

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

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Sweet Home Chicago and Beyond: Music of the Windy City

With more than 250 live music venues and dozens of annual music festivals, Chicago is a music-lover's paradise. Whether you enjoy seeing emerging artists at a late-night club or a gospel choir over Sunday brunch, Chicago's diverse music scene offers something for fans of every genre.

BLUES

Its rich history in the city has made "blues" almost synonymous with "Chicago". Originating in the Mississippi Delta, blues moved north to the South Side of "Sweet Home Chicago" in the 1930s. Modest venues such as the Gatewood Tavern, Rhumboogie, El Grotto and the Du Drop Inn gained recognition with performances by blues legends Big Bill Broonzy, Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, Otis Spann and Muddy Waters. Waters was later joined by Howlin' Wolf, Otis Rush, Buddy Guy and other southern bluesmen who set up shop in the '50s and '60s. In the '60s, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band's "Born in Chicago" and KoKo Taylor's "Wang Dang Doodle" earned national recognition.

Today's blues performers remain very much a part of Chicago's culture. Artists like Lynne Jordan, Chick Rogers, "Honeyboy" Edwards, Fernando Jones, Erwin Helfer, Corky Siegel and John Primer and The Real Deal Blues Band keep fresh talent on stages across the city. Buddy Guy has his own popular club, Buddy Guy's Legends (754 S. Wabash). House of Blues (329 N. Dearborn), Blue Chicago (736 N. Clark) and Blue Chicago on Clark (536 N. Clark) are all downtown, while B.L.U.E.S. (2519 N. Halsted), Kingston Mines (2548 N. Halsted), Lee's Unleaded Blues (7401 S. Chicago), The New Checkerboard Lounge (5201 S. Harper Ct.) and Rosa's Lounge (3420 W. Armitage) offer nightly performances in the surrounding neighborhoods.

A must-see educational spot is Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation (2120 S. Michigan). The Foundation includes a blues archive and photo gallery and is located in the former Chess Records recording studio, which introduced the sounds of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Etta James, Buddy Guy, Aretha Franklin and Ramsey Lewis to the world.

The Chicago Office of Tourism recently launched its **Chicago Blues Audio Tour**. Narrated by Chicago blues legend Buddy Guy, over 50 minutes of conversation highlight the history of the blues and focus on how the city's musical tradition forever changed popular music and American culture. The Chicago Blues Tour is free, available in five languages and can be downloaded at www.downloadchicagotours.com.

JAZZ

After spreading from the South in the 1910s, Chicago became the nation's jazz center in the '20s. Most live music was found in South Side African-American clubs between 31st and 39th streets on State Street-- a half-mile strip known as "The Stroll." The Apex Club, Dreamland Café, Plantation Café and Royal Garden showcased performers like Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory, Fletcher Henderson and Earl Hines, later joined by the Loop's Moulin Rouge Café and the College Inn. Among other jazz stars of the '20s was a group from Austin High School that began playing a type of improvisation known as "Chicago style" jazz. One Austin High group member, Benny Goodman, came from an impoverished immigrant family of 12, but reached jazz stardom and was dubbed "the King of Swing" less than a decade later.

Open since 1907, the Green Mill (4802 N. Broadway) is one of Chicago's oldest existing jazz clubs and still draws a nightly crowd. In the early days, silent movie stars such as Wallace Beery and "Bronco Billy" Anderson, who made Western films on Chicago's North Side, frequented the Green Mill. Over the years, performers have included comic Joe E. Lewis and Louis Armstrong.

Jazz, from traditional to modern, can be heard today at Andy's (11 E. Hubbard), known for its music at lunch, cocktail hour and late night. Other jazz establishments include The Velvet Lounge (67 E. Cermak), Empty Bottle (1035 N. Western), Green Dolphin Street (2200 N. Ashland) and the Backroom (1007 N. Rush).

