

# Historic Chicago Walking Tour

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Finalized Tour Link - <https://izi.travel/en/e7aa-chicago-a-drift-through-the-windy-city/en>

### Introduction

Hi. Welcome to iziTRAVEL's Historic Chicago Walking Tour, presented by ListenUp Audio. We're so glad you'll be joining us today! I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I'll be your guide. A few notes before we get started. This tour takes approximately an hour and a half to complete. You can stop at any time and start again at the same spot later. If you'd like, you can put your phone in your pocket and just listen from here. I'll be giving you clear directions and the audio will automatically start playing when you get close to the next point of interest. If a site is closed or your path is blocked, don't worry. Just go around it. The tour will pick up at the next location. And this is important: PLEASE make sure you stay aware of your surroundings at *all* times and obey *all* traffic signals.

(pause)

Welcome to "Windy City" Chicago, the largest city in the Midwest and "Freight Handler to the Nation." Founded in 1830 and a current leader in international trade and commerce, Chicago's history is just as rich as its industrial roots. As we wind our way around its parks, historic buildings, and towering skyscrapers, we'll look into some of Chicago's most notable landmarks, chronicling the city's reputation as one of the nation's greatest meeting places of industry and innovation.

**Whenever you're ready to begin, head to the Cloud Gate entrance of Millennium Park at 201 E Randolph Street.**

### Cloud Gate

Starting off our tour of the Windy City, we come to the massive, bean-shaped art sculpture in downtown Chicago's Millennial Park. Appropriately nicknamed The Bean by most everyone, the piece is widely considered one of the top works of art around the world. In truth, it's probably one of the most expensive as well. Coming in at a pricey \$23 million for its construction alone, The Bean was made from the seamless welding of over 168 metal plates, making its final shape akin to something like a drop of mercury. The illusion is eye-catching, and once you're inside, it's impossible not to be drawn in by its story.

As one can imagine, cleaning costs for something as massive as The Bean are equally expensive.

Because it essentially acts as a giant, shiny mirror, reflecting the sky and the city skyline, it's a challenge in of itself to keep it clear of fingerprints. Add in thousands of visitors each year, and you have a recipe for a *lot* of fingerprints. Those on the lower portion have to be wiped down twice a day by hand, while the higher portions of the sculpture get what equates to giant soak in the dishwasher, detergent and all.

That being said, The Bean occasionally evokes something entirely different in its visitors, and the duality of its sky-earth construction is sometimes seen as something more spiritual. While no confirmed religions are known to worship its shininess, the wavy reflections it casts back on its underside are often hypnotizing, leading many to stop, stare, and get totally lost in The Bean.

**When you're ready to continue, simply step through the Cloud Gate entrance into Millennium Park.**

### **Millennium Park**

We break out of our Bean-induced hypnosis to explore the rest of Chicago's Millennium Park. Opened in 2004, it's often regarded as one of the city's best green spaces. Looking around, it's easy to see why. At 25 acres, the space itself is massive, and it's filled to the brim with all manner of breathtaking architecture, works of art, and installations for outdoor concerts, film screenings, workouts, and more.

Speaking of events, Millennium Park is known for some of the absolute best year-round. With seasonal workshops like those offered in the park's Lurie Garden, visitors are given the hands-on opportunity to experience landscaping at its finest. Lessons in beekeeping, basket-weaving, pruning, and much more are offered with proper registration, and the park even features toddler sing-alongs and kiddie art lessons to keep the younger ones perfectly distracted. Better still, the park's music festivals and summer workouts make the perfect addition to an already adventurous summer, going for weeks at a time with free admission as an added bonus. Whether you're in for a quick visit, a quick bite, or even a quiet stroll with the kids, make sure to make a day of it. There's plenty to see at Millennium Park, and even more to do.

**When you're ready to continue, Head east toward S Columbus Dr. Take a Slight left, then take a Slight right. Turn right toward E Randolph St. Turn left toward E Randolph St. Turn right toward E Randolph St. Slight right toward E Randolph St. Continue onto E Randolph St. Take a Slight right toward Lakefront Trail. Turn left onto Lakefront Trail, and you should see the signs for Lakefront Trail.**

### **Lakefront Trail**

Just east of Lakeshore Drive, we come to another one of the city's best parks, Chicago's Lakefront Trail. Spanning 18.5 acres along gorgeous Lake Michigan, its linear design is a city

favorite, offering an assortment of scenic beaches, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and a host of other attractions.

