

FALL + WINTER 2024 - 2025

# enjoy illinois

  
the  
middle  
of  
everything

FABYAN FOREST  
PRESERVE, GENEVA, IL

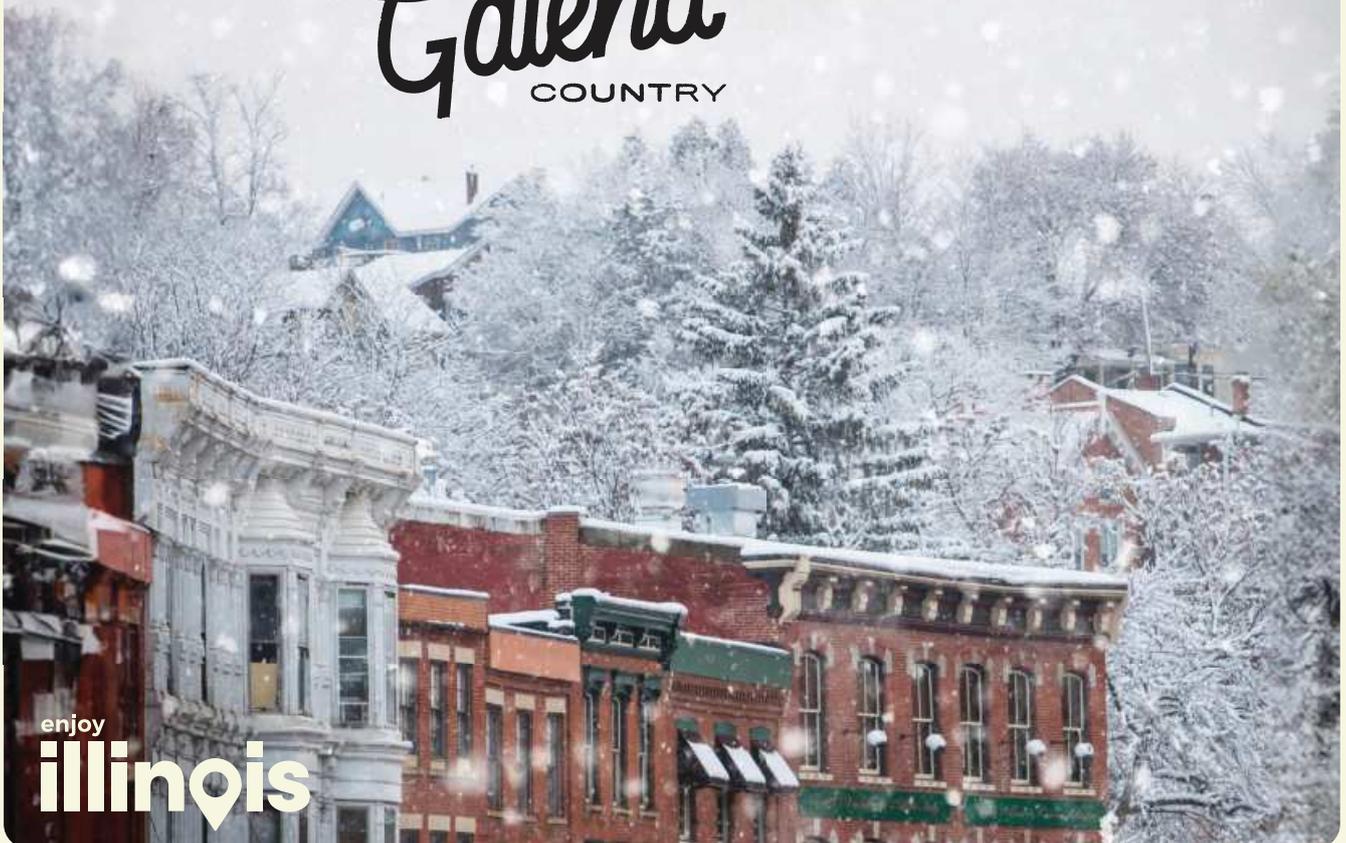


Dear traveler,

We've always done things our own way in Galena Country. Never rigid, but always true to ourselves. You won't find a chain coffee shop or cookie-cutter resort here. What you will find is a journey that's just like you—completely and forever original.

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*Galena*  
COUNTRY



enjoy  
**illinois**

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## BONUS!

*Hike, bike, paddle or glide on trails in Illinois parks, forests and rivers in our special section, Outdoor Adventure in Illinois.*



Washington  
Park,  
Quincy  
↓

PHOTOGRAPH: JASON LINDSEY

📍 **ON THE COVER** Fabyan Forest Preserve, Geneva. Photographer: Bob Stefko

THE MIDDLE  
OF EVERYTHING

# WELCOME

A scenic drive through Illinois in the fall is an unbeatable way to discover the beauty of our incredible state. Crisp autumn air and colorful autumn foliage—what more could you ask for? Or maybe the allure of twinkling holiday lights and cozy sweaters at a historic inn is more to your liking. No matter what you're seeking, you'll find it here.

Want to satisfy your wanderlust responsibly? Green getaways have never been easier in Illinois (*page 28*). Hike a Galena trail with goats as your guides, e-bike to a vineyard along the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail, or shop local for unique merch and meet the actual makers. And we're making it easier than ever to drive electric in Illinois, with more than 1,200 public charging stations and growing.

Looking for indulgence? Delight in our curated list of all things luxury (*page 10*), including lavish accommodations with stunning views of Chicago's skyline. James Beard Award-winning dining also awaits, as well as traditional afternoon tea at an elevated British manor. Or experience a historic jail-turned-inn, where well-appointed rooms will make you want to extend your stay.

There is so much to see and do this fall and winter. What we've highlighted in this issue is just a sampling of what the state offers. For more information on seasonal trip ideas, events and travel resources, make sure to visit the newly relaunched *EnjoyIllinois.com*. I hope you enjoy our magazine as much as we do. We look forward to welcoming you to Illinois: The Middle of Everything.



**DANIEL THOMAS**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE &  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, OFFICE OF TOURISM

# enjoy illinois

FALL + WINTER  
2024 - 2025

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE &  
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# Want to make the most of your trip to Illinois?

Let Big Lincoln, an AI Travel Assistant, help you make plans.

Find him on [enjoyillinois.com](http://enjoyillinois.com)



**ROAD TRIP!**  
*Whether you want to travel 5 miles or 500, enjoyillinois.com has an itinerary for you. Choose from more than 100 trips with themes like family fun; architecture tours; outdoor activities; offbeat attractions; and arts, history and culture. You'll also find iconic trips on scenic byways like historic Route 66, the Great River Road and the Lincoln Highway.*



Scan the code for road trip itineraries.

## 24/7 TRAVEL SUPPORT

An expert on his namesake Land of Lincoln, Big Lincoln is here to make trip planning easier. He'll inspire you to hit the road, suggesting things to do, where to go and where to stay. And then he'll personalize his recommendations with unique, in-depth responses to your questions. To get started, tell Big Lincoln a little about yourself and the trip you're planning: when you'll be taking the trip, who you're traveling with, and what you're interested in seeing and doing. The more Big Lincoln knows, the better he can guide your next journey.



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EAT PLAY STAY

# GUIDEBOOK

Chicago  
Botanic Garden,  
Glencoe



Scan the code  
for more things  
to see and do.

FALL  
+  
WINTER  
2024 - 2025

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PHOTOGRAPH: IOT

FALL COLOR

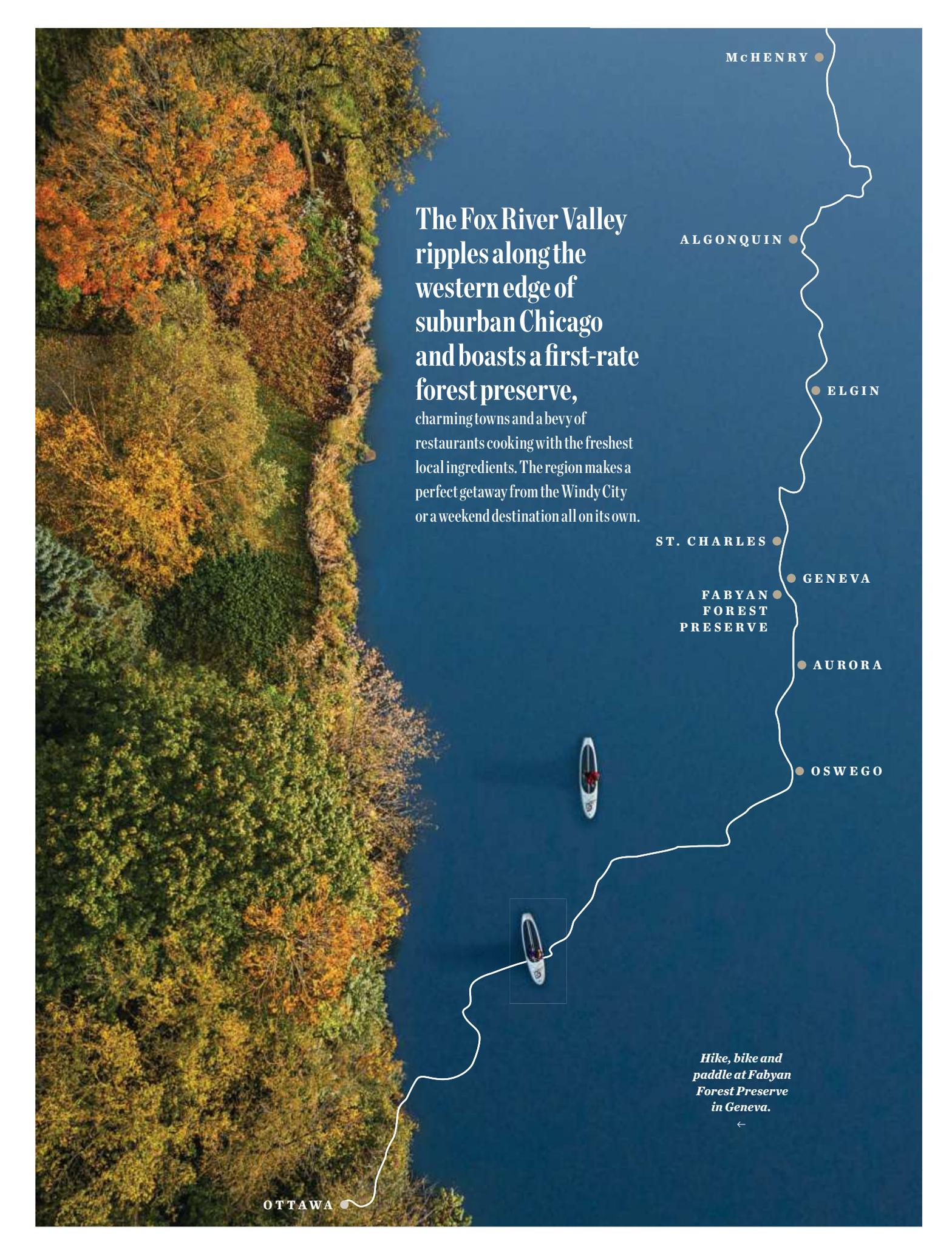
# Insider's Guide

*A local tastemaker shares where to go,  
how to play and what to eat in the Fox River Valley.*



## MEET OUR EXPERT

*Molly Jackson-Schultz, a teacher-turned-project manager and influencer (@thatawkwardteacher), loves exploring her hometown and the surrounding communities with her husband, Jackson, and their 3-year-old son and newborn daughter.*



# The Fox River Valley ripples along the western edge of suburban Chicago and boasts a first-rate forest preserve,

charming towns and a bevy of  
restaurants cooking with the freshest  
local ingredients. The region makes a  
perfect getaway from the Windy City  
or a weekend destination all on its own.

