed segments of Route 66, and in 1985 the highway was officially decommissioned. But that wasn't the end of the story—or an era. People recognized Route 66's historical and cultural significance, and they pushed to preserve the route and attractions along it, including those in Illinois. That means opportunities for you.

Now nearly a century old, Route 66 isn't the fastest way to drive across Illinois, but it's the next best thing to actual time travel: You see part of America as it used to be, through the perspective of history's rearview mirror.



ROUTE 66 TRIP TIPS



TAKE IT SLOW

The Illinois portion of Route 66 is about 300 miles long (more if you take all the original side roads), so you could cover it in a day. But that wouldn't leave you much time to stop and explore towns and attractions. A three- to four-day itinerary with a couple of overnights lets you slow down and savor all the history and kitsch. And since the route starts (or ends) in Chicago, you might want to spend an extra day or two in the Windy City.



FOLLOW THE SIGNS

Modern Interstate-55 more or less parallels Route 66 through Illinois and can take you to the signature towns and attractions quickly. But for a more authentic experience, you'll want to stay on the original route as much as possible. Follow the helpful and plentiful brown Historic Route 66 signs. Just keep in mind that Route 66 had various alignments over the years—sections were often moved, improved and rerouted—so there can be more than one way to go. And if you miss a turn, don't sweat it—detours often bring serendipity.



STAY IN YOUR LANE

Illinois was the first state where Route 66 was entirely paved. Some of the oldest parts are now inaccessible, undrivable, invisible (under I-55) or on private property. Even on the marked historic route, the driving ambience varies. A several-mile section south of Moline is a four-lane divided highway, almost like an interstate. But in and around smaller towns, you definitely get some of the two-lane intimacy that sparks nostalgia.



BE FLEXIBLE

Because many of the attractions on Route 66 are in small towns, expect limited days and hours of operation. If there's a place you have your heart set on, call ahead or check online for schedules. And be prepared to call an audible.



BOOK LODGINGS OR NOT

Part of an authentic Route 66 road trip is staying in a motel or two. And while there are reliable chain options on the route, you may prefer the nostalgic feel of something locally owned. Even better—a motel that dates to the highway's heyday. Wherever you stay, consider booking a room ahead of time. In a small town with few motels, a summer festival or other event could leave a No Vacancy sign when you show up. Then again, it's in keeping with Route 66's legacy of freedom, adventure and spontaneity to just wing it.

FROM LEFT

ink elephant
ntique
Mall, Livingston
Standard il
as Station, del
Route 66
Motorheads ar
and rill,
Spring eld
ell Rhea
hicken asket,
illowbrook



GO GREEN

It's not your grandmother's Mother Road—you can travel the entire Illinois portion of the route without stopping for gas. Drive your electric vehicle—there are EV stations in towns along the route, including Pontiac, Lincoln, Springfield and Collinsville. Or bike the Route 66 Trail, a network of rural byways, off-road paths and city streets that mirrors the auto route.





Ambler's Texaco Gas Station, Dwight



CHICAGO → JOLIET → DWIGHT

Start your Route 66 journey in downtown Chicago—there's a pylon marking the beginning point at the corner of South Michigan Avenue and East Adams Street, across the street from the **Art Institute of Chicago**. Soak in the Impressionists, then bookmark your adventure with a selfie at the pylon. First stop is Joliet, where the **Joliet Area Historical Museum** contains a Route 66 visitors center that will orient newbies with info and memorabilia. Many Joliet visitors

wind up in jail—**Old Joliet Prison** was once the country's largest lockup and is now open for tours. It held gangster "Baby Face" Nelson and later appeared in *The Blues Brothers* movie. That film's soul-man sibs, Jake and Elwood, dance atop retro ice cream shop **Rich and Creamy On Broadway**. Down the road in Dwight, fill 'er up with nostalgia at **Ambler's Texaco Gas Station**. The motoring mainstay, now a welcome center, has been restored with old-style pumps (just for show).

Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket, Willowbrook



RETRO EATS
Carbo load for the road at **Lo Mitchell's** in Chicago, the champion of breakfasts since 1923. Tucked between towering downtown buildings near the start of Route 66, the diner is famous for free doughnut holes and Milk Duds while you wait to be seated. **Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket** in Willowbrook opened along Route 66 in 1946 after outgrowing a gas station lunch counter next door, where its fried chicken recipe first stopped traffic. Their famous basket comes with fries and house-made coleslaw. Partake like it's 1959 at **The Polka Dot Drive In** in Braidwood: There's a pay phone on the wall and Elvis just left the building—his statue is right outside. The burgers and chili cheese fries come with photo ops.



© Joliet Area Historical Museum, Joliet



WORTH A LITTLE DETOUR

Gardner's **Historic Celled Jail** was built in 1906, closed in the 1950s and later restored. Go inside and take a picture behind bars with your partner in crime.

SELFIE SPOT

The **Gemini Giant**, a 30-foot-tall rocket man named for the 1960s space program, stands in downtown Wilmington's South Island Park. It's one of the tallest **Murder Men**, which are often seen outside automotive shops on Route 66.

TAKE A CHANCE

If you're lucky, a slot machine along 66 will come up with a 777. **Harrah's Joliet** and **Hollywood Casino** both offer a range of table games and lots of slots in Joliet.



Missy's Sweet Shoppe, Atlanta

RETRO EATS

Top off your body's tank at **Edinger's Filling Station** in Pontiac, a former auto garage with its bay door turned into windows. Have biscuits and gravy for breakfast, a burger for lunch, or check out dinner specials like pasta night. Warning: The pie goes fast. Grab goodies for the road from **Missy's Sweet Shoppe** in the former Palms Grill Cafe in Atlanta. Missy Gaither had a home-based bakery before opening in a former restaurant. Look for special Route 66 cookies and cupcakes. Road-trippers appreciate **Dixie Family Restaurant** in McLean serving breakfast, lunch and dinner all day. A salad bar and buffet provide plenty of choices, and the service is famously friendly.



PONTIAC → ODELL → ATLANTA → NORMAL

Regardless of your car's make, all drivers love Pontiac, a small city with big **Walldog mural**. In 2009, the visiting artists who created them called themselves Walldogs, an old nickname for building-sign painters. The largest mural adorns the **Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum**, a mother lode of Mother Road artifacts, including artist Bob Waldmire's Route 66 Road Yacht. The **Pontiac Oakland Automobile Museum** displays classic General Motors cars, like a 1954 Pontiac Star Chief Convertible. Odell's **Standard Oil Gas Station**, built in 1932 and

since restored, greets travelers with a swinging roof sign, canopy-covered benches and an old-style (nonworking) pump. Expect bumper-to-bumper traffic inside the **Route 66 Arcade Museum** in Atlanta—it's full of vintage operational pinball machines, plus awesome '80s and '90s video games, which are free. (A \$5 donation is encouraged.) **Sprague's Super Service** in Normal epitomizes how gas stations once resembled homes. The 1931 two-story brick Tudor Revival structure is manor-like, with a gabled red roof, swirled stucco and dark exterior woodwork.



SELFIE SPOT
When you pose with a giant Route 66 shield painted on the **Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum** in Pontiac, you can stand on original route bricks.



WORTH A LITTLE DETOUR

Though Abraham Lincoln never drove Route 66, his footprints are all over it. Pick up the trail at the **Crain's With Lincoln on 66 Visitor Center** in Bloomington.



Paul Bunyon statue,
Atlanta

DID YOU KNOW
Long before the 19-foot-tall **Paul Bunyon statue** (yes, spelled with an **o**) came to Atlanta, the frankfurter-holding giant graced a hot dog stand in Cicero (also on Route 66). Nearby, the **American Giant Museum** showcases statues like Big Boy (new for the 2025 season) and Texaco Big Friend.





Mustard on a corn dog, Springfield

↑ **SPRINGFIELD RETRO EATS**

Beer taps hang from the rear ends of vintage cars at **Route 66 Motorhead Bar and Grill**, part of a complex that includes a museum. The menu is the Owner's Manual, and their take on Italian beef is called the Ferrari. At **Cool Dog Drive In**, on Route 66 since 1949, the namesake specialty is a hot dog on a stick. It's dipped in batter and deep-fried for maximum crunch using founder Ed Waldmire's original recipe. The Mother Road claims what's thought to be the nation's oldest drive-through restaurant, **Maid Rite** sandwich shop. The spot has been serving its beloved loose-meat burgers since 1926.

SELFIE SPOT

Springfield's own **Mueller Man**, the **Lauterbach Giant**, looms over the parking lot of Lauterbach Tire and Auto Service. He used to hold a tire, but now carries a U.S. flag.

**BRING
YOUR PET**
Well-behaved
dogs are welcome
at **Route 66 Hotel
and Conference
Center** 🐾, which
opened in the
1950s as the first
Holiday Inn on the
historic highway.

**WORTH A
LITTLE
DETOUR**
Springfield's
Mel's Cream Donuts,
founded in 1932, is
almost as old as Route
66. They have several
locations—and most
close at noon. Get there
early for best choices.



SPRINGFIELD

The histories of two American icons—Abraham Lincoln and Route 66—often intersect in Illinois, especially in Springfield, the state capital. Abe lived here for 24 years before becoming president, and it's the only place he ever owned a home. Tour the **Old State Capitol** to see where Lincoln served in the Illinois Legislature and gave his famous "House Divided" speech. The **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum** re-creates the one-room cabin Lincoln grew up in, part of several immersive galleries portraying his key life moments. Abe was buried in Springfield at **Oak Ridge Cemetery**, along with wife Mary and three of their four sons. At **Route 66 Drive In**, relive an era when people watched more movies from their cars than their couches. Two screens show double features most every summer night. **Mahan's Filling Station** may be the oldest and cutest little gas place in the state. It was moved next to **Flynn's Pizza and Pasta**, across from the Illinois State Fairgrounds, home to one of the country's oldest fairs and the **Legend Neon Sign Park**. Open year-round, the park is home to replicas of signs, like BelAir Drive In, found on Route 66 in Illinois.

Old State Capitol, Springfield





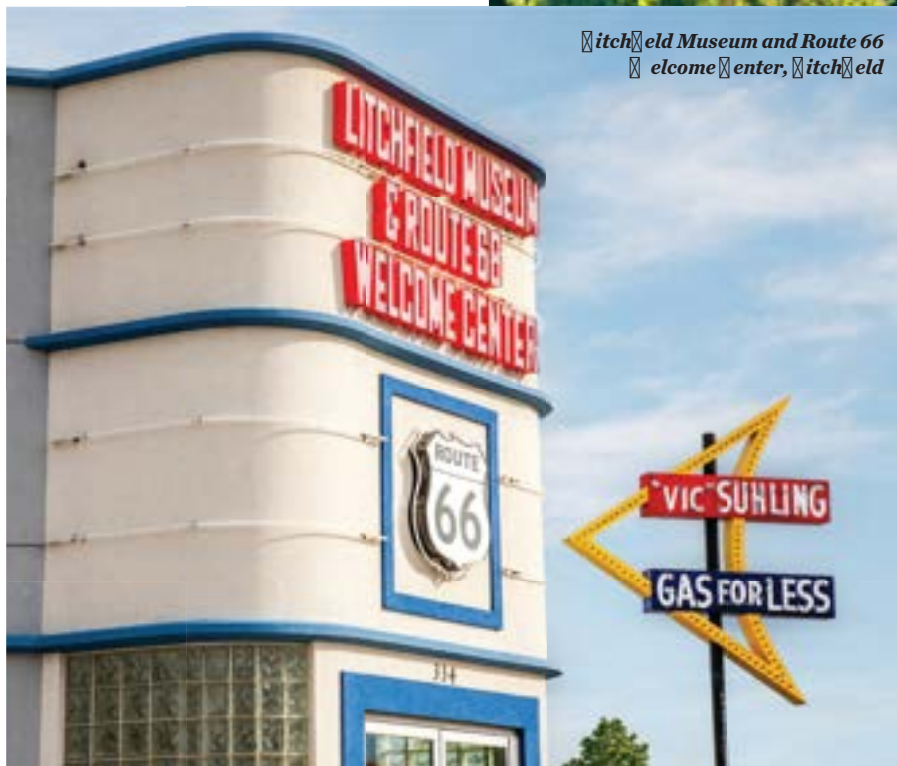
COLLINSVILLE → STAUNTON → LIVINGSTON → LITCHFIELD

With all the french fries served at eateries along Route 66, it's a good thing **The World's Largest Catnip Bottle** stands in Collinsville. Actually, it's a 170-foot one-time water tower built in 1949 for the makers of Brooks catsup. You may or may not see bunnies hopping at **Henry's Rabbit Ranch** in Staunton, but you will see W Rabbits popping out of the ground and other Route 66 relics. How do you know you've found the **Pink Elephant Antique Mall** in Livingston? You'll see a spoiler alert: an enormous pink elephant, as well as other fiberglass giants. Shop 30,000 square feet of vintage treasures in the town's former high school. A refurbished neon sign for **Vic Suhling's Gas For Less** glows as a beacon drawing visitors to the **Litchfield Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center** in Litchfield. Browse Route 66 memorabilia and check out an 1883 hand-drawn fire wagon.

