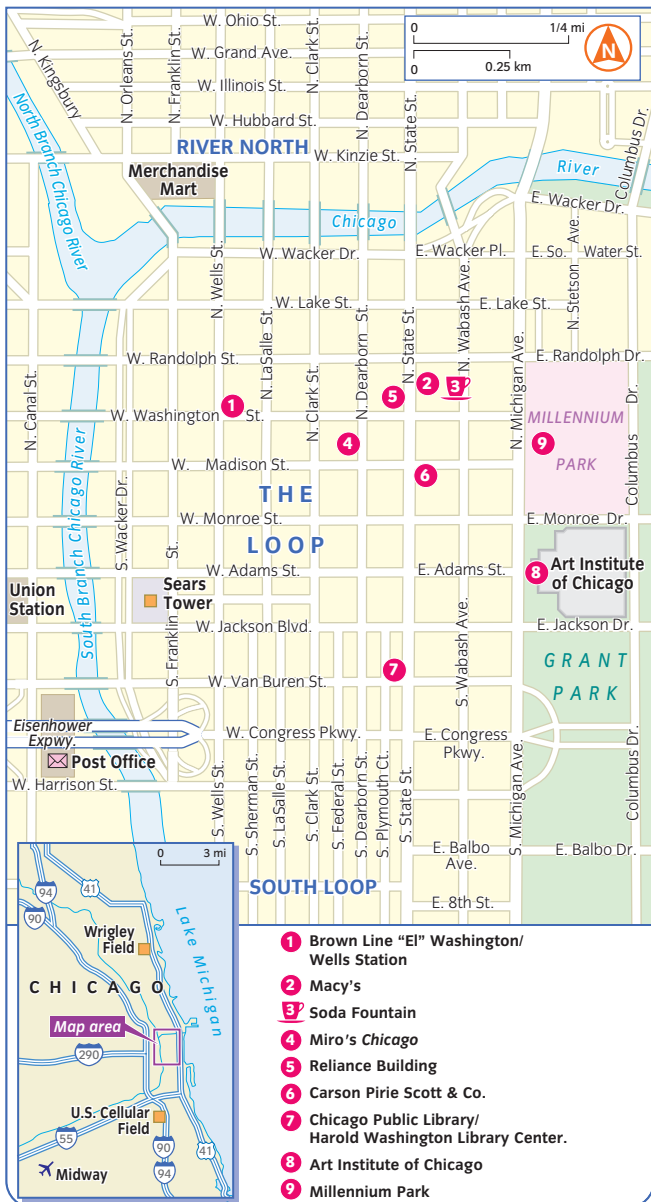


1

The Best **Full-Day** **Tours**



The Best in One Day



With one day to spend in Chicago, focus on the heart of the city. The Loop is a collection of commercial, governmental, and cultural buildings contained within a corral of elevated train tracks. Here you'll find classic Chicago experiences, plus the chance to glimpse the city's future in its newest urban showcase, Millennium Park. **START: Washington/Wells El Station.**

1 ★★★ kids Ride the Brown Line "El" (Elevated Train) around the Loop. Board the Brown Line at Washington/Wells and ride it around the Loop through the canyons of office buildings (you'll be close enough to peer into some of them). Hop off at Randolph/Wabash (or, if you don't mind a longer walk, ride to Clark/Lake). ⌚ 30 min. *Avoid rush-hour boarding before 9am and from 3:30–6:30pm.* ☎ 888/YOURCTA. www.transitchicago.com. Tickets \$1.75 per ride, 85¢ for kids 7–12 and seniors, free for kids under 7. *El: Brown Line to Washington/Wells.*

2 Macy's. In 2006, this landmark's name was switched from Marshall Field's to Macy's, much to locals' horror. This department store's clock is

Joan Miro's Chicago is just one of many world-class sculptures found in the Loop.



A ride on the city's famous "El" train is a quintessential Chicago experience.

one of the city's most-recognized icons. Browse the store's famous windows, or stop in for Frango Mints, a favorite Chicago souvenir. Head inside to check out the largest Tiffany glass mosaic dome in the United States. ⌚ 5 min.–2 hr. *(if you want to shop).* 111 N. State St. at Randolph St. ☎ 312/781-1000. *Hours vary seasonally; call ahead.* *El: Red Line to Washington.*

Quench your thirst at the **3 classic soda fountain** in Macy's, or add a twist of lemon, cherry, or vanilla flavor to your soft drink. 111 N. State St. ☎ 312/781-1000. \$.

