

Short collection of fun stuff to do in Chicago



Cloud Gate



Cobb Gate

Compiled by Mirna Marinić, UC Global Team

Greetings from UC Global Team

So, you've got yourself a gig at The University of Chicago and moved from possibly far far away to the biggest city in the American Midwest. After figuring out a place to stay and where the local supermarket is, you finally have time to do some fun stuff. But where to start?

UC Global is a resource group for foreigners and we are a great place to get a lot of info on anything you are curious about regarding life at the University campus and Chicago in general. What you have in front of you is a short list of fun stuff you can do in your free time that we think you'll like. This list is by no means exhaustive – after all, Chicago is a big city and there's always something new to do – but we hope the places listed here will be a good start for your new Chicago adventure.

Have fun! ☺

UC Global Team



<https://global.uchicago.edu/>

Table of Contents

Public transportation	4
Museums.....	5
Cinemas	7
Theatres	8
Comedy	10
Music venues.....	11
Music festivals.....	13
Sports	14
Architecture	15
Gardens, parks, beaches.....	16
Zoos.....	18
Free stuff.....	19
Novels about Chicago	21
Generally useful links	22

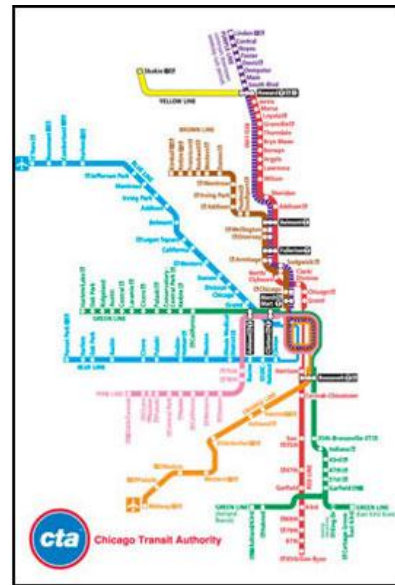
Places/events color-coded in **The University of Chicago (UofC) maroon** are located/take place in Hyde Park, close to the campus itself.

All images courtesy of the Internet.

Public transportation



Lake Front



CTA map

Chicago is a big city and the parking is most of the time difficult to find and expensive. So it's often better to use public transportation or take a bike. Here are the options:

- **Chicago Transport Authority (CTA):** network of buses and underground and elevated ("L") train tracks.
<https://www.transitchicago.com/>
- **Metra:** commuter railroad network connecting Chicago downtown with suburbs and close by towns.
<https://metrarail.com/>
- **DIVY bikes:** should you prefer to ride a bike, this is a rental bike service.
<https://www.divvybikes.com/>
- **Bike paths:** Chicago has an extensive network of bike paths. Biking along the Lake Michigan is both an easy way to reach downtown, as well as a scenic and recreational experience.
https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdot/provdrs/bike/svcs/bike_maps.html
- **TransLock Rider App:** this app gives an overview of UofC shuttles that operate in Hyde Park. Very useful if you need to go home from work late in the evening. Free of charge with UofC ID card.
<http://uchicago.transloc.com/>

Museums



Maximo in The Field Museum

Museums are usually the first stop for many people visiting or moving to a new town. Here are some of the most popular ones. They all have membership options, free days for residents of Illinois and often discounts for UofC students, staff and faculty.

- **Field Museum:** natural history museum with its two most famous inhabitants, T-rex Sue and Titanosaur Maximo. Many interactive games for the youngest visitors.
<https://www.fieldmuseum.org/>
- **Shedd Aquarium:** all sorts of water creatures, including aquatic presentations with dolphins, sea lions and beluga whales.
<https://www.sheddaquarium.org/>
- **Adler Planetarium:** America's first planetarium covers everything from the beginnings of stargazing to modern space explorations.
<https://www.adlerplanetarium.org/>

Field, Shedd and Adler and all located at the Museum Campus, close to each other, but keep in mind it is probably impossible to see everything in one day.

