

Arriving and Getting Oriented

Coming into Chicago by Car

The major route into Chicago from both the south and the north is Interstate 90/94 (better known locally as the **Dan Ryan Expressway** south of the Loop and the **Kennedy Expressway** to the north). The busy highway runs roughly north to south through Chicago (paralleling Lake Michigan) and features both express lanes (without exits) and local lanes (with exits); it's a setup guaranteed to exasperate first-time visitors.

South of the city, **I-90/94** links with **I-80**, a major east-west route that connects Chicago to South Bend, Toledo, Cleveland, and New York City to the east, and Davenport, Des Moines, Omaha, and other points to the west. It also joins **I-57**, which continues south through Illinois to Kankakee and Champaign.

North of the Loop, I-90/94 changes names to become the Kennedy Expressway; it veers northwest toward O'Hare International Airport before splitting. I-90 (now called the **Northwest Tollway**) continues northwest past the airport to Madison, Wisconsin, where it meets I-94.

The **Stevenson Expressway** (I-55) enters Chicago near McCormick Place from the southwest; this interstate begins in New Orleans and goes north through Memphis and St. Louis before crossing I-80 and passing Midway Airport to its terminus in the city at Lake Shore Drive. From the west, the **Eisenhower Expressway** (I-290) comes into the Loop from **I-88** (the East-West Tollway) and DeKalb.

West of the city limits, two highways run north and south through Chicago's suburbs to link the major roads coming into Chicago from the south, west, and north; the highways serve as "beltways" in otherwise beltway-less Chicago. **I-294** (the Tri-State Tollway) starts at I-80 south of the city and crosses **I-55** (the Stevenson Expressway), **I-290** (the Eisenhower Expressway), and I-90 (the Kennedy Expressway) near O'Hare. North of Chicago it merges with I-94 en route to Milwaukee.

A few miles west of I-294, **US 355** (the North-South Tollway) connects I-55 and I-88 (the East-West Tollway) to I-290 west of O'Hare; I-290 goes north to I-90, the Northwest Tollway that links Madison and Chicago.

US 41, the Edens Expressway, links I-90/94 in Chicago's North Side (north of the Chicago River) with the northern suburbs of Skokie, Highland Park, and Lake Forest before merging with I-94 south of the Wisconsin state line. Farther south in the city, US 41 becomes Lake Shore Drive, which follows Lake Michigan south past downtown and into Indiana.

Coming into Chicago by Plane

O'Hare International Airport is famous (or, as some cynics snort, infamous) as the busiest airport in the world. More than 72 million people a year fly in and out of the airport located 17 miles northwest of downtown Chicago. That means there are usually enough travelers on hand to turn the huge facility into a refugee camp when lousy weather snarls air traffic and strands travelers by the thousands.

Yet O'Hare isn't the only game in town. Midway Airport, located eight miles southwest of downtown, handles about one-tenth of the passenger traffic of its big brother to the north, and that makes it a more hassle-free point of arrival and departure for many visitors to the Windy City.

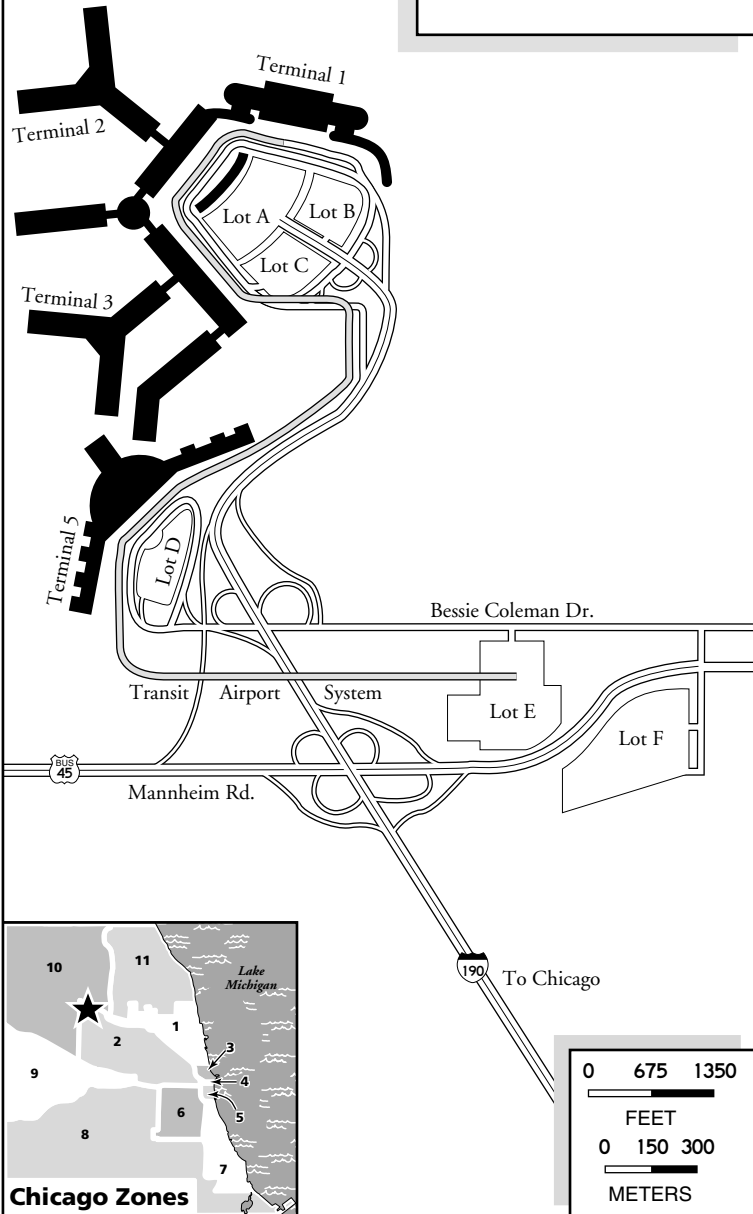
O'Hare International Airport

Opened in 1955 and named for Congressional Medal of Honor winner Edward O'Hare (a navy pilot killed in the Battle of Midway), this sprawling airport includes four terminals connected by passenger walkways, moving sidewalks, and a "people mover" (an automated transit system that covers 2.7 miles of airport property).