4 Miro's Chicago. Originally called *The Sun, the Moon and One Star*, Joan Miro's Chicago was unveiled in 1981. This 40-foot-tall sculptural representation of a woman with outstretched arms sits in the Brunswick Plaza on Washington Street, and overlooks the Picasso sculpture at the Daley



Center. 🕒 5 min. *On the plaza of 69 W. Washington St. El: Red Line to Washington.*

5 Reliance Building. Now the Hotel Burnham, this building, with a terra-cotta and glass exterior, was one of the world's first skyscrapers. Stop inside to admire the terrazzo tile floors, white marble wainscoting, and mahogany door and window frames. Room numbers painted on the translucent doors recall the structure's days as an office building. Today, the Hotel Burnham features an eclectic decor, and an excellent ground-floor restaurant with a view onto State Street (p 100). 🕒 15 min. 1 W. Washington St. ☎ 312/782-1111. *El: Red Line to Washington.*

6 Carson Pirie Scott & Co. The exterior of this Louis Sullivan–designed department store features the renowned architect's trademark intricate ornamentation. Sullivan (1856–1924) was one of the nation's most influential architects, and his distinctive style of decoration embraced natural forms—an approach that influenced his student, Frank Lloyd Wright. 🕒 5 min.–2 hr.

The Chicago Public Library is the largest public library in the world.



Built in 1890, the Reliance Building features a landmark Gothic exterior.

(if you want to shop). 1 S. State St. ☎ 312/641-7000. Hours vary depending on season; call ahead. El: Red Line to Monroe.

7 kids Chicago Public Library/ Harold Washington Library Center. This hulking Italian Renaissance building is the world's largest public library. Named for the city's first and only African-American mayor, who died of a heart attack in 1987 while still in office, the building fills an entire city block. On the second floor, the Thomas Hughes Children's Library makes an excellent resting spot for families traveling with kids. 🕒 30 min. 400 S. State St. ☎ 312/747-4300. www.chipublib.org. *Free admission. Mon–Thurs 9am–7pm; Fri–Sat 9am–5pm; Sun 1–5pm. Closed holidays. El: Brown or Purple line to Library.*

8 ★★★ Art Institute of Chicago. Stop in to view the Impressionist collection on the second floor, a highlight of this, Chicago's grande dame of museums. With 33 paintings by Claude Monet, dancers by Degas, and Seurat's legendary masterpiece, *A Sunday Afternoon on La Grande Jatte*, this museum is a must for any art lover. 🕒 1 hr. *See p 38.*



9 ★★★ kids **Millennium Park.**

When Chicago's newest showpiece debuted in summer 2004, it won raves for its winning combination of

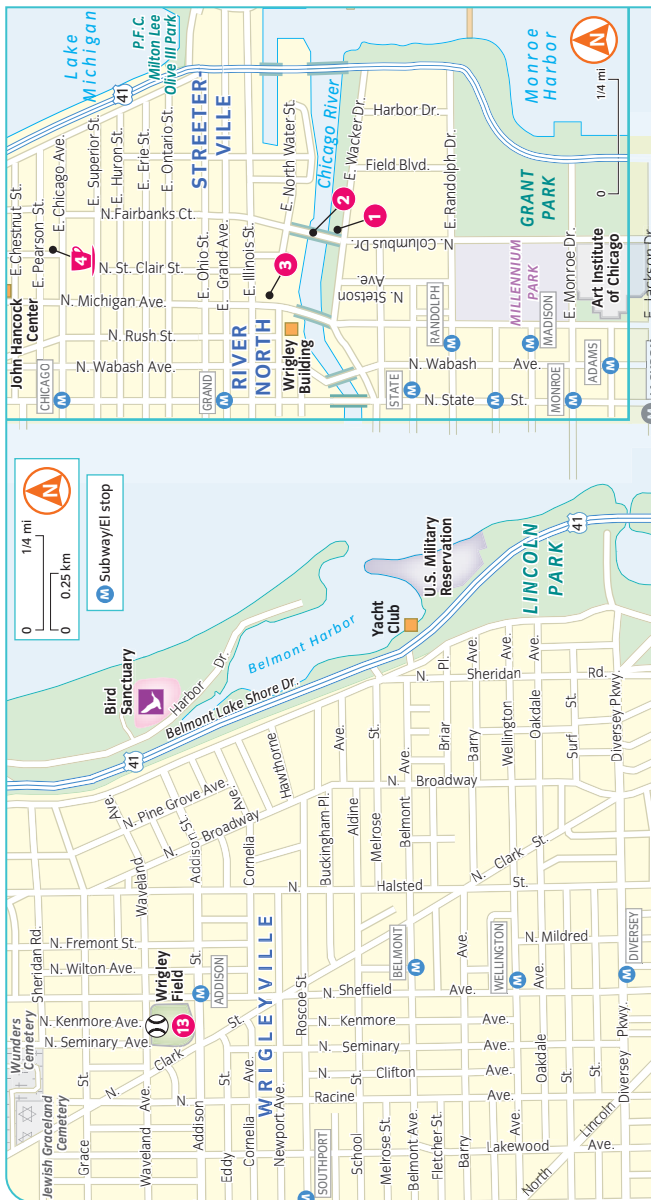
beautiful landscaping, elegant classically inspired architecture, and public entertainment spaces.