- **Museum of Science and Industry:** located in Hyde Park, known among school children as the best field trip.
<https://www.msichicago.org/>
- **Art Institute of Chicago:** art museum with artwork dating from ancient to modern times.
<https://www.artic.edu/>
- **Museum of Contemporary Art:** not only modern art, but also concerts, fashion shows and guest artists visiting.
<https://www.mcachicago.org/>

- **Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago:** located in the main quadrangle of our University, featuring ancient Near Eastern archeological artifacts.
<https://oi.uchicago.edu/>
- **Museum of Broadcast Communications:** curious museum in the Loop, on history of radio and television broadcasting.
<https://www.museum.tv/>
- **Chicago History Museum:** everything you want to know about past, present and even possible future of this great city.
<https://www.chicagohistory.org/>

Cinemas



Music Box

There are number of multiplex venues throughout Chicago that screen newest blockbusters in 2D and 3D:

<https://www.amctheatres.com/movie-theatres/chicago>

However, here are some less known places that offer more classical cinema experience: indie and foreign films, 70mm and 35mm projections and special events with guest actors and directors.

- **Music Box:** in this beautiful historic venue from 1929 one can see not only digital, but 70mm and 35mm projections, meet famous directors during various film festivals and experience silent films with live organ music.
<https://musicboxtheatre.com/>
- **Logan Movie Theatre:** another historic venue from 1915, showing contemporary films and film classics.
<http://www.thelogantheatre.com/>
- **Davis Theatre:** modern and old films and special events.
<https://www.davistheater.com/>
- **Gene Siskel Film Center:** commemorating Gene Siskel, famous Chicago film critic and *Chicago Tribune* journalist.
<https://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/>
- **Harper Theatre:** \$5 tickets on Tuesday nights, here in Hyde Park.
<https://www.harpertheater.com/>
- **Doc Films:** student-run film society with 75 yearlong history, the oldest one in the USA, here at UofC campus.
<https://docfilms.uchicago.edu/dev/>

Theatres



Court Theatre

Chicago's famous Theatre District hosts numerous theatre venues from the early 20th century:

- **The Chicago Theatre:** theatrical performances, but also concerts, comedy shows, panel discussions, interviews and movie projections.
https://www.msg.com/the-chicago-theatre?cmp=van_chicagothatre
- **Goodman Theatre:**
<https://www.goodmantheatre.org/>
- **Auditorium Theatre:** hosting Joffrey Ballet
<https://www.auditoriumtheatre.org/>
- **The Joffrey Ballet:** Chicago-based dance company offers classical ballet productions, as well as modern dance performances.
<http://joffrey.org/>
- **Shakespeare Theatre at the Navy Pier:** all things Shakespeare. And much more.
<https://www.chicagoshakes.com/>
- **Steppenwolf Theatre:** opened in 1974. Stage performances, but also outreach and educational programs.
<https://www.steppenwolf.org/>
- **Looking Glass Theatre:** modern takes on classical stories.
<https://lookingglasstheatre.org/>
- **Otherworld Theatre:** tiny theatre showing sci-fi and fantasy plays, magicians and burlesque shows.
<https://www.otherworldtheatre.org/>

- **Court Theatre:** conveniently located at UofC campus if you feel like seeing a play, but don't want to travel downtown. Discounted tickets for UofC employees.
<https://www.courttheatre.org/>
- **Hyde Park Community Players:** amateur troupe here in Hyde Park, often auditioning for players and welcoming newcomers.
<http://hydeparkcommunityplayers.org/>

Comedy



The Revival

In case you didn't know, the birthplace of standup comedy is here in Chicago, in our own Hyde Park:

<http://www.the-revival.com/history>

- **The Revival:** at the site of the original Compass Bar, this small venue hosts improvisational comedy shows and classes. Be sure to check out events by *The Excited State*, an improv group composed of UofC employees.
<http://www.the-revival.com/shows>
- **The Second City:** founded in 1958, this club is the offspring of some of the original Compass Players members.
<https://www.secondcity.com/>
- **Laugh Factory Chicago:** stand-up comedy club in Lake View neighborhood.
<http://www.laughfactory.com/clubs/chicago>

Music venues



Reggie's shuttle

No matter what you taste in music is, there's something for everyone.