Statistics on O'Hare are impressive. For decades, it has been the commercial aviation capital of the world, providing service to all 50 states and many foreign countries. The mammoth airport handles more passengers and aircraft than any other field in the world; about 195,000 travelers pass through O'Hare each day and an average of 100 aircraft arrive or depart each hour. The complex covers nearly 7,700 acres, and the airport serves nearly 60 commercial, commuter, and cargo airlines on a regular basis.

The airport is also connected to Chicago's subway system and is close to I-90 (the Kennedy Expressway), which goes downtown to the Loop. Although O'Hare is renowned for its headache-inducing holding patterns in the air, on the ground this modern airport boasts a new international terminal, is easy to get around, and is still growing. More than \$700 million in improvements (including new runways) are planned over the next few years.

O'Hare International Airport



The Layout

The “core” of O’Hare contains **terminals 1, 2, and 3**, where most domestic flights come and go. Terminal 2 lies in the center of the horseshoe-shaped arrangement and faces the **Hilton O’Hare**, a parking garage, and parking lots. **Terminal 5** (there’s no terminal 4), which handles international flights, is located south of the core and is reached via the Airport Transit System (or “people mover”).

In the three main terminals, the second-floor departure level features fast-food eateries, bars, shops, newsstands, and a “restaurant rotunda” between terminals 2 and 3. From the gate, arriving passengers follow signs to the baggage-claim area on the lower level.

Hanging Out at O’Hare

Unbeknownst even to natives, O’Hare International Airport is now a city unto itself. Recent renovations at O’Hareland have brought Chicago landmarks like **The Berghoff** to Concourse C in Terminal 1 and **Wolfgang Puck’s** on Terminal 3. If you’re stuck overnight in O’Hareland, here’s a tip: **International Terminal 5** has the only 24-hour restaurants inside the airport. O’Hare orphans can get hot dogs, frozen yogurt, and assorted snacks.

The **O’Hare Hilton** hotel is connected to the airport through an underground tunnel and outdoor walkway. The underground passage includes a bookstore, clothing shop, currency exchange, and dentist (with limited hours). The O’Hare Hilton features a sports-themed restaurant and bar and basement athletic club with a dry sauna and pool. Even Traveler’s Aid will suggest that if you need to freshen up, buy a one-day membership for \$10 and take a quick shower.

If you have time to explore, wander through the hotel lobby. The last **Gaslight Club** in America sits on the west end of the lobby. The Gaslight started in 1953 as a private club on Chicago’s Gold Coast. Co-founder Burton Browne set out to recreate a 1920s speakeasy with Dixieland jazz and servers dressed in skimpy flapper outfits. The Gaslight Club concept was a prototype for Hugh Hefner’s Playboy Clubs. The dimly lit O’Hare Gaslight Club opened in 1973. It is a separate operation from the Hilton.

Ticketed passengers with kids needing to burn off steam may visit the new **Children’s Museum** in Terminal 2. Interactive displays include an air-traffic control tower, fantasy helicopter, cargo plane, and luggage station. The modest-sized museum was developed by the Chicago Children’s Museum at Navy Pier and the Chicago Aviation Department.

The People Mover

If you need to get from, say, terminal 1 to terminal 3, or your destination is the long-term parking area, take the “people mover.” Escalators and elevators in front of the ticket counters take you over the roadway where departing passengers are dropped off. The people mover is free, and a train comes every few minutes.

Hint: If you've got some time to kill before your flight, explore this transportation system. It's fun to ride, and you'll be treated to some terrific views of the airfield. In addition, the international terminal has a food court with cheaper prices than the restaurants in the other terminals. And it's usually less crowded.

Getting Downtown

Cabs and Shuttles Visitors who fly into Chicago have to make a choice when it comes to getting downtown. If your final destination is a major hotel near the Loop or the Magnificent Mile (which is where most of them are), **Airport Express** (phone (888) 284-3826) is the cheapest and easiest way to go—unless you're not schlepping luggage (take the train) or in a group (take a cab). Just inquire at the Airport Express desk in the baggage-claim areas of either airport and ask if the van goes to your hotel. It's also a good idea to ask if your hotel is one of the first or last stops the van makes.

The service operates vans to major downtown hotels from 6 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. daily that leave about every 10–15 minutes. Ticket counters are located in the baggage-claim areas of all four terminals. One-way fares are \$21; round-trip fares are \$39. Figure on a 45-minute ride to your hotel during non-rush hour traffic. Call to make reservations for a pickup from your downtown hotel, or for a guaranteed seat, on the day before you leave; last-minute reservations can be made up to an hour before departure on a space-available basis.

If your hotel isn't served by Airport Express, taxis, buses, hotel vans, and rental-car pickups are located outside the lower-level baggage areas. Cab fares to downtown run about \$35–\$40 one-way for the normal travel time of 30 minutes; share-the-ride cabs cost \$20 per person for a taxi shared between two to four passengers headed downtown. Allow at least an hour and a half during rush hour and expect to pay a higher fare for the longer cab ride.

Public Transportation If you're traveling light, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) **Blue Line** train terminal is located in front of and beneath terminal 2 (follow signs that read "Trains to Downtown"); it's about a 40-minute trip to the Loop that costs \$1.75 one-way. Trains leave about every 10 minutes weekdays and about every 15 minutes early evenings and weekends. Unfortunately, there's no place to store luggage on the rapid-transit trains (although one piece of luggage is usually manageable, as many airline employees attest). For more information, call the CTA at (312) 836-7000.