MCHENRY ●

ALGONQUIN ●

● ELGIN

ST. CHARLES ●

● GENEVA

FABYAN  
FOREST  
PRESERVE ●

● AURORA

● OSWEGO

OTTAWA ●

*Hike, bike and  
paddle at Fabyan  
Forest Preserve  
in Geneva.*



## Eat Local

*Talented chefs tempt your taste buds with surprising flavors.*

Begin a day of deliciousness in Aurora with a simple yet delectable dish: bread and butter at **Society 57**. Katich Breads supplies the sourdough, which is smothered with European butter and a sprinkling of Hawaiian black salt. At **Hardware Gastropub** in North Aurora, Executive Chef Alyse Marie Warren uses produce and herbs grown on-site for the Green House salad and other seasonal dishes. Plan to complement your hyperfresh lunch with a memorable sip. They grow the hops used in their craft beers, plus Hardware is known for its 600 whiskeys.

One of the best streets for food in the Fox River Valley (and a short walk from the train station) is Third Street in Geneva. **Graham's Fine Chocolates and Ice Cream** evokes the charm of a vintage candy store and satisfies your sweet tooth. While delectable, don't let Graham's chocolates, caramels' mores and handmade ice cream fill you up. Instead, head to **Preservation**, open for lunch and dinner. The restaurant focuses on creative cuisine that's meant to be shared with your tablemates. Opt for a seat on the covered patio, also the spot for live music. **Niche Restaurant** stimulates the senses with seasonal dishes like slow-roasted short rib.

Once a month, **Heritage Prairie Farm** in Elburn offers themed outdoor dinners for the over-21 crowd, including the celebrated Roots and Wine Farm Dinner (October 10).

For hip eats in an artsy environment, **Craft Urban** in Aurora and Geneva offers daily specials like half-price burgers on Industry Night (Monday) and late-night ramen on weekends. For happy hour deals on food, wine and craft beer, head to **The Lone Buffalo** in Ottawa, where a chef-crafted menu is inspired by local farmers.

## Out and About

*Fox River Valley provides big-city conveniences with small-town heart and rural touches.*

**ALONG THE TRAIL** Walkers and cyclists love the 45-mile Fox River Trail for its mix of flat and rolling hill sections—as well as gorgeous views of its namesake river accented by a rainbow of autumn hues. The trail loops through the **Fabyan Forest Preserve**. Hike, bike or drive to the preserve, south of Geneva, for a picnic near an authentic Dutch windmill, a stroll through a Japanese garden (open Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays through September), and a tour of the Fabyan Villa Museum, a mid-1800s home redesigned by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1907 (open Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays through September). These highlights, along with the wrought-iron gates and vine-covered walkways, make beautiful selfie backdrops.

**ON THE RIVER** Experience the Fox on your own or with a savvy guide. **Mill Race Cyclery** in Geneva rents gear (kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddleboards), while a cruise aboard a **St. Charles Paddlewheel Riverboat** will carry you down the river and back again.

**IN THE FIELDS** Families venture to **Kuipers Family Farm** in Maple Park, **Jonomac Orchard** in Malta and **The Pumpkin Wagon** in Elgin every fall to hunt for the perfect jack-o'-lantern and devour apple cider doughnuts. **Stade's Farm and Market** in McHenry shines for its seasonal U-Pick produce, including classic apples and autumn surprises like green beans, raspberries and beets.



St. Charles

## Where to Stay

*Overnight in the heart of downtown hospitality along the Fox River.*

Within walking distance of restaurants, bars and local entertainment, the almost century-old **Hotel Baker** in St. Charles or **The Herrington Inn and Spa** in Geneva combine luxe touches and historic appeal. All of the 50-plus rooms and suites at Hotel Baker come with fluffy robes; some feature private outdoor hot tubs. Step onto your private balcony at The Herrington Inn and Spa before heading to your room to warm up in a whirlpool tub or in front of your own gas fireplace. For guests who want more relaxation, book a spa appointment.



*On Friday and Saturday nights, listen to regional musicians while sipping a wine slushie at Fox Valley Winery in Oswego.*



Preservation, Geneva



The Lone Buffalo, Ottawa

PHOTOGRAPHS: (ST. CHARLES) JOT, (PRESERVATION) NATHAN KIRKMAN, (THE LONE BUFFALO), KEVIN J. MIYAZAKI/REDDUX

**ILLINOIS INSIDER** The Sandwich Fair (September 4–8) in Sandwich dates to 1888, making it one of the state's oldest county fairs. It regularly draws more than 160,000 visitors over five days with concerts, deep-fried food and barnyard animals.



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*The Langham, Chicago*

**ILLINOIS INSIDER**

Surprise your travel buddy with a little something extra by purchasing hotel-curated gift packages as an add-on while booking. Or if the mood strikes mid-stay, chat with the concierge for gift recommendations.

**THE ULTIMATE GIFT**

# Deluxe R&R

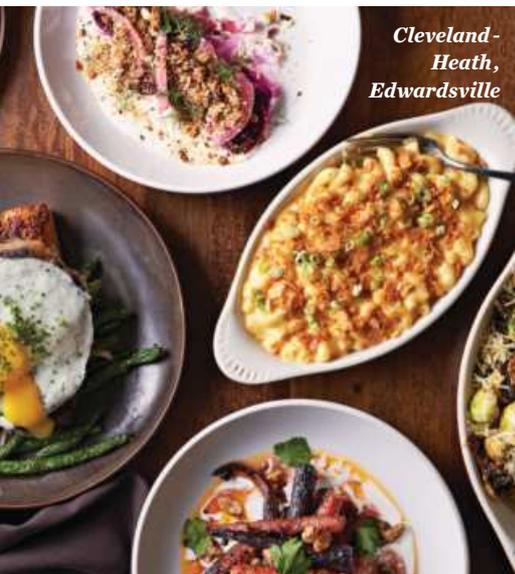
*Book a palace—ahem, a room—at one of these three luxe lodging options to weave moments, minutes or hours of indulgence into your next getaway.*

## ↑ The Langham Chicago

Fittingly housed in a skyscraper designed by trailblazing modernist architect Mies van der Rohe, The Langham harnesses many of the characteristics the design visionary preferred. His passion for exceptional materials inspires details like Botticino Fiorito marble and dark walnut in guest rooms, and perhaps the addition of caviar and crushed pearl in a facial offered at the Chuan Spa. The window through which diners witness the kitchen staff's culinary acrobatics during a private Chef's Table experience nods to Rohe's love of open expanses. If you opt for a Club room or suite, automatic access to The Langham Club weaves even more splendors into your stay, such as a reading library and evening cocktails. Club members can also gift a custom Chuan massage to a loved one—or themselves.

## ↓ Decadent Dining

Illinois travelers may picture Chicago first while dreaming about their next gourmet meal, but statewide outposts prove elevated menus exist beyond the Windy City. **Le Colonial** brings Vietnamese fine dining to Lake Forest. Here, the aromas of earthy-yet-sweet lemongrass and piquant chilies drift from the kitchen, permeating a sea of guests lounging in intricately woven wicker furniture and sipping Cafe Du Monde chicory coffee with sweetened condensed milk to counterpoise the spice. Farther south in Edwardsville, co-owners Gina and Evan Buchholz, who graduated from Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School, serve elevated comfort food at **Cleveland-Heath**. Spread seasonal jam over crumbly biscuits before digging into locally sourced pork chops with a cheddar bread pudding accented with jalapeños. Diners sip handcrafted lemonades at Peoria's **2 Chez**. Chefs here showcase their creativity with surprising details, splashing brandy into the crème sauce adorning veal cutlets and blending roasted red pepper into demi-glaces.



*Cleveland-Heath,  
Edwardsville*

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**EXPLORE ELGIN AREA**

Take time for rest and fun in the Elgin area, just 35 miles from downtown Chicago! Enjoy the fall colors outdoors on the Fox River Trail, visit the pumpkin farms and sample tasty treats the many restaurants in the Elgin area. Plan your getaway today!