ROCK

Rock and Roll Hall of Famer and Chicagoan Bo Diddley was the first to put Chicago on the map as a rock and roll hotspot when he landed his first #1 single in 1955. The "British Invasion" officially arrived in Chicago with the Beatles' summer 1965 show in Comiskey Park, and the sound was carried on with Beach Boys-inspired groups like the Buckingham's through the late '60s. Hugely popular '70s groups like Styx, Chicago and REO Speedwagon all launched their careers in Chicago.

In the early '90s, Chicago gave birth to alternative rock icons the Smashing Pumpkins and Wilco, whose influences on emerging bands continue to be seen worldwide. Liz Phair, Veruca Salt, Ministry, Smoking Popes, Wesley Willis, Alkaline Trio, Shellac, Tortoise and Andrew Bird are just a few of the other artists representing the dynamic Chicago rock scene.

Take a look at the show listings for Schuba's (3149 N. Southport), Empty Bottle (1035 N. Western), Subterranean (2011 W. North), the Hideout (1354 W. Wabansia), Double Door (1572 N. Milwaukee), Metro (3730 N. Clark) and Logan Square Auditorium (2539 N. Kedzie) to catch everything from the best local punk bands to up-and-coming indie rock groups. Big-name rock bands frequently make tour stops in Chicago and can be found at one of the city's several stadiums.

HIP-HOP AND R&B

Though the city has had a large hip-hop community for decades, the last few years have drawn widespread attention to the vibrant Chicago hip-hop scene. Superstars like Kanye West and R. Kelly are joined by Common, Twista and Lupe Fiasco on the growing roster of chart-topping acts coming out of Chicago. The mainstream success of Kanye West has opened doors for emerging Chicago artists like Kid Sister, who collaborates with West in her first music video, and the Cool Kids, who were recently profiled on MTV.

Check out underground hip-hop acts on select nights at venues like Bassment (1415 N. Ashland), Darkroom (2210 W. Chicago), Sonotheque (1444 W. Chicago) and the Abbey Pub (3420 W. Grace). Larger hip-hop and R&B groups draw crowds at super-sized venues like the United Center (1901 W. Madison).

ELECTRONIC

Chicago's greatest influence on electronic music may be its role as the birthplace of House music. Grown out of the post-disco dance club culture of the early '80s, bass-heavy House music is strongly influenced by elements funk and soul music. The name "House" is rumored to originate from the Chicago dance club the Warehouse, where renowned DJ Frankie Knuckles played his dance tracks and mixes. Additionally, the classic House record label Trax Records was based in Chicago.

ANNUAL CHICAGO MUSIC FESTIVALS

Each summer, visitors from around the globe flock to Chicago for dozens of festivals dedicated to celebrating music of every genre and culture. Many of these festivals are free to the public, and a number suggest a modest donation for admission.

- Chicago Blues Festival (early June) *FREE
- Chicago Gospel Festival (early June) *FREE
- Great Performers of Illinois Festival (mid June) *FREE
- Grant Park Music Festival (mid-June through mid-August) *FREE
- Chicago Country Music Festival (late June) *FREE
- Close Up 2 Smooth Jazz Festival (late June)
- Chicago MOBfest (late June)
- Summer on the Square (late June)
- Midwest Electronic Music Festival (late June)

- The Taste of Chicago (late June and early July) *FREE
- Lakeview Music Fest (early July)
- African Caribbean International Festival of Life (early July)
- Chicago Folk & Roots Festival (mid July)
- JVC Jazz Festival (mid July)
- Pitchfork Music Festival (mid July)
- Wicker Park Fest (late July)
- Lollapalooza (early August)
- “¡Viva! Chicago” Latin Music Festival (late August) *FREE
- African Festival of the Arts (late August, early September)
- Chicago Jazz Festival (early September) *FREE
- Hideout Block Party (mid September)
- World Music Festival: Chicago (late September) *FREE

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.

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