Driving If you're renting a car and driving, getting to the Loop is pretty easy. Follow signs out of the airport to I-90 east, which puts you on the Kennedy Expressway; it's a straight 18-mile ride to downtown that takes about a half hour (longer during rush hour; Friday afternoons

are the worst). As you approach the city, Chicago's distinctive skyline, anchored by the John Hancock Center on the left and the Sears Tower on the right, comes into view—if it's not raining.

If you're headed for the Loop, move into the right lane as you approach the tunnel (just before the city center) and get ready to exit as you come out of the tunnel. Take the Ohio Street exit to get to the north downtown area. The last of four exits to downtown is the Congress Parkway (where I-290 west, the Eisenhower Expressway, meets the Kennedy Expressway) to South Loop; miss it and you're on your way to Indiana. Taking the Congress Parkway exit scoots you *through* the U.S. post office building to the south edge of the Loop; South Michigan Avenue and South Lake Shore Drive lie straight ahead. For more information on getting around Chicago, see Part Six, Getting Around Chicago (page 123).

Visitor Services

Twenty-six multilingual information specialists are on hand to provide information and translation assistance to travelers. Five airport information booths are located throughout the airport: on the lower levels of terminals 1, 2, and 3, and on both the lower and upper levels of terminal 5. The booths are open daily from 8:15 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more information, call the main airport number at (773) 686-2200.

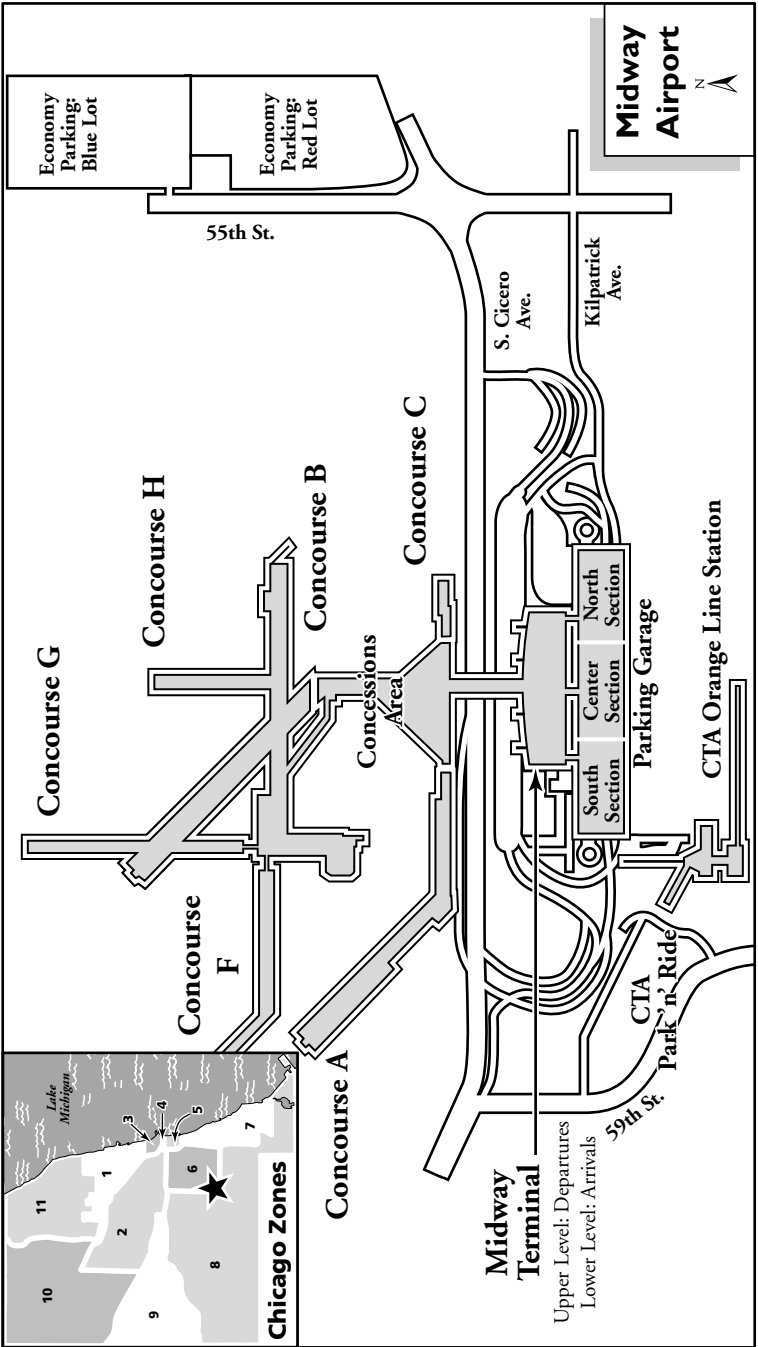
The **U.S. Postal Service** operates an office in terminal 2 on the upper level. Hours are 7 a.m.–7 p.m. weekdays. Teletext phones for the hearing impaired are located next to the airport information booths in the three domestic terminals (lower level) and outside the customs area in the international terminal. More teletext phones are located in phone banks throughout the airport; (773) 601-8333.

Foreign currency exchanges are located in terminals 1, 3, and 5. Hours are 8 a.m.–8 p.m. daily.

A duty-free shop, located in terminal 5 in the center court on the upper level, offers a wide range of merchandise free of export duties and taxes. Hours vary; the shop frequently stays open later than normal to serve international flights. Satellite shops are also located in terminal 1 near gate C18 and in terminal 3 across from gate K11; hours vary according to flight times.

ATMs are located on the upper levels of terminals 1, 2, and 3 near the concourse entrances (airside) and on the upper and lower terminals of terminal 5.