PLAN YOUR WEEKEND GETAWAY  
AT [EXPLOREELGINAREA.COM](http://EXPLOREELGINAREA.COM)

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## Deer Path Inn

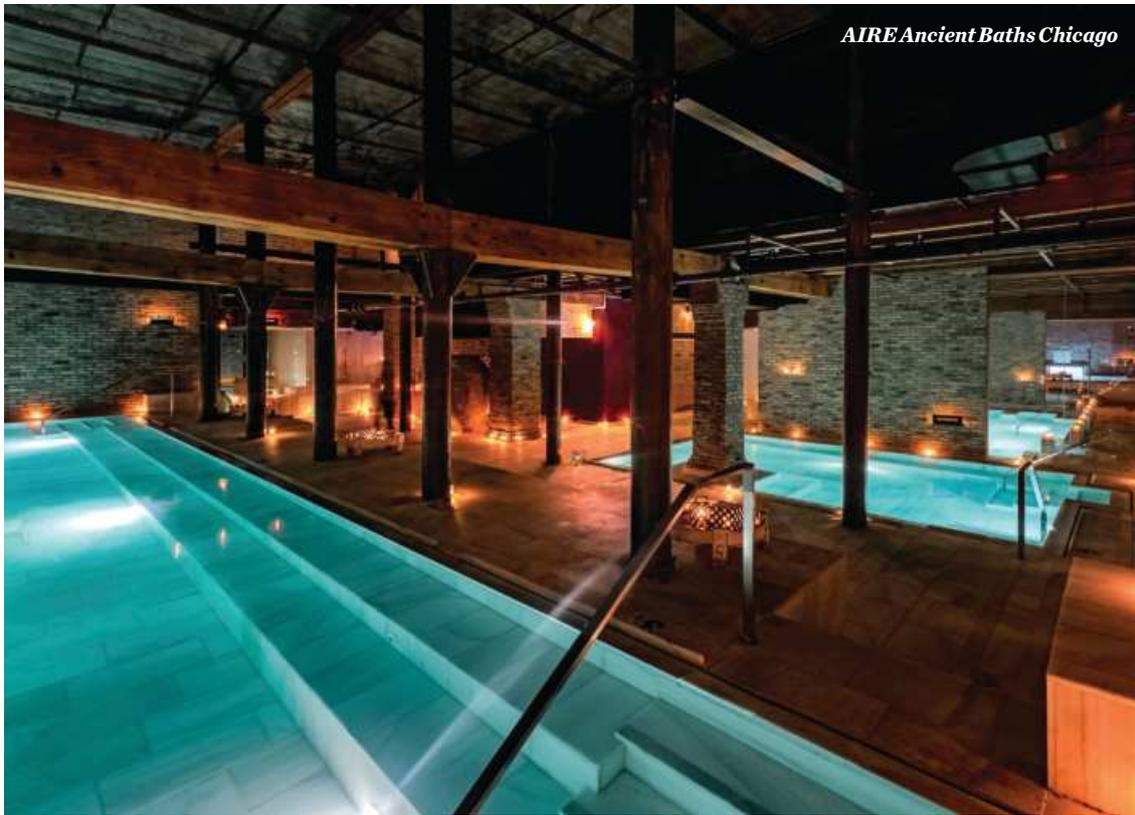
### Lake Forest

Anglophiles, rejoice. The traditions of a classic English country estate are alive and well at the Deer Path Inn, with its manicured garden beds and stately Tudor-style foyer. Borrow a complimentary bike and pedal to nearby Lake Forest Beach to watch sailboats buffeted by the wind on Lake Michigan, but leave enough time to return to The English Room at the Inn for a traditional tea service. Sun streams through the venue's floor-to-ceiling windows as you nibble scones and sip smoky lapsang souchong tea. The English Room's offerings extend beyond tea, too—its vino list has received *Wine Spectator's* coveted Most Outstanding Wine Lists in the World recognition 19 years in a row. Post-pours, retire to your suite to surprise your partner with a gift package of cotton pajamas from luxury loungewear company Sleepy Jones. The pocket and sleeve cuff bear the Deer Path Inn's logo, making the set a particularly sumptuous souvenir.

## Jail Hill Inn

### Galena

Don't allow the Gothic iron fencing or the four-story brick building's history as a place of confinement intimidate you: For guests staying in one of six 700- to 800-square-foot rooms, the Jail Hill Inn seamlessly blends luxury, comfort and history. Prepare to feel fizzy upon entering your suite, and not just because chilled champagne and chocolates greet new arrivals. Jet-equipped tubs well-suited for massaging sore muscles add to your delight, while details such as exposed original beams, brick and fireplaces connect the edifice's past and present. Doze beneath crisp linen sheets and wake to a three-course breakfast starring locally made sausage and flaky croissants. When hunger finds you again after shopping downtown Galena, pick up your inn-provided wine and cheese tray and feast in the courtyard. Celebrating a special occasion? Gift your partner a birthday cake or flowers from the inn, or spoil them with an in-room massage.



## ↑ Take Pause

Packing a vacation with nonstop activities leaves little time for relaxation. Counteract any travel stress at the **Galena Day Spa**, an open-to-the-public sanctuary despite its location in the **Irish Cottage Inn and Suites**. Nosh on rich chocolates following a couples massage with your darling, and an autumn-appropriate pumpkin latte wrap leaves skin feeling softer than rose petals. Candlelight casts shadows against exposed brick and wood beams in **AIRE Ancient Baths Chicago**. Once a factory, the 1902 building now houses hot mineral baths, salt-laden floating pools, steam rooms and masseuses with a range of specialties. Opt for the wine bath special to soak in actual Spanish Ribera del Duero red grapes. Can't give up a day of exploration? Try **Hand and Stone Massage and Facial Spa** in Geneva. It remains open until 10 p.m. on weekdays, so you can squeeze in a massage or facial after your afternoon adventures end.



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experiences.



WINTER  
**ADVENTURES**

Don't let the cold weather stop you from making discoveries and memories! Grab a friend or family and let this guide you for ideas of ways you can stay busy this winter season.

