



Welcome to our brief guide of things to do in Chicago that we suggest a/o recommend. We got music, eats and miscellaneous tourist stuff here in this guide. Enjoy!

General Suggestions and Recommendations

Security in Chicago

Needless to say, they take security in Chicago VERY seriously. We consider ourselves a potential big red target with a lot of priceless historical buildings and architecture, some major world wide known high profile locations and events, and the fact that we've not yet been a target of any serious potential terrorism targeting.

That said, DON'T fuck around or do anything that can be construed wrong. We're not trying to panic and scare you or make you run from police here, as generally they are mostly friendly and usually have better things to do than harass you if you're just being silly. That said, Chicago police are historically infamous for their potential to act on a whim, sometimes violently, and worry about consequences later if they consider you ANY kind of serious threat to the city or its people and property. Don't even joke about security stuff here, especially in our airports, bus and train stations, and high profile tourist areas like the Sears Tower, or you could find yourself in a jail cell for the con weekend. You've been warned.

Driving In Chicago.

Put simply, if blows. We HIGHLY recommend public transportation if your destination is ANYWHERE near an El stop or major bus line, even if you drove to the city from out of state. Additionally, we probably will not have any "in and out" privileges for people that drove/park at the hotel (you'll pay every time you enter). We went to great lengths to make it so no one had to drive during the con weekend if they didn't HAVE to, so take advantage of that.

Take the CTA wherever you go. <http://www.transitchicago.com/maps/index.html>

Please though, do check ALL schedules of trains and buses before you get on any to go somewhere, many do not run 24 hours and you may find yourself stranded and having to take a cab to the nearest bus/El station if the line stops running after you are already where you're going.

Driving Into the City

Those of you driving into the city; during any daylight hours on Thursday or Friday you should allow yourselves an extra HOUR OR TWO to get through Chicago expressways to downtown. If you're driving in from the east, at ANY time, STAY OFF THE "DAN RYAN" EXPRESSWAY (I94 in the city limits)! It's currently in the midst of a MAJOR reconstruction project and you could find yourself trapped for 3 or 4 hours if you try it. Of course, Illinois and Indiana DOT's in their infinite wisdom have also decided that this would be the best time to overhaul The Chicago Skyway (I90) and the 90/94/294 interchange at the Illinois/Indiana border, thereby tying up all major traffic ways in and out of Chicago from the east. You'll suffer some delay in these areas as well, and unfortunately there is no real alternative to the interchange – you just kind of have to grin and bear it.

Random Exploring

Like any big city, Chicago has its good neighborhoods, neighborhoods you probably shouldn't wander around too much in if you're not familiar with them or look like a tourist, and neighborhoods you really just don't want to go into, even in broad daylight. Unfortunately, these are mostly spread throughout the city and going into too many specifics would be mostly pointless – most Chicago natives don't even know all of the good/bad areas of the city, and it CAN shift every couple of blocks.

VERY general rule of thumb is that anything in the downtown area north of Roosevelt and east of 90/94, and anywhere north of I90 as it goes northwest from the Loop is pretty much okay (but there are a couple of exceptions to that too). We suggest you do not randomly stop your car off or jump off the El in neighborhoods that look "interesting" unless they also look relatively safe to you. If you make a mistake, get right back on the El as it's generally safe even in the poorer neighborhoods.

If you have ANY doubt, ask a local (con committee member or hotel employee).

On to the fun now...

Recommended general things to do and places to go around Chicago

by jeff

Touristy Stuff

Sears Tower - 233 S Wacker Dr - <http://www.the-skydeck.com/homeDefault.htm>

Head to the Sky Deck of the tallest building in the US. Hourly trips up to the top on all clear weather days.

John Hancock Building - 875 N. Michigan Avenue - <http://www.hancock-observatory.com/>

The second tallest building in Chicago and many feel their building top view is better than the Sears Tower. Plus you can say that you traveled to the top of the biggest Cock in the world. ;-)

The Water Tower - 800 N. Michigan Avenue - <http://www.aviewoncities.com/chicago/watertower.htm>

The largest surviving structure of the Great Chicago Fire, The Water Tower and Pumping station is one of the oldest buildings in the city, and our most widely loved and recognized historical building.