Kids on the Fly is an exhibit for youngsters operated by the Chicago Children's Museum. Centrally located in terminal 2 (near the security checkpoint), the 2,205-square-foot interactive playground lets children ages 1–12 burn off excess energy as they explore a kid-sized air traffic control tower, a ceiling-high model of the Sears Tower, a cargo plane, and



a fantasy helicopter. It's free and open to all visitors during regular flight hours and to ticketed passengers after 10 p.m.

Parking

O'Hare provides more than 10,000 spaces in short- and long-term parking lots and a garage (call (773) 686-7530 for info). Short-term parking in the first level of the parking garage is \$3 for the first hour, \$21 for the next four hours (and another \$21 for the next four hours after that), and finally \$50 for 9–24 hours. Parking on levels 2–6 of the parking garage and in outside lots B and C costs \$3 for an hour or less, with a maximum fee of \$25 for 24 hours. Rates in short-term lot D (next to the international terminal) are \$3 for an hour or less, and \$32 for 13–24 hours. Long-term parking in lots E (served by the “people mover”) and G costs \$2 for an hour or less, with a \$13 maximum fee per day.

Midway Airport

Located in a bungalow community eight miles southwest of downtown Chicago, this airport is everything O'Hare isn't: small, convenient, and uncongested. Our advice: If you can get a direct flight into Midway, take it. Why fight the hassles of the world's busiest airport?

The new terminal at Midway has six concourses. From your gate follow signs to the baggage area to pick up your bags. Passenger pick-up and drop-off, taxis, buses, car rental, and the CTA Orange Line train station are right outside the door. Free shuttles to the long-term economy parking lot arrive every 15 minutes.

Cab fares from Midway to downtown run about \$35, and the ride takes 20 minutes (in non-rush hour traffic; allow more time and figure on a higher fare during heavy traffic and/or bad weather). Share-the-ride cabs let you split the ride with up to three other passengers going downtown; the cost is \$10 per person.

Airport Express (phone (888) 284-3826) offers van service to and from downtown hotels; the fare is \$16 one-way for adults and \$8.50 for children under age 12 with an adult. The trip takes about 30 minutes, and vans depart every 15 to 20 minutes. Round-trip fare for adults is \$30. For a return reservation, call a day in advance. Last-minute reservations can be made up to an hour before departure as space allows.

CTA's **Orange Line** connects Midway to downtown, and trains offer plenty of room for luggage. The fare is \$1.75 one-way, and the ride lasts 35 minutes. Trains run every day from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays, and 7:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sundays and holidays. Trains run every six to eight minutes in rush hours and every ten minutes the rest of the time. Weekday *morning* rush-hour bus service to downtown is via the **#99M Midway Express bus** (do *not* take this bus in the evening). Pick it

up at the airport's center entrance. The **#62 Archer bus** provides 24-hour service to downtown. Bus fares are \$1.75.

If you're renting a car and driving downtown, take South Cicero Avenue north a few miles to I-55 (the Stevenson Expressway) east. The highway ends at Lake Shore Drive and the McCormick Place complex; take Lake Shore Drive north to get downtown or places farther north.

As you bear left onto Lake Shore Drive, you're treated to a great view of the Chicago skyline and Lake Michigan. After passing the Field Museum on the right, turn left onto Balbo Avenue to reach Michigan Avenue, the Loop, and I-290 (the Eisenhower Expressway). Or continue straight along the lake across the Chicago River to reach the Magnificent Mile, Navy Pier, and other points north. From Midway, the ten-mile drive to downtown takes about 20 minutes (longer during rush hour).

Coming into Chicago by Train

Chicago's **Union Station**, located across the Chicago River a couple of blocks west of the Loop, is a hub for Amtrak rail service and Metra commuter service. Unfortunately, the train station's location makes it pretty inconvenient—it's not particularly close to anything (say, major hotels, tourist attractions, or subway stations)—and its layout is confusing.

Amtrak trains arrive on the concourse level of the station. After picking up your baggage, head for the taxi stand near the north concourse (Adams Street exit). Alas, Chicago's fabled "El" is several blocks to the east—too far to walk if you're carrying luggage. The only public transportation option is the **#151 bus**—also not a good idea if you're lugging a suitcase or two—which you can catch outside on Canal Street. The bus goes through the Loop and up North Michigan Avenue. To sum up: If you're not being picked up by someone in a car, a cab is your best option for getting out of Union Station.

Getting Oriented

The operative word for Chicago, currently the nation's third-largest city, is "big."

Located a third of the way between the East and West coasts of the United States, the Windy City covers 227 square miles and stretches 33 miles along the southwestern coastline of Lake Michigan (the second-largest of the five Great Lakes, after Lake Superior). With a population of just under 3 million—in a metropolitan area of over 6 million—Chicago is not only the largest city in Illinois, it's the de facto economic and cultural capital of the Midwest. (But not the state capital; the state house is 200 miles away in Springfield.)

A Geography Lesson

Chicago is located in the northeast corner of Illinois, a large Midwestern state bordered by (starting clockwise southeast of the city) Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Iowa, and Wisconsin; Michigan is to the east and north across the eponymous lake. Most of the land that surrounds the city is flat—like most of the Midwest—a fact, theorists say, that may explain the city's passion for tall buildings and the dizzying, easily recognized skyline.

To the southeast, just past the city line on the southern tip of Lake Michigan, lies the gritty industrial town of Gary, Indiana. North along the lake the city merges with the comfortable suburban enclave of Evanston (home of Northwestern University); farther north, but still within commuting range of Chicago, are Highland Park and Waukegan. The Wisconsin state line lies about 40 miles north of the Loop, the heart of downtown Chicago.