If the weather is fine, you can make a picnic out of the sandwiches and salads served at the **9A Park Grill & Cafe** (11 N. Michigan Ave.; ☎ 312/521-7275; \$). The **Crown Fountain**, and its two towers of glass blocks with a shallow reflecting pool between them, is perfect for kids to splash around in warm weather (late at night, you'll find revelers doing the same). Faces of Chicagoans are projected through the glass—and their mouths spew water when you least expect it. The **Cloud Gate** is an elliptical sculpture made of highly polished steel that reflects the nearby skyline, landscape, and lights. For the most mind-bending funhouse view, stand underneath the sculpture. The park's

centerpiece is the **9D Jay Pritzker Pavilion**, an outdoor music venue designed by Frank Gehry; massive stainless steel ribbons top the stage. Another Gehry-designed standout, **9E BP Pedestrian Bridge**, curves and winds its way over Columbus Drive, providing changing views of the cityscape as you walk. Finally, stroll **9F The Lurie Garden**, where 250 varieties of native perennial plants re-create a Midwestern prairie. ⌚ 2 hr. *Michigan Ave. from Randolph St. on the north end to Monroe St. on the south, and west to Columbus Dr.* ☎ 312/752-1168. www.millenniumpark.org. Free admission. Daily 6am–11pm. *El: Blue Line to Washington, Red Line to Lake and Brown, Green, Orange, or Purple line to Randolph.*

The Best in Two Days



On your second day in Chicago, take to the water for a boat cruise, and gain insight into the people and events that shaped the city's famous skyline. Stroll the Magnificent Mile, with its glittering array of shops. Finish your day in scenic Lincoln Park, with its charming centerpiece, Lincoln Park Zoo. **START: Southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge. Bus: 151 (Michigan Ave.) to Illinois Street.**

1 ★★★ Chicago Architecture Foundation's Architecture River Cruise.

You'll see 50 or so buildings from a unique perspective as you glide along the north and the south branches of the Chicago River. Narration is provided by docents, who do a good job of making the cruise enjoyable for all visitors, no matter what their level of architectural knowledge. In addition to pointing out famous buildings—Marina City, the Civic Opera House, the Sears Tower, and Merchandise Mart, to name a few—they approach the sites thematically, explaining, for example, how Chicagoans' use of the river has changed in the past 2 centuries. If you have very young kids, you may prefer the shorter (and less expensive) tours by Wendella Sightseeing Boats. Kids' tickets cost \$9 and the tours last 1 hour. 🕒 **1½ hr. Southeast corner of Michigan Ave. bridge.**

Tickets \$23 per person weekdays, \$25 on weekends and holidays. Daily June–Oct 11am–3pm (weekends only May and Nov). Purchase tickets in advance through Ticketmaster (☎ 312/902-1500), or avoid the service charge and

The Michigan Avenue Bridge offers some of the city's best photo ops.