The world's largest catsup bottle, Collinsville



Litchfield Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center, Litchfield



WORTH A LITTLE DETOUR

Check out the 1870 **Macopin County Courthouse** in Carlinville, nicknamed the Million Dollar Courthouse. It cost \$1.3 million to build, a lavish sum at the time. Allegedly, not all that money went toward construction.

RETRO EATS

Shake off hunger at **Doc's Root Beer** in Girard, an old-fashioned soda fountain that also serves lunch and dinner. The building long housed Deck's Drug Store, which opened in 1884, and big doses of pharmacy decor remain. **The Arlington Cafe** in Litchfield may be the oldest restaurant anywhere along Route 66. Its 1924 launch predates the Mother Road. The menu fare is as diverse as the driving public; there's some Midwestern, Southern, Italian and Greek. If you're ready for the Mother Road Burger Challenge (a cheeseburger tower of six patties, fries and a large shake with a time record to beat), head to **Route 66 Creamery** in Hamel. Furry friends always get free pup cups.



SELFIE SPOT

Besides the namesake pastel pachyderm outside the **Pin Elephant Antique Mall** in Livingston, you can stand by other giant statues, such as a **Muñer Man** in a Harley shirt.



BRIDGE OVER FABLED WATERS

The **Old Chain o' Rocks Bridge** near Madison once carried Route 66 travelers across the Mississippi River. Now it's a part of a trail for bikes and pedestrians only. There's an unusual 30-degree midway turn necessary to accommodate the riverbed and boat traffic.

←



IS OVER MORE
I ONI STO S

Scan the code for charming towns,
quirky roadside stops and more
along the Mother Road.



- 1 Maid-Rite, Springfield @visitspringfield 2 Pink Elephant Antique Mall, Livingston @donutmamii
3 Docs Just Off 66, Girard @stl_sign_and_mural (muralist and photographer, Dan Ricketts)
4 Route 66 Creamery, Hamel @riversandroutes

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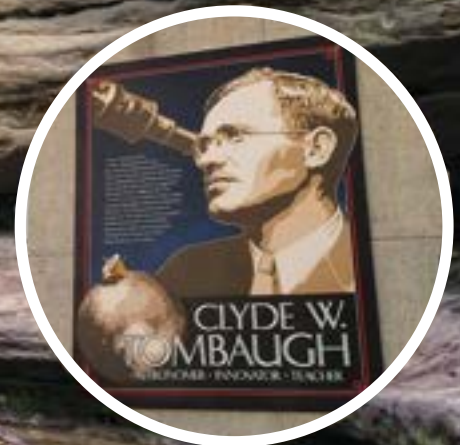
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RO IN EIGHTS

ome as you are. These destinations welcome walk-in guests.

SCRATCH GOODS, CHICAGO

Customize and apply a clay mask as part of a self-care routine at The Mask Bar, where specialists lead you through a skin care ritual featuring locally sourced, plant-based ingredients. Your skin and your conscience will thank you.

ROLLING OAK ALPACA RANCH, MAKANDA

Grab a feed bucket before sauntering down Alpaca Alley, a shaded gravel path that leads to three herds. Hand out treats and snap photos as part of a self-guided tour. You can even bring along a picnic for yourself.

ROPP JERSEY CHEESE, NORMAL

Watch cheese-makers at work after a stroll through the Jersey cow barn. Stop into the retail store where you'll find a large selection of products, including 42 flavors of cheese, hand-dipped ice cream and raw honey.



Scratch Goods, Chicago



Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch, Makanda



Shawnee Hills Lavender, Cobden



Wayward Wovens, Du Quoin

SHAWNEE HILLS LAVENDER, COBDEN

Plan your aromatherapy adventure precisely—the U-pick season lasts only a few weekends in June. Gather fresh bundles as you wander among the blooms.

WAYWARD WOVENS, DU QUOIN

Nicki Rathert uses a floor loom to weave colorful fibers into luxurious fabric. Wrap yourself in a shawl, use a lovely hand towel and appreciate the creative process.



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and scent and to
avoid dust buildup.

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balls—one glows in the
dark—during an Orb Glass
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Patterson. Highly decorative,
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working farm during their
goat hikes. Saturday morning
excursions can include a brief
tour of the farm, plus a sample
of cheese and a 1.5-mile hike.



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Company, Harrisburg

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alpacos on
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MARIE'S WOOD CARVINGS, WOODBINE

Animals and nature themes prevail in Marie's work. During class, beginners carve their way to a completed piece, which may feature a bear, two owls in a tree or a hummingbird.

EDGE OF NORMAL WORKSHOP, UPTOWN NORMAL

In one-on-one and small-group classes, work alongside an experienced bladesmith and walk away with a finished blade of your design.

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Sew a wall hanging or table runner, or learn binding under the guidance of this mother-daughter duo. Add finishing touches with decorative stitches.

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Marie's wood carvings, woodbine



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24 Hours of Whiskey and History

Follow the riverfront through downtown Peoria's Warehouse District for a memorable blend of restaurants, museums and spirits.



Black Band Distillery



→
Built during the
Roaring Twenties,
the chic hotel
exudes grandeur.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

Prior to Prohibition, Peoria was known as the Whiskey Capital of the World with almost 100 breweries and distilleries producing 40 percent of all alcohol in the United States.

At the end of the 19th century, the Rock Island Depot and Freight House was built in downtown Peoria to service more than a dozen railroads, fueling the community's major industries, including farm machinery and distilleries. More than a century later, the riverfront property houses restaurants and retail space across the street from the Smithsonian-affiliated Peoria Riverfront Museum. With so much to experience, you can easily fill a day exploring downtown. Relax and recharge at the historic **Peoria Marriott Pere Marquette**.

9 a.m. Locally grown and fresh milled grains fortify the baked goods on the menu at **Ardor Breads and Provisions**, which also showcases veggies from top-notch farms less than 10 miles away. Try the avocado tartine with a soft-boiled egg.

10 a.m. Tag along on a virtual ride to a mining site and operate a Cat machine simulator, two of the many experiences at the **Caterpillar Visitors Center**.

12 p.m. A former ice cream factory now houses **Thyme Kitchen and Craft Beer**. Mix and match apps and burgers, or go for the spicy tuna poke bowl. The menu also features 300 bourbons and 40 craft beers.

1 p.m. Outdoor sculptures welcome visitors to the Smithsonian-affiliated **Peoria Riverfront Museum**, a destination with art, science and history exhibits, plus a planetarium and giant-screen theater.

4 p.m. A waterfall and box canyon reward hikers who navigate the 1-mile-long trail through dense forest and steep inclines at **Rocky Glen Park**, 6 miles from downtown.

6 p.m. Head back to the Warehouse District for dinner and drinks at **Black Band Distillery**, a farm-to-table restaurant known for its whiskey, bourbon, gin, rye and vodka. Sample some in a flight or taste one in a classic cocktail.

8 p.m. The mixologists in **Martini's on Water Street** make, shake and stir more than 100 martinis in the original 1891 Rock Island Depot with soaring 35-foot ceilings and a 13-foot-long mahogany bar.



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ITOKO

Japanese

Twice nominated for a James Beard Award, chef Gene Moto's newest restaurant in Lakeview pairs Japanese cooking methods, such as robata (similar to barbecue), with standout ingredients like dry-aged bluefin tuna.



Windy City, Worldly Fare

From across the globe, Chicago attracts culinary artists who bring beloved recipes and traditional techniques to their kitchens. Pop among neighborhoods in Illinois' biggest city to taste around-the-world cuisine.



Monarch and Lion

MONARCH AND LION

British

Wind down your week with a classic roast, served only on Sundays, beside this pub's hearth in Streeterville. Or savor the crunch of IPA-battered fish and chips.

INDIENNE

Indian

Tamarind's sweet tang gives earthy buckwheat tarts a kick at this restaurant serving a seven-course tasting menu each night in a converted 19th-century printing warehouse in River North.

KASAMA

Philippine

This Michelin-starred outpost in the East Village presents an inventive tasting menu in the evening. Visit before 2 p.m. to try budget-friendly fare, including a breakfast sandwich loaded with longanisa, a sweet sausage.

ANELYA

Ukrainian

A staple largely made up of refugees wheels out a cart piled high with rakusky, cold snacks like pickled tomatoes and sunflower hummus to kick off a meal at this restaurant in Avondale.

THE MUKASE

African

In Uptown, take your taste buds on a tour through delicacies like egusi stew thickened with ground melon seeds, or fufu (a dough made of ground root vegetables) soaked in a spicy broth.

ILLINOIS INSIDER Even more international flavors await. Partake from a panaderia in Pilsen or dig into a dim sum brunch in Chinatown. Greektown, the Ukrainian Village, Little Italy and food festivals also encourage global travel minus the plane ticket.

MOODY TONGUE

American

As a chef-turned-brewer, it's no surprise that brewmaster Jared Rouben pairs specialty beers with a tasting menu featuring exotic ingredients such as sea urchin and dill pollen in his South Loop Michelin-starred dining room.

CARNIVALE

Latin fusion

Pink and turquoise chairs. Walls doused in vibrant hues. It's tough to outshine such an animated dining room, but this West Loop restaurant's menu manages it with whimsical touches like edible flowers accenting entrees and cotton candy perched atop a cocktail.



On the Trail

No o i es or hi ing shoes are needed on these paths. Instead pac your appreciation for eye-opening art and ground rea ing designs along with your appetite of course.



The Rookery in Chicago, Frank Lloyd Wright Trail

Art and Architecture Trails

RANK 0 RIGHT TRAIL

Designs from America's greatest architect span Illinois, but only 12 of Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings are open to the public, including The Rookery in Chicago's Loop and his 20-year home and studio in Oak Park. That's where he drew up the blueprints for Unity Temple, the local Unitarian church's replacement after the original burned down. Many considered his cubist, Prairie-style worship space as the world's first modern building, and today it's a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Wright's Prairie gems also reside in Springfield (Dana-Thomas House), Waukegan (B. Harley Bradley House) and Dwight (First National Bank Building). For the Usonian style he embodied later in his career, head to the Laurent House in Rockford. Wright designed the sprawling single-story home for a World War II veteran who used a wheelchair.

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ROCKFORD
ART TRAIL 🐾

The trail's smartphone passport lists more than 125 art installations that dot the City of Gardens and the surrounding area. Floral murals, stately memorials and intriguing sculptures. Start downtown and snap a photo in front of a signature Louise Jones mural of native flowers. Then head up North Main Street to the gardens of Veterans Memorial Circle for *old* *new* a stainless-steel piece by Ben Pierce, a post-9/11 veteran who sculpts for mental health. As you check in at pieces throughout the region via the pass, you'll earn points that you can redeem for prizes like a hat, tumbler or key chain.



South Main Mural,
Rockford Public Art Trail

Taste Bud
Trails

EER AN MORE

No matter where you find yourself in the Land of Lincoln, you can sip spectrum-spanning brews: crisp lagers to rich stouts. A curated exploration of this abundant craft beer scene awaits on the state's seven beer trails. On the **Northwest Illinois Ale Trail** 🐾, seven breweries pair small-batch suds with snacks like chicken wings and soft pretzels. After a day on Lake Michigan, pick out one of the 28 spots on the **Lake County Liqueur Trail** including distilleries, wineries and a meadery for nonbeer fans. The **Heritage Corridor Ale Trail** offers a prize to anyone who buys a beer at all 15 of its locales, worthy rest stops near the initial stretch of Route 66. The Mother Road can take you toward Peoria, where you can tour a microbrewery housed in a church on the 26-stop **Rock Island Ale Trail** 🐾. Or choose your own hop-filled adventure on the **Southwestern Illinois Beer Trail** 🐾, three loops (21 breweries total). Selecting from the **McHenry County Craft Beverage Trail** 🐾, with at least 10 breweries and distilleries, is a worthy reward after a sunny day of hiking or biking. Out west, seven breweries sit on the Illinois side of the **Illinois Ale Trail**, and trips to four of them will earn you a branded bottle opener.



Pour Bros. Taproom in Peoria, eighth, Rock Island Ale Trail

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CHOCOLATE

Now is the time to find the path that will indulge your most chocolatey cravings. **The Rock River Chocolate Trail** swings through 12 northern Illinois locations. In Dixon (President Ronald Reagan's hometown), stop at The Crystal Cork Wine Shoppe, where a handmade Belgian chocolate complements a glass of red. Long Grove's nostalgic Ma and Pa's Candy 🐾 is one of seven destinations on the **Chocolate Lovers Trail** in Lake County. Be sure to grab chocolate-covered Oreos or a caramel s'mores bar.