Magnificent Mile / Water Tower Place - 835 N. Michigan Avenue - <http://www.shopwatertower.com/>

Michigan Avenue North of the Chicago River up to the John Hancock Building features a concentration of some of the finest shops and stores in the world. Even if you can't afford anything, it's fun to window shop.

Millennium Park / Grant Park - Michigan Ave & Congress - <http://www.millenniumpark.org/>

Chicago's biggest public works park project in its history. Right across the street and a bit north from the hotel, this social gathering place had become a center for Chicago's citizens with many interesting areas. Cloud Gate (better known as "the bean") is a real favorite, especially for photographers. Also home to Buckingham Fountain, the largest freshwater fountain in the world.

Oak Street Beach - 1000 N. Lake Shore Drive - <http://www.chicagotraveler.com/attractions/oak-street-beach.html>

Just north of the John Hancock Building is Chicago's most popular beach. You can also walk the shore from there a mile north to North Avenue beach.

Misc. Chicago Tours and Landmarks - 224 South Michigan Avenue - <http://www.architecture.org/>

Go here for information on tours and things to do in the downtown area of Chicago. Not-For-Profit and dedicated to promoting our city.

The Art Institute of Chicago - 111 South Michigan Avenue - <http://www.artic.edu/aic/>

See the American Gothic painting (as seen and tribute'd to in Rocky Horror) and hundreds of other priceless world famous art pieces.

The Fine Arts Building - 410 S. Michigan Ave. - <http://www.fineartsbuildingchicago.com/>

Just north across the street from the hotel is the classic building/theater that Midnight Madness used to perform in (and where we tried to have the con, unfortunately the theater currently not up to code and is closed). However, it's still brimming with artists, musicians and writers and great architecture and you can take in a lunch at "the Artist's Café"

Navy Pier - 600 East Grand Avenue - <http://www.navypier.com/>

Chicago's most popular tourist attraction with a giant shallow pool, 150ft Ferris wheel, the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (currently featuring "Seussical the Musical"), Huge Winter Garden, Cirque Shanghai (just can't get away for the "Cirque" at Rocky cons now ;-)

Ohio & LaSalle St area, just north of the river

This is the center of a huge concentration of Chicago restaurants and clubs. The Rock and Roll McDonald's, Ed Debevic's, Geno's East, Lou Manati's, The Hard Rock Café Chicago, Carson's Ribs, Portillo's Hot Dogs, and literally 100 other restaurants in about a 5 block radius make this the place to go if you're looking for anything to eat in Chicago. It's a bit of a trek from the hotel to walk to, about a mile and a half north, but it's well worth getting a few people together in a cab to check out – the atmosphere alone is worth it.

Marshall Field's - 111 North State Street - <http://www.fields.com/>

Since 1852 Field's has been a shopping institution in Chicago, that in about 6 weeks will convert over to "Macy's". The building itself is a Chicago architecture landmark. Go there and get a Marshall Field's bag and a closeout Marshall Field's private label item or three and you can say you visited this store right before it passed into Chicago history. Marshall Field along with Montgomery Ward were the two Chicagoan's that are most responsible for the massive amount of public parkland east of Michigan Avenue and all along the shore due to their tireless efforts and lobbying in the first half of the 20th century to stave off private development of our lakefront, so "thank" them during picnic time on Sunday. That park would not be there were it not for them.

The Harold Washington Chicago Public Library - 400 South State Street - <http://www.chipublib.org/>

The much maligned (when it was built about 20 years ago), but now fondly admired Chicago Public Library – about 90% of you will pass this 6 story massive library on Congress Ave as you get to the hotel. This is the second largest library in the US right after the main branch of the NYC public library.

The Prairie Ave. Architectural Book Store – 418 S. Wabash Ave. - <http://www.pabook.com/>

Probably the finest collection of architectural books for sale in one place anywhere in THE WORLD. Tens of thousands of titles of architecture related books and magazines and a huge selection of print stuff. If architecture is your bag, THIS place is IT.

