

### **Why Chicago Matters**

Chicago is a great American city with a lot going for it. I say “American” because Chicago is very much the vision of how we have built cities over the past decade. In the late 1800’s the city was largely destroyed by fire and Chicago has essentially rebuilt itself from scratch over the last 100 years or so. In the early 1900’s, noted city planner and architect Daniel Burnham authored The Chicago Plan to shape the redevelopment and expansion of Chicago. It is one of the most comprehensive and over-arching city planning documents ever completed for an American city. Many elements of Burnham’s plan have been implemented and Chicago is an attractive city in a lot of aspects. It does in fact feel very “planned” and logically organized, thus making it easy to visit and get around. It has one of the great urban park systems in the world and has utilized its waterfront in a beautiful way. Millennium Park is probably the most well known urban park of the past couple of decades and is a great example of how to create active and meaningful public space. In many ways, because of the opportunity to “build new”, Chicago is the centerpiece of American architecture. Many architectural and engineering innovations, especially related to high-rise construction, are rooted in Chicago. However, this also led to some undesirable characteristics. Modern and post-modern architects that were active in Chicago were notoriously uninterested in the public realm. Some parts of Chicago seem very institutional and plain. Chicago has mass transit, but it is underwhelming for a city of this size and is not connected to large parts of the city. While there are many positives, and some negatives, the best thing is that Chicago does care deeply about itself as a city and planning, design and architecture are valued. The Chicago Architecture Foundation is a great community asset. It offers a variety of tours and a wonderful gift shop and it is the most comprehensive city architecture and design organization that I’ve ever seen. Chicago has many great restaurants and shops, but it does lack a certain grit, diversity or creativity as compared to some other great American cities. And then there is the weather. In a city with great parks and some outstanding “urban walks”, it can be very cold and windy for several months of the year so pay attention to when you visit.

### **Hotels**

Kimpton Hotel Gray (contemporary renovation of historic building, in “The Loop” downtown)  
122 West Monroe Street  
312.750.9012  
[www.grayhotelchicago.com](http://www.grayhotelchicago.com)

Park Hyatt Chicago (contemporary classic, feels like a big city apartment, great views, right on Michigan Avenue/Magnificent Mile)  
800 North Michigan Avenue  
312.335.1234  
[www.parkchicago.hyatt.com](http://www.parkchicago.hyatt.com)

Sofitel (contemporary architecture, near bars and restaurants at Rush Street)  
20 East Chestnut Street  
312.324.4000  
[www.sofitel.com](http://www.sofitel.com)

## **Hotels (continued)**

Swissotel (modern, great architecture, convenient location between River North and Grant Park)  
323 East Upper Wacker Drive  
312.565.0565  
[www.swissotel.com/hotels/chicago](http://www.swissotel.com/hotels/chicago)

The Drake (historic, classic, great lobby for piano bar and drinks even if you don't stay here)  
140 East Walton Street  
312.787.2200  
[www.thedrakehotel.com](http://www.thedrakehotel.com)

The Gwen (previously Conrad Chicago, great location, in River North adjacent to Magnificent Mile)  
521 North Rush Street  
312.645.1500  
[www.starwoodhotels.com/TheGwen](http://www.starwoodhotels.com/TheGwen)

Trump Hotel (big new hotel, on the river, Rebar and Terrace Bar are great for cocktails)  
401 North Wabash Avenue  
312.588.8000  
[www.trumphotelcollection.com/chicago](http://www.trumphotelcollection.com/chicago)

## **Jazz and Blues**

Need to ask hotel concierge where to go. I never can remember the names, but there are a couple of good ones on Rush Street and I have been to Blue Chicago a few times.

## **Restaurants**

Bavette's Bar & Boeuf  
218 West Kinzie Street  
312.624.8154  
[www.bavetteschicago.com](http://www.bavetteschicago.com)

Blackbird (creative American bistro, on Randolph Street where there are lots of the trendier places)  
619 West Randolph Street  
312.715.0708  
[www.blackbirdrestaurant.com](http://www.blackbirdrestaurant.com)

Chicago Cut Steakhouse  
300 North La Salle Street  
312.329.1800  
[www.chicagocutsteakhouse.com](http://www.chicagocutsteakhouse.com)

Duck Duck Goat  
857 West Fulton Market  
312.902.3825  
[www.duckduckgoatchicago.com](http://www.duckduckgoatchicago.com)

## **Restaurants (continued)**

Flat Top Grill (lunch)  
30 South Wabash Avenue  
312.726.8400  
[www.flattopgrill.com](http://www.flattopgrill.com)

Frontera Grill (Mexican, great chef, not “tex mex”)  
445 North Clark Street  
312.661.1434  
[www.frontera-grill.com](http://www.frontera-grill.com)

Gene & Georgetti (old school steak)  
500 North Franklin Street  
312.527.3718  
[www.geneandgeorgetti.com](http://www.geneandgeorgetti.com)