COFFEE

A quartet of Illinois coffee trails with more than 50 destinations finally offers the chance for that caffeine habit to pay off. On the **Explore Elgin Area Coffee Trail**, time lords and their companions can sip a latte at the Doctor Who-themed Blue Box Cafe 🐾. Nab a warm drink—and maybe your next novel—inside Woodstock's Read Between The Lines 🐾, part of the **McHenry County Coffee and Tea Trail**. Caffeine and Carbs, along the **QC Coffee Trail** in Geneseo, lives up to its name when you match a cup of tea with a tasty bagel sandwich. The **Rockford Area Coffee Trail** rewards java drinkers with prizes when they use their digital passport.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

In the early 1900s, Chicago earned the title Candy Capital of the World with more than 1,000 candy companies. Chocolate treats invented in the Windy City include Snickers, Fannie May gourmet chocolates, brownies and the DoveBar.



**CULINARY
TOURISM**
*Throughout the
state, visit breweries,
coffee shops and
confectioneries for
local flavors.*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP *Lagomarcino's 🐾 in Moline, The Rock River Chocolate Trail; Fannie May in Rockford, The Rock River Chocolate Trail; Viator Coffee 🐾 in Elgin, Explore Elgin Area Coffee Trail; Odeo Cafe 🐾 in Algonquin, McHenry County Coffee and Tea Trail*

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LAGOMARCINO'S) JOT, (FANNIE MAY) COURTESY OF FANNIE MAY, (COFFEE) EXPLORE ELGIN AREA, (MACARONS) COURTESY OF ODEO CAFE

STOP ON YOUR TRIP, BUT MAKE IT SUPER!

Calling all road-weary heroes: if you're road tripping from one place to the next, plan a stay in the Super City of Metropolis, Illinois. We're right off I-24 at Exit 37, so why not pull in and play a while?

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CHICAGO



Beyond the hustle and bustle, discover the tranquility and lush landscapes of **Busse Woods** — a Forest Preserve of Cook County.

NORTHWEST



For more Chicago Northwest inspiration beyond the skyline, visit [CHICAGONORTHWEST.COM](https://chicagonorthwest.com).

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| A A E M O A T

This actor and former Chicago Bulls acrobatic dunker went from searching for gigs on Craigslist to a six-season run on *Saturday Night Live*.

Actor Alex Mo'at says the details of his first office job are lost to the bottom of a bottle of Malört. While his desk life, like the infamous Chicago liqueur, remains a pungent mystery, a passion for performing comedy took over soon after graduating from Denison University in 2005.

Mo'at took classes at The Second City and received support from local stand-up comedians and people in the Chicago improv scene where audiences recognized his talent and charisma. Mo'at joined the *Saturday Night Live* cast in 2016. Over six seasons, the Evanston-born sketch comedy pro impersonated famous figures like President Joe Biden and created original characters.

After wrapping up his *SNL* run, Mo'at made his Broadway debut in *Heist* comedy. The former high school running back also appeared in the movie *For Brady* and kid-friendly films such as *Lord of the Big Red Dog* and *Alpha Bred's the Internet*. In 2023, Mo'at appeared in four episodes of the FX Emmy-winning series *The Bear*. Recently, Mo'at played opposite fellow Chicagoan Vince Vaughn in *Bad Monkey* on Apple TV.

Mo'at currently lives in New York (his wife, Caroline Rau, is also a North Shore native) but plans to keep his 312 area code for life. We asked him about his acting experiences, Chicago sports icons and where to catch him next.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

Often imbibed as a shot, Meppson's Malört is not for the faint of heart. The Chicago-based liqueur's extreme bitter taste comes from wormwood, the same ingredient found in absinthe.





WHERE THE MOTHER ROAD *Meets the River Road*



Take a road trip like no other through the only place in America where the Mother Road of Route 66 meets the Great River Road. Discover a Neon Sign Park, meet a giant pink elephant, dine at historic roadside cafes, take a walk through river bluffs and prairies and relax with a glass of locally crafted wine beside the Mighty Mississippi River.

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GOOD FOR A LAUGH

Mo'Nique credits these Chicago clubs with launching his career.

Zanies

Stand-up comedian Dobie Maxwell had me perform here.

The Annoyance Theatre and Bar

The owners are comedic geniuses.

iO Theater

This is where I ended up auditioning for *Off the Wall*.



When hanging with family in Wilmette or filming in the Windy City, the actor likes these restaurants.

HOMER S I E REAM

We had engagement photos taken here. Last time we were in Wilmette, we managed to go five times over two days. It's the best ice cream anywhere in the world. I had a double scoop of Oreo cookie with fresh peach, and I still think about that treat.

A KER ROS THE ORIGINAL AN AKE HO SE

There are locations scattered around Chicagoland, but the original on Green Bay Road is so good.

A S I T A I A N E E

When I'm in the city, if I want a meal that's going to immediately put me to sleep for four hours, then I can have an Italian beef sandwich with the best of them.

Q Sounds like a cheesy rom-com plot in the making! Who are some of your comedy heroes?

A When I was little, Eddie Murphy. I loved him so much. Still do. When we would go to Blockbuster, the only thing I wanted to rent for a solid year was *Saturday Night Live*. *The Best of Eddie*. Murphy. My parents were finally like, "All right, you can only rent this every third time." I loved the *SNL* cast from the '80s and '90s. Phil Hartman, Dana Carvey. *San Hooks* was amazing. But I also love Molly Shannon and Will Ferrell so much. Adam Sandler, Chris Farley. All those guys were comedy heroes to me.

Q Before your big break, Chicago Bulls mascot Benny the Bull was your boss. How did you make the acrobatic dunking team?

A I saw a posting on Craigslist, of all places. I went out for the *SNL* team and made it. Pretty quickly after, a guy broke his leg and I was told, "All right, Mo'Nique, you're up. I know you're still learning, but we need you." So, my slam dunking career was on the fast track. It was pretty wild. Benny was a dynamo. Sometimes I would play an opposing team's mascot and, of course, Benny the Bull would just mop the floor with me. It was the crowd's delight.

Q You joined the cast of off-Broadway's *The Big Gay Jamboree*. Were you a theater kid growing up?

A I was not the stud of the North Shore Country Day School theater department by any stretch of the imagination. I think that I played Pirate Number Six in *Peter Pan* my senior year of high school. I was in a deep post-college malaise when a friend was like, "Hey, you're sort of a miserable sack. Why don't you just take an improv class?" I signed up at The Second City and fell in love immediately. It felt like getting into a warm bath. I thought, "Oh, this is what my life has been missing." Once I got into it, I took as many classes as I could. I did as many shows as I could. I was doing open mics as a stand-up, doing a lot of improv shows. Anywhere they would let silly hams up on stage, I was there.

Q Your wife is from Chicagoland too. How did you meet?

A We were born in houses behind each other. Our moms knew each other, but we moved out of that house when I was like, 8 years old. I didn't know the 5-year-old girl who lived in the house behind us. We're both actors, so we finally met years and years later at a casting call for a *Elveeta* commercial in the West Loop.

Q Besides your Bulls mascot mayhem, do you have other Chicago sports memories?

A I watched Ryne Sandberg win the Home Run Derby at Wrigley Field from the bleachers. A good friend of my dad's had tickets to the 1990 MLB All-Star Game when I was little. I still have a hat. After the Cubs won the World Series in 2016, it felt like closing a chapter on a lifetime of misery. With one chapter of elation.

Q Barbie director Greta Gerwig said Ryan Gosling clinched the role of Ken after appearing in one of your "Guy Who Just Bought a Boat" SNL sketches. Was that your favorite character to play?

A I loved all the characters I got to do on *Weekend Update*. That was always such a gas. If I had to pick a fave, I would say *Paul*, film critic Terry Fink.

Q What was it like playing a drug-addicted line cook on *The Bear*?

A That was another dream gig. The first time I went back to Chicago to shoot, I got a phone call, and the person said, "The weather's not looking good, so we can't really shoot your *Outside* scene today. Do you want to go train in the kitchen of a Michelin-starred restaurant instead?" I was happy to get into that kitchen and get some training. They didn't want to fake it, nor did I. The show takes its stuff seriously. Even for little old me, who was going to be playing a messy line cook who was adept with his knife skills. They sent me over to a restaurant called Ever, in the West Loop. I got to work under Curtis Duffy, who is one of the best chefs in the world.

Q Tell fans what's on the horizon for you.

A I've got a few things out this spring. I'm in the comedies *Brewmance* and *Indiana Regnant* with Amy Schumer. I did a fun little role in a Hulu movie called *Summer of '83*. William Bell is always great on screen, and it turns out she's a great director too.



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◉
SUMMER
CELEBRATIONS

DATEBOOK



*Music in the Park,
Rockford*

MUSIC AND MORE

Trek to Illinois' skyscraper-shaking festivals and picnic-ready parks to find your official song of the summer.

May-mid-September ROOFTOP SUMMER MUSIC SERIES

Joliet
Reserve a table atop the Joliet Area Historical Museum and groove the night away with your friends.

May 24-25 SUEÑOS MUSIC FESTIVAL

Chicago
Reggaeton and Latin artists like Peso Pluma and Rauw Alejandro fire up packed crowds in downtown's Grant Park during this celebration of Latin culture.

May 24-June 8 THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS MUSIC FESTIVAL

Carbondale to Cairo
Professional musicians from North and South America perform opera, jazz, orchestral and chamber music.

May 29-August 28 GRAFTON'S MUSIC IN THE PARK

Grafton
Bands perform every Thursday from the Grove Memorial Park gazebo. Look toward the Mississippi River while kids scamper on the playground.

May 30-August 22 FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

Champaign
Welcome the weekend at downtown Champaign's intersections, where streetside bands play rock, jazz and country. Bring the kiddos to play with bubbles and get their faces painted.

June-July SUNSET CONCERTS

Carbondale
It's hard to beat live music, a cool drink and some food-truck nibbles as the sun sets on Southern Illinois University's campus.

June-August MUSIC IN THE PARK

Rockford
The 75-year-old Siniissippi Park Music Shell provides a forest-like setting for bluegrass and classic rock acts that have visited the amphitheater for more than 50 years.

June-mid-September RAVINIA FESTIVAL

Highland Park
This sprawling park hosts popular bands throughout the entire summer, along with a six-week residency of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Reserve a seat in the pavilion, enjoy a picnic on the expansive lawn—where you'll have no trouble basking in the music—or do both.

Early June CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL

Chicago
Each year since 1984, more than 500,000 descend on Millennium Park to jam with some of the country's best blues musicians at this free festival.

Early June CHICAGO GOSPEL MUSIC FESTIVAL

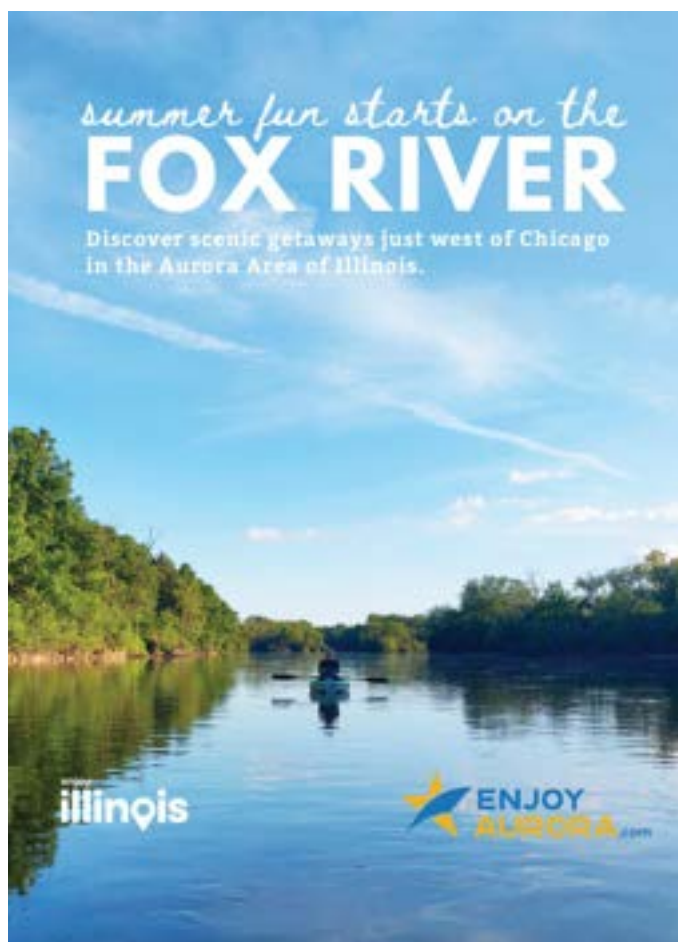
Chicago
Nab your seat at Millennium Park's Jay Pritzker Pavilion for an afternoon of joyous, Grammy-winning gospel—all for free.

Early June MILLEDGEVILLE JAMBOREE

Milledgeville
Live bands accompany a classic-car exhibition, a crafts show and garage sales. Or just unwind with the tunes in the beer garden.



Scan the code
for more
summer events
and festivals.



DATEBOOK

OUR CALENDAR



ollapalooa, hicago

June 1-August 31 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Eastline

Runner's Park is the Quad Cities' spot for music all summer long. Bring a blanket and grab some treats and drinks for a date night.