The closest major city is Milwaukee, a blue-collar town on Lake Michigan 90 miles to the north. Other big Midwestern cities arrayed around Chicago are Detroit (290 miles to the east), Indianapolis (180 miles to the southeast), St. Louis (300 miles to the southwest), Des Moines (360 miles to the west), and Minneapolis/St. Paul (410 miles to the northwest).

Chicago's Layout

River and Lake

The other major geographic feature of Chicago is the narrow **Chicago River**, which meets **Lake Michigan** downtown along the carefully preserved lakefront (which is lined with parks and a wildly popular bike and jogging trail, not factories and wharves). The direction of the river was reversed around 1900 and today flows away from Lake Michigan downstate to the Illinois River; it's a major shipping route to the Gulf of Mexico. Boat tours on the Chicago River provide some of the best views of the city's fabled architecture.

The Loop and Grant Park

Tucked south and east of a bend in the river is **the Loop**, Chicago's downtown core of skyscrapers, government buildings, financial and trading institutions, office buildings, hotels, and retail establishments. The name comes from the elevated train (the "El") that circles the downtown business district.

A couple of blocks east of the Loop and hugging Lake Michigan is **Grant Park**, a barrier of green where millions of Chicagoans and visitors flock each summer to enjoy a variety of outdoor events and music festivals, including concerts at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park. Grant Park also provides a campus-like setting for some of the city's

largest museums, colorful Buckingham Fountain, and many softball fields. The view of the Chicago skyline from the park is spectacular.

Lake Shore Drive

Running north and south through Grant Park and along Lake Michigan is **Lake Shore Drive**. Although the multilane road's high speeds and congestion usually result in a white-knuckled driving experience for first-time visitors, a cruise along the venerable highway provides spectacular vistas of the Chicago skyline, yacht basins, parks full of trees and greenery, beaches, and ocean-like Lake Michigan stretching east to the horizon. (The views at night are even more mind-boggling.) It's also a major north-south corridor through the city, which is longer than it is wide.

In late 1996, Lake Shore Drive was relocated to the west of the **Field Museum** and **Soldier Field**. In 1997 the old lanes to the east were demolished and transformed into ten acres of new parkland, creating a traffic-free museum campus for the Field Museum, the **Adler Planetarium**, and the **Shedd Aquarium**. With its paths, bikeways, a pedestrian concourse under Lake Shore Drive serving as a gateway to the Museum Campus, and extensive landscaping, this new lakefront park provides Chicagoans and visitors with another place to stroll, bike, run, and relax as they take in the views. For drivers, an extensive system of new directional signs was installed.

Near North

North of the Chicago River are two areas popular with out-of-town visitors: the **Magnificent Mile** (a glitzy strip of North Michigan Avenue full of the city's toniest shops and galleries) and **River North** (Chicago's premier nightclub and restaurant district). Renovated and reopened in 1995 and jutting out into Lake Michigan is **Navy Pier**, featuring amusement rides, a shopping mall, clubs and restaurants, and a convention center. Farther north are the **Gold Coast**, an enclave of exclusive homes (and a great walking destination), and **Lincoln Park**, often called Chicago's "Central Park." It's surrounded by a residential neighborhood full of high-rises offering spectacular lake views and is home to the most visited zoo in the United States.

South and West of the Loop

South of the Loop along the lake is **McCormick Place**, North America's largest convention venue. Farther south is where visitors will find the huge **Museum of Industry and Science** and **Hyde Park**, home of the beautiful **University of Chicago** campus (and more museums).

Some sections of the city west of downtown encompass the most economically distressed neighborhoods—and for out-of-town visitors, the most unsafe. Yet not-to-be-missed attractions west of the Loop include

Hull House (where Nobel Prize winner Jane Addams gave turn-of-the-nineteenth-century Chicago immigrants a leg up on the American dream), ethnic restaurants in **Greektown** and **Little Italy**, huge **Garfield Park Conservatory**, and, just beyond the city line, **Oak Park** (hometown of famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright and equally famous Nobel-laureate novelist Ernest Hemingway).

Scattered throughout the city to the north, west, and south of downtown are a wide array of urban neighborhoods featuring shops, museums, and dining that reflect the ethnic diversity of the Windy City; see “Exploring Chicago’s Neighborhoods” in Part Seven, Sightseeing, Tours, and Attractions (page 139), for descriptions and locations. Beyond the city limits are more attractions worth the drive: **Brookfield Zoo**, **Chicago Botanic Garden**, and the **Morton Arboretum** are all less than an hour from downtown Chicago (allow more time in rush-hour traffic).

The Major Highways

The major interstate routes to Chicago’s Loop are **I-90/94** (better known to Chicagoans as the **Dan Ryan Expressway** south of downtown and the **Kennedy Expressway** to the north and west), **I-290** (the **Eisenhower Expressway**), and **I-55** (the **Stevenson Expressway**, which ends about a mile south of downtown at McCormick Place).

West of the city, **I-294** (the **Tri-State Tollway**) parallels Lake Michigan through Chicago’s suburbs as it heads north and links I-80 (a major transcontinental route south of the city) to I-90 (which goes to Milwaukee). I-294 also skirts **O’Hare International Airport**, where it intersects with I-90 (which links Chicago and Madison, Wisconsin).

A Word about Driving: Don’t

With four major interstates converging downtown at or near the Loop, entering the city makes for a very interesting driving experience, especially if it’s your first visit to Chicago . . . and it’s rush hour.

Our advice: **If you’re staying in a downtown hotel, don’t drive.** Why? The congestion in America’s third-largest city is unrelenting: morning and evening rush-hour traffic reports endlessly list backups, accidents, and delays occurring throughout the metropolitan area. And parking? Forget it. Chicago is notorious for its lack of convenient and/or affordable places to park.