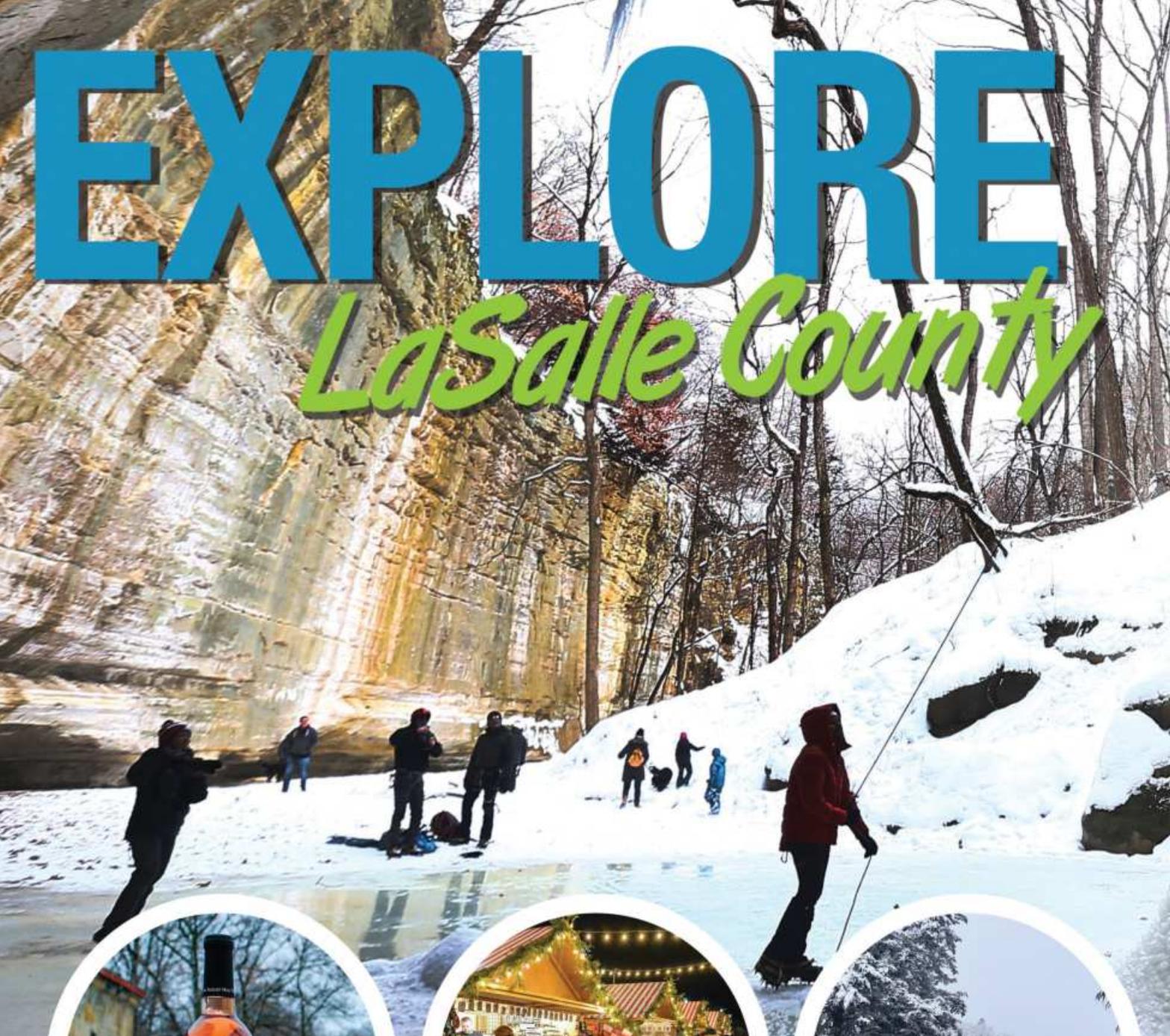


DISCOVER   
**PEORIA**

enjoy  
**illinois**

# EXPLORE

## *LaSalle County*



### **AUGUST HILL WINERY**

Enjoy wine tastings in scenic downtown Utica



### **SCENIC OTTAWA**

Explore the Illinois River & shop vibrant boutiques



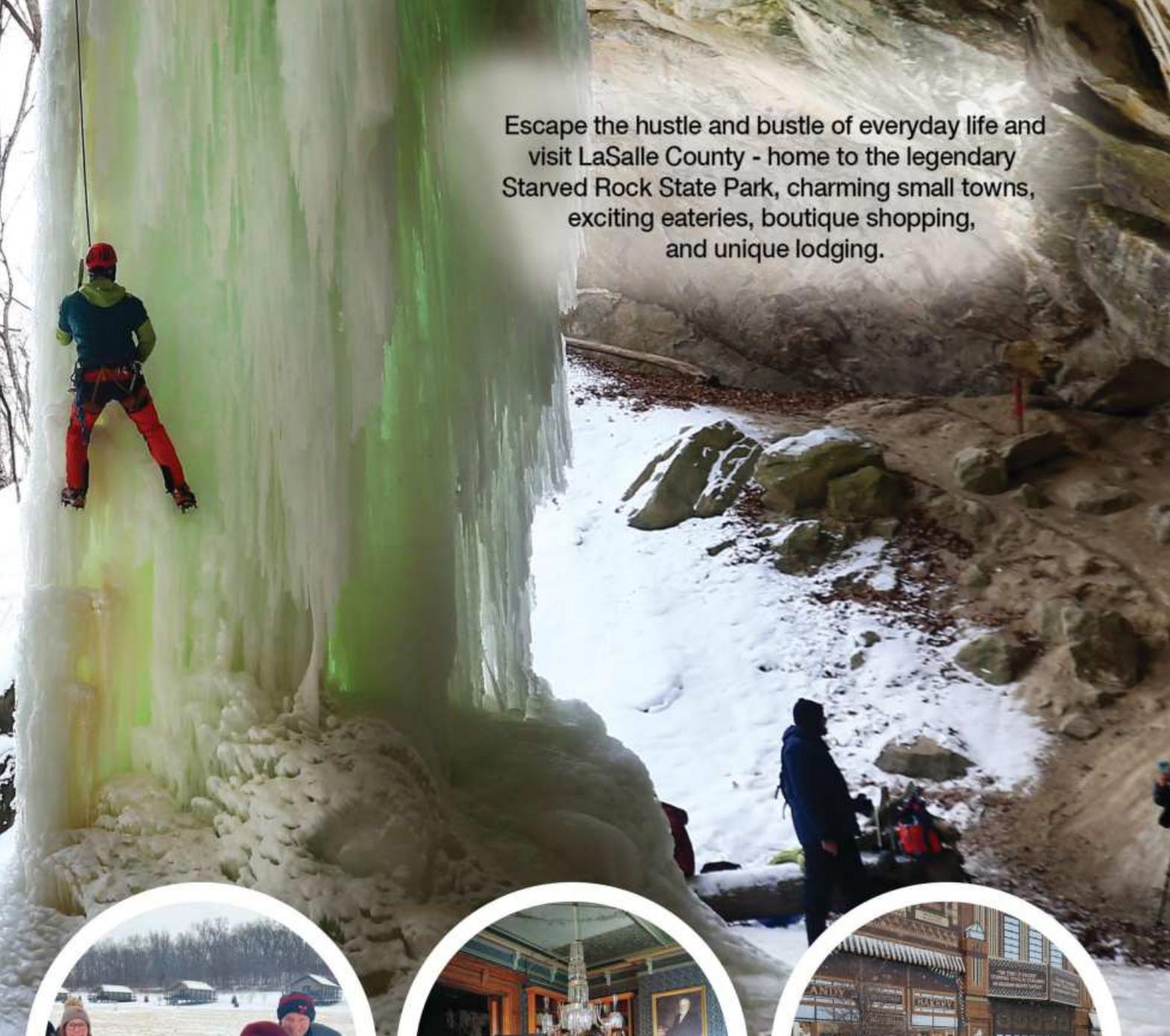
### **STARVED ROCK LODGE**

Home to cabins, hikes & dining with panoramic views

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Escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and visit LaSalle County - home to the legendary Starved Rock State Park, charming small towns, exciting eateries, boutique shopping, and unique lodging.



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**HEGELER CARUS MANSION**

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7 years in a row



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# OUTDOOR ADVENTURE *in* ILLINOIS

Hike, bike, paddle  
or glide on trails in  
Illinois parks,  
forests and rivers.

## **BIG ROCKY HOLLOW TRAIL**

*An easy  
0.75-mile loop leads  
to a 100-foot-tall  
intermittent  
waterfall at Ferne  
Clyffe State Park  
in Goreville.*

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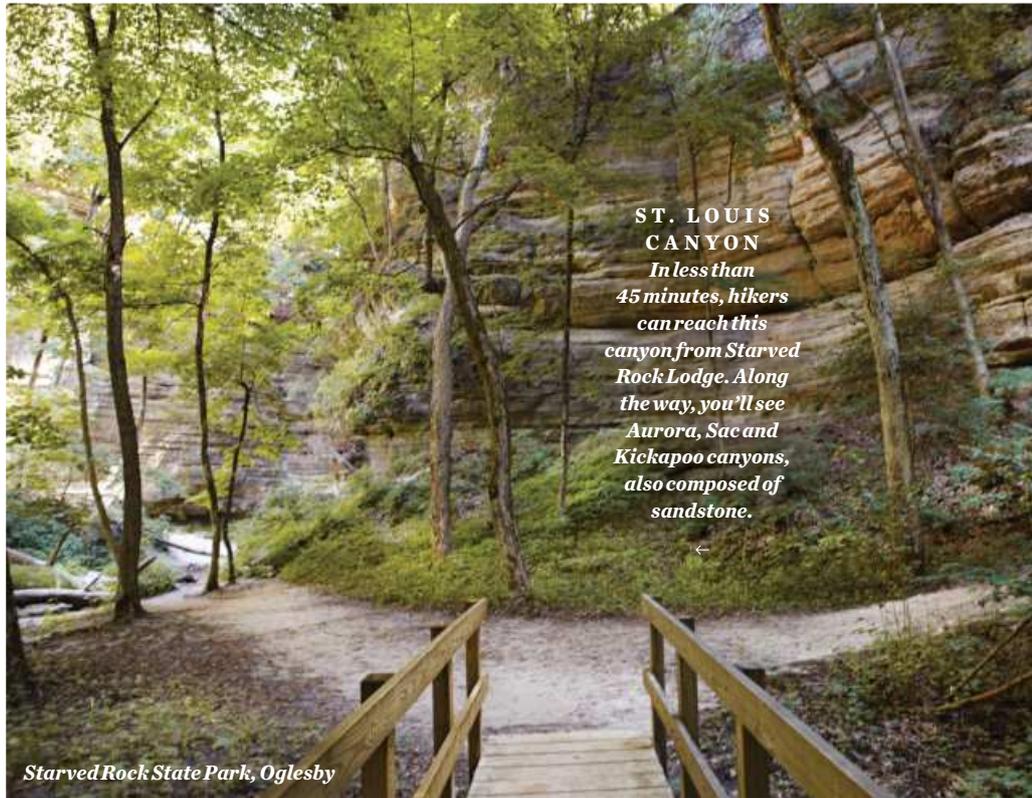
**ENJOY ILLINOIS: OUTDOORS & BEYOND**



# HIKING TRAILS

## **STARVED ROCK STATE PARK, OGLESBY**

The thrill of chasing waterfalls draws people to this park's 13 miles of trails, all of which start from the visitors center or parking lots off IL-178 and IL-71. The more rain the Illinois River gets, the more powerful the flow of the cascades. Interior canyon trails lead to eight waterfalls. For an easy to moderate trek (one stone staircase) that's less than a mile, hikers can reach **French Canyon** with 45-foot walls. Ambitious adventurers can continue to one of the most photographed canyons in the park, **LaSalle**, a 4-mile round-trip. This moderate to difficult route (nine staircases) can take up to three hours.



**ST. LOUIS CANYON**  
*In less than 45 minutes, hikers can reach this canyon from Starved Rock Lodge. Along the way, you'll see Aurora, Sac and Kickapoo canyons, also composed of sandstone.*



*Starved Rock State Park, Oglesby*



*Pomona Natural Bridge, Pomona*

## **SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST, HARRISBURG**

It's a hiker's heaven, encompassing nearly 300,000 acres of oak-hickory forests, wetlands, grassy expanses, lush canyons and sheer bluffs. More than 300 miles of trails are marked, with 30-plus miles for hiking only. A highlight is the **Pomona Natural Bridge Trail**, a short loop through a forest and over its namesake sandstone bridge. The 90-foot-long span was created by eons of erosion.

**CRAB  
ORCHARD  
NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
REFUGE,  
MARION**

Take a short, easy hike or challenging trek among 44,000 acres of oak-hickory upland forest, bottomland hardwoods, crop fields, brush, prairie, wetlands and lakes. Some trails incorporate displays of local history or the environment. The gentle 1.9-mile **Rocky Bluff Trail** leads past waterfalls and seasonal wildflowers. The 2.3-mile **Grassy Creek Trail** is less traveled and moderately difficult.

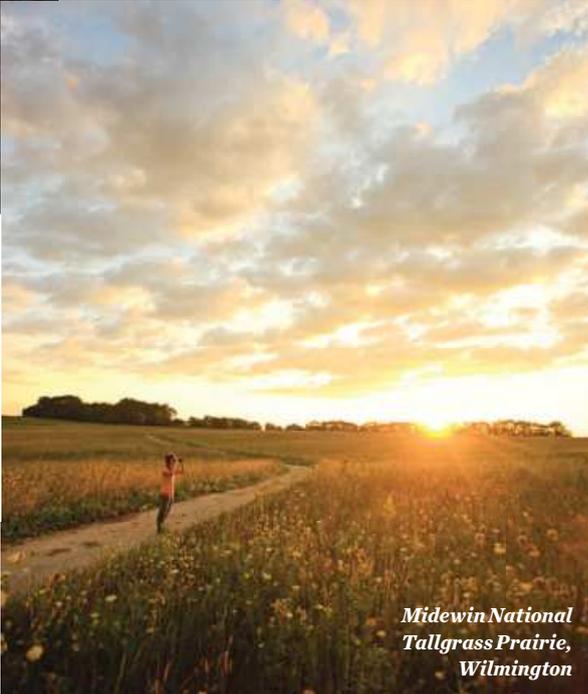


**WATERFALL  
GLEN,  
DARIEN**

This ecologically impressive forest preserve offers hikers 11 miles of trails over rolling to hilly terrain. And there's a lot to look at: The 2,500 acres of prairies, savannas and oak-maple woodlands nurture 740 native plant species and more than 300 species of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles. Also check out **Rocky Glen waterfall** and **Sawmill Creek bluff overlook**.



*Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, Penfield*



*Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie, Wilmington*

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## Dark Sky Park

*A new dark sky trail and other improvements are coming to the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve in Penfield, Illinois' only International Dark Sky Park. Shielded from the glow of urban areas, the preserve is a nighttime refuge for wildlife and a boon for astronomers—the site's North Waterfowl Management Area is open 24 hours a day to accommodate night-sky viewing. The mile-long dark sky trail will be open year-round and accessible to visitors with limited mobility.*

**MIDEWIN  
NATIONAL  
TALLGRASS  
PRAIRIE,  
WILMINGTON**

Hike among the kind of pristine prairie the pioneers experienced—roaming bison included—at this restored site once dominated by rusting munitions factories and abandoned ammunition bunkers. Follow more than 34 miles of trails, 12 miles of which are for hiking only. To see bison, hike south from the **Iron Bridge Trailhead** to spotting scopes located along the Route 53 Trail and the Group 63 Trail.



*Scan the code for more hiking trails.*

**ILLINOIS INSIDER: CAPTURING GOLDEN LIGHT**

Try these tips when photographing sunsets with your smartphone: Scout out a location beforehand (in person or online). Don't shoot on a perfectly clear evening; clouds and haze provide color and drama. Wait—don't quit when the orange ball disappears. Great shots can come right after. Shoot in RAW format (if your phone allows), then enhance images in a photo editor.



# BIKING TRAILS

## LAKEFRONT TRAIL, CHICAGO

A full day of Windy City natural wonders and national landmarks awaits on the Lake Michigan shore. The popular path runs 18 miles along the lake, past beaches, parks and downtown restaurants. Spend an afternoon at the **Lincoln Park Zoo**, **Navy Pier** (both free) or **Shedd Aquarium**. Or simply kick back and alternate your gaze between the lake and downtown skyline.

## TUNNEL HILL STATE TRAIL

Whirring bicycle freehubs have replaced the clickity-clack of railcars that used to pass through the trail's 543-foot-long namesake. The 45-mile path, mostly crushed limestone with some concrete sections, guides riders from Harrisburg to Karnak, darting through the **Shawnee National Forest** and surpassing the **Cache River State Natural Area's** swamps filled with cypress and tupelo trees.

**Shift Into High Gear** *Near the Mississippi River bluffs, **Grafton Zipline Adventures** maximizes the adrenaline, sending thrill seekers through the treeline up to 45 mph. Trailblazers reach almost the same speed during a tree-skittering journey at **Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour** in Makanda. The three-hour adventure stays above ground, with ziplines and aerial bridges connecting the treetops before the grand finale: a 1,100-foot-long trip over a bouldered creek. In Galena, **Long Hollow Canopy Tours** offers excitement from beginning to end. Choose from an aerial adventure park or six-line zipline course, which includes a ride to the first ascent in a utility terrain vehicle and a free fall from the final platform.*

LAKEFRONT  
TRAIL  
*The 18-mile  
multiuse trail has  
designated lanes  
for cyclists and  
pedestrians.*





*Grafton Zipline Adventures, Grafton*

### **I & M CANAL STATE TRAIL**

More than 100 miles of trails border the historic canal that connects Lake Michigan to the Illinois River. Visitors wanting to explore the country's first **National Heritage Area** can rent a bike at seven trailside stations. Once you have your steed, pedal over to **Old Joliet Prison**, outside of which sunglasses-clad Jake Blues reunited with brother Elwood in *The Blues Brothers*.

### **CONSTITUTION TRAIL**

This 45-mile trail stretches from Bloomington to Normal, home of **Illinois State University**. In Bloomington, cycle past the **Beer Nuts factory**, a family-owned staple since the 1930s, before continuing north through parks, ISU's campus and Uptown Normal's popular shops and restaurants. Like a bicycle wheel, the trail has spokes—its eight branches include the **Route 66** portion that traces the Mother Road through Illinois.

### **GRAND ILLINOIS TRAIL**

The name for the 535-mile loop—a collection of other state and local trails—certainly fits. Riders who want to put their legs to the ultimate test over a multiday tour can set off from Lake Michigan and pedal to the Mississippi River bluffs via Illinois' northern prairies. Then they can loop back east, heading toward Chicago along the Illinois River. For just a day trip, pick a stretch of trail that cuts through scenic areas like **Mississippi Palisades** or **Apple River Canyon state parks**.



*Constitution Trail*



*Scan the code for more places to cycle.*



**ILLINOIS INSIDER: GREEN WHEELS** Exploring Illinois via bicycle keeps more automobiles off the road, which reduces gasoline consumption and limits harmful carbon dioxide emissions that affect everyone's respiratory and heart health.



### **PALOS TRAIL SYSTEM, COOK COUNTY**

The 42 miles of flowing, grin-inducing trails within **Palos Preserves** cater to riders of all levels, quickly dipping into ravines and grinding up hills alongside lakes and sloughs. The extensive, intersecting system—11 sections of unpaved singletrack that meander around the forest—is the largest in the Chicago area, hosting the annual **Palos Meltdown**, a mountain bike race and festival (late August).



*Bullfrog Lake, Palos Preserves*

## **MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS**



*Lake Glendale Rec Area and Dixon Springs State Park, Shawnee National Forest*

### **LAKE GLENDALE REC AREA AND DIXON SPRINGS STATE PARK, SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST**

Intrepid bikers can spin through the Shawnee National Forest’s first-ever mountain bike trails, established in 2021. Twist, drop and jump along 19 miles beneath tall pines—from **Dixon Springs State Park** to the loop around Lake Glendale. After a picnic break at **Pine Point**, descend more than 100 feet on the Rollercoaster Trail to get the blood flowing again.

**ILLINOIS INSIDER: READY TO ROLL** When you're out on the trail, be courteous to hikers and other bikers. Keep your speed under control, don't ride in mud and always announce yourself to anyone you're passing.



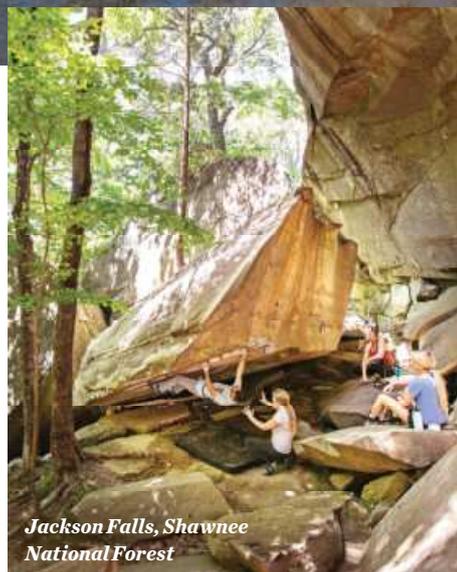
↑  
**CATALYST TRAIL**  
*Proficient riders can tackle this technical section of Touch of Nature Trails in Makanda.*

**TOUCH OF NATURE TRAILS, MAKANDA**

Beginners can hone their skills on nearly 3 miles of green (easy) trails, while proficient riders take on the difficult Catalyst section, a 3.3-mile snaking stretch along Indian Creek. The youngest set can ride the pump track or the skills loop in the **Kids Terrain Park** before graduating to the adult trails.

**KICKAPOO STATE RECREATION AREA, OAKWOOD**

Strenuous climbs, tricky turns and bombable descents on more than 10 marked routes—there's no shortage of variety over the 22 miles of trails. The dirt-packed singletrack on Trail 7 runs along a ravine before reaching a jump run at the trail's conclusion, while Trail 4 riders ford some water before the rocky, strenuous climb up Heartbreak Hill.



*Jackson Falls, Shawnee National Forest*



Scan the code for more places to go rock climbing.

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## On the Rocks

While best known for its lush forests, southern Illinois is also a destination for passionate cragsmen and cragswomen. **Ferne Clyffe State Park** recently added to its rock climbing routes, exceeding more than 100 options to scale the park's cliffs and walls. The newly created climbing area includes eight different walls. Adventurers can also test their grip strength while bouldering in **Rebman Hollow**. Near Makanda, climbers can try to conquer **Devil's Standtable** at **Giant City State Park**. In the **Shawnee National Forest**, the **Jackson Falls** area boasts hundreds of climbing and bouldering routes, dozens of which lead out of the forested canyons.



# WATER TRAILS



↑  
**LOWER  
CACHE RIVER  
TRAIL**

*Choose the 3- or 6-mile route of the trail, which takes paddlers through a cypress-tupelo swamp with 1,000-year-old trees.*

*Cache River State Natural Area, Belknap*

## **FABULOUS FOX WATER TRAIL**

Between the towns of Johnsburg and Ottawa, this beloved paddling path serves up a series of captivating urban and suburban vistas as well as restaurants and breweries for refueling. Hop out and explore dozens of small islands along this National Water Trail or fine-tune your birding skills by spotting Sandhill cranes, cormorants and great blue herons. (The rookery at the Kane-Kendall county line regularly hosts more than 30 nests high above the water.)

## **LAKE MICHIGAN WATER TRAIL**

Though home to just 68 miles of this epic 1,638-mile route that traces the outline of Lake Michigan, Illinois contributes both serenity and sparkle to the National Recreational Water Trail. Launch sea kayaks (ideally with a group or guide) from the secluded beaches of **Illinois Beach State Park** in Zion and get close to coastal bluffs. Carry-in sites along North Shore beaches let you get in a water workout before enjoying neighborhood eateries. Wherever you begin, the Chicago skyline serves as a beacon to keep on paddling.



## ROCK RIVER WATER TRAIL

The Rockford-to-Rock Island portion of this National Water Trail courses gently through small towns, rural landscapes and limestone bluffs. You can trace Native American heritage via historic markers and statues along the way that commemorate the Black Hawk and Sauk nations who first lived on these lands. Plan a day trip itinerary with stops at charming Oregon and nearby **Grand Detour**, a historic village where John Deere invented the first commercially successful steel plow. If you prefer letting the river power your journey, rent a tube at **Lundeen's Landing** in East Moline.

## KANKAKEE RIVER NATIONAL WATER TRAIL

The Illinois portion of this blueway shared with Indiana is largely undeveloped and still resembles the Grand Kankakee Marsh, a vast area known before the 1880s as the Everglades of the North, with more than 1,000 square miles of inland water and vegetation. Take your time wending through the **Momence Wetlands Nature Preserve** and the **Momence Wetlands Land and Water Reserve**, home to abundant waterfowl, wild turkey and deer.