June 2-August 2 MUSIC ON THE ESPLANADE

lencoe

Explore the Chicago Botanic Garden's 385 acres of blooms, woodlands and prairie before settling in for live music every Monday and Wednesday.

June 5-July 2 ALTON MUNY BAND CONCERTS

lton

Dedicated musicians in this band have been performing summer concerts since 1891. Catch them for free on Thursdays and Sundays.

June 12-15 TAILGATE N' TALLBOYS

Bloomington

Country music fans gather around their campfires after sets from some of the biggest stars: Eric Church, Cody Johnson and Riley Green.

Early July AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Berwyn

As you chow down on barbecue, more than 40 rock, soul and bluegrass groups will shake Fitgerald's century-old roadhouse with their Americana tunes.

Mid-July DOWNTOWN GLEN ELLYN AREA MUSIC FESTIVAL

len Ellyn

notes and talented vocalists fill the air on Main Street, but don't forget to stop at one of the intimate jam sessions at nearby restaurants.

Mid-July FRANKFORT BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

Frankfort

Bluegrass acts of all kinds: up-and-comers and Grammy winners strum their banjos and guitars on the Breidert Green and Prairie Park stages.

July 25-26 MERCHANT STREET MUSIC FEST

anandalee

In the downtown train depot, more than 30 local, regional and national artists perform on three stages.

Late July FIESTA EN EL RIO

Peoria

Latin American music takes center stage at this annual party by the river. Remember, you can dance while biting into a taco or flauta.

Early August DOWNTOWN DECATUR MUSIC FESTIVAL

ecatur

Sip on a lemon shake-up as you peruse handmade crafts from local artisans, all with rock, pop and blues notes in the background.

Early August LOLLAPALOOA

hicago

Music fans flock to Grant Park each summer for the annual mega-party that features dozens of blockbuster acts: the likes of Chappell Roan, Blink-182, Megan Thee Stallion, and The Killers.

August 1-11 ILLINOIS STATE FAIR GRANDSTAND

Springfield

Cap off your day of carnival rides and tasty treats: not to mention the Butter Cow with a jammin' set or some pop bops with 15,000 other fans.

August 22-23 MAHOMET MUSIC FESTIVAL

ahomet

Each night, three bands provide the soundtrack for this late-summer party, but don't miss the carnival rides, cornhole tournament and parade.

August 29-30 PEORIA BLUES AND HERITAGE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Peoria

After the sun dips below Peoria's riverfront, the blues and funk music travels from two festival stages to late-night bar shows.

Labor Day weekend CHICAGO AREA FESTIVAL

hicago

For more than 40 years, the free Millennium Park and Chicago Cultural Center concerts have celebrated the Windy City's jazz roots, hosting both legendary musicians and talented newcomers.

CHICAGO'S
NORTH SHORE
CITY LIFE,
ELEVATED

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Centennial Tower

More than a century ago, the Chicago Tribune held an international design competition to create “the most beautiful building in the world” for their new downtown headquarters, the Tribune Tower.



THEN

The media conglomerate received more than 260 entries from 23 countries, with New York architects Hood and Howells winning a first-place prize of \$50,000. Built in 1925 in the Gothic Revival style, the 36-story building features flying buttresses, a three-story arched entrance and famous quotes carved into walls of the first-floor lobby, which is still open to the public.

NOW

Luxurious finishes, marble masterbaths and high-end appliances—such as Sub-Zero, Wolf, and Miele—are just some of the design features found in the Tribune Tower Residences. Condo residents soak up the city’s skyline and views of the river and lake from the 25th-floor Crown Lounge and Terrace.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

Embedded in the exterior stone walls are fragments from historic monuments (such as London’s Westminster Abbey and the Vatican’s St. Peter’s Basilica), plus artifacts from the American Revolution’s Battle of Bunker Hill and WWII’s Omaha Beach in Normandy.

WILMINGTON COUNTY ILLINOIS

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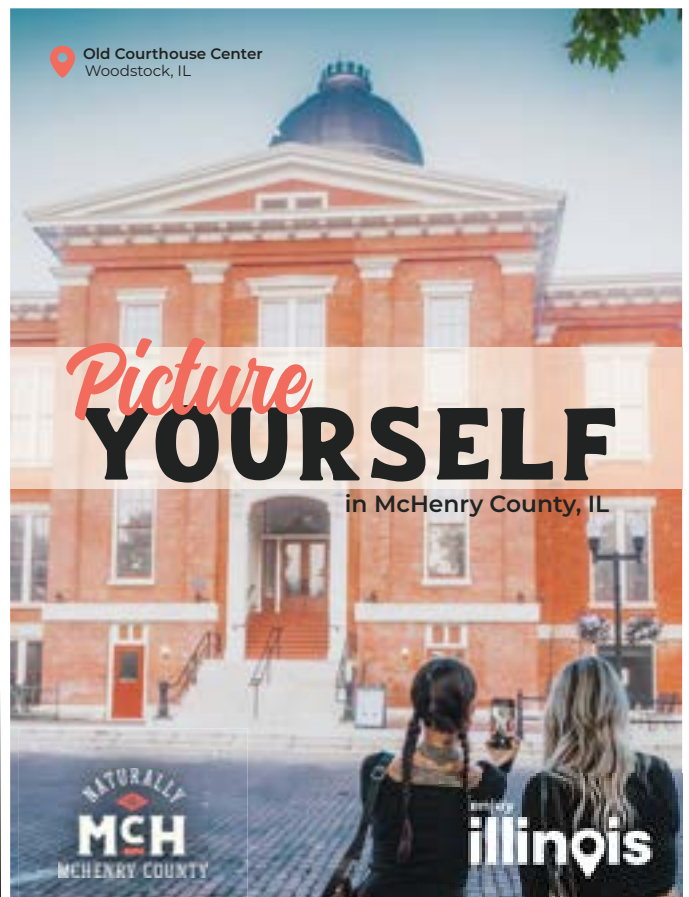
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Picture
YOURSELF

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WHAT'S YOUR BLISS?

*Imagine a free long weekend suddenly appears in your
near future—no plans—no responsibilities.
What are you craving? Everyone has their own recipe
for bliss. Let's take our quiet time to plan your ideal escape.*

WRITER TREE MEINCH

FIND YOUR BLISS

Use this quiz to help you decide where to go on your next Illinois getaway.

When I travel, I remember the experiences that

- ☐ A Take me back with Father Time
- ☐ B Let me bond with Mother Nature
- ☐ C Feel high-end and exclusive
- ☐ D Energize me and make me laugh
- ☐ E Help me slow down and reflect

I'm happiest when

- ☐ A Learning something new
- ☐ B Exploring wide-open spaces
- ☐ C Splurging on myself, family or partner
- ☐ D My heart rate is elevated
- ☐ E Surrounded by farm animals

Most of the time, after a visit, I feel

- ☐ A Biographies of great leaders and innovators
- ☐ B Reality shows set in the wilderness
- ☐ C Meditation and yoga sessions
- ☐ D Video game playthroughs
- ☐ E How-to videos by experts

I love to sit on or drink

- ☐ A Ben Burns (documentary filmmaker)
- ☐ B Mike Probst (*Survivor* host)
- ☐ C Gwyneth Paltrow
- ☐ D Tom Cruise
- ☐ E Martha Stewart

I have one extra hour to do anything I want to do

- ☐ A Sink into a comfy chair with a good book
- ☐ B Take a walk through the park
- ☐ C Soak in a bubble bath
- ☐ D Try indoor rock climbing
- ☐ E Work in my yard/garden

My favorite meal is

- ☐ A Afternoon tea with all the traditional trimmings
- ☐ B A perfectly packed picnic lunch
- ☐ C A multicourse tasting menu at a trendy bistro
- ☐ D Cocktails and sushi
- ☐ E A farm-to-table brunch

My signature look is

- ☐ A Pair of dressy boots
- ☐ B Flowy linen shirt
- ☐ C Cashmere wrap
- ☐ D Belted jumpsuit
- ☐ E Denim jacket

Most of the time, I like to

- ☐ A Thrilling symphonic pieces, such as *The Stars and Stripes Forever* by John Philip Sousa
- ☐ B Mellow tunes that make you smile, such as *What a Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong
- ☐ C Lush ballads performed by exceptional vocalists, such as *Beautiful* by Christina Aguilera
- ☐ D Dance mixes that get your feet tapping, such as *Uptown Funk* by Mark Ronson featuring Bruno Mars
- ☐ E Feel-good sing-alongs, such as *Thank God I'm a Country Boy* by John Denver

I like watching TV

- ☐ A The History Channel
- ☐ B Animal Planet
- ☐ C The Food Network
- ☐ D E!
- ☐ E Magnolia Network

My dream road trip vehicle is a

- ☐ A Vintage Volkswagen Beetle
- ☐ B Rivian R1S
- ☐ C Rolls-Royce Spectre
- ☐ D Chevrolet Corvette R1
- ☐ E Ford F-150

Answer key

Mostly A: History Trips

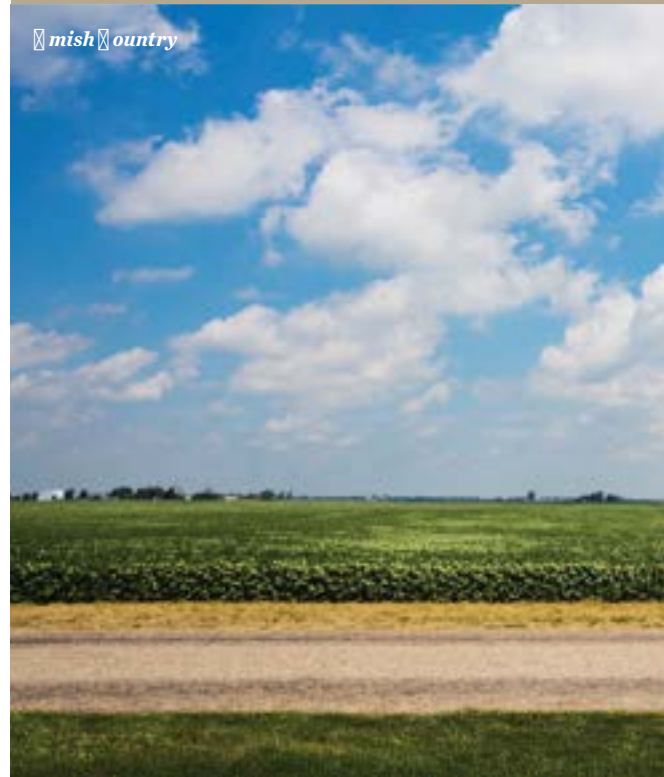
Mostly B: Nature Excursions

Mostly C: Exclusive Retreats

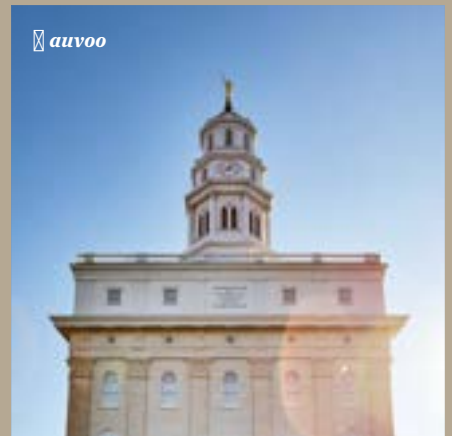
Mostly D: Adrenaline Adventures

Mostly E: Agritourism Tours

Midwest country



Southwest



Midwest Capitol, Springfield





Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield

A

TRAVEL THROUGH HISTORY

Get up close and personal with the humanity and legacy of

Illinois' most famous resident at the **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum** in Springfield. The museum features multimedia programs, rare artifacts and a reproduction of the 1861 White House to create an immersive experience of Lincoln's life and legacy. Down the block, a re-creation of the **Old State Capitol**, Illinois' statehouse from 1840 to 1876, honors the Supreme Court where Lincoln tried cases as a lawyer.

MORE HISTORY TO VISIT

Food-centric festivals and timeless craftwork take center stage in **Illinois Amish Country**, spanning the towns of Arcola, Arthur, Sullivan and Tuscola. Trades like pottery and broom making, which helped build the historic village of **Bishop Hill** in 1846, remain pillars of the community today. Visit several of the foundational sites of **Joseph Smith** and The Church of **Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** in **Nauvoo**.

Bishop Hill





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cabins for pet-
friendly lodging
options in the area.

Shawnee National Forest

Starved Rock State Park,
Oglesby



Pere Marquette Lodge and
Conference Center, Grafton

B

DISCOVER ENDLESS NATURE

Weather-dependent waterfalls, canyons, dells, overlooks and

alcoves lure hikers through **Starved Rock State Park** near Oglesby. Hit the trails in the early morning to claim quiet and solitude at this beloved destination. Booking a room or cabin in the woods at **Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center** is the favorite, comfiest way to beat the crowds of day-trippers. Richly rustic touches set the scene at this stone-and-log lodge that's listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

MORE STATE PARKS TO TRY

Nestled along the Great River Road in Grafton, **Pere Marquette Lodge and Conference Center** in the state park coaxes guests to slow down and gather around a 700-ton stone fireplace after a day exploring the surrounding blues. Rocky trails at **Mississippi Palisades State Park** in Savanna trace the routes of Native American pathfinders along the Mississippi and Apple rivers. Water reigns supreme in Spring Grove's **Chain O'Links State Park**, touting more than 480 miles of shoreline.