Whether you’re in town for business or pleasure, spare yourself the frustration of battling traffic, lanes that change direction depending on the time of day, and a tangle of highways. Instead, ride Chicago’s extensive public transportation systems, take airport vans to and from downtown hotels, and take advantage of an abundance of taxis to get around town. (For more information on how to negotiate Chicago without a car, see “Public Transportation” in Part Six, Getting Around Chicago, page 125.)

Finding Your Way around Chicago

Chicago's sheer size can be overwhelming, but here's some good news for visitors: The city is a relentlessly "right-angle" town, a characteristic that's invaluable in finding your way around. Except for the rare diagonal street, Chicago is laid out numerically on a grid, with State and Madison streets (in the Loop) intersecting at the zero point.

It works like this: North Side Chicago is north of Madison Street and South Side is south of it. The West Side, logically enough, is west of State Street. And the East Side? It hardly exists; most of what could be termed "East Side" is Lake Michigan, since State Street is only a few blocks west of the lakefront.

Street numbers run in increments of 100 per block, with eight blocks to the mile. (Folks who like mental arithmetic can have fun figuring distances using street addresses.) Generally speaking, North Side streets and north-south streets on the South Side have names (Michigan Avenue, Erie Street), while east-west streets on the South Side usually are numbered (for example, the popular Museum of Science and Industry is at 57th Street and Lake Shore Drive).

After you've tried it a few times, navigating Chicago's grid gets to be fun (at least on weekends, when traffic is light). Locating, say, the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture is a snap. The address, 6500 South Pulaski Road, tells you the museum is at the corner of South Pulaski and 65th Street. It also helps that many (but not all) major avenues traverse the entire city from north to south. Like old friends, names such as Western, Cermak, Halsted, and Clark crop up over and over as you explore the city.

One last note that will help you stay oriented when exploring Chicago: Keep in mind that if the street numbers are going up, you're headed away from downtown; if they're going down, you're moving toward the center of the city.

Where to Find Tourist Information in Chicago

If you're short on maps or need more information on sightseeing, hotels, shopping, or other activities in and around Chicago, there are several places to stop and pick up maps and brochures:

- In downtown Chicago, the **Visitor Information Center** located in the Randolph Lobby of the Chicago Cultural Center dispenses literature and advice to tourists. Just off the lobby, the Visitor Information Center provides orientation with videos and displays. Open Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; and Sunday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Closed on major holidays. 78 East Washington Street (at Michigan Avenue); (312) 744-2400.
- On the Magnificent Mile north of the Loop, the **Water Tower Welcome Center** at Chicago and Michigan Avenues (you can't miss it; the tower is one of two structures that survived the Great Fire of 1871) provides tourist information, maps, hotel reservations, and advice. In addition, the Welcome Center stocks plentiful

information on tourist attractions throughout Illinois. The Center is open daily, 7:30 a.m.–7 p.m.; closed Thanksgiving and Christmas.

- In the Loop, the **Explore Chicago** kiosk inside the Sears on State store (2 North State Street) is open Monday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; and Sunday, noon–5 p.m.
- In suburban Oak Park, visitors interested in touring the former residences of Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway should make their first stop at the **Oak Park Visitors Bureau**, 158 Forest Avenue; (888) OAK-PARK or (708) 848-1500. Visitors can park for free in the adjacent parking garage on weekends and can purchase tickets and pick up free maps in the visitor center. Open daily, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Things the Natives Already Know

Chicago Customs and Protocol

Chicagoans have earned a well-deserved reputation for friendliness and often display a degree of forwardness that can put off foreigners and visitors from more formal parts of our country. Sometimes Chicago natives come off as brash or blunt, since many value getting directly to the point. And that’s mostly good news for tourists, who can count on plenty of help finding a destination when, say, riding a crowded rush-hour bus. The moral is, don’t hesitate to ask the natives for assistance.

Eating in Restaurants

By and large, casual is the byword when dining in the Windy City. Only the most chi-chi Chicago eateries require men to wear a jacket or prohibit ladies from wearing shorts or tank tops. Even swank places such as the Ritz-Carlton have ceased requiring men to wear a tie at dinner.

Although people tend to get more dressed up for dinner downtown, you’ll still find plenty of casual restaurants (the ones at Navy Pier, for example). Just about all ethnic restaurants beyond downtown have relaxed (read: nonexistent) dress codes. If in doubt, call ahead—or dress “chic casual”: nice looking, but no T-shirts or running shoes.

Tipping

Is the tip you normally leave at home appropriate in Chicago? Yes. Just bear in mind that a tip is a reward for good service. Here are some guidelines:

Porters and Skycaps A dollar a bag.

Cab Drivers A lot depends on service and courtesy. If the fare is less than \$8, give the driver the change and a dollar. Example: If the fare is \$4.50 give the cabbie 50 cents and a buck. If the fare is more than \$8, give the driver the change and \$2. If you ask the cabbie to take you only a block or two, the fare will be small, but your tip should be large (\$3 to \$5) to make up for his or her wait in line and to partially compensate him or her for missing a better-paying fare. Add an extra dollar to your tip if the driver handles a lot of luggage.

Parking Valets \$2 is correct if the valet is courteous and demonstrates some hustle. A dollar will do if the service is just okay. Pay only when you check your car out, not when you leave it.

Bellmen and Doormen When a bellman greets you at your car with a rolling luggage cart and handles all your bags, \$5 is about right. The more luggage you carry yourself, the less you should tip. Add a \$1 or \$2 if the bellman opens your room. For calling a taxi, tip the doorman \$0.50–\$1.

Waiters Whether in a coffee shop, an upscale eatery, or ordering room service from the hotel kitchen, the standard gratuity ranges from 15–20% of the tab, before sales tax. At a buffet or brunch where you serve yourself, leave a dollar or two for the person who brings your drinks. Some restaurants, however, are adopting the European custom of automatically adding a 15% gratuity to the bill, so check before leaving a cash tip.