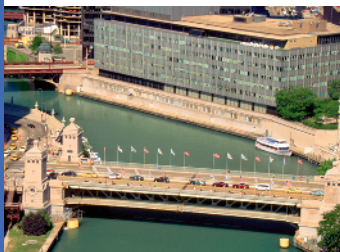


A cruise along the Chicago River is one of the best ways to see the city's fabulous architecture.


buy your tickets at the ArchiCenter, 224 S. Michigan Ave., or at the boat launch. Wendella Sightseeing Boats depart from Michigan Ave. bridge (on the northwest side, at the Wrigley Building). ☎ 312/337-1446. www.wendellaboats.com. Tickets \$18 adults, \$16 seniors, \$9 children under 12. Daily Apr–Oct. Bus: 151.



2 ★ Michigan Avenue Bridge.

Gaze up at the Gothic splendor of the Tribune Tower and the white brilliance of the William J. Wrigley Jr. Building from Chicago's most famous bridge, one of many that span the Chicago River. Designed to improve transportation and enhance the riverfront, the bridge was completed in 1920, followed by the Wacker Drive esplanade (1926). Together, they



provided an impressive gateway to North Michigan Avenue and led to its development as one of the city's premier thoroughfares. Views from every direction are stunning, but for one of the city's best photo ops, look west down the Chicago River.

 **15 min.** **El:** *Green, Purple, Brown, or Orange line to State.*

3 Tribune Tower. This Gothic design was the result of an international competition to create “the most beautiful office building in the world,” held in 1922 by the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper. The winning entry, with a crowning tower and flying buttresses, was based on the design of the French cathedral at Rouen. The base of the building is studded with over 120 stones from famous sites and structures in all 50 states and dozens of foreign countries—from the Parthenon to Bunker Hill. The lobby and gift shop of the Tribune Tower are worthy stops for Cubs fans (the baseball team is owned by the Tribune Company).  **15 min.** **435 N. Michigan Ave.**  **312/222-3232.** **Bus:** 151.

The Tin Man, one of many Wizard of Oz sculptures inside Oz Park.



The eye-catching Tribune Tower combines Gothic elements with traditional skyscraper design.

4 Puck's, a cafe operated by Wolfgang Puck of Spago restaurant fame, has seating overlooking the Museum of Contemporary Art's 1-acre terraced sculpture garden. Mediterranean and Asian influences enliven classic dishes, as exemplified by the three-bean salad with shrimp, lime, and cilantro; and the smoked shrimp pizza with sun-dried tomatoes and leeks. **Inside the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave. (1 block east of Michigan Ave.).**  **312/280-2660.** **\$\$.** **El:** *Red Line to Chicago.*

5 kids Oz Park. One of Lincoln Park's most famous residents was L. Frank Baum (1856–1919), the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, who settled in Chicago in 1891. Take a quick stroll through this 13-acre park, created in 1967 in his honor. You'll find larger-than-life statues of many *Wizard*-related characters, including, most prominently, *The Tin Man*, designed by metal sculptor John Kearney. The paths are perfect for walking off your meal. There's an “Emerald Garden” for strolling, and “Dorothy's Playlot,” a



play area for kids. 🕒 30 min. 2021 N. Burling St. (at Lincoln Ave.) 📞 312/747-2200. Free admission. Open daily until dusk. El: Brown Line to Armitage.

6 Lincoln Park Conservatory.

If the weather's uncooperative, a visit to this conservatory's climate-controlled environs can be a real mood-lifter. It's comprised of four greenhouses—the Palm House, the Fernery, the Tropical House, and the Show House—that offer seasonal displays. Even on the coldest day of winter, the Azalea and Camellia show that begins in late January is sure to put a spring in your step. Outside the front doors of the conservatory is an expansive lawn with a French garden. Don't miss the lovely Bates Fountain on the conservatory's south side, designed by famous sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. 🕒 30 min. Fullerton Ave. (at Stockton Dr.). 📞 312/742-7736. *The best way to get to Lincoln Park from the Miracle Mile is to stroll the lakefront from Oak St. Beach to North Ave. Beach, then cross the pedestrian bridge over Lake Shore Dr. and into the park. Free admission. Daily 9am–5pm. Bus: 73, 151, or 156.*

7 ★★★ kids Lincoln Park Zoo.

The nation's oldest zoo, founded in 1868, is also one of the last free zoos in the country. You'll want to meander a while among the landmark


A Siberian tiger; one of the many big cats found at the Lincoln Park Zoo.