C

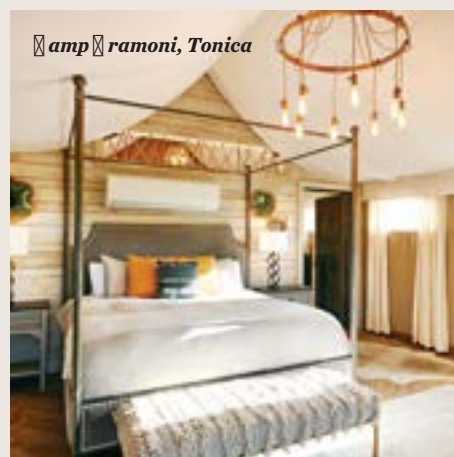
GO ON AN EXCLUSIVE RETREAT

You've probably never stepped on a farmstead quite like **Bunker Hill Farm**. This luxury private resort in Woodstock was invite-only, catering to celebrities and IPs, until 2023. Now the overnight lodge, cottage and silo suite on a private lake welcomes the public, but only one group at a time (accommodating up to 30 guests). Guests have access to the decadent spa-in-a-silo with a glass floor above a garden, a private chef, an 18-hole golf course, and a spacious patio and terrace. Your splurge stay here also goes to a cause, as the owners donate all profits to charity.

MORE EXCLUSIVE RETREATS TO TRY

The upscale **Harpole Heartland Lodge** merges hunting-cabin resort and outfitter with bed-and-breakfast comforts in Nebo. Boutique camping at **Camp Aramoni** in Tonica makes space for hotel amenities in safari-style tents tucked within nearly 100 acres of woods. **Dragonfly Lake** in Dahinda invites you to slow down in sustainable timber-frame cabins, equipped with elegant bathrooms, kitchens and fireplaces.

Camp Aramoni, Tonica



HAVE AN ADRENALINE RUSH

After climbing a steep hill, the Wrath of Rakshasa pauses before plunging 171 feet; the world's steepest dive-coaster drop comes to Gurnee's **Six Flags Great America** in 2025. The gravity-defying ride is in addition to the 17-story-tall, massive pendulum thrill ride that changed the park's skyline last year. The swinging Sky Striker creation clocks speeds up to 75 mph. And it's not even the fastest ride in the park. The record-breaking Maxx Force coaster boasts an eye-watering 0 to 78 mph acceleration in two seconds. Across the street, water-lovers savor summer year-round at **Great Wolf Lodge**. Splash away in a four-story water tree house, the River Canyon Run family raft ride, and a 40-foot water vortex drop, all under one roof.

MORE HEART-PUMPING ADVENTURES TO TRY

Let go and let gravity take over at **Aerie's Resort** in Grafton, where you fly past the trees via zipline or glide between them on Illinois' only alpine coaster. **The Forge: Lemont Quarry** serves up ziplining, a ropes course and rock climbing at its adventure park southwest of Chicago. Brave the Aussie Mat Dash at **Raging Waves**, Illinois' largest outdoor water park in Yorkville.

*Superman: Ultimate Flight,
Six Flags Great America, Gurnee*



SPEND A DAY ON THE FARM

Marcoot Jersey Creamery, a seventh-generation

family farm in Greenville, invites people to drop in for a visit. On a self-guided tour, visit the calf barn, milking parlor and creamery before sampling delicious dairy creations like the Topsy Cheddar Cheese or Sriracha Cheese Curds. Discover more artisan cheeses, ice cream, honey and dog treats at the Country Store. Schedule a ride around the farm in a shaded, open-air monster truck on the “Big Cheese” Safari. During the one-hour excursion, patrons tour the pasture while tasting cheese.

MORE RURAL EXPERIENCES TO TRY

Nature bears extra delight when goats join your hike at **Hoof It Goat Treks** in Galena. Book a standard goat trek—or opt for the bonus bonfire edition. Venture back to a simpler time with agrarian diversions at **Primrose Farm** in St. Charles. Visitors can walk the land and meet the animals. Check the online schedule for animal encounters like milking a cow, feeding the goats and gathering eggs.



Hoof It Goat Treks, Galena

Marcoot Jersey Creamery, Greenville



THE HOUSE OF SICK CHICAGO MUSIC

The infectious sounds of Chicago's have been bringing people to the city for decades. Hollar the the pa-tu pa to the city were tenacious. The Latino and L creators of the party started and discover the beat truly goes on.

WRITERS BRIAN RAMER
AND GARY THOMPSON



CHICAGO HOUSE MUSIC FESTIVAL
Thousands gather in Millennium Park in early summer to feel the beat.

The ideal elevated heart rate pulses at 120 beats per minute. So does a dance floor fueled by Chicago house music. As propulsive and insistent today as it was more than 40 years ago when it was invented in a cluster of clubs on the city's western and southern areas, house's rhythms have always been about more than tempo. They're an invitation to escape the mundane. To move and groove with your friends or complete strangers. To join your heart with other lovers of the beat.

Discussions of house music usually begin with DJ Francis Warren Nicholls Jr., aka Frankie Nuckles, the Godfather of House. (Over the decades, music historians and fans have also conferred godfather status to Chicago DJs Farley "Jackmaster" Funk, Ron Hardy and Lil Louis, among others.) In 1977, Nuckles relocated from New York to Chicago to DJ at a

new dance club called The Warehouse on the city's industrial west side. The club had two distinct differences: Its three floors were packed with top-of-the-line speakers and audio equipment, resulting in an intense, all-consuming sound experience. More importantly, it was a private gay club. Membership wasn't about exclusivity but rather creating a safe place for people to be free from the negativity of sexism, racism and homophobia.

Although some proclaimed disco dead in 1979, Nuckles knew people wanted no, needed to get together and dance. From The Warehouse's second-floor DJ booth, he used the now-classic setup of two turntables and a mixing board to extend and blend three-minute singles into epic soundscapes. When he eventually started his own club, The Power Plant, in 1983, Nuckles began incorporating

HOUSE



House music maintains a home in plenty of Chicago real estate, including these events and clubs.

CHICAGO HOUSE MUSIC FESTIVAL

House heads get their groove on at this free, weekend-long dance party (early summer). It celebrates the genre with a stellar lineup of sets from local and internationally known DJs on two stages in Millennium Park. Additional festival events in previous years have taken place at nearby Chicago Cultural Center and Navy Pier.

SHEDD AFTER HOURS HOUSE PARTY

Mingle with sea creatures and marvel at the Chicago skyline as the beats wash over you at Shedd Aquarium along Lake Michigan. On select summer dates, local DJs spin house sounds as you enjoy the aquatic life and the views. Admission includes all exhibits, with food and beverages available for purchase.

ARC MUSIC FESTIVAL

Gather in Union Park for a Labor Day weekend of music around the theme House Comes Home, with more than 75 scheduled performers. Past rosters included names like Carl Cox and Chip E, the innovative producer of Nuckles's first record "You and I."

drum machines and synthesizers to layer sound. (An oncoming freight train was one of his favorite effects.) Recordings of his club mixes on cassette tapes and quickly produced vinyl LPs from Trax Records were traded between fans and eventually sold in shops around town.

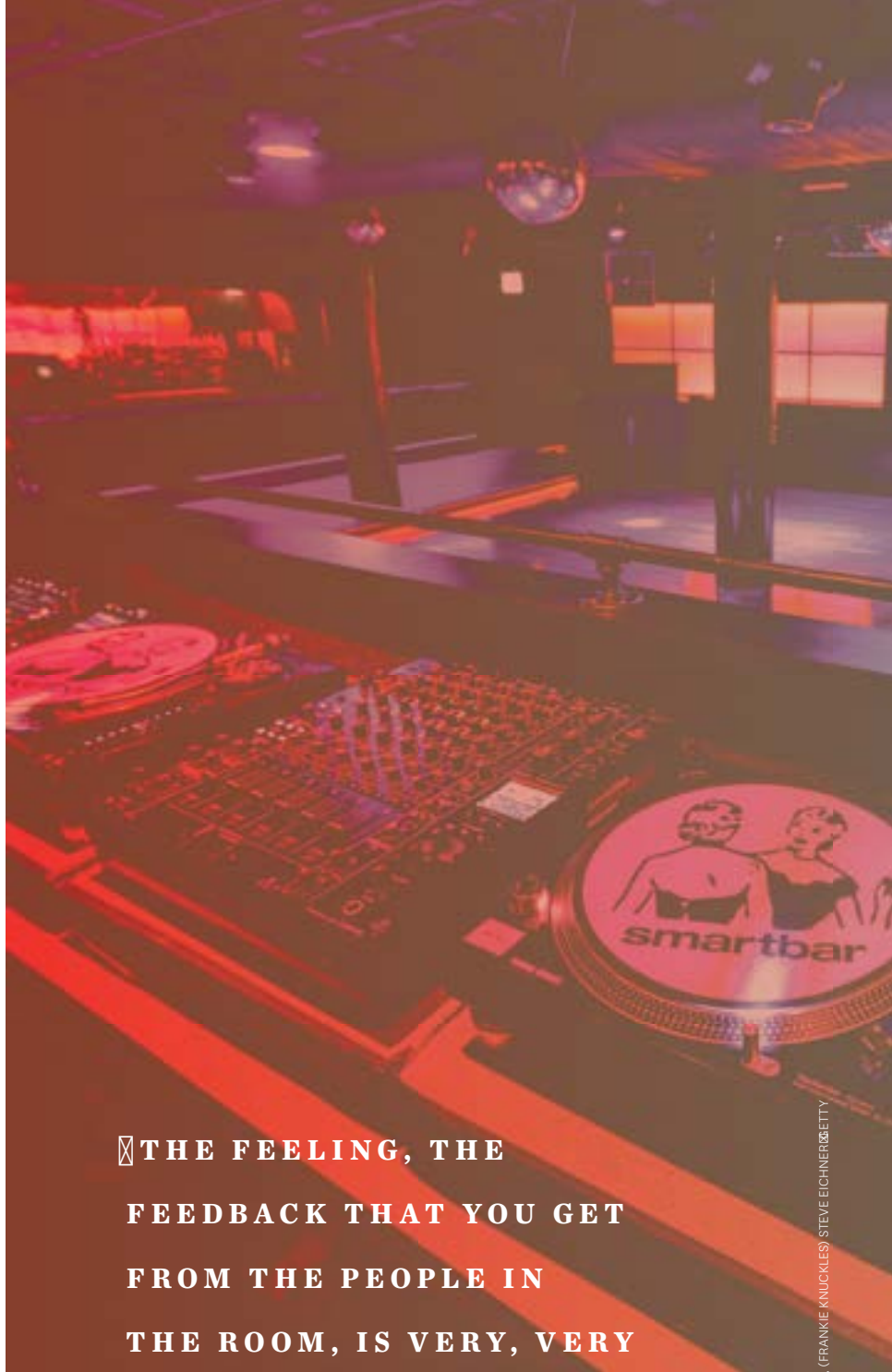
Crowds ballooned and diversified as clubs multiplied. Black and white, gay and straight were soon flocking to The Playground, the Bismarck Hotel, Sauer's, and The Music Box every night of the week to hear DJs spin their versions of musical salvation. For those who couldn't get to the club, Chicago-area radio stations broadcast shows like *otix 5* and *aturday night live in the oive*. House music had become disco's revenge. nuckles boasted in interviews later in his career.

Chicago's house music scene suffered several blows in the second half of the 1980s, including increased club policing and the rise of HIV/AIDS. Audiences shrank and clubs closed, but the recordings made their way across the pond to U.S. music producers who used the sound as the template behind dozens of chart-topping singles and albums for global audiences. Windy City DJs became in-demand producers for mainstream pop stars like Janet Jackson, Whitney Houston and Madonna, all looking for ways to bring dance music back to the masses. nuckles continued to DJ, produce and create house mixes of popular songs until his death in 2014.