Gibson’s Steakhouse (best steakhouse in the city)  
1028 North Rush Street  
312.266.8999  
[www.gibsonssteakhouse.com](http://www.gibsonssteakhouse.com)

Girl & the Goat  
809 West Randolph Street  
312.492.6262  
[www.girlandthegoat.com](http://www.girlandthegoat.com)

GT Fish & Oyster  
531 North Wells Street  
312.929.3501  
[www.gtoyster.com](http://www.gtoyster.com)

Hugo’s Frog Bar and Fish House (next to Gibson’s, more casual)  
1024 North Rush Street  
312.640.0999  
[www.hugosfrogbar.com](http://www.hugosfrogbar.com)

Lawry’s the Prime Rib (a true classic supper club)  
100 East Ontario Street  
312.787.5000  
[www.lawrysonline.com](http://www.lawrysonline.com)

Mastro’s Steakhouse  
520 North Dearborn Street  
312.521.5100  
[www.mastrosrestaurants.com](http://www.mastrosrestaurants.com)

## **Restaurants (continued)**

Miller's Pub (old school pub)  
134 South Wabash Avenue  
312.263.4988  
[www.millerspub.com](http://www.millerspub.com)

NAHA (foodie place, creative American)  
500 North Clark Street  
312.321.6242  
[www.naha-chicago.com](http://www.naha-chicago.com)

NoMi Kitchen (in Park Hyatt, nice restaurant and wonderful outdoor terrace)  
800 North Michigan Avenue  
312.239.4030  
[www.NoMiKitchen.com](http://www.NoMiKitchen.com)

Ocean Cut  
20 West Kinzie Street  
312.280.8882  
[www.oceancutchicago.com](http://www.oceancutchicago.com)

Revival Food Hall  
125 South Clark Street  
773.999.9411  
[www.revivalfoodhall.com](http://www.revivalfoodhall.com)

RPM Italian  
52 West Illinois Street  
312.222.1888  
[www.rpmitalian.com](http://www.rpmitalian.com)

Swift & Sons Steakhouse  
1000 West Fulton Market  
312.733.9420  
[www.swiftandsonschicago.com](http://www.swiftandsonschicago.com)

Velvet Taco  
1110 North State Street  
312.763.2654  
[www.velvettaco.com](http://www.velvettaco.com)

## **Drinks & Cocktails**

Allium Lobby Bar at Four Seasons Hotel  
120 East Delaware Place  
312.280.8800  
[www.alliumchicago.com](http://www.alliumchicago.com)

## **Drinks & Cocktails (continued)**

Boleo at Kimpton Gray Hotel (rooftop)  
122 West Monroe Street  
312.750.9012  
[www.boleochicago.com](http://www.boleochicago.com)

Cindy's Rooftop at Chicago Athletic Club Hotel  
12 South Michigan Street  
312.792.3502  
[www.cindysrooftop.com](http://www.cindysrooftop.com)

Nico Osteria at Thompson Hotel  
1015 North Rush Street  
312.994.7100  
[www.nicoosteria.com](http://www.nicoosteria.com)

RL Bar & Grill  
115 East Chicago Avenue  
312.475.1100  
[www.rlrestaurant.com](http://www.rlrestaurant.com)

Sable Kitchen & Bar at Hotel Palomar  
505 North State Street  
312.755.9704  
[www.sablechicago.com](http://www.sablechicago.com)

Siena Tavern  
51 West Kinzie Street  
312.595.1322  
[www.sienatavern.com](http://www.sienatavern.com)

Signature Room at the 95<sup>th</sup> (located at the John Hancock Center, best for cocktails and view)  
875 North Michigan Avenue  
312.787.9596  
[www.signatureroom.com](http://www.signatureroom.com)

Somerset at Viceroy Hotel  
1112 North State Street  
312.586.2150  
[www.somersetchicago.com](http://www.somersetchicago.com)

Tavern on Rush (in the middle of the Rush Street district where there are lots of good restaurants)  
1031 North Rush Street  
312.664.9600  
[www.tavernonrush.com](http://www.tavernonrush.com)

## **Places to see**

Art Institute Chicago, new Modern Wing opened in May 2009

Chicago Architecture Foundation, store on Michigan Avenue across from Grant Park, best river cruises (an architecture river cruise is a must)

Grant Park, Buckingham Fountain

Millennium Park, Cloud Gate (the “Bean”) and Crown Fountain

Lakefront, Navy Pier, Oak Street Beach, North Avenue Beach, you can walk or bike (use Divvy bike share) the entire waterfront and this is the best part of Chicago

Museum of Contemporary Art (just off Magnificent Mile, towards the lakefront)

Second City Comedy Club, an improv-based sketch comedy club (famous alumni John Belushi, Gilda Radner and Mike Myers)

Shopping on North Michigan Avenue, Magnificent Mile

Lincoln Park Neighborhood, Armitage Avenue, Halsted Street (lunch or cookies at Summer House)

Bucktown / Wicker Park Neighborhood

The 606 / Bloomingdale Trail & Park