Of these attractions, the trail's direct access to some of the city's biggest landmarks plays a key factor in its popularity. With exits to places like Chicago's Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Chicago Children's Museum, the trail offers a pretty wide variety of destinations to embark and disembark as you map out the day. On top of this, Chicago's Lincoln Park and the upcoming Navy Pier are just a stone's throw away, with Lincoln Park's zoo being one of the more famous in the region.

Nevertheless, the key thing to do on Lakefront Trail has always been to explore it via walking or biking. Though it's often more crowded in the warmer months, making real workouts a bit tougher to accomplish depending on the time of day, residents of Chicago swear by its views and its various extensions, each offering their own unique challenges.

**When you're ready to continue, head north on Lakefront Trail toward Chicago Riverwalk. Slight right to stay on Lakefront Trail. Turn right onto E Grand Ave, and you'll see the great sign for Navy Pier.**

### **Navy Pier**

Stepping off the winding curves of Lakefront Trail, we come to one of its most popular stops: Chicago's Navy Pier. Built in 1914 and opened to the public just two years later, the pier was at one time the world's largest on record, measuring an impressive 3000 feet long and 292 feet wide. Designed originally as a shipping and entertainment area, the Pier has seen a number of transformations over its 100 years, each of which has served to bolster its reputation as one of Chicago's most veritable landmarks.

The first of these occurred with its grand opening. During its first decade in business, the Navy Pier (then known as Municipal Pier #2) saw enormous profits and popularity. It was the hottest place to be during the early 1920s, and while these profits were temporarily stunted at the onset of The Great Depression, the 20s are generally regarded as the Pier's "Golden Age." As the 30s came and went, the U.S. Navy realized that the Navy Pier would prove invaluable as a training facility for their entrance into WWII.

Preparations were made, and it served this purpose until the war's end in 1945. Following this, the Navy Pier was again recommissioned, serving as a classroom and undergraduate program for returning veterans until 1965.

Yet the Pier's final and most popular transformation occurred in the early 1990s, and by 1995, it had returned to its roots as one of the city's best entertainment spaces. Packed with an

assortment of new attractions, the new Navy Pier features some of the best food, shopping, and fun in the city. From its 148 ft. Ferris Wheel, to its Aeroballoon and convention halls, it definitely marks one of the most exciting stops on our tour.

**When you're ready to continue, Head west on E Grand Ave. Turn right toward E Ohio St. Turn left toward E Ohio St. Slight right onto E Ohio St, then take the stairs. Turn left onto N Lake Shore Dr. Turn left onto E Huron St. Turn left onto N Michigan Ave, and you're at your destination.**

### **Magnificent Mile**

Having had our fill of the thrills and excitement over at Chicago's Navy Pier, we take some time to relax and explore the city's largest shopping district, the world-famous Magnificent Mile. Ranked as one of the top ten dining and retail destinations around the globe, Chicago's Magnificent Mile is lined from end to end with the very best the city has to offer in shopping, dining, and luxury accommodations, making it renowned tourist destination and a playground for the affluent.

From its luxury boutiques, to its chic collection of designer studios, it's easy to see why the Mile garners its reputation as one of the trendiest spots in all of Chicago. With the Mile playing host to a variety of additional museums, live music, and seasonal events, many of its visitors find themselves making an entire afternoon of the experience. Attractions like the Magnificent Mile Shopping Festival and the upbeat sounds of the nearby Redhead Piano Bar allow its visitors completely lose themselves in the rich, cultural atmosphere. Afterwards, many find themselves hard-pressed to choose just *one* of its amazing dining experiences to stop at for a quick bite, as the variety of options there is just as daunting. In the end, it's generally recommended to explore Chicago's Magnificent Mile at a comfortable pace. With so much to do, you'd be hard pressed to run out of ways to entertain yourself. Nevertheless, we'll help narrow down at least *one* of those choices with the next stop of our tour.

**When you're ready to continue, Head south on N Michigan Ave toward E Erie St. Turn left onto Pioneer Court, and take the stairs. The destination will be on your left.**

### **Tribune Tower**

Standing at a massive 462 feet tall, we find ourselves at Chicago's Tribune Tower, one of its most beautiful and historic landmarks. Built in 1925 and designed by the architecture firm Howells & Hood, the Tribune Tower's design is Neo-Gothic, drawing direct inspiration from the Button Tower of the cathedral at Rouen, France. Having been declared a national landmark in 1989, its iconic status amidst the Chicago skyline is, in some way at least, representative of the way American architects often sought to elevate similar buildings to sacred status.