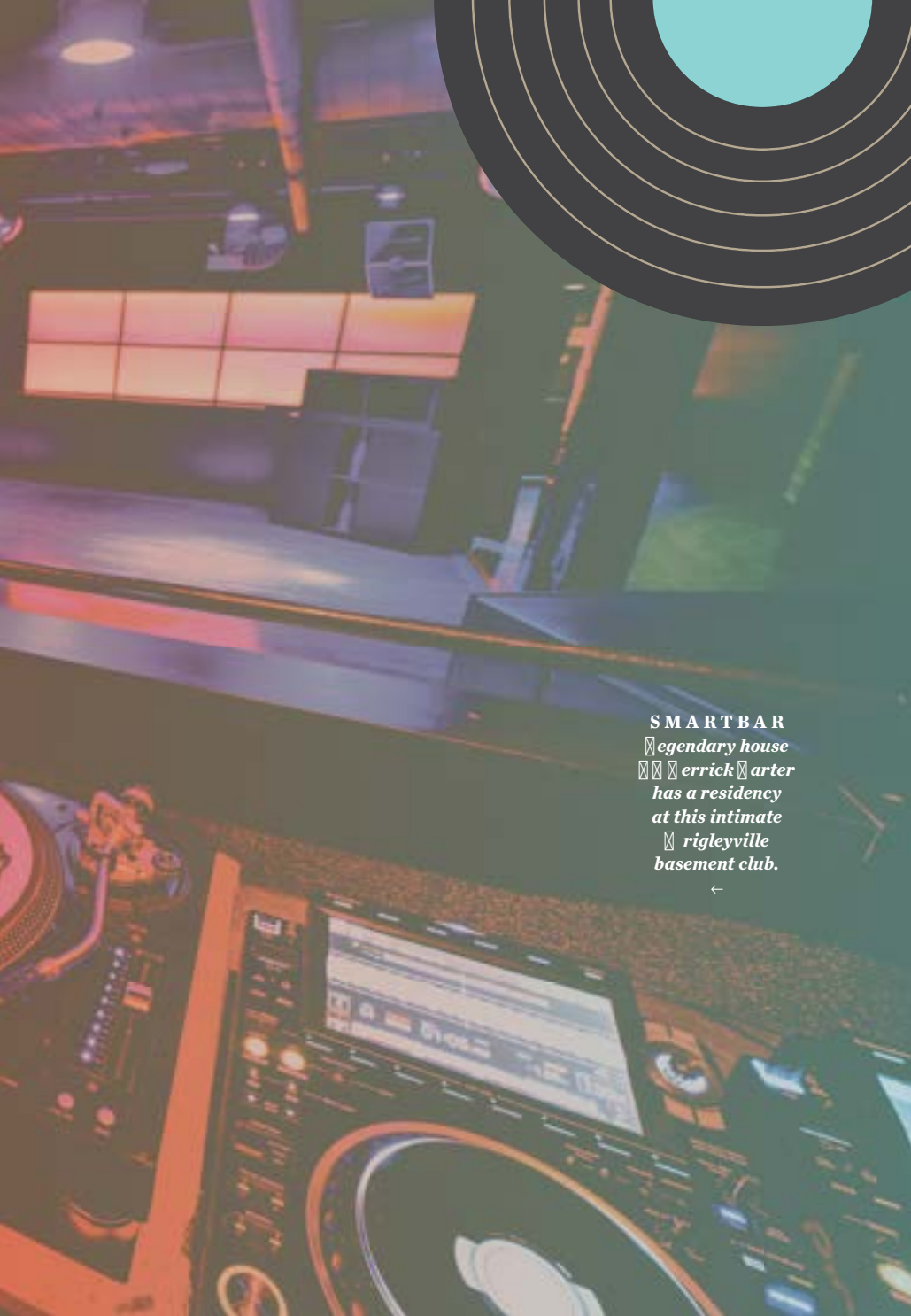
In recent years, creators and fans from around the world have filmed documentaries, written books and started festivals to tell the genre's story. The goal is to keep house music's heart beating for generations of fans to come.

THE FEELING, THE
FEEDBACK THAT YOU GET
FROM THE PEOPLE IN
THE ROOM, IS VERY, VERY
SPIRITUAL. THE WAREHOUSE
WAS A LOT LIKE THAT.
FOR MOST OF THE PEOPLE
THAT WENT THERE, IT WAS
CHURCH FOR THEM.

RANKIE KNuckles INTERVIEW



PHOTOGRAPHS: (SMARTBAR) COURTESY OF SMARTBAR; (FRANKIE KNUCKLES) STEVE EICHNER/GETTY



Chicago gave birth to another lasting form of cultural expression—the dance known as steppin’

Chicago Dancer Sam Chatman gave the dance style its name—steppin'. The smooth, soulful and sensual pas de deux grew out of the Bop, becoming a 1970s Windy City sensation in the Black community. Today, the 6- or 8-count dance has couples spinning, strutting and sashaying to cool R&B music like Marvin Gaye's "Step the Night Away." To truly appreciate steppin', you must see it and try it. Top spots for steppers include the 50 Yard Line and The Grand Ballroom, both on the South Side. Take a class from instructors like Snoop and Crew or Andre Blackwell. And if you and your partner practice all summer, you can enter the annual World's Largest Steppers Competition, held in September at Tinley Park Convention Center.

☒ *egendary house*
 ☒☒☒ *errick ☒ arter*
has a residency
at this intimate
 ☒ *rigleyville*
basement club.

✓ The Warehouse at 206 S. Dearborn St. is now an office building and Chicago landmark. Snap a selfie at the Honorary Frankie Knuckles Way street sign at the corner of Dearborn and Adams streets.

After 30 years of shaping pop music, House is still producing new talents.

The chart-topping releases of Drake's *Honestly*, *evermind* and Beyoncé's *Enaissance* (both in 2022) returned house to the forefront of pop culture, showcasing the genre's ability to adapt to any moment. While Drake plays with tropical and Afropop beats on house-rooted tunes like "Massive" and "Texts Go Green," Queen Bey exalts NYC ballroom culture and musical elders, including her late gay Uncle Johnny who introduced her to house music as a child. Move out the way, indeed!

House-Proud Venues

H RATE NIGHT

DJs play progressive house in Northalsted, a storied LGBTQIA neighborhood.

O ASIE

On weekends, it's all about that bass in Avondale.

R SM HI AGO

This upscale Lincoln Park nightclub boasts touring house DJs as well as live acts.

RA I S HI AGO

House beats often overtake this former steel factory in East Pilsen.

THE HIST ER

Pick back with a cocktail at this bar-gallery known for its live music and house DJs in Logan Square.

Radius  Chicago



rysm  Chicago



**SMOKE AND
MIRRORS**
*Magical house
artists draw locals to
this late-night Logan
Square speakeasy.*



PHOTOGRAPHS: (DISCO BALL HAT, SMOKE AND MIRRORS) FABRIEN BAESFOR AURIS PRESENTS;
(RADIUS, ARC) NOE PADILLA, (BISTROT) ROBERT BRENNER, (MAN WITH SUNGLASSES) BRANDY FIK



The Whistler



rysm Chicago



*After Ark Afterparty
at rysm Chicago*



CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Step through Champaign's dynamic Black history during a self-guided tour that includes more than 20 markers, murals and sculptures—all part of the African American Heritage Trail.

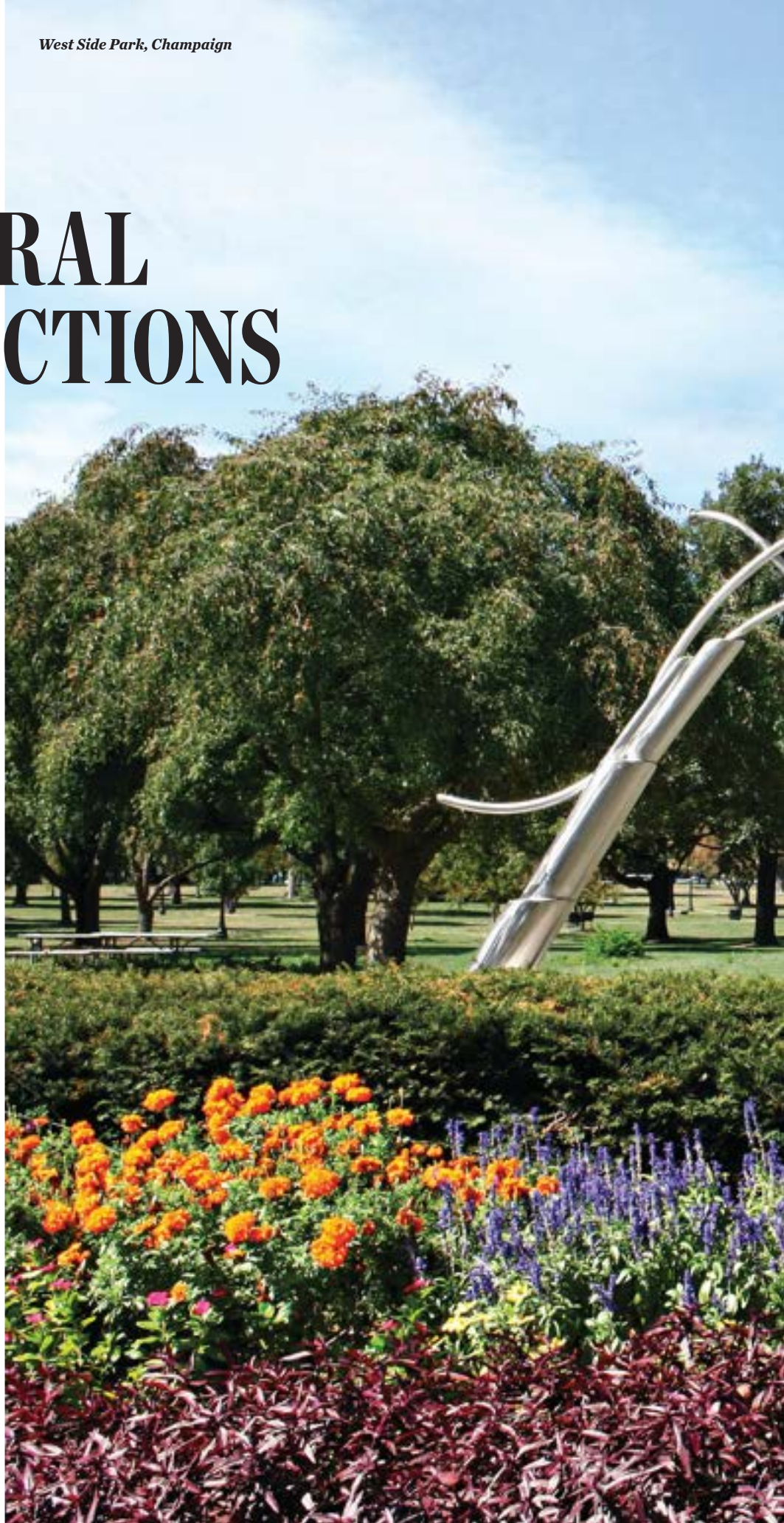
The Heritage Trail, one of 10 state-designated cultural trails, showcases landmarks such as the 1863 Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest African American church in Champaign County, and the North First Street Corridor, the city's oldest business district dating to the 1850s.

In West Side Park, the stainless-steel-and-bronze statue *Double Dutch—A Jump for Joy* sparks memories of children skipping ropes (pictured). And in the newly revitalized Skelton Park, a steel sculpture honors the area's African American musicians who are known locally, nationally and internationally.



**Scan the code
to learn more
about the arts
and culture
scene in Illinois.**

PHOTOGRAPH: EXPERIENCE CHAMPAIGN URBANA





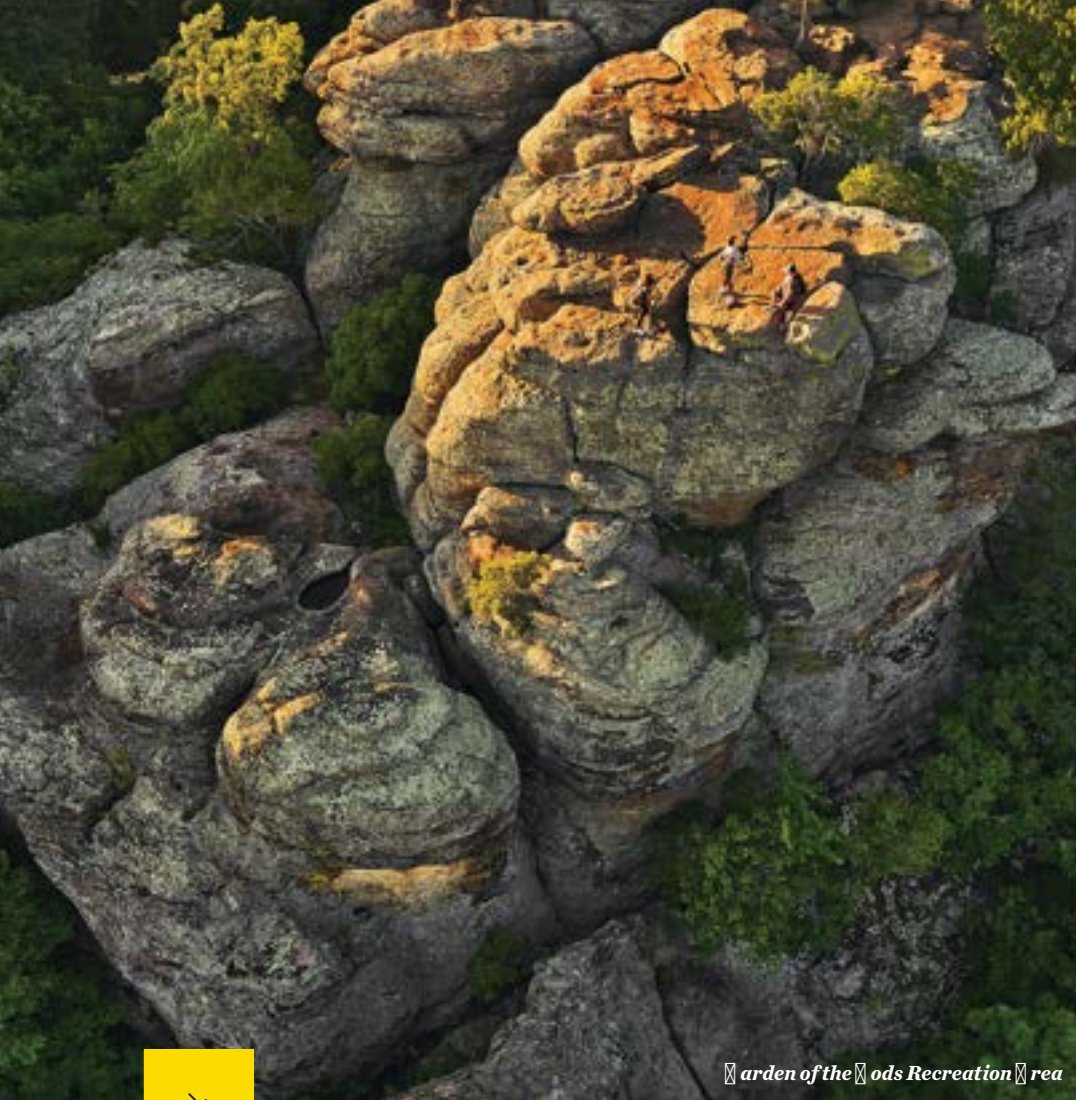
ROCK *of* AGES

TALL LIMESTONE BLUFFS, BIZARRE BOULDERS AND
RAZORBACK RIDGES DEFINE THE JAW-DROPPING TOPOGRAPHY
OF SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST. CHASE WATERFALLS,
THEN UNWIND AT RETREATS SPANNING SOUTHERNMOST ILLINOIS.