The Frank Lloyd Wright houses / Oak Park - 951 Chicago Avenue, Oak Park, IL - <http://www.oprf.com/flw/>

Oak Park IL is the largest single residential collection of FLW architecture in the world. There are tours that take you around the neighborhoods, but we suggest you contact them first for times and availability before you get on the El and head out there.

The Field Museum - 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr - <http://www.fieldmuseum.org/>

The "natural history" museum for Chicago. King Tut is back in town and you can see "Sue" the worlds most complete T Rex fossilized skeleton.

The Museum of Science and Industry - 57th Street and Lake Shore Drive - <http://www.msichicago.org/>

The "science and technical" museum for Chicago, lots of famous exhibits. Leonardo daVinci is "in town" as well right now.

The John G. Shedd Aquarium - 1200 South Lake Shore Drive - <http://www.sheddaquarium.org/>

One of the finest and largest aquariums in the country.

The Adler Planetarium - 1300 S. Lake Shore Drive - <http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/>

Although aging a bit, it's still an excellent place worth a visit from any of you astronomy buffs. Notable for the fact that the view in the most common pictures you see of the Chicago skyline are taken from the shore from right around the planetarium.

Graceland Cemetery - 4001 N. Clark St. - <http://www.graveyards.com/IL/Cook/graceland/>

Just slightly north/northeast of Wrigley and The Music Box Theater

Many of Chicago's biggest names and historical figures are buried here, and you'll find some incredible tombstones and mausoleums. If cemeteries are your thing, Graceland is it in Chicago. We should note that although it is within walking distance of the Music Box Theater, it will not be open to the public at any times around our Rocky/Music Box events = you'll have to make a special trip if you want in.

Wrigley Field - 1060 W Addison St - <http://chicago.cubs.mlb.com/NASApp/mlb/chc/ballpark/index.jsp>

The second oldest pro baseball park in the country, and the home of the Chicago Cubs. Located in the same neighborhood as the Music Box Theater.

We should note though that for the weekend of the convention, the Cubs are playing the Cardinals at Wrigley, and the Cubs/Cards is a baseball rivalry on par with the Red Sox / Yankees – and a lot of people from St. Louis make the trip up to Chicago to support their team. The neighborhood during game times can be very heated and intense, and like any sports event, attracts a bit of its share of drunken assholes. We suggest that unless you really want to experience the true baseball game day feel of Wrigley and are prepared to "fit in" with the baseball crowd, that you limit your visiting of Wrigley to the times around Rocky at the Music Box (especially if you take the El to and from there, as the Addison El stop at Wrigley is also the main El stop for the Music Box) – the neighborhood is a lot more calm at that time

**Only if you've done "everything" else
(and most only if you have a car to get to and get you around).**

US Cellular Field (formerly Comiskey Park, where the White Sox play) - 33 W 35th St Chicago

http://chicago.whitesox.mlb.com/NASApp/mlb/cws/ballpark/cws_ballpark_cellularfield.jsp

If you want to drop by to check out the home stadium of the world champion Chicago White Sox, here it is – just take the "El" down to 35th and you're there. However, we should note that the Sox are out of town the weekend of the con and, unlike Wrigley, there really isn't much of anything to do around the Cell (in fact, we don't recommend you wander too far away from the park / El as it isn't the greatest neighborhood in the city otherwise.

Woodfield Mall - Golf Rd. at Route 53 (5 Woodfield Shopping Center) Schaumburg, IL - <http://www.shopwoodfield.com/>
About 35 minutes northwest of the city off I90. The mall with the largest square footage of retail space of any mall in the US (Mall of America is bigger if you include the general areas with the roller coaster and such). If you want to go shopping, this is the place to go, but otherwise we can't recommend it for much else – just about anything here can be found at the Mag Mile / Water Tower.

Six Flags : Great America - Take I-94/294 Exit Grand Ave. (Rt. 132) Gurnee, Illinois -

<http://www.sixflags.com/parks/greatamerica/index.asp>

One or two of you might be interested in our Six Flags park – it's about 45 minutes north of the city by car. As far as amusement parks goes, it's about middle of the road. We suggest it only if you're a completist/enthusiast of amusement parks.