## QUAD CITIES WATER TRAILS

The 45 miles of exceptional waterways along the Mississippi



*Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens along the Rock River, Rockford*

and Rock rivers between Cordova and Andalusia have something for every paddler: urban backgrounds, lush backwater, gentle flows and strong currents. You may even see bald eagles. Expand your explorations by casting a line at fishing hot spots, hiking or biking more than 75 miles of surrounding trails, and recharging at an array of lodging options.



*Scan the code for more canoeing and kayaking spots.*



*St. Charles Paddlewheel Riverboat*

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## Hues Cruise

*Viewed from the bow of a boat as the sun sinks, Illinois' leafy tapestry of red, orange and gold radiates autumn vibes. Hop aboard a **St. Charles Paddlewheel Riverboat** cruise for a 45-minute jaunt. Beginning in October, **Celebration River Cruises** hosts **Fall Foliage** excursions departing from Moline and featuring meals and live entertainment. Venture upriver to **Marseilles Lock and Dam** or downriver passing **Buffalo Rock** on **The Sainte Genevieve**, a stern wheel riverboat launching from Ottawa for scenic rides through Starved Rock Country. The vessel for Grafton Harbor's **Hakuna Matata** cruises may be small, but the views are mighty impressive.*

**ILLINOIS INSIDER: FALL FISH TALES** Seek out an Army Corps lake (there are 11 statewide, six for fishing), which are typically well-stocked with hungry fish as winter approaches. Large bass fishing picks up in October, and rainbow trout are plentiful through late October. Charters specializing in both are available throughout the state.



# WINTER TRAILS

## CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAILS

Most parks and preserves are open from dawn to dusk, and maintain and groom trails for cross-country skiers; some even offer rental equipment.

**Lake County Forest Preserves** has 209 miles of scenic trails, including a flat loop around the lake at **Old School Forest Preserve** in Mettawa, hilly terrain at **Lakewood Forest Preserve** in Wauconda (ideal for more advanced skiers), and 31 miles of the **Des Plaines River Trail** for endurance skiers.

## SNOWSHOE TRAILS

Step into a pair of snowshoes and move through the snowy season. Most forest preserves and nature centers offer snowshoes on a first-come-first-served basis. Seek out 13 miles of trails and frozen falls at **Starved Rock State Park** in Oglesby. **The Morton Arboretum** in Lisle lets snowshoers explore its 1,700 acres with four or more inches of snow. And in Monticello's **Allerton Park and Retreat Center**, trek on 16 miles of trails in its natural area.



*Giant City State Park, Makanda*



*Mississippi River, Alton*

## Eagle Eye

*Showing off their 7-foot-wide wingspans, bald eagles can be spotted soaring over Illinois' rivers and dams between December and March. During this time, Illinois boasts the highest number (outside of Alaska) of the majestic birds, which rely on open water and a bounty of fish. One of the highest concentrations of eagles can be found at **Lock and Dam 18** in Gladstone. Other prime viewing spots include the top of the bluffs at **Starved Rock and Matthiessen state parks** in Oglesby. River towns such as Alton, Rock Island and Quincy host annual eagle festivals.*



←

**POST OAK  
NATURE TRAIL**  
*Sandstone bluffs,  
formed 100,000 years  
ago, line this short  
trail named for a  
notable tree species in  
Makanda's Giant City  
State Park.*

**FAT-TIRE  
BIKING TRAILS**  
Cycle past bison,  
elk and cougars at  
**Wildlife Prairie Park**

in Hanna City. More than 60 different native species of animals call the zoological park home. In winter, the park's 20 miles of mountain bike trails, including 3 miles of wide two-track for beginners, welcome fat bikes. In the Quad Cities, **Friends of Off-Road Cycling** built and maintains 40 miles of dirt singletrack. Cyclists who want less of a challenge travel the 1.2 miles of multiuse trails on **Sylvan Island** in Moline.



*Chestnut Mountain Resort,  
Galena*

**SKI AND  
SNOWBOARD  
TRAILS**

Bunny-hill graduates, beginners and seasoned skiers can all find trails that suit their abilities at **Chestnut Mountain Resort** in Galena. The state's largest ski resort has 19 trails and a 475-foot vertical drop. Snowboarders head to the Farside, a 7-acre terrain park within Chestnut with 25 rails and other features. In Lisle, **Four Lakes Alpine Snowsports** gives suburbanites an opportunity to ski close to home with four trails and a terrain park known as The Alley.



*Scan the  
code for  
more winter  
outdoor  
activities.*



*Wildlife Prairie Park,  
Hanna City*

**ILLINOIS INSIDER: GNOME ROAM** Search for the hidden gnome on each of Giant City State Park's winter hiking trails—most routes are less than 1 mile long. Find all seven of the mythical creatures to collect a prize.



1

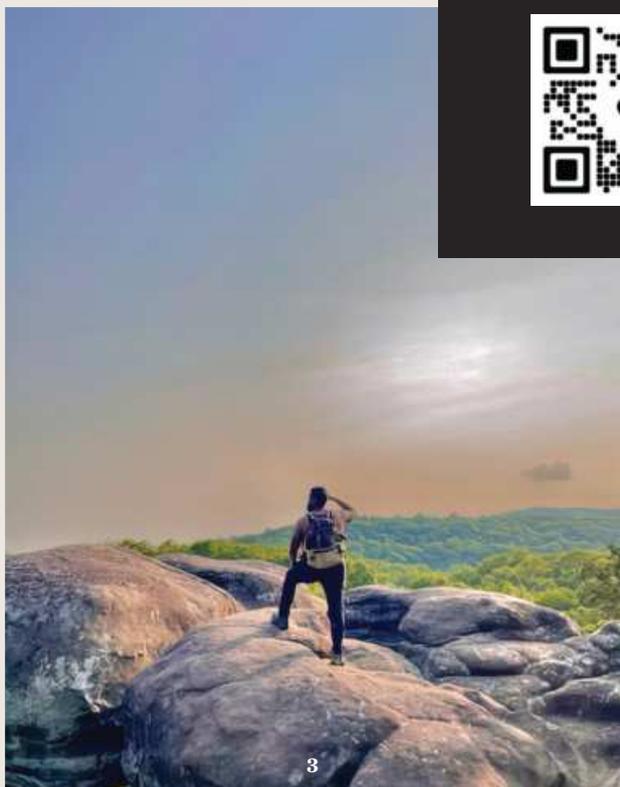


2

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**DISCOVER MORE  
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

Scan the code and explore the  
state's national forests,  
historic river towns and more!

3



4

**1** Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, Penfield @blakesmith.photography **2** Bell Smith Springs, Shawnee National Forest @meghangarriott  
**3** Garden of the Gods, Shawnee National Forest @blk.people.outside **4** Chestnut Mountain Resort, Galena @jadro\_jaja



# MADE FOR SMILES

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# The 12 Drinks of Christmas

*Be merry and thirst-free this holiday season with a variety of beverages handcrafted by Illinois Made makers and fortified from the land's bounty.*

COFFEE, TEA AND MILK →

## 1 THE NORTH POLE LATTE

**CROWN BREW COFFEE CO., MARION**

House-made peppermint and chocolate syrups flavor the latte known as The North Pole. Owner Josh Benitone relies on intentional brewing methods, where even the coffee and water are weighed, leading to a remarkable drink.



*Crown Brew also serves noncoffee drinks, such as chai, hot cocoa and apple cider.*



*Sip seasonal lattes, such as The North Pole, at Crown Brew.*

## 2 ORANGE CREAM MILK

**ROLLING LAWN FARM, GREENVILLE**

The dairy churns out classic products like milk and ice cream, but their strawberry and orange cream milk have devoted followings. Customers can purchase these and other tasty treats at The Milk House, where a window inside the shop allows you a peek behind the scenes to see the milk and bottling process. The Turley family, with more than 100 years of caring for the land, sustains a herd of registered Holstein cows with pedigrees reaching back centuries.



# WHERE THE MOTHER ROAD *Meets the River Road*

Take a road trip like no other through the only place in America where the Mother Road of Route 66 meets the Great River Road. Meet wintering American Bald Eagles, dine at historic roadside cafes, take a walk through haunted hotels and mansions and relax with a glass of locally crafted wine beside the Mighty Mississippi River.

Your one-of-a-kind road trip adventure begins at [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com).



enjoy  
**illinois**

*The festive Minty Mocha Macchiato boasts a layer of mint-infused milk topped with espresso and finished with a dark chocolate drizzle at Trolley Depot.*



### 3 MINTY MOCHA MACCHIATO

**TROLLEY DEPOT COFFEE AND TEA COMPANY, GALENA**  
Joy and Cory Heller (*above*) nurture their company, as well as their five children, who you may see at the downtown shop. Here, they roast their beans on-site and source products locally when possible. For a memorable caffeine boost, try a Minty Mocha Macchiato.



### 4 DRAGON'S BREATH TEA

#### CASTING WHIMSY, WOODSTOCK

Red chilies and cayenne give this noncaffeinated brew its spicy flair, while cranberries and hibiscus add a touch of coziness. Owners Paula and Randy Aitken are known for clever flavor pairings, blending small batches in-house and using ethically sourced loose-leaf tea along with organic spices, herbs and fruits.

### 5 MULBERRY CARDAMOM AND VANILLA KOMBUCHA

#### CLOUD MOUNTAIN KOMBUCHA, URBANA

The team behind this fizzy fermented tea curates locally farmed and foraged ingredients to create unique beverage flavors, including Mulberry Cardamom and Vanilla kombucha for a yuletide kick. In store, taste their on-tap brews or take home bottles, which are available with a deposit to help reduce their carbon footprint.

## BEER

### 6 WINTER WELCOME

#### BIG THORN FARM AND BREWERY, GEORGETOWN

Roasted cherry branches, hazelnuts and cloves give Winter Welcome its spiciness. This big, dark-brown ale releases for the winter solstice in conjunction with the brewery's Winter Welcome event (December 20). Owners Anna Schweig and Aaron Young built the brewery to function off the grid with solar power and an earth-berm cellar for fermentation. They also grow and harvest their beers' ingredients.

### 7 VANILLA PORTER AND FRUIT CAKE

#### THE OLD BAKERY BEER COMPANY, ALTON

Kick off the holidays with perennial favorites Vanilla Porter or Fruit Cake, a rum barrel-aged barley wine with pineapple and cherry. Cofounders Lauren Pattan and James Rogalsky's certified organic craft brewery operates in a former downtown bakery building, serving its beers on-tap and in cans and growlers.