WRITER BRIANNE SANCHEZ

Natural wonders converge in the Shawnee Hills region. Nestled between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, this Southern Illinois spot encompasses a national forest, seven wilderness areas and nine state parks. From Bald Knob Wilderness on the state's western edge to the border with Kentucky, trails and waterways are packed with ecological marvels. Winding drives make getting there—and getting around—part of the fun.

The region's ancient formations emerged thanks to nature's erosive forces, creating slopes and sheer walls ideal for scaling and hiking. Sandstone cliffs and rocky precipices also serve as stunning backdrops for less strenuous pursuits. Sample your way through a variety of vineyards and breweries on a tasting tour. Or bring a blanket and cooler to a venue that invites music fans to "rock on" at the mouth of a cave.



Garden of the Gods Recreation Area



FIVE FAB ADVENTURE TRAILS

The 160-mile River-to-River Trail beckons backpackers, but interesting day hikes abound. Choose from scenic strolls or rugged routes.

Rangers consider Giant City Nature Trail a must-see at **Giant City State Park** in Makanda. This 1-mile, moderately difficult loop meanders through massive sandstone rock formations. Naturally walled terrain resembles the streets of an ancient city. Spot salamanders, birds, bats and other wildlife that make their homes in the rock crevices.



Jackson Falls, Shawnee National Forest

Hike 20 minutes through the forest to the top of **MacDon Fall**, a popular warm-weather destination. The seasonal waterfall's flow depends upon recent rainfall. When it's wet, stay cautious of slippery surfaces. Access the falls' bottom via a 3.25-mile round-trip route, beginning at Trail 049 of rugged Glen Street Falls Road.

Eight miles of interconnected trails at **Bell Smith Spring Recreation Area** showcase distinct rock formations and lush landscapes. Don't miss Devil's Backbone and Boulder Falls. Descend stone steps built into the cliffside to the canyon floor. Prepare to wade through pools and hidden springs at this National Natural Landmark.

The Observation Trail at **Garden of the Gods Recreation Area** pairs stunning views with interpretive signage. Follow the flagstone path to learn about the geological origins of named formations like Camel Rock, Table Rock and Devil's Smokestack. Just a quarter-mile long, this postcard-worthy hike rewards those short on time or stamina.

Cave-in-Rock State Park is named for the 55-foot-wide cave that was naturally carved out of limestone rock. Once a hideout used by pirates who threatened travelers on the Ohio River, today it is a tranquil place to trek. There's a river walk and two hiking trails in the heavily wooded park.



NATURAL TRAILS

earthy pumping attractions await visitors who crave an adrenaline rush. Exciting Shawnee trails expeditions keep everyone moving and good times rolling.

ZIPLINE

Channel your inner flying squirrel on the **Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour** out of Makanda. Experienced guides not only show participants the ropes, they educate everyone on ecology between exhilarating trips through the trees. Whiz from platform to platform and hike past white oak and other hardwoods on two- or three-hour established excursions.

ROCK CLIMB

Ferne Clyffe State Park designates dozens of named and graded routes in three distinct locations for climbers of all skill levels. Trad, sport and top rope fans will all find areas to enjoy. For up-to-date climbing routes, details and descriptions, research Mountain Project online.

BICYCLE

Stretching 45 miles from Harrisburg to Arnak, **Tunnel Hill State Trail** follows a crushed-gravel former railroad bed. Less ambitious cyclists can take the section between Vienna and Tunnel Hill for a 20-mile round-trip ride. Turn around after the historic 1929 train tunnel and stop for an ice cream treat at Sandburn Junction, a small shop with bike rentals and snacks.

HORSEBACK RIDE

Saddle up and follow skilled wranglers on a guided gallop. **Giant City Stables** in Makanda is located at the north end of Giant City State Park and offers a one-hour equestrian journey through exclusive trails, as well as hand-led rides for kids. The park also features a 12-mile public horse trail and designated horse campground.

Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour, Makanda

Giant City Stables, Makanda



ILLINOIS INSIDER

Groove then glamp during events and concerts at **Shawnee Cave Amphitheater**, a mesmerizing outdoor music venue nestled into a 100-foot-long sandstone bluff. The natural formation amplifies each note.



Pet-Friendly Parks

Leashed animals are allowed in Illinois state parks, but keep pets out of campground cabins. At **Giant City State Park** 🐾, tail-friendly hiking options include all trails except Trillium Trail.



**GETAWAY
GOALS**
Balance your
active pursuits
with time to relax
and unwind.



Avie School
Ann, Anna



Plant City State Park Lodge and
Restaurant, Makanda



11th Street, Murphysboro



Scratch Brewing
Company, La Grange



THE ITA EE END

Rustic landscapes make the Shawnee Hills an alluring escape. Locally owned establishments infuse unique places to dine, drink and stay.

Toast to the 30th anniversary of the **Shawnee Hill Wine Trail** with sips at 12 spectacular Southern Illinois vineyards.

Order a full rack at renowned barbecue destination **10th Street BBQ** in Murphysboro, home to the legendary Magic Dust seasoning blend.

Named a top brewery for foraged beer by *Outside* magazine, Ava's **Scratch Brewing Company** features farmhouse styles enhanced by local ingredients.

In Makanda, check in at the historic **Giant City State Park Lodge and Restaurant** and marvel at its Civilian Conservation Corps craftsmanship with the use of Illinois hardwoods in its beams and pillars.

The state's first tree house and log cabin resort, **Timber Ridge Outpost and Cabin** in Elizabethtown elevates guests' experience with canopy views.

Stay in one of 11 converted classrooms at the historic **Daniel School Inn** for a lesson in reimagined luxury in Anna.



PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN NOLTNER (BBQ) RYAN DONNELL, (PIZZA) JOT, (TIMBER RIDGE) COURTESY OF TIMBER RIDGE

Timber Ridge Outpost and Cabin, Elizabethtown



TRIP IDEAS AROUND



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





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

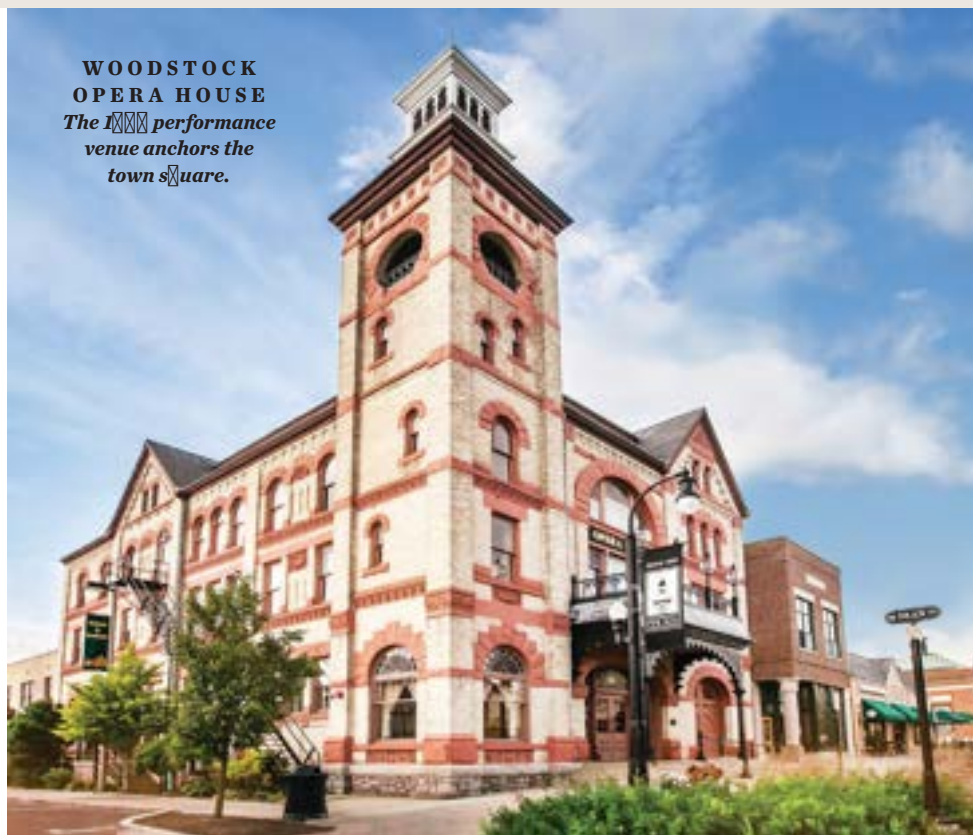


Three Oaks Recreation
area, Crystal Lake

THE STATE

STORY: GARY THOMPSON, PHOTOGRAPHS: (SUNFLOWERS) KEVIN J. MIYAZAKI/REDUX, (MURAL) RYAN DONNELL

**WOODSTOCK
OPERA HOUSE**
*The 1890 performance
venue anchors the
town square.*




POPULATION
310,229

OF NOTE
Glacial Park
Conservation Area,
a natural wonderland,
is the McHenry
County Conservation
District's most
popular site.



←
**QUARRY
CABLE PARK**
*Stay and enjoy a
repet and live
entertainment.*

 **CHICAGO & BEYOND**

McHenry County

Just an hour northwest of Chicago, McHenry County offers a change of pace from the urban hustle. Its communities retain small-town charm and rural roots.

In a classic episode of *Heiligt* *one* stressed executive riding the train home from the city falls asleep and seemingly wakes up in an idyllic small town called Willoughby. It's a bit like that when you visit McHenry County, except the dreamy towns you can reach via Metra train like Cary, Crystal Lake and McHenry are for real, their quaint downtowns filled with quirky shops and colorful history. Woodstock's square is so picturesque that it's been in pictures, most

famously *roundhog* ay. And since agriculture is still big here, you'll find some of the state's best farmers markets.

McHenry County also beckons with natural beauty and spots for outdoor recreation. The Fox River flows through, helping connect a waterway system called the Chain O' Lakes, and the city of Crystal Lake has its own namesake 230-acre body of water. All of them attract birders, fishers and paddlers, while spots like Moraine Hills State Park draw hikers and cyclists. For a more leisurely encounter with nature, visit farms where fields of sunflowers bloom in late summer. The *olo* Museum in *olo* is a ride through automotive history, and the Illinois Railway Museum in Union transports you back to when trains dominated travel may be to Willoughby.

DO

During the weekend, find food purveyors, artisans and more at the **McHenry Riverwalk Shoppe**, a village of tiny start-ups.

Three Oaks Recreation Area

, an old quarry, is now a rockin' spot for water-lovers in Crystal Lake. Swim, paddle, boat (rentals available) and even scuba dive. At **Harry's Cafe Par**, there's wakeboarding and live music.

EAT

Cool off with a treat at **lie Ann**, a family-owned frozen custard shop in Crystal Lake.

Find farm-to-table comfort food and more than 150 beers at **Doe's Alehouse and Kitchen** in Crystal Lake. Pi at **Doe's Inferno** in Woodstock is fire too.

Stop into **Ye Olde Corner Tap** for old-fashioned ambience and a Ye Olde Fashioned cocktail in McHenry.