- **Lyric Opera:** high-end productions of classical operas. Various subscription packages offered and backstage experience.
<https://www.lyricopera.org/>
- **Chicago Symphonic Orchestra:** stars of classical music and famous conductors perform here.
<https://cso.org/>
- **Broadway in Chicago:** as the name suggests, Broadway-style musicals performed in several venues throughout Chicago.
<https://www.broadwayinchicago.com/>
- **United Center:** home to The Chicago Bulls and The Blackhawks sports clubs, but also big stage rock/pop concerts.
<https://www.unitedcenter.com/>
- **House of Blues:** popular music concerts and blues performances in the dining area.
<http://www.houseofblues.com/chicago>
- **Metro:** this club opened its doors in 1982 in the historic venue from 1927 and since then hosts various emerging and world-known bands and musicians.
<https://metrochicago.com/>
- **Aragon Ballroom:** dance parties and concerts in all genres of the 20th (and 21st) century popular music, ever since 1926.
<http://www.aragonballroom.org/>

- **The Green Mill:** one of the oldest jazz joints in the city opened in 1907. Allegedly, Al Capone's favorite, and the legend has it that in the prohibition era there were secret tunnels leading to the nearby Aragon Ballroom.
<http://greenmilljazz.com/>
- **Schuba's:** a bar and a diner hosting sports events viewing and concerts of local and visiting bands.
<https://www.schubastavern.com/>
<http://www.lh-st.com/>
- **The Empty Bottle:** this music venue has performances every night, 7 days a week.
<http://emptybottle.com/>
- **Reggie's:** not in Hyde Park, but relatively close by in the South Loop and very popular among UofC employees. During special events, there's a Reggies shuttle taking people from the campus and back after the show.
<https://www.reggieslive.com/>

Music festivals



Lollapalooza

If you prefer open-air music events, here are some.

- **Lollapalooza:** 4-day summer festival in Grant Park. Alternative and punk rock, heavy metal, hip-hop, electronic music and more.
<https://www.lollapalooza.com/>
- **Pitchfork:** 3-day festival in July, featuring mainly dance, hip-hop and electronic music.
<https://pitchforkmusicfestival.com/>
- **Riot Fest:** rock, punk, hip-hop genres.
<https://riotfest.org/>
- **Hyde Park Jazz Festival:** in September in Hyde Park. Free performances.
<https://www.hydeparkjazzfestival.org/>
- **Blues Festival:** in June in Millennium Park, also free admission.
https://chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/chicago_blues_festival.html
- **The Ravinia Festival:** series of performances from June to September, featuring classical and modern music. This is the oldest outdoor music festival in the USA, dating back to 1905.
<https://www.ravinia.org/>

Sports



There's no shortage of professional sports teams in Chicago. Baseball, basketball, ice hockey, American football and soccer, pick what you like and enjoy the game.

- **Chicago Cubs:** baseball club, at home at Wrigley stadium.
<https://www.mlb.com/cubs>
- **White Sox:** while the Cubs are unofficially the baseball team of the north Chicago, White Sox have more supporters in Chicago south neighborhoods.
<https://www.mlb.com/whitesox>
- **Blackhawks:** hockey team, sharing their home stadium United Center with Chicago Bulls, the basketball team.
<https://www.nhl.com/blackhawks>
- **Chicago Bulls:** NBA team, Michael Jordan is one of the most famous players who ever played for The Bulls.
<https://www.nba.com/bulls/>
- **Chicago Bears:** this American football team calls Soldier Field their home stadium.
<https://www.chicagobears.com/>
- **Chicago Fire Soccer Club:** from Bridgeview, IL.
<https://www.chicago-fire.com/>
- **Chicago Wolves:** another hockey team, with home stadium at Allstate Arena.
<https://www.chicagowolves.com/>

Architecture



Chicago River and skyline

If there's one thing Chicago is famous for, it's architecture. After Great Chicago Fire in 1871, the architects at the time introduced novel approaches to building construction and design, and their legacy is still visible today.