Experience

# UPTOWN NORMAL

Dine Play Shop Stay

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Where the Past  
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# Thirsty?

The Quincy Cocktail Challenge is ON

85

**WATERING HOLES**

GUIDE TO QUINCY'S BAR SCENE + 4 MINI CRAWLS

retro cocktail lounges cozy cafes beloved dives late-night musts

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**SEEQUINCY.COM**



BUBBLES, WINE AND MEAD ↓

SPIRITS ▾

8 CRANBERRY GIN LIQUEUR

KOVAL, CHICAGO Create your own cocktail with Cranberry Gin Liqueur or savor it solo. A gorgeous ruby hue concocted from 13 signature botanicals, this award-winning small-batch drink gifts your eyes and taste buds. Koval's founding duo, Robert Birnecker and Sonat Birnecker Hart, creates spirits, certified as organic and kosher, in Chicago's first new distillery since the mid-1800s.



Scan the code to learn more about all the Illinois Made makers.

9 AGED RUM

BLAUM BROTHERS DISTILLING COMPANY, GALENA This decade-old distillery originally focused on whiskey before branching out. According to owners Matt and Mike, their Aged Rum is not for the faint of heart. It's full of character, much like themselves. Tour the facilities then find cocktails, craft beer, wine and food in their recently opened Public House.

10 APPLE CIN MEAD

WILD BLOSSOM MEADERY AND WINERY, CHICAGO

For a taste of ancient tradition with a twist of modern consciousness, sip Apple Cin, which tastes like apple pie in a glass. The meadery raises their own bees and collects the honey, combines it with yeast, and ferments it to create alcoholic mead.



11 HOLIDAY HOOCH

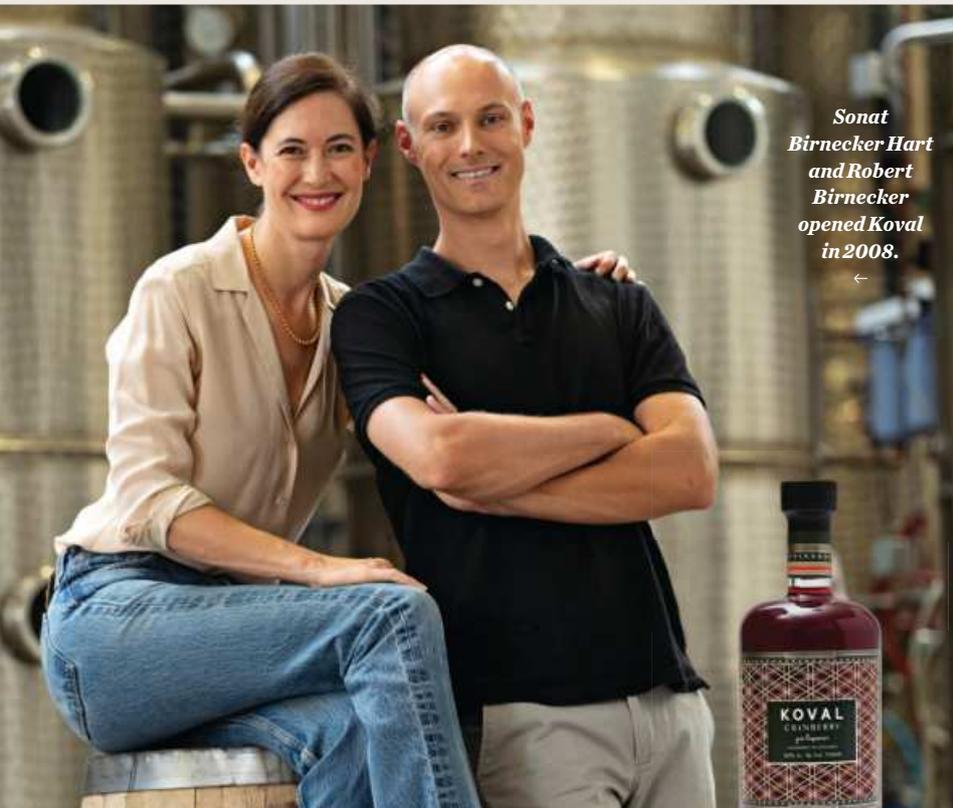
CROOKED CREEK WINERY, CENTRALIA

Luscious and lighthearted, this blackberry wine remains a holiday bestseller. The winery and horse farm is the creation of Shannon and Mindy Cooney, who bought the establishment a decade ago. Today, the winery includes a tasting room and veranda, a relaxing spot on mild days to sip a glass and watch the horses graze in the pasture. Or head to their downtown wine bar and The Yard, an outdoor venue that hosts concerts and events.

12 BRUT OMBRÉ ROSÉ

ILLINOIS SPARKLING COMPANY, NORTH UTICA

Illinois-grown Chambourcin grapes produce this light pink sparkling rosé, the perfect complement to crisp salads and savory sauces. ISC, founded by Mark and Teri Wenzel, hand-blends every bottle before corking.



Sonat Birnecker Hart and Robert Birnecker opened Koval in 2008.



PHOTOGRAPHS: JASON DONNELLY, (KOVAL OWNERS) COURTESY OF KOVAL



# Warm up to colorful fun in Lake County

Lake County, just north of Chicago, offers countless ways to enjoy its family-friendly fun. From pumpkin patches and Halloween activities to holiday light shows and Great Wolf Lodge's amazing indoor waterpark, there's something for everyone. Book your stay at [GreatWolf.com/Illinois](http://GreatWolf.com/Illinois). Plan your getaway at [VisitLakeCounty.org](http://VisitLakeCounty.org).



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# Q | A

## RANDY STINE

He sang bass in the a cappella group Straight No Chaser, but this Naperville dad of three feels he's retiring on a high note.

When Randy Stine was a senior at Naperville North High School in 1995, he shared his future plans with the student paper: *Attend Indiana University with a double major in vocal performance and business. Become wealthy as a bass in a successful singing group.* It was a bold but prescient prediction for a musically inclined kid.

Stine first developed his talents in musical theater and, later, show choir. It wasn't until well after he graduated from Indiana University (in telecommunications, with a business minor) that the college a cappella group Stine helped form found a global audience. In 2006, after getting laid off from a corporate job, Stine posted old concert footage of Straight No Chaser singing a holiday mash-up online. The internet loved it, which led to a reunion and five-album record deal.

Stine recently retired from touring with the group as he and his wife, Lindsey, raise their trio of children in Naperville. We asked the singer to reminisce on a dream realized and imagine what's ahead.



# It's Christmas Time in the City... of Decatur!



Santa in the Transfer House



Christmas Card Lane



Trees on the Tees



Downtown Christmas Walk

The Decatur area offers so much during the holiday season.

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←  
**DIE-HARD BULLS FAN**  
**Randy Stine**  
(kneeling in front of Michael Jordan) at basketball camp.



*Straight No Chaser*

**Q** *Is there a local venue you loved playing?*

**A** The Chicago Theatre holds a special place in my heart from playing there and also seeing acts like James Taylor and Paul Simon. We got to play at the Lyric Opera House, which is a treat because it's such a massive venue. We played in lots of big cities and tucked-away little towns that were on the way to the next stops.

**Q** *Straight No Chaser (SNC) is famous for mash-ups. Can you tell the story behind one?*

**A** I was at a Chicago bar and the music was so loud, I couldn't quite tell what song was playing—I just heard the bass. I thought it was Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean." Then I got closer to the speakers and realized it was "Poison" by Bell Biv DeVoe. That night, I pulled up the MP3s of those two songs on my computer and started splicing them together. Lyrically, they can play off each other. It's one of the biggest crowd-pleasers any time we perform it.

**Q** *Your wife, Lindsey, is from Streamwood, Illinois. How did you meet?*

**A** Her brother was a longtime fan of the group. Unfortunately, he passed away at 20 from cancer. While he was going through his treatments, he would listen to us and work on singing the bass. Before I knew Lindsey, he came to a show, and I signed his cast. Later, she came to a show. I noticed her right away when she went through the signing line. One of the guys sitting next to me said, "She's your type. You could marry her." That was our initial connection.

**Q** *Let's talk about Chicagoland traditions. What are you sharing with your kids?*

**A** Two years in a row I've taken them to the Chicago Air and Water Show. That was a tradition my dad started with me. I remember parking on Michigan Avenue and marching with lawn chairs over our shoulders to North Avenue Beach. It doesn't matter if you're an aviation buff. When these military planes come by, you feel it in your chest.

## Stine's Downtown Naperville Stops

The "Naperthrill" native has enjoyed having a front-row seat to the city's rise as a western suburb hub.

### JACKSON AVENUE PUB

They have great burgers. My wife and I always go. If you recommend it to someone who has been there, they're like, *Oh my gosh, I thought that was my place.*

### NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE

I interviewed Sara Bareilles at Pfeiffer Hall when she came to Naperville on her book tour.

### NAPER SETTLEMENT

You can tour historic homes and watch a blacksmith do his work.

### CENTENNIAL BEACH

Originally a quarry, the beach has paths that lead to the Riverwalk.

### LOU MALNATI'S

Located in a former Naperville Fire Station, the beloved pizzeria has old-town charm.

**Q** *Which Chicago teams do you cheer on?*

**A** My biggest draw was always the Bulls, and I got to go to a bunch of games, plus Michael Jordan's basketball camp. I also grew up a Cubs fan because my dad's company had season tickets. But our neighbor's father, Jerry Hairston Sr., played for the White Sox, so I'd often get to go to his games as well.

**Q** *Naperville has grown quite a bit since you were a kid, right?*

**A** When my parents moved here in 1976, it was a pretty small town. All the field trips I took as a kid were to Chicago, because that was where everything was. They've done a really good job of making Naperville a destination with places to eat and shop, plus it's a great place to raise a family.

**Q** *What was it like singing on the Illinois-themed float in the Rose Parade?*

**A** That was technically my last show with SNC, and it was such a full-circle moment for me. We did a medley from *The Blues Brothers*. I grew up watching that movie and had the soundtrack on CD. It's such a love letter to Chicago and to blues and soul music. John Lee Hooker, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Cab Calloway, Ray Charles—it's incredible they were all in one movie.