Being no exception, the Tribune Tower even features distinct, architectural decorations in commemoration of its creators. Carved images of Robin Hood and a howling dog adorn its main entrance, along with a pair of gargoyles, a sculpted frog, and other appropriately gothic ornamentations. Even more fascinating, much of the Tower's exterior contains a mixture of famous stones, including but not limited to fragments from The Alamo, The Coliseum, and The Great Wall of China.

**When you're ready to continue, Head west on Pioneer Court. Turn right toward E Hubbard St, and take the stairs. Turn left onto E Hubbard St, then take the stairs. The destination will be on your left.**

### **Trump International Tower and Hotel**

Like Chicago's Tribune Tower, the next skyscraper on our tour has a rich history all its own. Built in 2009, the tower stands at a whopping 98 stories, affording some of the best river views in the city. Featuring a retail space, a parking garage, the tower itself, and condominiums of varying luxury, its interior structure is just as massive, hosting a total of 339 guest rooms, suites, and spa rooms.

With amenities like this, it's no wonder that the Trump Tower's motto that "no stay should feel like the first," is spoken of with such reverence. All visitors of the hotel are offered attaché services, including but not limited to grocery stocking, pet walking services, and even Nanny Services. Weddings and social events are often held in its luxurious spaces, and special vacation packages are always on hand to help make your stay just a little bit longer and that much more special. With additional dining accommodations like the Tower's famous "Sixteen" restaurant, and accolades for its Green Initiatives including the donation of excess food to local shelters, Chicago's Trump Tower and Hotel is the *first* overnight stay visitors should look into. Its guests are rarely, if ever dissatisfied.

**When you're ready to continue, Head northeast on N Wabash Ave. Turn right toward N Michigan Ave. Take the pedestrian overpass. Turn right onto N Michigan Ave. Turn left onto Chicago Riverwalk.**

### **Chicago Riverwalk**

Having already visited a few of Chicago's best parks and green spaces, it's hard to imagine that the city has yet *another* surprise up its sleeve. Chicago's Riverwalk it just that however, and with a nickname like "Second Lakefront," it's easy to see why. Spanning the length from Lakeshore Drive to Franklin Street, the Riverwalk is the culmination of the city's desire to see the open space between it and the Chicago Riverbank improved. Plans were laid out more than a

decade ago to accomplish this task, and the space you see before you, with its lush greenery, fine dining, seating, and boat rentals, is the realization of this dream.

With sections dedicated to the creation of special underpasses, The Riverwalk also offers pedestrians and visitors alike the chance to move through its bordering streets completely unimpeded by traffic. These urban, car-free walks along the river have made it one of the hottest attractions in the city, and its added amenities only strengthen this reputation. Featuring added stops like the Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum, visitors are able to explore the inner workings and history of Chicago's world-famous movable bridges. In addition, the Riverwalk's Wabash Memorial Plaza offers visitors the chance to stand in front of the city's Vietnam War Memorial, a black granite commemoration featuring the names of 2,900 Illinois soldiers killed or missing in action during the war. With added projects to the Riverwalk set for completion at the end of 2016, the Riverwalk is set to become an even bigger attraction in the years to come.

**When you're ready to continue, Head north on Chicago Riverwalk toward E Upper Wacker Dr. Turn left onto E Upper Wacker Dr. Turn left onto N State St.**

### **The Chicago Theatre**

Dubbed "The Wonder Theatre of the World," at its opening on October 26<sup>th</sup> 1921, our next stop on the tour is the breathtaking Chicago Theatre. From its majestic lobby, to its elegant staircase and mural-adorned auditorium, The Chicago Theatre marks the beginning of the lavish "movie palace" experience in America, becoming the prototype for all similar constructions that followed.

Constructed in the classic French-Baroque style, the Theatre's exterior features an assortment of dazzling amenities. From the miniature replica Paris's Arc de Triomphe above the marquee, to the grand window housing the circular stained-glass panel bearing the Balaban and Katz coat-of-arms, it's easy to see that the owners, spending \$4 million on the Theatre's construction, truly spared no expense. But while the exterior of the Theatre is a truly a sight to behold, its interior is likewise extravagant. Modeled after the Royal Chapel at Versailles, the main lobby is five stories high and surrounded by galleries on multiple levels, with an added staircase fashioned after that of the Paris Opera House. Likewise, its seven-story auditorium, measuring more than a half a city block in length and width, is capable of comfortably seating more 3,600 guests.