FermiLab - Wilson and Kirk Roads, Batavia, IL - <http://www.fnal.gov/>

About 40 minutes west of the city. The World's largest particle accelerator and the property also houses a large wildlife reserve and science and entertainment complex (it is also where Midnight Madness performs as part of their film series every 2-3 years)

Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oriental Theatre - 24 W. Randolph St. -

<http://centerstage.net/theatre/theatres/oriental.html>

Currently showing Wicked the Musical

The Briar Street Theater - 3133 N. Halsted St. - <http://centerstage.net/theatre/theatres/briar-street.html>

Chicago home of the Blue Man Group

The Blues Brothers Tour of Chicago - http://www.suntimes.com/special_sections/bluebros/index.html

Want to visit all of the sites from the original Blues Brothers movie – well, since that one was ALL filmed in Chicago, you sure can. Go to the website for all of the info!

Off the beaten path recommended things to do and places to go around Chicago

by Chris

About the Author

I'm a huge Chicago enthusiast and have lived here my entire life. This project was originally going to be a print zine, but time is at a premium and Jeff offered to put it up on the con site. What you see here is a guide to record stores, music venues, PIZZA and neighborhoods. All things I'm extremely enthusiastic about! Be sure to get an L card and fill it up! If you need help, track me down, I'm the guy with the Chicago flag tattoo!

Music – Record Stores

YES. I am a music fanatic! It consumes about 90% of my existence, so I am the perfect guy for this job. Oh man. All of Chicago's record stores used to be located in one general neighborhood, but with yuppification and gentrification and various other "ifications", they've become somewhat scattered. Some fine record stores from Chicago's past that I miss are as follows (and I'm just giving props here): Wax Trax (the label's record store), Clubhouse (my all time favorite record store ever), Video Beat (best selection of goof ball records and bootleg videos), Second Hand Tunes on Clark (two locations next to each other. One all CD's and cassettes, the other all vinyl), Dr Wax on Clark (there's still a bunch of these floating around, but this one was my favorite), Hi Fi north (the store that replaced the Clubhouse) and the list goes on. Let's get started.

Reckless Records - (two locations)

3161 N Broadway (Lakeview) State street redline to Belmont. East on Belmont to Broadway. South on Broadway for less than half a block.

1532 N Milwaukee (Wicker Park) Jackson blueline to Damen. North on Damen to Milwaukee, south on Milwaukee.

This chain store, which acts as one of the finest choices to pick up the latest snobby indie rock records, obscure weird psychedelic freak outs, and collectable rock classics. They have an awesome jazz selection, but the punk/hardcore section at the Broadway store is consistently picked over. The Milwaukee store has a very strong 7" vinyl section and a passable punk section. This is Chicago's answer to Kim's in NYC, Spaceboy in Philly and Amoeba in the SoCal.

Metal Haven

604 W Belmont Ave (Lakeview) State street redline to Belmont. East on Belmont to Metal Haven.

This is a hesh's paradise. Just look for the suit of armor in the window. This store only stocks the most metal of all metal. They don't fuck around either. Whether it's old Metallica vinyl or the scariest black metal from the coldest countries in the world. They have it. Looking for old Neurosis albums? This is the place. If I were a metal head, I'd probably live here.

Dave's Records

2604 N Clark St (Lincoln Park/Lakeview) Harold Washington Library Brown Line to Diversey. East on Diversey to Clark. South on Clark for a handful of blocks.

This place only sells vinyl. That's it. There's a small shelf of CD's, but past that, it's LP's, 7"s, 10"s and various other chunks of awesomeness. It's located where the old Second Hand Tunes was located. Dave was the manager of said store and bought it out. This is a wide wide wide selection and depending on what you're looking for, they probably have it. Old New Order 12" singles? They have it. PiL LP's? They have it. It's worth the walk, because just down the street is HiFi records.

HiFi records

2570 N Clark (Lincoln Park/Lakeview) Harold Washington Library Brown Line to Diversey. East on Diversey to Clark. South on Clark for a handful of blocks.