STAY

Relax at the **Cherry Tree Inn Bed and Breakfast** with a wraparound porch in Woodstock. It's a convenient base camp for exploring downtown.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

For nearly 20 years, **Ree's Bakery and Pawti** has been helping people pamper their dogs and cats with the best foods, treats, toys and accessories in McHenry. Locals rave about the friendly, personal service.

DO

View exhibits on dinosaurs, Mississippi River wildlife and Native Americans inside **The Quincy Mansion**, housed in the historic Newcomb-Stillwell Mansion.

Tour **Villa Kathrine**, a Moroccan-style mansion built on the Mississippi bluffs for Quincy native and world traveler W. George Mett.

Use the self-checkout system at **Kaya Quincy** to rent a vessel at Mesler Park and paddle Quincy Bay. Paddles and life jackets are included.

EAT

Billy Joel could have written *Scenes from an Italian Restaurant* about **Tiramisu**, an old familiar pizza and pasta place across the street from Washington Park.

The **Maid Rite** is one of the oldest (since 1928) of the Midwest sandwich-shop chain restaurants.

Stop in for a classic loose-meat burger.

The city's only craft brewery, **Quincy Brewing Company**, keeps things hopping with beers like Great Debate, a pale lager. Pets are welcome in The Garden, their outdoor space.

STAY

The Atrium Hotel on Third is renovating and rebranding as a DoubleTree by Hilton. Look for new furniture, flooring and bath fixtures in every room, plus upgraded food and beverage options.



GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY

Quincy

Though held in high regard for its architecture, Quincy keeps a low profile along the Great River Road, sparkling for those who discover this hidden gem.



Bayview Bridge

Anchored to the Mississippi River, Quincy is steeped in history and acclaimed for its buildings. With four districts on the National Historic Register (representing 3,600 properties), Quincy is home to some of the state's most important structures not in Chicago. *National Geographic* named 16th and Maine Street one of 10 most architecturally significant corners in the U.S. The spot is in the city's East End Historic District, which includes every popular home style from the 1830s to the 1930s. Most of the dwellings have been restored and are beautifully landscaped. Take a self-guided walking tour or rent a bike through Bike Quincy; the first two hours are free.

Downtown, The District offers shopping, dining and entertainment amid more historic architecture, plus a farmers market on Saturdays (May through October). Still hungry? Quincy boasts 130-plus restaurants, half of them locally owned. On summer Fridays, Blues in The District brings concerts to Washington Park, where the sixth Lincoln-Douglas debate took place in 1858. Learn more at the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Museum across the street. In June, the park also hosts the Midsummer Arts Faire, a three-day festival featuring 60 artists. Appreciate creativity year-round at The Art Center, which maintains a collection of more than 400 works by regional and national artists.

THE ART CENTER
Open (for free) or sign up to take a class.



POPULATION
39,463

OF NOTE

Bayview Bridge over the Mississippi River features multihued lights that put on an always-changing show at night.


POPULATION
12,252

OF NOTE
Lake Sara, an 800-acre reservoir west of town, has a public beach, two marinas, a playground and golf.



LAND OF LINCOLN

Effingham

People have some fun with the town's name, but locals and in-the-know travelers laugh right along all the way to attractions that are seriously stimulating and relaxing.

At the crossroads of Interstates 57 and 70, Effingham welcomes many travelers who are just passing through, offering rest and repasts with 17 hotels and more than 65 restaurants. And for decades, Effingham straddled two major railroad lines, earning the nickname Heart of the United States. Today, the city of Effingham

←
**THE CROSS
AT THE
CROSSROADS**

*Walk the
acre campus.*

releans Amtrak's historic passenger line, still picks up and drops off passengers here on its route between Chicago and

New Orleans. But the city's attractions warrant more than just a brief stop. The most prominent landmark is The Cross at the Crossroads,

a 198-foot-tall symbol that stands near I-57/70. People go there to reflect, connect with their faith and visit the adjacent welcome center and chapel. For the roads part of crossroads, check out the rare automobiles, such as classic Corvettes and Volkswagens, at My Garage Museum. A 1910 gas station was moved to the museum and restored on-site. Foodies know top chefs use butcher-block cutting boards crafted by John Boos and Company, an Effingham-based company founded in 1887. Shop their factory showroom outlet store—it's open to the public. See more craftsmanship in the Effingham County Courthouse Museum—it's on the National Register of Historic Places.

DO

Walk, run or bike miles of smooth pavement on the **TREC Trail** through woods and a nature park near the Little Wabash River.

Starship and Randy Travis highlight the 2025 concert calendar at **Effingham Performance Center**, a 1,500-seat venue.

More than 30 sculptures by Midwest artists decorate the streets as part of **Sculpture on the Avenue**. Start a self-guided walking tour at city hall, where you can pick up a map.

EAT

Firefly Grill, Niall and Kristie Campbell's rustic-chic restaurant, earns glowing reviews with ingredients grown on-site and gathered from area farmers, fishers and foragers.

Cafe owner Emily Debenham got her start at Firefly Grill. Now she serves hand-brewed, small-batch coffee, plus wraps and sandwiches full of local flavors, at **Joe Sipper Cafe**.

Since 1978, **Niemerg Steakhouse** has been dishing out scratch-made, good-as-Grandma's breakfast, lunch and dinner. The fried chicken and the pies are big faves.

STAY

Choose **Loft at the Exchange** with the modern-industrial vibe and convenient location of a furnished loft apartment in a renovated 1890 bank building downtown.



DO

Join thousands of fans who come for the annual **Superman Celebration** (June 13-15), a weekend of costumes, contests and celebrities.

The **Super Museum** holds one of the world's largest privately owned collections of Superman memorabilia—70,000-plus items, including a costume worn by George Reeves.

Get a selfie with the **Noel Neill/Lois Lane Statue**, which honors Neill, the first actor to play Superman's leading lady.

Scuba dive at **Mermet Spring**, a full-service scuba training facility and dive site. Among the spring-fed quarry's underwater treasures—a 727 jet used in the movie *Jaws*.

EAT

Order from the Black Rock Grill menu at **Cordano's Italian Kitchen** and your entree is served on a 775-degree black stone to finish cooking at your table.

Here's the skinny on **Fat Edd's Roadhouse**—it's all about fun, hands-on food (like kabobs, peel-and-eat shrimp, and chicken wings).

Get the Superman Breakfast—two eggs, loaded hash browns and toast—until noon at **Yesterday BBQ**, a favorite spot among locals.

STAY

Ohio Riverviews and Vegas-style gaming up the ante at **Harrah's Metropolis Hotel and Casino**. Rooms are haute yet homey, and there are two on-site dining options.

Superman Statue



TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

Metropolis area

While its claim to fame stems from a fictional superhero, the town of Metropolis in southernmost Illinois promises some very real delights.

For more than 50 years, Metropolis has been the official hometown of Superman, a status declared by DC Comics and the Illinois General Assembly in 1972. The city's pride in that lofty honor is clear from the 15-foot-tall statue of the Man of Steel that guards the business district. Though Clark Kent's alter ego draws people to this town just off I-24 in the southern tip of Illinois, other super attractions get them to stay awhile. Downtown, Market Street is home to locally owned boutiques full of fashions, home decor and antiques. On the eastern edge of town, Fort Massac State Park

is the oldest state park in Illinois and contains a reconstructed fort from the French and Indian War. The visitors center has exhibits about the fort, and the park has a disc golf course, picnic shelters, playgrounds, and places for fishing, hiking and biking. Explore Mermet Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, about 12 miles northwest of Metropolis. The old cypress swamp, now a haven for waterfowl, is popular with anglers, boaters and hikers. On the Ohio River Scenic Byway, the Incaid Mounds State Historic Site, once home to Native Americans, dates to A.D. 900.

ILLINOIS INSIDER

Though artisan cookies, cupcakes and ice cream give **Sioux Metropolis** a sweet reputation, the downtown bakery also serves savory soups, salads and sandwiches for lunch.

FORT MASSAC STATE PARK
In 1800, this site that overlooks the Ohio River became Illinois' first state park.



POPULATION
5,969

OF NOTE
Metropolis Lighthouse, aka Hope Light, overlooks the Ohio River from Dorothy Miller Park. It's the world's first lighthouse dedicated to the fight against cancer.

EXPLORE

Check out these inspiring places across Illinois.



HEMPSTOCK PHARMS Working hemp farm and craft cannabinoid formulation center.

Hempstock Farms is Illinois' first and only year-round, tourable, working hemp farm and craft cannabinoid formulation center. Hempstock's on-farm retail store, apothecary and education center is open Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. with extended hours on Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

hempstockfarms.com

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EXPLORE ART AND HISTORY Elgin Area, experiencing architecture and art showcased in historic downtowns.

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exploreelginarea.com
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[Facebook](#) celebrationBelle



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volomuseum.com

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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,
exploreeginarea.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
708/524-7800,
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
618/889-5283, 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 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, 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 29 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.



Sixteen 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 in most public places, including theaters, museums, casinos, restaurants and bars.

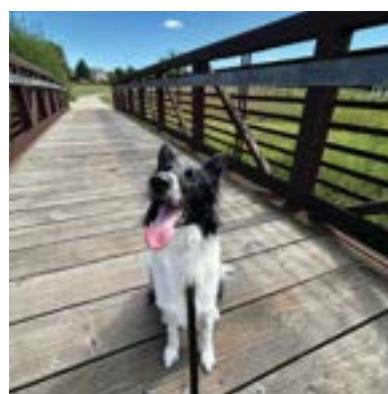
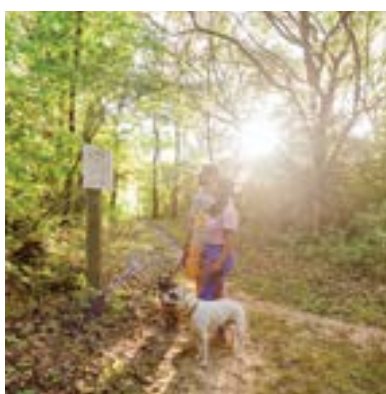
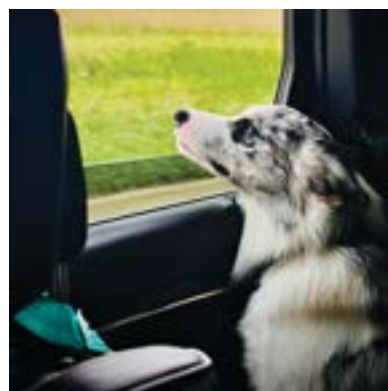
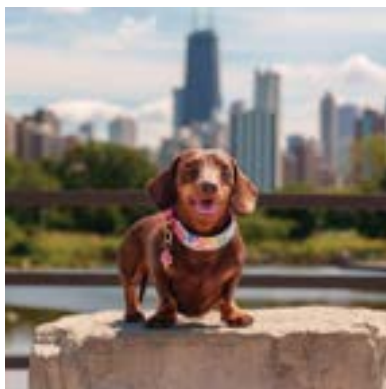
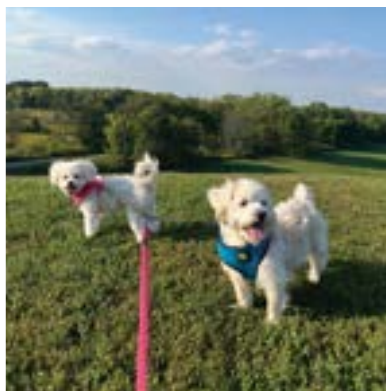
Big Lincoln, an AI Travel Assistant, is online and ready to help you make plans 24/7. Find him at enjoyillinois.com



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POP-TASTIC!

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

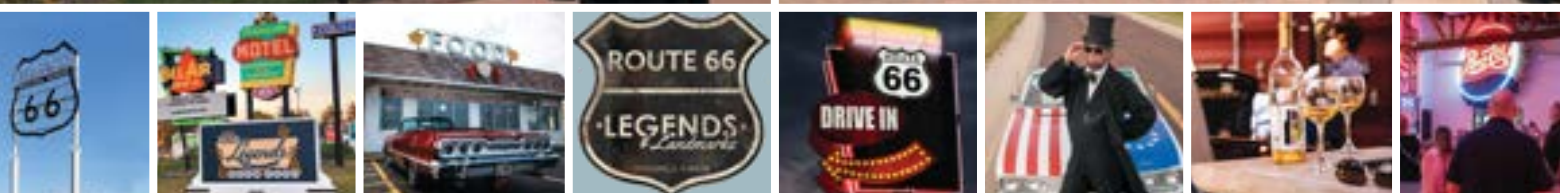


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT → Springfield @twofluffs; Galena @schleuningphotography; Stoney Creek Hotel, Peoria @wanderlustdiy; US-30, between Hinkley and Shabbona @simplicityofthree; Gaelic Park, Bloomington @midwestmeeko; Jubilee College State Park, Peoria @discoverpeoria; Southport Corridor, Chicago @misscoconutthedood; Chicago @parker.dachshund

**ENGAGE YOUR SENSES
IN SPRINGFIELD, IL**



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AND DO IN THE LAND OF
LINCOLN GO TO
EN.O.ILLINOIS.COM