Though the Theatre has faced periods of decline over the decades, it's bright, vertical CHICAGO sign still shines brightly today, welcoming some of the hottest stars and productions of the last 100 years. From Frank Sinatra, to Prince, and even comedians like Ellen DeGeneres and Robin Williams, it remains a staple of the Theatre industry and a landmark of the Windy City to this day.

**When you're ready to continue, Head south on N State St toward E Benton Pl. Turn right onto W Washington St, and the destination will be on your right.**

### **Richard J. Daley Center**

Moving onto another one of Chicago's cultural highlights, we come to the Richard J. Daley Center, named in honor of Chicago's former mayor from 1955-1976. Originally known as the Chicago Civic Center, the Daley Center was the city's first major public building to be constructed in the modern style, rather than the more traditional, classic architecture of its former counterparts. Designed by the architect Jacques Brownson of C.F. Murphy Associates, the design itself is based on the steel and glass architecture made famous by German-American architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Widely regarded as the pioneer of modern architecture, Rohe's architectural influence can be seen throughout the city, and the Daley Center provides no exception.

Standing at 31 stories and regarded as the tallest flat-roofed structure in the world under 40 stories, it is truly spectacular. Though the building itself has no interior columns, its cross-shaped exterior columns and 87-foot-wide structural bays provide more than enough architectural integrity, leading many to compare the bays themselves to actual bridges in scope. Additionally, while the building was originally designed to house 120 court and hearing rooms, its plaza has become a landmark in of itself, hosting the city's very own Picasso sculpture gifted to the Center in 1967. Though the artist himself never explained what the sculpture represented, the mystery has allowed visitors the world over to enjoy the Center that much more, forming their own theories as they explore one of Chicago's most historical landmarks.

**When you're ready to continue, Head west on W Washington St toward N Clark St. Turn left onto N Clark St. Turn right onto W Madison St. Turn left onto S Franklin St.**

### **Willis Tower**

Leaving one towering structure for another, we arrive at Willis Tower, the nation's tallest building and the eighth-largest skyscraper in the entire world. Formerly known as the Sears Tower, it stands at an astonishing 110 stories, featuring an elevator that makes the climb in a flat one minute and ten seconds. While the building's name changed in 2009 to reflect its new tenants, the Willis Group Holdings, the fun and excitement over at Willis Tower remains just the same as it was decades ago.

Offering the most breathtaking view of the city of Chicago and its surrounding regions, visitors of the Willis Tower often find themselves at its illustrious Skydeck on the 103<sup>rd</sup> floor. Having received two major renovations in 2000 and 2009 to improve its experience, Skydeck offers visitors the chance to look out a staggering 50 miles in all directions. Standing out on the "The

Ledge,” a large, glass box that extends 4.3 feet out from the Skydeck, braver individuals are even afforded the opportunity to their courage and “walk on air,” an experience which usually makes for some of the best photos for those willing to look down. Having sufficiently scared themselves and maybe even a few friends, visitors are also encouraged to check out the new Skydeck Marketplace, an express retail café offering an assortment of unique, Chicago items and foods to calm those shaky nerves.

**When you're ready to continue, Head north on S Franklin St toward W Adams St/Historic U.S. 66 W. Turn right onto W Adams St/Historic U.S. 66 W.**

### **The Rookery-La Salle Street**

Coming down from the clouds at Willis Tower, we take a moment to explore another architectural landmark of Chicago, The Rookery Building on La-Salle Street. Known as the oldest standing high-rise in the city, The Rookery's history dates all the way back to Chicago's Great Fire of 1871. While the fire itself proved devastating to much of the city's infrastructure, it ironically proved to be its greatest blessing as well. Understanding the need for the city to bounce back to its former glory and beyond, many architects of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the chance to build something greater upon the rubble. An architectural boom was born, and many of Chicago's greatest buildings, like the Rookery, sprang from this venture.

While no one is quite sure where The Rookery's name originated, others have offered their speculations. The first, and most likely, was that the name was given in reference to the crows and pigeons that often inhabited its exterior walls. The second, and definitely more entertaining, is that the name is a direct reference to the corrupt politicians that often inhabited its *interior*, playing on the connotation that their greed and the rook's penchant for materialism were one and the same. While the building's naming conventions remain unclear, what *is* clear is that the structure itself remains a marvel of architectural prowess. Rising into the sky sometime around 1886, it stands eleven stories tall, and has seen the contribution of no less than five architects to its infrastructure during its 130 years in occupation. With 30-min tours offered Monday and Friday afternoons, visitors to Chicago are encouraged to stop, admire, and explore The Rookery at their earliest convenience.