- **Chicago Architecture Center (CAC):** the best place to start exploring the history of many Chicago buildings. They offer various architecture tours, the most popular one being the river cruise.
<https://www.architecture.org/tours>
- **Chicago Open House** event is also under the organization of CAC:
<https://openhousechicago.org/>
- **Willis Tower:** tallest skyscraper with 108 floors. One can visit The Skydeck on the 103rd floor and enter into The Ledge, one of the glass walled boxes to experience viewing Chicago under one's feet.
<https://theskydeck.com/>
- **Frederick C. Robie House:** at UofC campus, a work by Frank Lloyd Wright, one of the most famous American architects. One can also visit Wright's home and studio in the Oak Park.
<https://flwright.org/visit/robiehouse>
- **Burnham and Root:** the most famous architectural firm from late 19th century Chicago, founded by Daniel H. Burnham and John W. Root. They organized and led the team that designed the buildings for Chicago's World Fair in 1893. Museum of Science and Industry was part of the Fair's *White City*. Other work still in use today includes: Rookery Building, Monadnock Building, Marshall Field and Company Building (Macy's Store on State Street).

Gardens, parks, beaches



Osaka Garden

- **Chicago Botanic Garden:** special events all year long, like *The Orchid Show* or *Night of 1000 Jack-o'-Lanterns*.
<https://www.chicagobotanic.org/>
- **Morton Arboretum:** 25 miles west of Chicago. Yearlong events for adults, families and school groups.
<https://www.mortonarb.org/>
- **Chicago Park District:** all the information on the parks and beaches throughout Chicago.
<https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/>
- **Osaka Garden:** Japanese-style garden close to the UofC campus, west of Museum of Science and Industry.
<https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/japanese-garden>
- **Nichols Park:** 53rd Street, close to shopping and dining joints of Hyde Park.
- **Promontory Point:** on the lakefront, relatively short walk or even shorter bike ride from the UofC campus. Wonderful view of Chicago's skyline (day or night) and a popular wedding spot – in 2013 it hosted the wedding reception of George Lucas.
<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/top-lists/guide-to-promontory-point/>
- **Millennium Park:** the main park in The Loop, with the musical and dance performances, festivals, climbing walls, children playgrounds and ice skating ring and strip in winter.
https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/millennium_park.html
- **Oz Park:** statues of the characters from "The Wizard of Oz" novel.
<https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/oz-park>
- **Navy Pier:** shopping, dining, amusement park, theatrical and music shows, tours, cruises and fireworks twice a week – this place has it all.
<https://navypier.org/>

- **Oak Street Beach:** standard beach activities: swimming, sunbathing, volleyball. Popular spot to view 4th of July fireworks show from the Navy Pier.
<https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/oak-street-beach>
- **North Avenue Beach:** this is the best spot to view Chicago Air and Water Show activities.
<https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/north-avenue-beach>
- **Chicago Flower and Garden Show:** should you be interested in exhibit on flower arrangements, garden landscaping etc., this event takes place at the Navy Pier in early spring.
<https://chicagoflower.com/>

Zoos



Lincoln Park Zoo

- **Lincoln Park Zoo:** downtown Chicago, free for all visitors, various family-friendly and +21 special events.
<https://www.lpzoo.org/>
- **Brookfield Zoo:** this one requires driving a bit outside of Chicago, but it's worth noticing their conservation efforts.
<https://www.czs.org/Brookfield-ZOO/About.aspx>

Free stuff



57th Street Art Fair

This collection of highly entertaining events has a big advantage: they are all for free!

- **Shakespeare in Parks:** every summer *Shakespeare Theatre* performs one play in various parks throughout Chicago. It's a combined picnic and theatre staged experience, with actors interacting with the audience during and after the show.
<https://www.chicagoshakes.com/parks>
- **Shakespeare in Nichols Park:** Hyde Park theatre group *Community Players* also performs one Shakespearian play, usually over 2 weekends in July.
<http://hydeparkcommunityplayers.org/>
- **Hyde Park Jazz Festival:** in September in Hyde Park.
<https://www.hydeparkjazzfestival.org/>
- **Blues Festival:** in June in Millennium Park.
https://chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/chicago_blues_festival.html
- **Summer concerts at Nichols Park:** on the 53rd Street side, weekends in July and August.
- **57th Street Art Fair:** always during the first weekend in June, this fair will provide you with an art overdose. Both local and artists from other states showcase their work and are keen on talking about the art making process.
<https://www.57thstreetartfair.org/>
- **Hyde Park Brew Fest:** during the same weekend of 57th Street Art Fair, this block party is happening on the 53rd Street.
<https://hpbrewfest.com/>

