

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

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CHICAGO SHOWS ITS SWEET SIDE WITH THE TOP 10 ACTIVITIES FOR A COUPLES GETAWAY

With world-class art, architecture, restaurants, and hotels, Chicago is a premier destination for romance. The Chicago Office of Tourism has put together a menu of activities and story ideas for visitors to Chicago that is sure to reinvigorate both your senses and your mood for love. In Chicago there is something for every couple, no matter your interest. From theater and museums to shopping and professional sports, Chicago's activities for couples are the perfect recipe for a great romantic getaway.

Gardens and Parks – With more than 7,500 acres of parkland, two world-class conservatories, 26 miles of lakefront and 600 acres of nature areas, Chicago lives up to its motto "City in a Garden". Chicago is home to two beautiful conservatories, the Garfield Park and Lincoln Park Conservatories, both located in the city's public parks. Chicago's downtown area is home to two world-class parks, Grant Park and Millennium Park. Both parks are convenient to downtown lodging and perfect for a romantic stroll with a cup of coffee or an ice cream cone. In the colder months ice skating is available in ten Chicago area rinks. In the warmer months, couples can enjoy one of Chicago's free outdoor concerts or movies.

Shopping – Shopping can be very romantic, especially if you are the one getting bought for. Chicago is a leading center for fashion and design, home to more than 400 fashion designers and 375 independently owned retail boutiques. The city is also an international shopping capital, with a vibrant retail scene that caters to the needs of every shopper, including major department stores, chic designer boutiques, and unique ethnic stores. For more information of Chicago's thriving fashion scene, please visit www.chicagofashionresource.com.

Museums – Chicago is world renowned for its incredibly diverse collection of over 40 museums. For romance seekers, the Museum of Modern Art and The Art Institute of Chicago are both great options for a relaxing afternoon of art. The Art Institute is one of the world's leading art museums with over 300,000 works, including an extensive impressionist and post-impressionist collection. The Museum of Contemporary Art explores art dating from 1945 to present-day with a strong focus on surrealism, minimalism, conceptual photography and work by Chicago-based artists.

Restaurants – Chicago is a world-class culinary destination, featuring more than 7,000 restaurants and more 5-diamond restaurants than any city in the nation. For a dinner spot with a romantic view try the Park Grill in Millennium Park. In the summer months you can dine alfresco, people watch, and gaze out over the sweeping city views. For a more interactive experience where you and your date can work together to cook dinner, try Geja's Café in Lincoln Park. Geja's features traditional fondue and is hailed by many to be the most romantic restaurant in the city.

Hotels – For romance, nothing beats the beautiful amenities, stellar views, and top-notch service of Chicago's hotels. In the year 2009 alone, five Chicago hotels have made it to *Travel + Leisure's* Top 500 World's best hotels list. The W Hotel Lakeshore and the Trump International Hotel and Tower offer some of the best views of Lake Michigan and the Chicago River around. For prime location and proximity to shopping and nightlife, the Park Hyatt and The Peninsula Chicago can not be rivaled. And for their cool urban vibe, the Dana Hotel and Spa and the Affinia Hotel will not disappoint.

Architecture – Visitors from around the world come to Chicago, the birthplace of the modern building, to view its romantic cityscapes and architectural marvels. From historic landmark buildings to contemporary technological masterpieces, Chicago is home to unique and innovative designs that have shaped American architecture. A view of the city's buildings by boat offers a unique perspective. Visitors to Chicago may take one of many architectural river cruises to experience the preservation of ageless architectural styles in classic

and modern structures along the Chicago River. For a more detailed look, the Chicago Architecture Foundation offers more than 50 walking or bus tours, conducted by knowledgeable guides.

Spas – After a long day of exploring head to one of Chicago's spas to relax before a night out on the town with your significant other. Chicago's Spa Space, exhale spa, and Kiva Salon and Spa are all perfect options for any treatments you desire including manicures and pedicures, aromatherapies, massages, and scrubs. For the budget conscious, Cortiva School of Massage Therapy in Chicago's Loop offers great discounted massages and treatments given by students and instructors.

Walk or bike Chicago – Chicago's scenic views and flat landscape make it the perfect city for exploring either on foot or bike. It is no wonder that Chicago was named the one of the top five running cities in the country by *Runner's World*. No matter how you choose to explore, Chicago views are sure to evoke romance with stunning skyline and lakefront views. A favorite of Chicagoans is to start your trip south of downtown at the Museum Campus and walk north along the lakefront path to Monroe Street. Along the way you'll see the iconic image of sailboats along Lake Michigan flanked by the Chicago skyline. Bicycles can be rented at a number of locations around the city.

Recreation – Chicago has something to offer all couples looking to get out in the city and participate in something recreational. Romance seekers can take a cooking class at either World Kitchen or the Chopping Block; take a segway tour of the city; or a moonlight kayak trip down the Chicago River. Depending on your interests, other romantic activities for couples include attending one of Chicago's professional sporting events with a Blackhawks, Bulls, Cubs, or White Sox game.

Theater – Enjoy a classic date in Chicago with dinner and a show. From storefront theaters and Tony-award winning regional companies to major Broadway shows, Chicago theater is recognized throughout the world for its diverse selection and critically-acclaimed productions. Choose a musical or play in the bustling downtown theater district or venture out into the neighborhoods for a performance at one of Chicago's many resident theater companies such as Steppenwolf Theatre. Purchase half-price tickets to a show through Hot Tix, in person or online, at www.hottix.org.

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 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 Chicago 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.

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