A wide selection of LP's CD's, 7"s, 10"s, you name it. They're primarily indie rock, but they have a lot of punk as well. It's pricier than Reckless, but the selection is better and more consistent. For those who care, it's owned by Dom Nation of the Goblins and Joe from Chicago's legendary Life Sentence (current member of Regress) works there as well as the dude from the Eternals.

Tower Records

2301 N. Clark (Lincoln Park) State Street Red Line to Fullerton and head east for about four blocks. Head south on Clark for about a block.

This place is EX-PEN-SIVE!!!! If you have the bucks and you're looking for a wide variety of CD's, this place is probably for you. Just watch out for free range SUV's, because this is Lincoln Park and the yuppies own the streets there.

214 S. Wabash (Loop) walk north on Wabash to Adams and there you have it.

The store on Wabash is a little smaller, but the selection is the same. The other shoppers are more of the businessy and touristy type, so at least it's a good place to scare the normals... if you're into that kind of thing.

Laurie's Planet of Sound

4639 N Lincoln (Lincoln Square) Harold Washington Library brown line to Western Ave. It's on Lincoln, right across from the train. This is in the heart of Lincoln Square, which is a burgeoning neighborhood filled with bars, restaurants and other fun little attractions. Taking its name from a Pixies song, you can get an idea of what you'll find here. Probably the absolute best selection and some of the crappiest prices. Ex-rock star Matt Caterer of the Smoking Popes works here as does one of the dudes from Chicago garage rock phenoms, Vee Dee. You'll find some good stuff here, so it's worth paying a couple extra bucks for odd ball Birthday Party/Bad Seeds bootlegs and all your favorite Elephant Six bands. There's a good punk and jazz selection and a good selection of videos too. I really like this place. It's laid back and the employees have very little attitude.

Evil Clown Records

4314 N Lincoln (Lincoln Square) Harold Washington Library brown line to Western and head south on Lincoln. An excellent selection of goth, electronic, experimental, indie rock and TONS of imports. They let you listen before you buy, but beware... they're very snotty and will ban you forever if your listen to purchase ratio is off (I speak from experience). If you're looking for obscure German goth, old Wax Trax stuff or weird ambient CD's, this is the place. They only sell CD's, new and used.

Dead Wax Records

3819 N Lincoln (Lakeview/Wrigleyville) State Street redline to Fullerton. walk east to Lincoln. Take the #11 Lincoln Ave bus to Addison and Ravenswood//Lincoln. walk 0.3 miles north on Lincoln.

This place is fairly new and not too different from any of the other places mentioned that only do vinyl. I wasn't too blown away by this place, but there are other little shops around it worth checking out, so it wouldn't be a total waste of a trip.

Groovin' High Records

1057 W Belmont (Lakeview) State Street redline to Belmont. Walk about a block and a half west on Belmont and there it is. Huge assed sign.

Kind of a mediocre selection of everything. I usually walk out with something, because the prices are right. The owner is knowledgeable and if he doesn't have it, he can tell you where to get it.

Gramophone Music

2668 N Clark (Lakeview/Lincoln Park) Harold Washington Library brown line to Diversey. East to Clark and then south.

The best selection of hip hop and electronic music in the city. The employees will most likely glare at you, but will gladly answer your questions if you ask.

Record Emporium

3346 N Paulina (Roscoe Village) Harold Washington Library Brown Line to Paulina. Get off the train and there it is.

This record store boasts the best selection of BREAD records in Chicago. I like this store a lot. It claims to be "the last old time record store in the city" and it really is. It's a mom and pop sort of store and everyone is really friendly. Paul, from Chicago punk rock band MOTO works here. Be sure to say hi, because he's good people.

Hard Boiled Records

2008 W Roscoe (Roscoe Village) State Street redline to Belmont. 77 Belmont bus to Damen 0.3 miles north to Roscoe and you're there.

Indie snobbery runs thick here. The CD and vinyl selection is decent as is the video selection. While you're there, go a few doors west to Big Hair and get the best ten dollar hair cut you'll ever get from some of the most awesome people in the city.