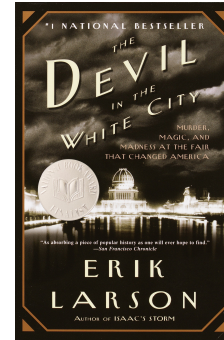
- **Open House Chicago:** for one weekend in October, Chicago is celebrating its architecture. Numerous historic buildings, as well as high rises (residential and business) are open for public viewing. Special events at some of the locations.
<https://openhousechicago.org/>
- **Chicago Air and Water Show:** for one weekend in August, people gather at the North Avenue Beach to watch acrobatic flights, parachute jumps and US Air Force Thunderbirds flyovers.
https://chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/chicago_air_and_watershow.html
- **Walking tours:** there are various walking tours in Chicago. They are free, but tips are highly appreciated.
<https://freetoursbyfoot.com/chicago-tours/>
- **Taste of Chicago:** indulge your taste buds by sampling local and not so local cuisine.
https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/taste_of_chicago.html
- **Parades:** various neighborhoods will have special events throughout the year.
https://chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/neighborhood_parades.html
- **Free museum days:** multiple museums have free days for visitors advertised on their respective web pages.
- **Naperville Astronomical Association** night sky watching: a bit of drive outside Chicago, this astronomical society hosts public events. Especially popular is the Perseid meteor shower watch in August.
<http://www.stargazing.net/naa/index.shtml>
- **Fermi Lab:** this particle physics and accelerator laboratory is impressive on its own, but they also offer guided tours and self-guided audio driving tours. Additionally, you can hike and bike around the laboratory, and spot a herd of bison.
<http://www.fnal.gov/>

Novels about Chicago

Chicago is a city with curious history and a particular atmosphere. If it's too cold outside (and it can get really cold), you can have a stay at home evening and still visit Chicago through these novels whose plots take place in various neighborhoods.

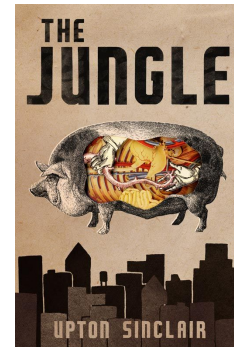
- Erik Larson: **The Devil in the White City**

Intriguing novel about real events that took place around the time of Chicago's World Fair in 1893. A book for both architecture and crime mystery aficionados.



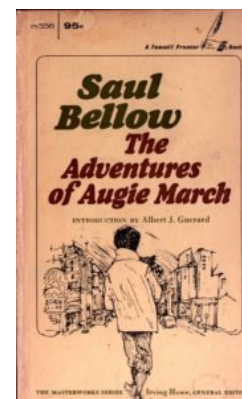
- Upton Sinclair: **The Jungle**

This novel talks about the struggles of Estonian immigrants working at meat packing industry from the turn of the 20th century. Sinclair wanted to point at the unfair and often inhumane treatment of the immigrants, but the bigger shock for the readers were the exposed hygienic standards of the food industry at the time.



- Saul Bellow: **The Adventures of Augie March**

Coming of age novel about Chicago born and raised Augie March and his struggle through the times of Great Depression.



Generally useful links

The extended info on events and Chicago in general can be found under these links.

- Official site of the city of Chicago:
<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en.html>
- Neighborhoods info:
<https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/>
- Events search sites:
<https://do312.com/>
<https://www.choosechicago.com/>
- CityPass: one pass for multiple locations, needs to be used within 9-day period.
<https://www.citypass.com/chicago>
- Bus tours: hop on-hop off tourist bus. Various day and night routes possible.
<https://www.bigbustours.com/en/chicago/chicago-bus-tours/>
- Encyclopedia of Chicago: as the name suggests, enter a Chicago-related term and read along.
<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/>
- Hyde Park community and local newspapers:
<http://www.hydepark.org/>
<https://hpherald.com/>
- Events in Hyde Park:
<http://www.downtownhydeparkchicago.com/events/>
- UofC ID: your ID card can often get you discount purchases, memberships, event tickets or even free entries. Be sure to check for the places/events you are interested in.