

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

VISIT CHICAGO AND DISCOVER WHY PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK OBAMA CALLS THE CITY HOME!

With its stunning architecture, world-famous museums, lakefront parks and vibrant ethnic neighborhoods, Chicago is a city of world-class status and unsurpassed beauty. It's no wonder that President-elect Barack and Michelle Obama – and nearly three million others – call Chicago home.

Visitors to the city experience a virtual explosion of cultural activity, civic pride and multicultural expression. Chicago offers a range of attractions which keep tourists coming back again and again. There is no better time to discover Chicago and see what makes this city such a compelling destination.

"Chicago shaped the life and career of our new President-elect," said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. "Visitors from around the world have been inspired by Barack Obama, and feel more drawn to Chicago than ever before. We welcome new and returning visitors to explore the city the Obamas love and call home."

Here are some ideas to help visitors discover the Obamas' Chicago. For more information on visiting Chicago, or to book accommodations, visit www.explorechicago.org or call 877-CHICAGO.

University of Chicago Campus/Hyde Park Neighborhood

Barack Obama taught Constitutional Law at the world-renowned University of Chicago from 1992 until 2004. The "U of C", as it's commonly known, was founded in Hyde Park in 1892 and has made this South Side neighborhood a cultural and intellectual enclave. In Hyde Park, visitors can relax in any number of coffeehouses and bookstores and attend lectures, concerts, plays and art exhibits.

Hyde Park is also home to the DuSable Museum of African American History, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Oriental Institute Museum, Smart Museum of Art, Hyde Park Art Center, Court Theatre, The Renaissance Society and Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House. The neighborhood's new Checkerboard Lounge on 52nd Street is a popular spot for "Blues 'n' Jazz."

Kenwood Neighborhood

The Obama family has lived in Kenwood since 2005. This South Side neighborhood, just north of Hyde Park, is filled with beautiful old homes and is a wonderful place to tour by foot, car or bicycle. The 19th century mansions in this community once housed some of Chicago's wealthiest industrialists and merchants. By the middle of the 20th century, many of the stately homes had been subdivided into apartments and fallen into disrepair. The neighborhood underwent a revival in the 1980s and 1990s as families, attracted by Kenwood's proximity to both Hyde Park and downtown Chicago, began buying the homes and restoring them to their former glory.

Chicago's Thriving Fashion Industry

Chicago is a leading center for fashion and design, home to more than 250 fashion designers and 400 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. Michelle Obama is a fan of the Chicago-based designer Mario Pinto. Pinto's boutique in the West Loop sells her elegant women's accessories and ready-to-wear line.

The Chicago White Sox

Barack Obama is a fan of the Chicago White Sox Major League Baseball Team. The White Sox, winners of the 2005 World Series, play 81 home games each season at U.S. Cellular Field each season. With a number of ticket options, visitors are sure to find a seat with a great view of the action while staying within a budget.

The Tastes of Chicago

Chicago is a world-class dining destination, featuring more than 7,000 restaurants serving cuisines to suit every taste. While building on its cutting-edge culinary reputation, the city continues to honor local traditions such as deep dish pizza and Chicago-style hot dogs. Chicago's rich food history, paired with the visions of its emerging chefs and restaurateurs, make Chicago a food-lover's paradise. As reported in the Wall Street Journal, the Obamas enjoy dining together at Rick Bayless' award-winning Mexican restaurant Topolobampo, while the First Lady-elect frequents the West Loop's stylish Sepia. Spiaggia is a regular date night destination for its 4-star Italian cuisine and breathtaking views of Lake Michigan. For a casual meal that's easy on the wallet, the Obamas enjoy comfort food at R.J. Grunts in Lincoln Park and MacArthur's, the soul food mainstay Obama names as a favorite in "The Audacity of Hope".

Lakefront

Barack Obama is a fitness enthusiast and has enjoyed workouts along the shore of Lake Michigan. Chicago's 26 miles of lakefront allow residents and tourists alike the opportunity to bike, swim, fish, boat, or walk while enjoying the city's stunning skyline views. Visitors should be sure to check out the boats in Monroe Harbor, 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.

The Art Institute of Chicago

According to the Chicago Sun-Times, Barack and Michelle Obama's first date included a trip to the Art Institute of Chicago. The Art Institute is a world-renowned art museum housing the third largest permanent collection in the United States. An encyclopedic museum, the Art Institute collects, preserves and displays works in every medium from all cultures and historical periods as well as hosts special exhibitions. With a collection of more than 260,000 art works and artifacts, the museum has particularly strong holdings in Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painting, early 20th century European painting and sculpture, contemporary art, Japanese prints and photography.

Chicago Blues Downloadable Audio Tour

Chicago, especially the South Side, where Barack Obama lives, is known around the world as the home of blues music. The Chicago Office of Tourism's Chicago Blues Enhanced Audio Tour, narrated by legend Buddy Guy, brings the Chicago blues scene to life like never before as guests are guided to 10 of Chicago's historic blues sites, including the Checkerboard Lounge in Hyde Park. Featuring over 50 minutes of conversation and music, the free tour explores the history of Chicago blues and how the city's musical tradition forever changed popular music and American culture. It is available for download in five languages (English, Spanish, Mandarin, German and Japanese) at www.downloadchicagotours.org.

Chicago Neighborhood Tours and Chicago Greeters

First-time visitors and Chicago-residents can discover something new about the city's exciting and diverse communities with **Chicago Neighborhood Tours**. These affordable half-day bus excursions highlight the history, stories, traditions, and most importantly, the people of Chicago. Each year, dozens of tours are offered, including a tour of the Hyde Park and Kenwood neighborhoods, scheduled for 2009 on April 18, July 18 and September 19.

The Chicago Office of Tourism's free visitor service, **Chicago Greeter**, is designed to match a friendly, enthusiastic, and city knowledgeable local with a visitor for a two-to-four hour informal, insider orientation to Chicago's sights. Visitors meet with a greeter who takes them around the city and demonstrates its walk-ability and the user-friendliness of its public transportation system. Visitors are matched with greeters through an online registration system based on special interest and language. There are more than 20 Chicago Greeters who are knowledgeable about the Hyde Park and Kenwood neighborhoods.

Chicago 2016

Chicago is a Candidate City to host the 2016 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. Chicago's concept for hosting the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games will create an unforgettable Olympic experience. The plan puts athletes at the center of the Games, integrates the Games with the city's downtown area and lakefront and features venues and a design that are responsible and sustainable. The Olympic Stadium will be located in Washington Park, which borders Hyde Park to the West. Barack Obama has voiced his support for Chicago's Olympic Bid, most recently at a rally held in Chicago's Daley Plaza in June 2008.

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.cityofchicago.org/tourism. 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.

#