

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: Karen Vaughan
312.744.2390
kvaughan@cityofchicago.org

CHICAGO'S ACCOLADES

From its delectable dining to its family-friendly attractions, Chicago has received numerous awards praising the city as a great travel destination. Since 2003, Chicago has received such titles and awards as:

- City of the Year – *GQ Magazine* (2008)
- One of the Top 10 Cities in the World – *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2009* (2008)
- Five Chicago hotels received their Green Seal certification, making Chicago the city with the most Green Seal Certified hotels: Hotel Monaco Chicago, Hotel Burnham, Hotel Allegro Chicago, InterContinental Chicago, and the Talbott Hotel (2008)
- Ranked the number one US destination for LGBT business travel (and number five for leisure travel) by Community Marketing, Inc.'s 13th Annual LGBT Tourism Study (2008).
- Out of three U.S. cities surveyed, Chicago residents were the 'most satisfied overall', reported that Chicago is an 'easy place to live' and were 'most confident about the future of their city' - *Veolia Observatory Survey of Urban Lifestyles*, conducted by Veolia Environnement (2008)
- U.S. City of the Year (2008) by *Fast Company* magazine
- Outstanding Chef Award – awarded to Alinea's Grant Achatz by the James Beard Foundation (2008)
- Best Chef for the Great Lakes region– awarded to Naha's Carrie Nahabidian by the James Beard Foundation (2008)
- America's Classics Award – awarded to Tufano's Vernon Park Tap by the James Beard Foundation (2008)
- Voted "World's Top Trading City for Traders" by *Trader Monthly* (2008)
- Voted North America's "City of the Future" by the Financial Times publication *Foreign Direct Investment Magazine* (2007-08)
- Voted #2 top art destination in the 'Big Cities category' of *AmericanStyle* magazine's list of Top 25 Arts Destinations for 2008 (2008)
- Outstanding Restaurant – awarded to Frontera Grill by the James Beard Foundation (2007)
- Best Skyline – America's Favorite Cities poll, *Travel + Leisure* (2007)
- Best Food/Dining & Best Pizza – America's Favorite Cities poll, *Travel + Leisure* (2007)
- Best Business Trip (that's secretly fun) – America's Favorite Cities poll, *Travel + Leisure* (2007)
- Best Sports Fan's Vacation – America's Favorite Cities poll, *Travel + Leisure* (2007)
- Chicago's Green City Market rated as one of the top ten great farmers markets in the US by chef and author Alice Waters (2007)
- America's New Culinary Star – *Saveur* (2007)
- More five diamond restaurants than any other city in the nation (Alinea, Arun's, Avenues, Charlie Trotter's, Everest, Seasons and Tru) – AAA (2007)
- Favorite Road Trip City as voted by Major League Baseball players – *Sports Illustrated* (2007)
- Best Restaurant City in America – *GQ* (2006)
- Best Restaurant in America: Alinea – *Gourmet* (2006)
- Best Sports City – *Sporting News Magazine* (2006)
- Top 50 Destinations for Summer 2006: Millennium Park #1, North Michigan Avenue #2 – Priceline.com
- 2006 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design –Millennium Park
- Top 2006 U.S. Destination – as ranked by Orbitz.com (2006)
- 2006 City Livability Awards Program - Chicago and Mayor Richard M. Daley awarded First Place honors by The U.S. Conference of Mayors and Waste Management
- Among the top three cities most traveled by adults with disabilities – Open Doors Organization (2006)
- Voted #4 in the 25 Best Running Cities in America survey – *Runner's World* (2005)
- One of the "Top Ten Green Cities in the U.S." - *The Green Guide* (2005)
- "Bicycle Friendly Community" designation by The League of American Bicyclists (2005)