Cocktail Waiters/Bartenders Here you tip by the round. For two people, a dollar a round; for more than two people, \$2 a round. For a large group, use your judgment. Is everyone drinking beer, or is the order long and complicated? Tip accordingly.

Hotel Maids On checking out, leave a dollar or two per day for each day of your stay, provided the service was good.

How to Look and Sound Like a Native

Good news: Chicagoans, by and large, are unpretentious, down-to-earth realists who, for example, take perverse pride in their city government's legendary corruption. This town shuns phoniness, so visitors who want to blend in only need to be themselves. Yet, if it's important to you not to look like a Windy City tourist, we offer the following advice:

1. Don't crash diet. Except for razor-thin fashion victims haunting the over-priced boutiques along the Magnificent Mile, Chicagoans disdain the frou-frou svelteness that's the norm in New York or Los Angeles. Being overweight in Chicago isn't a social faux pas—this is, after all, a town renowned for its pizza, Italian beef and sausage sandwiches, and many other kinds of artery-clogging, waistband-expanding “hand food.”
2. Be obsessive, if not maniacal, about the Cubbies, White Sox, Bears, Bulls, and Blackhawks.
3. Talk through your nose. Master the flat phonetics of the Midwest: give the letter “a” a harsh sound and throw in a few “dem’s” and “dose’s” when conversing with natives.
4. Occasionally, for no apparent reason, erupt in your best attempt at a Chicago accent, “Yah, but the city works.”
5. Never, under any circumstances, put ketchup on a Chicago-style hot dog.

Publications for Visitors

Chicago has two major daily newspapers, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Both are morning papers that cover local, national, and international news, and have Friday editions with up-to-the-minute information on entertainment for the weekend. Grab a Friday edition of both papers before coming to Chicago for the weekend.

An even better source for entertainment and arts listings is the weekly *Chicago Reader*, a free tabloid that starts showing up on downtown newsstands (as well as a wide variety of clubs, bars, bookstores, cafes, and shops) on Thursday afternoons. *New City*, another alt-weekly published on Thursdays, irreverently examines Chicago news, art, and entertainment.

Chicago is a monthly magazine that's strong on lists (top 20 restaurants, etc.) and provides a calendar of events, dining information, and feature articles. *Windy City Sports* is a free monthly guide to fitness and outdoor recreation that highlights seasonal sports such as skiing, bicycling, running, inline skating, and sailboarding. Pick up a copy at bike shops and outdoors outfitters.

Chicago Scene highlights Chicago's beautiful people and visiting celebs as they scarf canapés at the town's top fund-raising social events; the free monthly also contains articles on dining and fashion. Pick up a copy at swank shops, hair salons, and cafes up and down the Gold Coast. At the other end of the social spectrum, *StreetWise* is published twice monthly and is sold by homeless and formerly homeless men and women for a dollar (look for identifying vendor badges). The tabloid paper includes features, a calendar of events, local sports, poetry, and film reviews.

Chicago on the Air

Aside from the usual babble of format rock, talk, easy listening, and country music stations, Chicago is home to a few radio stations that really stand out for high-quality broadcasting. Tune in to what hip Chicagoans listen to, as listed below:

CHICAGO'S BEST RADIO STATIONS		
Format	Frequency	Station
NPR, News, Jazz	91.5 FM	WBEZ
Progressive Rock	93.1 FM	WXRT
Jazz	95.5 FM	WNUA
Classical	97.1 FM	WNIB12
Classical	98.7 FM	WFMT

Access for the Disabled

Like most large U.S. cities, Chicago tries to make itself accessible to folks with physical disabilities. Most museums and restaurants, for example,

feature wheelchair access. At the **Art Institute of Chicago**, wheelchair access is through the Columbus Drive (east) entrance, and a limited number of wheelchairs and strollers are available for free at both main entrances. Most public areas associated with the **Chicago Historical Society** are accessible to the disabled, and a limited number of wheelchairs are also available. Parking for disabled visitors is provided in the parking lot adjacent to the building.

The **Field Museum** has wheelchairs available on the ground level near the West Entrance and first-floor North Door, and the **Adler Planetarium** has wheelchair-accessible restrooms on the first floor (down the vending machine hallway). Elevators are available for folks in wheelchairs, with strollers, or with other special needs.

The **Chicago Botanic Garden** has wheelchairs available at the Information Desks in the Gateway and Education Centers. Accessible parking is located in parking lots #1, #2, and #3. The Orientation Center is equipped with assistive listening devices, closed caption monitors, and raised letters. **Brookfield Zoo** provides assistive listening devices in the Administration Building near South Gate and in the Discovery Center near the North Gate. A telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD and TTY) is also available in the Administration Building.

Services for the Disabled

The **City of Chicago Department on Disability** offers information and reference: (312) 744-6673 or (312) 744-4964 (TDD).

Handicapped visitors can arrange door-to-door transportation from the airport or train station to their hotel, as well as transportation anywhere in the city in special vans; the rate is \$1.50 each time you board. Call the Chicago Transportation Authority Special Services Division at (312) 432-7025 or (312) 432-7116 (TDD) for more information.

The **Chicago Transit Authority** (CTA) operates 112 routes with lift-equipped buses; look for the blue wheelchair symbol displayed in the first bus/last bus chart on the Chicago Transit map. For routes, fares, schedules, and a copy of the latest Chicago Transit map, call (312) 836-7000 from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. The TDD number is (888) 282-8891. Some (but not all) train stations are wheelchair accessible. Here's the list; call (312) 836-7000 for hours of operation:

- **Blue Line** (O'Hare-Congress-Douglas): O'Hare, Rosemont, Cumberland, Harlem/Higgins, Jefferson Park, Logan Square, Western, Clark/Lake (Lake transfer), Jackson, UIC-Halsted/Morgan, Polk, 18th, Cicero/Cermak, Medical Center (Damen entrance), Kedzie-Homan, and Forest Park.
- **Red Line** (Howard-Dan Ryan): Loyola, Granville, Addison, Chicago, Lake, Washington, Jackson, Roosevelt, and Sox/35th, 79th, 95th/Dan Ryan.
- **Orange Line** (Midway): All stations between Midway Airport and Roosevelt; also Clark/Lake and Washington/Wells.