Dusty Groove

Ashland (Wicker Park) Jackson blue line to Division. Head south on Ashland less than a block.

A collection of Jazz, Hip Hop, Rap, Soul, R&B, Indie Rock, a very minimal amount of punk and whole lot of snobby white guys.

The best part about his place (aside from the amazing selection of just about everything) is that if you place an internet order, you can pick it up at the walk up window.

Jazz Record Mart

25 East Illinois (north Loop/Navy Pier) State street Red Line to Grand. walk 1 block south to Illinois then head east.

This is THE source for all things jazz. They also have a very strong blues, gospel, R&B and international section as well. This is a new location and I haven't had a chance to check it out yet, but I'm assuming it's huge.

Music - Venues

Chicago has a long running tradition of being one of the only cities in the country that has live music every night of the week. You could hear anything from jazz, punk, country or blues all on the same block. Here's a run down of Chicago's venues and what kind of music you'll find there. The best thing to do, much like most of this guide, is to pick up a copy of the Chicago Reader, where you'll find listings for these places.

Metro

3730 N Clark

The Metro is a Chicago staple for cutting edge indie rock and alternative music. They host anyone from Death Cab for Cutie to Nocturna (a monthly goth night). Everyone from the Pixies to the Smashing Pumpkins to My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult have played here.

Double Door

1572 N Milwaukee

This is the Metro's little brother. Here you'll see national touring acts who can't fill a bigger room, but are too big for smaller bars like the Empty Bottle. Aside from touring acts, they host many a washed up local acts, which is really the downfall of this venue. The set up of the room is a little awkward, but aside from that, there's a pretty good chance you'll see at least one decent band here.

Empty Bottle

1035 N Western

The Pabst Blue Ribbon flows thick here, along with the hip up and coming indie rock bands. They're big supporters of local music and underground culture. Many local indie rock icons work here, so keep your eye out for out of control haircuts and hipsterism.

Waiting Room

7016 N Glenwood

All ages punk venue on Chicago's far north side. This is the premiere venue for punk and hardcore. Bands with names like Chronic Seizure, the Victims, Career Suicide and 9 Shock Terror play this place along side ska acts such as Deals Gone Bad. A very diverse crowd ranging from the "youth crew" types to crust punks and ska kids hang out here. It's intimate size welcomes crazy slam pits and wicked pile-ons.

Beat Kitchen

2100 W Belmont

All ages and 21+ venue hosting mid level punk and indie rock bands. Also a lot of local rock and folk bands play here. It's an interesting crowd on any given night.

The Note

1565 N Milwaukee

Across from the Double Door, this venue welcomes hip hop, afro-beat, rock and the occasional punk band. A crowd that is a bit more "clubby" than the other clubs, but the music is usually good. The only issues I have with this room is that it has an oddly high stage and the oddly high drink prices.

Rosas Lounge

3420 W Armitage

This is the only blues club you really need to know about. It's just out of the way enough to detract tourists, but the music there is top notch. You'll see anyone from a blues legend to an up and coming artist to local hobbyists. This is probably best hidden gem you will find in this guide. By the way, Rosie herself works the bar, so be sure to tip her.

The Hideout

1354 W Wabansia

Roots music runs deep here. This is home to Chicago's alt. Country and folk punk scene. Every Tuesday, Chicago's Devil in a Woodpile plays, who are an incredible punk blue grass collective. The drink prices are good and the atmosphere is comfortable. I personally love this place.

Humility Gallery

564 W 18th St.

This southside gallery is home to all ages punk and ska. The bands you see here are usually in high school or just out of, but go on to greatness.

The Mutiny

2428 N Western

Chicago's real punk bar. The Exit may be more fashionable and you'll see more haircuts there, but at the Mutiny, you will see real punks and real punk bands. This place is the dive of all dives, but it's a very charming dive, so you can't really complain.

Big Horse

1558 N Milwaukee

This place is amazing. The front is an amazing burrito place and the back is a punk/indie venue. Believe me, it's a dive and the bands that play there really vary in quality, but the burritos make it a worthy trip.