The Lincoln Park Conservatory's indoor gardens are lush even in winter.


Georgian revival buildings and modern structures set amid gently rolling pathways, verdant lawns, and a profusion of flower gardens. The star attraction is the **Great Ape House**, where you can watch ape families interact. Also worth a stop is the **Regenstein African Journey**, home to elephants, giraffes, rhinos, and other large mammals. Kids flock to the ever-popular **Sea Lion Pool**, and there's a **Pritzker Children's Zoo** and **Farm-in-the-Zoo**, where children are encouraged to touch a variety of small animals under the supervision of zookeepers. **The Farm** is a working reproduction of a Midwestern farm, complete with chicken coops and demonstrations of butter churning. Finish off your visit with a ride on the **Endangered Species Carousel**. 🕒 2–3 hr. 2200 N. Cannon Dr. (at Fullerton Pkwy.). 📞 312/742-2000. www.lpzoo.com. Free admission. Buildings daily 10am–5pm (until 6:30pm Sat–Sun Memorial Day to Labor Day); grounds 9am–6pm (until 7pm Memorial Day to Labor Day and until 5pm Nov 1–May 31). Bus: 151.

Inside the Lincoln Park Zoo, the **Park Place Café** food court (near the Lion House; \$) is a good option for some quick refreshment. For a

snack with a view, try the rooftop eatery,  **Big Cats Café** (near the Birds of Prey exhibit; \$), which offers muffins, scones, focaccia sandwiches, salads, and flatbreads.

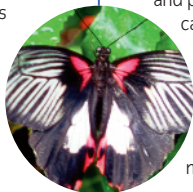
10 **Chicago Green City Market.**

Chefs from Chicago's best restaurants load up their trucks with organic foods sold at this outdoor market, which takes place Wednesday and Saturday mornings along the path between 1750 North Clark and Stockton Drive. You can browse the stalls right along with the pros. You might find fresh goat cheese or (in season) freshly picked blueberries; if you're hungry, you can get a made-to-order French-style crepe. Live music is also featured.

 30 min.–1 hr. In Lincoln Park, between 1750 N. Clark St. and Stockton Dr. www.chicagogreencitymarket.org. May–Oct Wed and Sat 7am–1:30pm. Bus: 151.

11 **kids Peggy Notebaert**



Nature Museum. This environmental museum, built into the rise of an ancient sand dune that was once the shore of Lake Michigan, features rooftop-level walkways offering a view of birds and other urban wildlife below. Paths wind through gardens planted with native Midwestern wildflowers and grasses, and trace the shoreline of Lincoln Park's newly restored North Pond. The best exhibit is the **Butterfly Haven**, a greenhouse habitat that's home to about 25 Midwestern species of butterflies and moths. Another exhibit, **City Science**, displays the inner workings of a 3,000-square-foot, two-story "house," where visitors can view the pipes and ducts that connect




The Butterfly Haven at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum is home to many colorful species.



Chicagoans flock to the Green City Market in summer for fresh produce.

homes with power sources miles away.  1 hr. Fullerton Ave. and Cannon Dr.  773/755-5100. www.chias.org. Admission \$7 adults, \$5 seniors and students, \$4 kids 3–12, free for kids under 3; free admission Thurs. Mon–Fri 9am–4:30pm; Sat–Sun 10am–5pm. Closed Thanksgiving, Dec 25, and Jan 1. Bus: 151.

12 **Fullerton Avenue Bridge.**

Take advantage of a wonderful photo opportunity at the bridge that runs over the lagoon, just before you get to Lake Shore Drive. Standing on the south side of Fullerton, you'll have a great view of the skyline and Lincoln Park (especially at sunset)—it's the perfect place to take a final snapshot to commemorate your day.  5 min. Bus: 151 or 156.

13 **★★★ kids Wrigley Field.**

There's no better way to create family lore than a game at Wrigley, where your kids (or you) can stuff themselves with hot dogs, licorice whips, and peanuts and begin their careers as future Cubs fans.

