

Chicago Vacation Travel Guide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QISwvg9Rv2EI>

Chicago Windy City Nights

<https://www.chicagotimelapse.org/projects/>

Chicago is situated in the Great Lakes region of the American Midwest, in the state of Illinois.

(Illinois is an Algonquin Indian word for "tribe of superior men".)

(Chicago comes from the Indian name for a kind of wild garlic that grew along the Des Plaines River. Des Plaines is French for "the plains" (flat land))

Rising from the edges of Lake Michigan, Chicago began as a tiny trading post at the mouth of the Chicago River, and has boomed into a modern global center of commerce and culture.

(Lake Michigan is 190 km x 494 km, so pretty big)

(has boomed → boom, the sound you get from an explosion; has boomed here means very fast economic growth; goes from small town to big city very quickly, so the growth was like an explosion)

The Windy City has always been driven by an unshakable optimism and can-do attitude.

(Windy City → not due to moving air; comes from politicians (wind bags) who talked and talked and talked)

(unshakable optimism → people do not get discouraged – EVER)

The Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which destroyed half the city, was seized upon as an opportunity for the metropolis to reinvent itself.

(was seized upon → took a disaster and used it as an opportunity)

What followed was the biggest building boom in US history and a skyline that is almost beyond beautiful.

(building boom → lots of building in a short time)

(beyond beautiful → more beautiful than just beautiful)

Start your visit in The Loop - the central business district encircled by the 'L', Chicago's elevated train line.

(central business district - downtown, i.e. el centro)

('L' is short for elevated train line; trains underground are subway trains)

The streets within The Loop are a showcase of architecture, from the world's first high-rises, to the cloud-piercing towers of today.

(first high-rises → the skyscraper was invented in Chicago; buildings that go up very high)

(cloud-piercing towers → very tall buildings, often the tops of the buildings are

hidden by clouds)

Willis Tower held the title of world's tallest building for almost 25 years.
(It was the Sears Tower, they changed the name.)

Take the 60-second ride to the Skydeck.
(averages out to about 20 kph)

On a really windy day you might even feel the building sway a little, but don't panic, it was designed to do just that.

The Loop also contains some amazing outdoor sculpture and an historic theater district which makes the area feel like a cross between a museum and a film set.

Running north from The Loop is the Magnificent Mile, where you'll be able to gaze up at even more wonders from the Chicago School of architecture.

Looking a little out of place is the Old Water Tower, a lone, but much-loved survivor from the Chicago Fire.

Shop 'til you drop in the upscale boutiques which line The Magnificent Mile's wide boulevards.

(Shop 'til you drop → Shop until you are so tired you can't stand up)

(upscale boutiques → stores with very expensive stuff)

(wide boulevards → very wide streets usually with trees between the opposite lanes;

The Magnificent Mile is not really a boulevard if you ask me.)

And when it's time to refuel, sink your teeth into a deep dish pizza - an old Chicago favorite.

(time to refuel → time to eat; planes get refueled; planes use jet fuel)

Following the south bank of the Chicago River and winding between the canyons of glass and steel, The Riverwalk offers a relaxing change of pace from the downtown bustle.

(downtown bustle → lots of people going very quickly in every direction; usually the phrase to use is "hustle and bustle")

Still within The Loop is Millennium Park.

Once the site of railway yards and car parks, the area has been transformed into what critics have hailed as 'the future of parks'.

(critics have hailed → critics are very happy with the new style of park; very excited)

The centerpieces of this visionary space are the Frank Gehry-designed Jay Pritzker Pavilion and the BP Footbridge.
(BP is British Petroleum)

The park showcases a number of public sculptures, including a futuristic stainless steel archway to the city, Cloud Gate, or as it's affectionately known to locals - 'The Bean'.

Just across the road is The Art Institute of Chicago whose exterior is a work of art in itself.

Set aside at least a day to explore this treasure-house of European, American and Asian masterpieces.

There are plenty of treasures to be found outside The Loop. Just to the west is one of Chicago's hidden gems, the Garfield Park Conservatory, an inner-city haven for nature lovers and a first-date favorite for Chicago couples.
(haven --> a safe or peaceful place)

In nearby Oak Park, step inside Frank Lloyd Wright's home and studio, where for 20 years he pioneered an entirely new architectural vision for America.

Unity Temple is just a short stroll away.

Completed in 1908, this Lloyd Wright masterpiece is widely regarded as the world's first modern building.

While you're in Oak Park, stop by the birthplace of one of Chicago's most famous sons, Ernest Hemingway.

In the nearby museum, fans of the novelist can read from his childhood diary and original manuscripts.

Down by The Loop's waterfront, the historic Navy Pier offers entertainment for all ages.

The pier is also the place to climb aboard one of the many lake and river cruises on offer.

Just south of Navy Pier, The Field Museum houses over 20 million specimens from the world of natural history.

Say hello to Sue, the largest and most intact skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus Rex ever unearthed.
(unearthed → dug out of the ground (earth))

The museum might look a little familiar, after all, it was the home base for Indiana Jones in the blockbuster movie series.

A little further south along the waterfront you'll find the Museum of Science and Industry - known by generations of school children as 'the best field trip ever!'.

Here you'll get to explore the inner workings of man and machine, and discover the secrets of natural phenomena like tornadoes, lightning and avalanches. (the inner workings → the things inside that make the machine work)

Chicago's largest green space is Lincoln Park, a seven mile stretch of shoreline which runs north from The Loop.
(stretch of shoreline → long area along the shore of the lake)

It's home to nature reserves, a conservatory, and monuments to many of the nation's heroes, including the park's namesake - Abraham Lincoln.

The park also features the Lincoln Park Zoo which has been entertaining and educating visitors since 1868.

The zoo features two sections specifically designed for children, and best of all it's free.

The park is also home to the Chicago History Museum.

From gangsters to baseball, this is the place to visit if you really want to know what makes this unique city tick.

As the sun sets, Chicago truly lights up.

But don't plan on going to bed early, the city offers some of the best jazz, blues and theater in America.

So come on over to Chicago, the memories you'll take away will last a lifetime - no matter how hard the wind blows.
(Every travel company will tell you every place you might go is the "trip of a lifetime")