Buddy Guy's Legends

754 S Wabash

This is the last blues club in the south loop and it's obviously owned by Chicago's legendary Buddy Guy. The groups that play here are a bit more of the "mainstream" or "established" artist variety. The cover charge varies, as do the people who frequent it you'll find both tourists and blues fans rubbing elbows here.

House of Blues

329 N Dearborn

This national chain has nothing to do with the blues. You are more likely to find neu metal before you find the blues. The same bands that play at the Metro commonly play the House of Blues.

Phyllis' Musical Inn

1800 W Division

Phyllis' is home to the monthly bike messenger meet up. Also, every band that's come out of Chicago that's gone onto greatness has played this room. Liz Phair, Smashing Pumpkins, Styx, Smoking Popes, Veruca Salt, you name it. The flip side of this is that every hack band in Chicago plays here too. Very diverse crowd.

Pizza

Pizza is the flag ship food in Chicago and believe me, we wave it high here. You can't go very far without coming across at least a handful of pizzarias in Chicago (there's somewhere around 2000 pizzarias) and here's a short list of my favorites.

Pequods

2207 N. Clybourn Ave

Somewhat off the beaten path you will find what I consider to be the absolute best pizza in Chicago. What they do is take a seasoned cast iron pan, line the edges with mozzarella cheese, then put in the pizza. What this does is allows for the cheese that sits on the crust to caramelize and give it the most unique taste in Chicago. If you were to get pizza from one place in Chicago, I would suggest the cab fair to get up to this place. It's AMAZING.

Giordano's - the closest one to the hotel is at **223 W. JACKSON BLVD.** - <http://www.giordanos.com/main.php>

Local chain specializing in stuffed pizza. There's locations all over the city, so look into it. This is a local staple and probably the tastiest stuffed pizza in the city. (*jeff recommends THIS as the place to go for the best in Chicago – GET THE STUFFED ONE*).

Leona's - <http://www.leonas.com/>

Another local chain that makes some wonderful deep dish "Sicilian style" pizza. They also have a lot of other stuff, including the best steak sandwich ever. Everything is hormone free and organic, so it's earth friendly. They also have vegan and vegetarian selections as well. This is one of my favorite places to eat. Again, these are all over the place, so you might want to check their web site for a location.

(Leona's is jeff's favorite restaurant in the city – very generous portions of great Italian food)

Gulliver's

2727 W Howard

State Street Redline to Howard. Howard street bus to California. Cross the street and you're there.

This is traditional Chicago style deep dish and if you want to experience it, this would be a great place to get the non-touristy version you'd find at places like Uno's or Due's.

My Pi (as in 3.145)

2417 N Clark - State Street Red Line to Fullerton, head east to Clark, turn left and you're there.

Much like Gulliver's, this is traditional Chicago deep dish. This eatery is more conveniently located in Lincoln Park on Clark Street, north of Fullerton. I highly recommend this place.

The Art of Pizza

3033 N Ashland

This place was voted the best deep dish in Chicago by the Chicago Tribune. I'm a bit of a fan of this place, but for me, it's a hike. For downtown, it's a little easier to reach.

Bacci's Pizza

State Street Red Line to Addison. Get off the train and there it is. Seriously.

This place will make New Yorkers feel at home, because they serve pizza by the slice as well as the superior Chicago version of the American classic. ;p

Pizano's Pizza – 864 N. State St. and also 61 E. Madison St. - <http://www.pizanoschicago.com/>

(added by jeff) – GREAT Pizza AND they are open until 2am Thurs, Fri, Sun, and 3am on Sat. - they MAY even deliver to the hotel too, but we haven't checked on that.

***Other Foods* (added by jeff)**

Chicago loves its food, and here's a bit of a selection of other things.

Miller's Pub - 134 South Wabash - <http://millerspub.com/>

GREAT eating, one of the best in the Loop (open until 2am, bar open until 4am)

Harold's Chicken Shack - 600 block or South Wabash Ave. - 312-362-0442

Year after year, this Chicago franchise gets voted THE best chicken in the city.