If you are bringing kids, due to the noise levels and general commotion of getting in and out of the stadium, I'd recommend this only for children age 7 and older. **For more on Wrigley Field, see p 24 and p 132.**

The Best in Three Days



On your third day in Chicago, stroll the “Michigan Avenue Cliff,” known for its imposing wall of grand buildings. In warmer months, stop in Grant Park and stand in the refreshing spray of Buckingham Fountain, then head to Museum Campus, a green expanse that comprises one of the most impressive collections of museums in the country. **START: Chicago Cultural Center, corner of South Michigan Avenue and Washington Street. El: Randolph or Washington/State El station.**

1 ★★ Chicago Cultural Center.

Built in 1897 as the city's library, this National Historic Landmark's basic Beaux Arts exterior doesn't begin to hint at the building's sumptuous interior. Inside you'll find rare marble; fine hardwoods; stained glass; polished brass; and mosaics of Favrite glass, colored stone, and mother-of-pearl inlaid in white marble. The crowning centerpiece is the Preston Bradley Hall's majestic \$35-million Tiffany stained-glass dome, decorated with symbols of the zodiac, which is said to be the largest of its kind in the world. The Cultural Center houses one of the Chicago Office of Tourism's main visitor centers, which makes it an ideal place to start your day. 🕒 30 min. 78 E. Washington St. ☎ 312/744-6630. www.cityofchicago.org/exploringchicago. Free admission. Mon–Thurs 10am–7pm; Fri 10am–6pm; Sat 10am–5pm; Sun 11am–5pm. Closed holidays. El: Brown, Green,

Stop off at the Chicago ArchiCenter for information on guided tours and the city's architecture.



The exquisite interior and Tiffany Dome of the Chicago Cultural Center.

Orange, or Purple line to Randolph, or Red Line to Washington/State.

2 ★★★ Chicago ArchiCenter.

The Chicago Architecture Foundation's shop and tour center is intended to help everyone appreciate the city's main claim to fame. Exhibits include a scale model of downtown Chicago, profiles of the people and buildings that shaped the city's look, and a searchable database with pictures and information on many of Chicago's best-known skyscrapers. The best gift shop in the city offers architecture-focused books, decorative accessories, and gifts. “Architecture ambassadors” provide information on a wide range of available tours. 🕒 30 min. 224 S. Michigan Ave. ☎ 312/922-3432. www.architecture.org. Free admission. Exhibits daily 9:30am–4pm; shop and tour desk Mon–Sat 9am–6:30pm, Sun 9am–6pm. El: Red Line to Jackson.





The distinctive Britannica Centre is best known for its pyramidal peak.

3 Corner Bakery, a casual restaurant and bakery, offers sweet treats (don't miss the tart lemon bars dusted with powdered sugar), plus a range of substantial salads and sandwiches (try the ham and Swiss on pretzel bread). 224 S. Michigan Ave. ☎ 312/431-7600. \$.

4 Britannica Centre. To view this building's highlight, look up. A part of Michigan Avenue's distinctive wall of buildings since 1924, Britannica Centre, originally known as the Straus Building and then as the Continental National Insurance Company building, is known for the glass, blue-lighted "beehive"

ornament atop its pyramidal peak. The venerable *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the oldest continuously published reference work in the English language, has been headquartered in Chicago since the mid-1930s. ⌚ 5 min. 310 S. Michigan Ave. ☎ 312/347-7159. El: Red Line to Jackson.

5 The Fine Arts Building. This 1885 building was originally a showroom for Studebaker carriages. Converted into an arts center in 1898, the building provided offices and studios for the likes of *Wizard of Oz* author L. Frank Baum and Frank Lloyd Wright. Take a quick walk through the marble-and-wood lobby, and, if you like, ride the vintage elevators to the top floor to view walls of spectacular murals that date from the building's conversion. ⌚ 30 min. 410 S. Michigan Ave. ☎ 312/427-7602. Free admission. Daily 7am–10pm. El: Brown Line to Library.

Scenic Lake Shore Drive offers marvelous views of Lake Michigan (see p 90).





The Auditorium Building and Theatre features exquisite interior ornamentation.

6 ★ Auditorium Building and Theatre. Designed and built in 1889 by Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler, the Auditorium was an architectural wonder of its time: the heaviest and most massive edifice on earth, the most fireproof building ever constructed, and the tallest building in Chicago. Today, the 4,000-seat theater hosts touring Broadway productions. One-hour tours on Mondays allow visitors time to marvel at the gorgeous arched design (lit by thousands of bulbs) that Sullivan created using his trademark ornamentation—in this case, elaborate golden stenciling and gold plaster medallions. 🕒 **30 min.** (1 hr. if you take a tour). 50 E. Congress Pkwy. 📞 312/922-2110. www.auditoriumtheatre.org. 1-hr. guided tour Mon 10am–4pm (call 📞 312/431-2354 to make reservations). Admission \$6 adults, \$3 students and seniors. El: Brown Line to Library.