**When you're ready to continue, Head west toward S La Salle St. Turn left onto S La Salle St. Turn left onto W Jackson Blvd, and the destination will be on your right.**

### **Monadnock Building**

Marking the last skyscraper on our tour, we come to Chicago's Monadnock Building. Designed as the tallest load-bearing brick building ever constructed, the Monadnock Building is yet



another Chicago structure with an infrastructure designed by multiple architects, owing its north and south sides to two different firms.

Its northern half, completed in 1891 owes itself to the vision of architects Daniel Burnham and John Root, two architects who also had a hand in the construction of The Rookery Building seen previously on our tour. The more famous of the two halves, its basic structure is simplistic, merely rising into the sky like an Egyptian pyramid. In addition, the northern half employed the first portal system of wind-bracing seen in America, with the inclusion of staircases representing the first uses of aluminum in building construction.

Its second half, completed just two years later and designed by the architecture firm Holabird & Roche, is structurally similar to the northern half but ultimately more ornate. At the time of its completion, The Monadnock Building remained the largest office building in the world. While the building continues to be used for that purpose today, visitors and residents alike still relish in its architectural design, with many referring to its dual designs as “a bridging of building styles,” and “an architectural treasure.” As a combination of visions, it surely remains one of Chicago’s most unique.

**When you’re ready to continue, Head east on W Jackson Blvd toward S Dearborn St. Turn right. Take the crosswalk. Turn left, and the destination will be on the right.**

### **Grant Park**

Nearing the end of our tour, we take some time to stroll through Chicago’s “front yard” and centerpiece, Grant Park. Spanning 319 acres of Chicago’s central business district, the park was built as the city’s first, named in honor of United States President and Civil War General, Ulysses S. Grant.

Containing a large number of performance venues, gardens, art work, and sporting and harbor facilities, the park plays host to a number of special gatherings and events, providing fun and festivities for any age group. Attractions like the Shedd Aquarium and the Field Museum of Natural History call Grant Park home, while specialty events like the annual Taste of Chicago and Grant Park Music Festival provide hours of clean, wholesome entertainment for the family. Other fun activities include the park’s Skating Ribbon, which doubles as an ice-skating rink in cooler months and a pathway for roller skates, balance bikes, and scooters during warmer weather. A climbing wall at one intersection provides some added activity, and an extraneous Skate Park offers BMXers, roller-bladers, and skateboarders the chance to test out new tricks in a wide, 2-acre lot.

**When you’re ready to continue, Head west. Turn left, walk a bit, then turn right. Make another left turn, and you should be standing right in front of the large, cascading fountain in the park.**

## **The Buckingham Fountain**

We conclude our tour of Historic Chicago at the base of Buckingham Fountain, Grant Park's centerpiece and most renowned attraction. Built in a rococo wedding cake style and fashioned after the Latona Fountain at the Palace of Versailles, the fountain shares a special relationship with the city, having been dedicated in honor of Charles Buckingham, brother to Chicago Philanthropist and fellow artist Kate Buckingham.

Powered by three separate pumps at varying horsepower, the fountain uses a special system to maintain its pressure and height, utilizing one pump for the water and two for its displays. With 20 minutes of every hour dedicated to these exhibitions, operators of the fountain go a step further by adding color to its waters at night and special, holiday decorations during the Christmas season. The effect is nothing short of magical, and many refer to the fountain's dazzling colors as a glimpse into "fairyland." Having fascinated visitors since its construction in 1927, the Buckingham Fountain shows no signs of stopping anytime soon, and as it marks the end of our tour, we encourage you to stop and stare for as long as you like. If you're lucky, you just might catch a glimpse of the Chicago skyline reflecting back.

**This marks the end of our Historic Chicago Walking Tour. We hope you've enjoyed yourself, and should you wish to journey back to where we started, please head along the following route: Head southeast, Turn right toward S Columbus Dr. Turn left toward S Columbus Dr. Turn right toward S Columbus Dr. Turn left toward S Columbus Dr. Turn right toward S Columbus Dr. Turn left toward S Columbus Dr, then take the stairs. Turn right onto S Columbus Dr. Turn left onto E Jackson Dr, and you should be back at The Bean.**