- **Brown Line** (Ravenswood): Kimball, Western, Clark/Lake, Washington/Wells, and Merchandise Mart.
- **Purple Line** (Evanston): Linden, Davis, Merchandise Mart, Clark/Lake, Library/Van Buren, and Washington/Wells.
- **Yellow Line** (Skokie).
- **Green Line** (Lake Street/Jackson Park): Ashland/63rd, Halsted, East 63rd–Cottage Grove, 51st, 47th, 43rd, 35th–Bronzeville–ITT, King Drive, Roosevelt, Clark/Lake, Clinton, Ashland/Lake, California, Kedzie, Conservatory–Central Park Drive, Pulaski, Cicero, Laramie, Harlem/Lake (Marion entrance), and Central.

Time Zone

Chicago is in the Central Time Zone, which puts Windy City clocks one hour behind New York, two hours ahead of the West Coast, an hour ahead of the Rocky Mountains, and six hours behind Greenwich Mean Time.

Phones

The Chicago area is served by five area codes: (312) in the Loop and downtown, (773) for the rest of the city, (630) for the far western suburbs, (708) for the near western and southern suburbs, and (847) for the northern suburbs. Calls from pay phones are \$0.50. To dial out of Chicago to the suburbs, dial 1, then the appropriate area code followed by the phone number you want to reach. While the initial call to the suburbs costs the same as an intra-city call, keep some change handy. On longer calls, you may have to plug in more coins or get disconnected. If you're calling into the city from the suburbs, dial 1, then (312) or (773), followed by the number.

Liquor, Taxes, and Smoking

In Chicago the legal drinking age is 21, and no store may sell alcoholic beverages before noon on Sundays. The local sales tax is 8%, and the combined sales and hotel room tax is 14.9%. City laws require all restaurants to offer nonsmoking sections. In addition, smoking is prohibited in theaters, public buildings, and on public transportation.

Crime in Chicago

For most folks, Chicago and crime are synonymous. It's mostly left over from the Prohibition era, when bootlegger Al Capone and arch-gangster John Dillinger earned Chicago worldwide notoriety. Go almost anywhere in the world and mention Chicago and the response will likely be a pantomimed machine gun and a "rat-a-tat-tat" flourish.

The truth is, Chicago wasn't all that dangerous for John Q. Public in the 1920s. Only 75 hoodlums went down in gang warfare in 1926—about 10% of today's annual murder count. Sadly, although metropolitan Chicago has about the same population as it did in the Roaring Twenties, the average person today is much more likely to become a crime statistic.

Places to Avoid

Like virtually all large U.S. cities, Chicago has its ghettos, including (until recently) the nation's most infamous: the **Cabrini Green** projects, a series of high-rises that once stood as a monument to the failure of mid-twentieth-century urban planning. Located in Chicago's West Side, the housing project was an island of chronically unemployed and underemployed tenants, a segregated slum that was regularly regarded as one of America's worst neighborhoods.

While Cabrini Green is now undergoing mixed-use gentrification, much of the South Side and Near West Side contain areas that most visitors should avoid; exceptions include Chinatown, Hyde Park, and Pullman. On the North Side, glitzy neighborhoods are often next door to areas of high crime, so don't wander too far afield. Often in Chicago, relative safety is a question of day or night; the lakefront, public parks, Loop, and River North are active during the day, but except around restaurants and clubs, are deserted at night. Take a cab or drive directly to nighttime destinations in these areas.

Safe areas at virtually any time of the day or night include the Magnificent Mile and Oak, Rush, and Division Streets in the Gold Coast community. Just stay within well-lighted areas and keep your eyes peeled for shady-looking characters who may have sinister designs on your purse or billfold. Pickpockets, by the way, are especially active in downtown shopping crowds during the holiday season and on subway trains to and from O'Hare.

Though we recommend that visitors stay away from unsafe public housing projects and other economically deprived areas, keep in mind that crime can happen anywhere. And Chicago, unfortunately, is an innovator when it comes to new ways of victimizing people; this is where carjacking and "smash and grab"—breaking a car window and snatching a purse off the seat—first gained national notoriety.

Taxicab Safety

When hailing a cab, you are somewhat vulnerable. Particularly after dusk, call a reliable cab company and stay inside while it dispatches a cab to your door. When your cab arrives, check the driver's certificate, which must, by law, be posted on the dashboard. Address the cabbie by his last name (for example, Mr. Jones) or mention his cab number. This alerts the cab driver that you are going to remember him and/or his cab. Not only will this contribute to your safety, it will keep your cabbie from trying to run up the fare.

If you are comfortable reading maps, familiarize yourself with the most direct route to your destination ahead of time. If you can say, "Pipers Alley movie theater on North Wells via State Street, please," the driver is less likely to take a longer route so he can charge you for extra mileage.

If you need to catch a cab at the train station or at one of the airports, always use the taxi queue. Taxis in the official queue are properly licensed and regulated. Never accept an offer for a cab or limo made by a stranger in the terminal or baggage-claim area. At best, you will be significantly overcharged for the ride. At worst, you may be abducted.

Carjackings

With the surge in carjackings, drivers also need to take special precautions. Keep alert when driving in traffic, and keep your doors locked, with the windows rolled up and the air-conditioning on. Leave enough space in front of your car so that you're not blocked in and can make a U-turn if someone approaches your car and starts beating on your windshield. Store your purse or briefcase under your knees or seat when you are driving, rather than on the seat beside you.