- #1 most dog-friendly city to visit in North America - DogFriendly.com (2005)
- One of the Top 10 U.S. Destinations - American Airlines' *Celebrated Living Magazine* (2005)
- Voted #2 in *AmericanStyle* magazine's Top 25 Arts Destinations readers poll (2005)
- Best Public Space: Millennium Park – First Annual *Travel + Leisure* Design Awards (2004)
- One of the “Best Walking Cities” in the USA – APMA/*Prevention Magazine* (2003, 2004)
- One of “America’s Favorite Cities” – AOL *Travel/ Travel + Leisure* (2003, 2004)
- Most exceptional dining destination – *Robb Report Magazine* (2003)

Travelers and travel publications from the United States and overseas have discovered Chicago’s cultural and recreational appeal, repeatedly selecting it as one of “America’s Favorite Cities” and a “Top U.S. Destination.” Chicago boasts dozens of renowned museums, including the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago Children’s Museum, Shedd Aquarium, Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum and The Field Museum. Visitors also rave about the city’s year-round free special events such as the Taste of Chicago, Venetian Night and the Air & Water Show.

Millennium Park has garnered numerous awards since opening in 2004. In 2006, it received the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design. The AIA jury called the Park “the most beautifully executed new urban public space in America . . . It’s a masterpiece of urban ingenuity and creativity.” In 2004, it received an award for “Best Public Space” in the First Annual *Travel & Leisure* Design Awards.

Being home to The Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art and other art museums helped Chicago earn the title of one of the country’s “top 25 arts destinations.” The city’s flourishing art gallery district, world-renowned architecture and public art including the Picasso sculpture, Miró’s *Chicago* and Dubuffet’s *Monument with Standing Beast* also contributed to Chicago’s receiving this honor.

In addition to culture, Chicago’s recreational opportunities have been well received. Eighteen miles of bicycling trails along the city’s sparkling lakefront, hundreds of miles of bicycle routes within the city, bike rental facilities, and the city’s efforts to equip the public transportation system with bike racks prompted the League of American Bicyclists to designate Chicago a “bicycle friendly community.” The lakefront path, plus 552 parks located throughout the city, also earned Chicago the title of one of the “best walking cities” in the United States by American Podiatric Medical Association and *Prevention Magazine*.

Home to 6 major-league sports teams (the Bulls, Bears, Cubs, White Sox, Blackhawks and Fire) and numerous collegiate athletic teams, Chicago is a great sports city. In fact, *Travel and Leisure* named Chicago the “Best Sports Fan’s Vacation,” *Sporting News* named Chicago the “Best Sports City” and a poll conducted by *Sports Illustrated* found that Chicago is considered the “Best Road Trip City” by Major League Baseball players.

It is fortunate that Chicago is a great city for athletics because visitors will have to burn some calories after dining in the one of the “best food cities” in America, according to participants in the *Food & Wine/AOL* Food in America Poll. Poll participants also ranked Chicago as one of the best cities for four-star restaurants, neighborhood restaurants and for restaurants offering the best overall value. Readers of *Condé Nast Traveller* in the UK agree because they also named Chicago a “top food city” and the editors of the luxury lifestyle magazine *Robb Report* designated Chicago the “Most exceptional dining destination.”

Recently, visitors to AOL *Travel* and *Travel & Leisure* online rated Chicago among the top five cities in America offering the best in shopping, dining out and cultural events. In the same poll, readers listed Chicago among the top five American cities with top-notch public transportation, which expands visitors’ choices for navigating the city’s first-rate shopping emporiums, cultural institutions, restaurants, neighborhoods and more.

Visitors and Chicagoans planning to entertain out-of-town guests can receive Chicago brochures, reserve hotel accommodations and receive trip-planning assistance by calling toll-free 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246), or visiting www.explorechicago.org. Brochures and information on Chicago’s exciting events and activities are also available at the Visitor Information Centers. The centers are located at Chicago Water Works, 163 East Pearson Street at Michigan Avenue and the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 East Randolph Street. The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294.

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 services.

###