

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER • 78 EAST WASHINGTON STREET • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

TEL: (312) 744-2400 • FAX: (312) 744-2359 • TTY: (312) 744-2947

Contact: Brooke Vane
312.742.4983
brooke.vane@cityofchicago.org

CHICAGO HITS A HOME RUN FOR FAMILY TRAVEL
Activities Chicago can offer the entire family

Nowhere other than Chicago can visitors experience more than 45 museums, attend major league sports events, dine at restaurants of every cuisine, enjoy theater performances and see a panoramic view from the Western Hemisphere's tallest building. The Chicago Office of Tourism is pleased to assist families planning their summer vacations with family activities that engage and delight all ages.

Navy Pier –

Navy Pier is free to the public and is Chicago's most visited tourist attraction. The Pier features attractions such as a permanent 150-foot-high Ferris wheel, a musical carousel, an old-fashioned swing ride, remote control boats, daily musical and theatrical performances, and an 18-hole miniature golf course. Navy Pier is also home to the Amazing Chicago Funhouse Maze, Chicago Children's Museum, and IMAX Theater at Navy Pier. Wednesdays and Saturdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day, Navy Pier hosts a fireworks display that fills the sky over Lake Michigan.

Major League Baseball –

Chicago boasts two Major League baseball teams, the Cubs and the White Sox. No summer trip to Chicago would be complete without a visit to Wrigley Field (home of the Chicago Cubs) or U.S. Cellular Field (home of the Chicago White Sox). Parents and kids alike will enjoy a history lesson while at Wrigley Field, the nation's second oldest major league baseball park. U.S. Cellular field offers family fun with its Pontiac Fundamentals area where kids can access baseball clinics, batting cages, and practice pitching areas. Both ballparks are accessible by rapid transit, which is part of the overall experience. If you miss going to a game, both parks offer tours at reasonable rates.

Hancock Observatory and Sears Tower Skydeck –

Chicago is home to two of the world's most famous skyscrapers, the John Hancock Center and the Sears Tower. Guests can see Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana and Illinois from the top of each structure. Built in 1973, the Sears Tower is the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere at 1,450 feet tall. The Hancock Observatory features talking telescopes, so visitors can hear and see the sights. The Sears Tower Skydeck features knee-high displays and scavenger hunts for the kids. Both buildings have skydecks, which are open to visitors daily for a small entry fee.

Millennium Park –

Millennium Park is located in the heart of downtown Chicago and features world-class architecture and entertainment year-round. Children and adults alike will marvel at the Cloud Gate sculpture where you can see your reflection framed against the city's dramatic skyline. The park is free to the public and in warmer months, kids of all ages will love playing in the park's Crown Fountain, which includes two 50-foot glass towers at each end that project video images of the faces Chicagoans. Each summer the park features hundreds of free events including the Great Performers of Illinois and the Family Fun Festival.

Lincoln Park Zoo –

Lincoln Park Zoo is a world of wildlife in the shadow of skyscrapers and is free to the public 365 days a year. The zoo includes polar bears, penguins, gorillas, reptiles, monkeys, and other species totalling nearly 1,250 animals. There are two designated sections of the zoo for children, the Pritzker Family Children's Zoo and

the Farm-in-the-Zoo, presented by John Deere. In the Children's Zoo kids can observe red wolves, black bears, river otters, and beavers in a woodsy outdoor setting, then head inside to play on the Treetop Canaopy Climbing Adventure. At the Farm-in-the-Zoo, the family can learn the origins of the food we eat, climb aboard a tractor, and visit with sheep, pigs, ponies, cows, and chickens.

Chicago lakefront –

Chicago enjoys 26 miles of lakefront offering biking, swimming, fishing, boating, or walking along Lake Michigan while enjoying Chicago's stunning skyline views. Make sure to check out the boats in Monroe Harbor; enjoy the evening light shows at Buckingham Fountain; play in the water at Oak Street Beach; and enjoy the scenery at Promontory Point in Hyde Park along the way. There are plenty of stopping off points to have a picnic, throw a football, or fly a kite.

International Chicago cuisine –

While Chicago has more five-star restaurants than any other city in the world and is famous for pizza, hotdogs, and popcorn, the city is also home to a diverse dining scene. The international community in Chicago is thriving and by trying one of its many restaurants you can give children a peek into other cultures and traditions. Families can discover the history and neighborhoods of Chicago by eating their way through the city. Children can taste food from countries around the world in any one of Chicago's ethnic neighborhoods. Some kid-friendly favorites are Greek, Thai, Chinese, Polish, Mexican, Italian, and German cuisines.

Chicago family hotel packages – Chicago hotels have many top-notch accommodations to fit the needs of the most discriminating traveler. Several hotels are rolling out the red carpet for children and families! Hotels such as the Hotel Burnham, Hotel Allegro, Hotel Monaco, Four Seasons Hotel Chicago, The Westin Michigan Avenue, and Residence Inn Chicago Downtown have developed hotel packages that are designed to please the entire family. Packages include some of the following amenities: complimentary CityPass admission booklet, free meals and room service for children, opportunities to create your own pizza or ice cream sundae, milk and cookies before bed, Nintendo, and a pet fish in your room.

Chicago Museums – Chicago has a very impressive collection of world-class museums to call its own, with many that are both interactive and educational. Adults and children alike will marvel at Chicago's collections and exhibitions by visiting the Art Institute of Chicago Kraft Education Center, learning about history at the DuSable Museum of African-American History, boarding submarines at the Museum of Science and Industry, looking in on "Sue" the preserved Tyrannosaurus rex at the Field Museum, checking out the sharks up close at the Shedd Aquarium, and gazing at the stars at the Adler Planetarium. Along with such a stellar collection of institutions come two that cater specifically to children. Families can learn about African-American history at the Bronzeville Children's Museum and take advantage of three floors of hands-on exhibits at the Chicago Children's Museum.

Visitor Information Resources - Chicago's visitor information centers are conveniently located in two of the city's most popular areas. Plan to visit the information centers when you arrive in Chicago and receive free brochures featuring attractions and special events. Friendly information representatives will answer your questions and assist your family in planning an action-packed itinerary. The visitor centers are located in the Chicago Cultural Center at 77 East Randolph across from Millennium Park and at the City's historic Water Works pumping station on Michigan Avenue. Additionally, the Chicago Office of Tourism is home to the Chicago Greeter program. Chicago Greeter links friendly, knowledgeable Chicagoans up with visitors looking to see the sights through the eyes of a local. The Greeter program can tailor their tours to meet the needs of the entire family.

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official city agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and resources. For more information please visit www.explorechicago.org or call 1.877.CHICAGO.

Note to Journalists: Please contact Brooke Vane with the City of Chicago at 312.742.4983 for additional information and story ideas.

###