Hot Dogs / Italian Beef

If you want a "Chicago style" hot dog, that's a Vienna Beef dog with mustard, onions, relish, cucumber, tomato's and celery salt – don't ask for Catsup/Ketchup on it – nothing makes you stick out more as a tourist than doing that! (just ask for packets for the fries and put it on yourself if you really want it - but trust us, Vienna Dogs ARE better without it so try it that way first).

If you want "really close to the hotel" – Gina's - 424 S. Wabash

If you want "good and relatively close" – Gold Coast Dogs at 159 N Wabash and Portillos at 100 W. Ontario - <http://www.portillos.com/>

If you want "the best in the city" – Superdawg at 6363 N Milwaukee Ave - <http://www.superdawg.com/>

NEIGHBORHOODS

Chicago's neighborhoods were originally broken down by church parishes as opposed to now, where it's defined by ethnic population, parks, or landmarks.

There are far too many neighborhoods in the city of Chicago to list them all here, so what I'll do is mention the neighborhoods that are worth visiting.

Lakeview – (Red/Brown/Purple line to Belmont)

Throughout the 1980's the Lakeview neighborhood was crawling with punks, skinheads, goths, shady characters and various other social rejects. This was due to the presence of the all ages dance club, Medusa's (located on the south east corner of Sheffield and School St, which has long been closed).

Currently, it's crawling with suburban kids in their mall purchased punk rock clothes and it's current yuppie residents. There are a lot of really neat stores and restaurants in this area as well as home to Chicago's gay district (North Halsted). Check out the Pick Me Up Cafe for a full menu of tasty sandwiches, breakfast food, deserts, vegan and vegetarian friendly dining and an amazing four berry shake. For those of you who are looking for exclusively vegan and vegetarian cuisine, check out the Chicago Diner on North Halsted. THE BEST SOY SHAKES IN TOWN. Also, if you need new fishnets, Tabou Taboo and the Alley will accommodate your needs. If vintage clothes is your thing, Hollywood Mirror, it's upstairs neighbor Ragstock and Strange Cargo will do you well. Chicago Comics is hands down the best comic shop in Chicago. They have a full zine library and small press section, as well as all the usual suspects.

Wrigleyville – (Red line to Addison)

This an extension of Lakeview is home to Wrigley Field as well as every bro bar in the city. Ever wanna see a bunch of drunk guys in polo shirts with popped collars high fiving each other yelling "go Cubs!"? This is where you'll find it.

Lincoln Square – (Brown line to Western)

This neighborhood is slowly becoming quite the hipster haven. Once a primarily German neighborhood, the young and hip crowd started moving in a handful of years ago when stores like Laurie's Planet of Sound opened, the Old Town School of Folk Music opened it's newest location and started hosting indie rock shows and various bars started opening up. In came vintage clothes clad kids, a Starbucks and out went empty store fronts and low rent housing. There's some tasty restaurants up here as well, like the Square Kitchen, Costello's Subs and the Brauhaus (which is super German and super awesome).

Wicker Park – (Blue line to Damen)

Hipsters hipsters hipsters! Everywhere you look are hipsters! That and art school students. This is where you'll find a shit ton of music venues, bars and hip restaurants. Swank Franks and Underdog have tasty hot dogs and Ear Wax is the place to go for affordable tasty dining in an artsy hip environment (you can also rent videos and buy records there). Smoke Daddy's has some of the best barbeque on the northside and it's neighbor, Phyllis' Musical Inn is a friendly place to grab an Old Style and while watching some unknowns kick out the jams. There's a lot to do in this neighborhood, if you don't mind being sneered at by the fashionably elite. Check out Quimby's Book Store for all you zine and literary needs.

Chinatown (Redline to Cermak, About 2 miles southwest of the hotel.)

Enough said. A Sunday morning tradition in Chicago is to go down to Chinatown and stuff yourself with dim sum. There's rumored to be a store that sells the perfect Magenta feather duster.

More?

Again, believe it or not, this is only a sampling of stuff that is "worth it" to do in Chicago – if you have any special requests or questions, feel free to contact jeff or Chris for our suggestions and recommendations at MidnightMadnessRHPS@yahoo.com. We're both known to freely give our opinion from time to time. ;-)