7 Buckingham Fountain. Grant Park's immense baroque

centerpiece—the starting point for the famous Route 66 to Los Angeles—is constructed of pink Georgia marble and patterned after the Latona Fountain at Versailles (although Buckingham is twice its size). The fountain, donated to the city of Chicago by philanthropist Kate Buckingham, first opened in 1927. From April through October, the fountain spurts columns of water up to 150 feet in the air every hour on the hour; beginning at 4pm, a whirl of colored lights and music makes for quite a show (the fountain shuts down at 11pm). If you visit in spring, be sure to stroll the adjacent esplanades and their lovely rose gardens. 🕒 **10 min.** *Inside Grant Park, at Columbus Dr. and Congress Pkwy.* www.chicagoparkdistrict.com. Apr–Oct daily 10am–11pm. Bus: 6 or 146.

8 ★★★ kids John G. Shedd Aquarium. The first thing you'll see as you enter the world's largest indoor aquarium is the 90,000-gallon tank occupying the Beaux Arts–style central rotunda. The **Caribbean Coral Reef** exhibit features nurse sharks, barracudas, stingrays, and a hawksbill sea turtle. The next don't-miss exhibit is **Amazon Rising: Seasons of the River**, displaying piranhas, birds, sloths, insects, spiders, snakes, caiman lizards, and monkeys. **Wild Reef—Sharks at Shedd** features 26 interconnected habitats (over 750,000 gallons of water) that encompass a

Catch the nightly sound and light show at Buckingham Fountain in summer.



Walker's Warning

Though Chicago is a great city to explore on foot, Lake Shore Drive is no place for pedestrians. People have been seriously injured and even killed attempting to dodge the traffic on this busy road. Near Grant Park, cross only in crosswalks at Jackson Boulevard or Randolph, East Monroe, or East Balbo drives, or by using the underpass on the Museum Campus. North of the river, utilize underpasses or bridges at East Ohio Street, Chicago Avenue, Oak Street, and North Avenue.



The Oceanarium's Beluga whales at the John G. Shedd Aquarium.

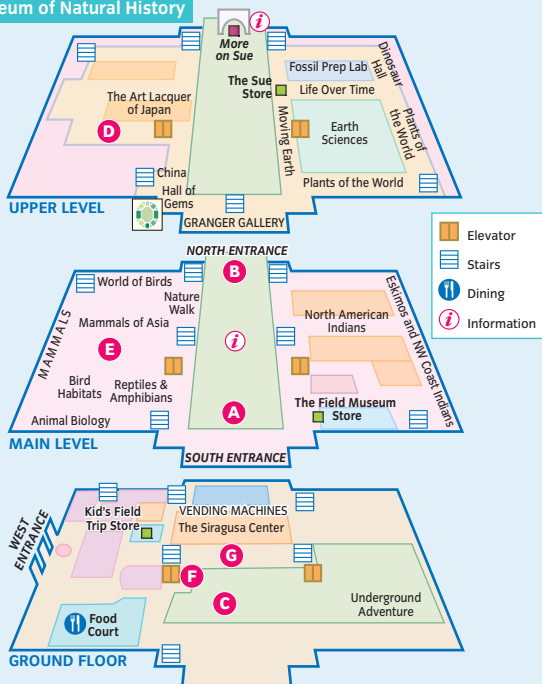
Philippine coral reef patrolled by sharks and other predators. Another highlight is the 3-million-gallon salt-water **Oceanarium**, a stunning indoor marine mammal pavilion that re-creates a Pacific Northwest coastal environment. Here, a crew of friendly trainers puts dolphins through their paces during daily scheduled performances. 🕒 1 hr. 1200 S. Lake Shore Dr. ☎ 312/939-2438. www.sheddaquarium.org. All-Access Pass (to all exhibits) \$21 adults, \$15 seniors and kids 3–11; admission to aquarium and either Oceanarium or Wild Reef exhibit \$17 adults, \$13 seniors and kids 3–11; aquarium only \$8 adults, \$6 kids and seniors. Free admission to aquarium Mon–Tues Oct–Feb (except the last 2 weeks of Dec). Mon–Fri 9am–5pm (until 6pm Memorial Day to Labor Day); Sat–Sun 9am–6pm. Bus: 6 or 146.

9 ★ kids Field Museum of Natural History. Indulge your inner Indiana Jones while exploring this renowned museum's 9 acres of exhibits. The museum was founded in 1893 to house natural history collections brought to Chicago for the World's Columbian Exposition. Though some of the diorama-type displays here have gotten musty over time, many others have been overhauled and are well worth a look.

"Sue," the famous Tyrannosaurus rex fossil at the Field Museum of Natural History.



Field Museum of Natural History



Standing proudly at the north side of the grand **A Stanley Field Hall** is the largest, most complete *Tyrannosaurus rex* fossil ever unearthed. The \$8.4-million specimen is named **B ★★ "Sue,"** for the paleontologist who found it in South Dakota in 1990. Head downstairs to **C ★ Inside Ancient Egypt**, a spellbinding exhibit that realistically depicts scenes from Egyptian funeral, religious, and other social practices. **D Traveling the Pacific** re-creates scenes of island life in the South Pacific; there's even a full-scale model of a Maori meeting house. **E Africa** is an assemblage of African artifacts and provocative, interactive multimedia presentations. Two other signature highlights: the

taxidermied bodies of **F Bushman** (a legendary lowland gorilla from the city's Lincoln Park Zoo) and the **G Man-Eating Lions of Tsavo** (the pair of male lions who munched nearly 140 British railway workers constructing a bridge in East Africa in 1898). ⌚ 2–3 hr. **Roosevelt Rd. and Lake Shore Dr.** ☎ 312/922-9410. www.fieldmuseum.org. Admission \$10 adults, \$7 seniors and students with ID, \$5 kids 3–11; free for teachers, armed forces personnel in uniform, and kids 2 and under. Free admission Mon–Tues mid-Sept to Feb (except the last 2 weeks of Dec). Daily 9am–5pm; last admission 4pm. Closed Dec 25 and Jan 1. Bus: 6, 10, 12, 130, or 146.

10 Chicago Hilton and Towers.

This massive brick and stone building was the largest hotel in the world when it opened in 1927. It's worth a stop to gaze at the Grand Stair lobby, done in a classical-rococo style, which is the most magnificent in the city. ⌚ 15 min. 720 S. Michigan Ave. (at Balbo Dr.). ☎ 312/922-4400. www.hilton.com. El: Red Line to Harrison/State.



The massive Chicago Hilton and Towers has been a fixture in Chicago since 1927.



Kitty O'Shea's is one of the most authentic Irish pubs in town (even though it's a hotel bar), with imported Irish bartenders and traditional Irish music. Pick up an Irish/American newspaper at the entrance, then relax with a pint in a cozy booth. If you've worked up an

appetite, the lamb stew, shepherd's pie, or fish and chips will keep you feeling as if you've landed on the Emerald Isle. 720 S. Michigan Ave.

☎ 312/294-6860. \$. ●

Taking Yourself Out to a Ballgame

It's been a long dry spell: The Cubbies haven't made a World Series since 1945, and haven't been World Champs since 1908, but that never deters die-hard Cubs fans, who are perennial optimists. Each April, they show up for opening day at Wrigley Field in what is almost certainly inclement weather, sure that their team's year has arrived. (Wrigley Field, 1060 W. Addison St. ☎ 773/404-CUBS. www.cubs.mlb.com. See p 132.)

Win or lose, a day at Wrigley is a don't-miss Chicago experience (and tickets tend to sell out accordingly). From the ivy-covered outfield walls to the hand-operated scoreboard and "W" or "L" flag announcing the outcome of the game to the unfortunates who couldn't attend, Wrigley Field is a pure slice of Americana. Buy a hot dog and some Cracker Jack, and join in the chorus of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" during the seventh-inning stretch (since the death of longtime announcer Harry Caray, the crowd is led by a guest singer, often a visiting celebrity). Because Wrigley Field is small, just about every seat is decent. Families, however, might want to avoid the bleacher seats, because fans there can get a little overzealous in their rooting for the home team (and drinking).