**Q** *Do you have a post-SNC project planned?*

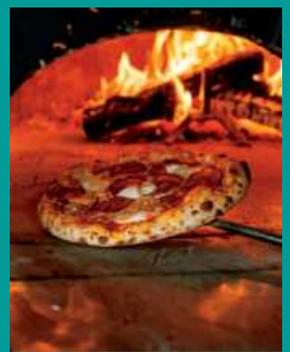
**A** Charlie, who left the group a year before me, called me with an idea to do a podcast together. We'd have topics and guests. Since we were both basses in the group, I came up with the idea of calling it *Off-Base*.



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# Green on the Go

*Traveling eco-responsibly has never been more convenient, fun and delicious. Try these six strategies to look out for the environment while you're traversing Illinois.*

1

## LOW-IMPACT ACTIVITIES

You may have hiked on other scenic getaways, but how about alongside a herd of goats? **Hoof It Goat Treks** in Galena facilitates an adorable combination of farm friends and exercise through acres of native prairie and forest. Try a similar novelty at **Magic Meadows Alpacos** northeast of Rockford, where yoga events feature their namesake animals. In Chicago, finding a bicycle has never been more convenient thanks to the **Divvy** bikeshare system, including docking stations along the Lake Michigan shore. On the western edge of the state, **Visit Quad Cities** in Moline provides free bike rentals during the week. There's no better way to cruise the Great River Trail—free access and zero emissions.

STORY: TREE MENCH. PHOTOGRAPH: STARBOARD AND PORT

**WHEEL ALONG**  
Utilize a fleet of about 15,000 Divvy bikes across Chicagoland.

←



2

**GREENER TRAVEL** One easy way to pack extra R&R into any trip: Let someone else do the driving. **Amtrak** makes the trip comfy—while slashing your carbon output—and offers stops in 29 cities across Illinois. As part of your weekend activities, look for **e-bike rentals** to explore the area in cities like Chicago, Springfield or through the Shawnee Hills. No other mode of transit can match the freedom of pedaling a bike while you immerse yourself in the local environment. If you bring a car, the roads are also primed for **electric vehicles**. A governor's initiative is rapidly expanding charging stations to support 1 million cars by 2030, including ports along historic Route 66.



*Scan this code for more sustainable stays and green getaways.*

#PLAYINPONTIAC



#PLAYINPONTIAC • VISITPONTIAC.ORG



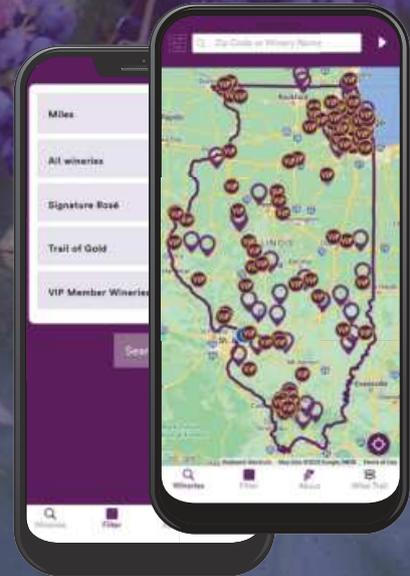
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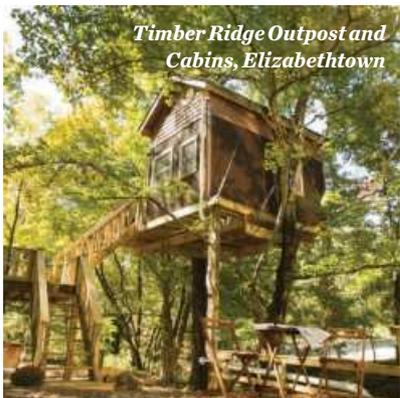
# ILLINOIS WINE<sup>SM</sup>

Illinois Grape Growers & Vintners Alliance (IGGVA)



SUSTAINABLE STAYS

Forest bathing takes on new meaning while you're swaying to sleep surrounded by live, growing trees. Elevate your stay near Garden of the Gods in the Shawnee National Forest with a modern tree house at **Timber Ridge Outpost and Cabins** in Elizabethtown. Or make it a southern Illinois eco-retreat at **Makanda Inn**. Their cozy cottages are built from straw bales, clay and other local materials. You can even stay grounded in the big city at **Hotel Felix**, Chicago's first LEED Silver-certified hotel. The lobby of this reimagined 1920s building boasts a towering mosaic of logs, a glass wall of natural light and floating orbs. Outdoor character sculptures, including charmer "Loren the Doorman," are made from reclaimed materials.



*Timber Ridge Outpost and Cabins, Elizabethtown*



SPECTACULAR VIEWS

*Rock formations like Camel Rock at Garden of the Gods are more than 320 million years old.*



ECO-CONSCIOUS MEALS

The living plant wall at **Hardware** gastropub in North Aurora is more than a facade. Sustainability truly steers the culinary ship at this eatery with a micro-orchard, hop farm and heated greenhouse on-site. In Bloomington, **Epiphany Farms Restaurant** reconnects diners with produce and protein raised and grown on its 75-acre farm, which results in dishes presented in immersive, mouthwatering ways. Rockford's brunch mecca, **The Norwegian**, emerged from a local kick-starter campaign to salvage a blighted building. Every week the restaurant features brunch and a new dinner menu with produce from local farms. Fans rave about its Benedict and The Sarah, which comes with smashed red potatoes, sunny-side up eggs and bacon, plus a side of toast. And for your Chicago hits list? Savor 100 percent plant-based deliciousness at **Bloom Plant Based Kitchen** and at the new **XMarket Food Hall**, the largest vegan food hall in the Midwest.

**ILLINOIS INSIDER**

Throughout the state, you'll find EV charging stations every 50 miles, with one less than a mile from major corridors like interstates and Route 66.

5

**SHOP LOCAL**

Looking for the travel souvenir that also gives back? Consider something with local roots. Handmade goods help limit environmental impact. Some proudly-made-in-Illinois wares include **Mississippi Mud Pottery** in Alton, **Laudi Vidni** custom leather bags in Chicago, and clean-burning soy candles from **1803 Candles** in Waterman. Artist fairs and markets also make the perfect spot for scoring local treasures. Alternatively, seek out vintage and thrift boutiques, which double as eco-smart shopping stops that also reflect the culture and flair of any destination.



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# TRAVEL

## SUSTAINABLE SUGGESTIONS



**SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS**  
*Go for a spin on Brookfield Zoo's Ferris wheel (closes in December), which is celebrating the zoo's 90th anniversary.*

6

### ANIMAL CARE AND CONSERVATION

**Brookfield Zoo Chicago** became the first U.S. bar-less modern zoological park with its use of moats and natural settings to separate visitors from animals when it opened 90 years ago. Today, animal viewing barely scratches the surface of its offerings and services. The zoo team has helped reintroduce endangered species into the wild, while visitors can register to feed sharks or flamingoes behind the scenes and mingle with penguins via the Wild Connections education program. Nearby, Chicago's **Shedd Aquarium**, famous for its beluga whales, hosts regular Shedd Aquarium Action Days. The events mobilize volunteers across the city for beach cleanups, habitat restoration and other conservation projects.



Shedd Aquarium

PHOTOGRAPH: ACKERMAN AND GRUBER

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# DATEBOOK



*The Great  
Pumpkin Patch,  
Arthur*

## AUTUMN ADVENTURES

*'Tis the shortest of seasons. Time to sip apple cider, pick a pumpkin and venture into a corn maze.*

### Late August–October JONAMAC ORCHARD

*Malta*  
Try wine and ciders, visit the farm animals, enjoy a walk through flowers or a corn maze. Take home just-picked apples and pumpkins.

### September–October CURTIS ORCHARD AND PUMPKIN PATCH

*Champaign*  
Visitors pick apples while the little ones revel in the petting zoo and jumping pad.

### DITTMAR FARMS AND ORCHARD

*Elizabeth*  
Pick your own apples and pumpkins, drop by the petting zoo and ride a pony, shoot gourds, and drive a tractor. Munch on apple cider doughnuts while sipping slushies.

### RENDLEMAN ORCHARDS

*Alto Pass*  
Apple season means cider slushies and doughnuts at the folksy Farm Market before picking mums, sunflowers and pumpkins.

### TANNERS ORCHARD

*Speer*  
Any apple-picking plans should include a stop at the Apple Bin Bakery for an apple cider doughnut (or two).

### September 11–14 MORTON PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

*Morton*  
The Pumpkin Capital of the World celebrates the dawn of the pumpkin harvest with a parade and carnival.

### Mid-September–October GREAT GODFREY MAZE

*Godfrey*  
Flashlight in hand, explore the 7-acre maze of sunn hemp after dark. Only the brave enter the adjacent Haunted Maze.

### THYME AND AGAIN FARM

*Rockford*  
The white-and-blue barn sits on 110 acres, and includes future jack-o'-lanterns of all sizes.

### September 18–October 31 THE GREAT PUMPKIN PATCH

*Arthur*  
Choose among the 300 kinds of pumpkins, squash and gourds on this family farm.

### Late September–October VON BERGEN'S COUNTRY MARKET

*Hebron*  
The corn maze and barrel train are for the kiddos. The apple cider-spiced sangria is for the adults.

### October 11–13 SCARECROW WEEKEND

*St. Charles*  
More than 100 scarecrows line the streets along the Fox River. Visitors can build their own.



Scan the code for more seasonal events and festivals.

# Fall & Holiday FUN GUIDE

## Disney's Frozen: The Broadway Musical

Experience the  
Chicagoland premiere  
at Paramount Theatre's  
award-winning  
Broadway Series ✨



## Pumpkins or Apples? U-Pick!



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and make lasting memories  
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orchards 🍂

## Christkindlmarket Aurora

Chicagoland's  
favorite holiday  
attraction returns to  
RiverEdge Park in  
downtown Aurora 🎄



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## DATEBOOK

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### HOLIDAY MAGIC

Charming markets and sparkling light displays mark the arrival of beloved holiday celebrations.

#### Mid-November–December **THE LIGHTS: AN EXHIBITION OF HOLIDAY MAGIC AT CEDARHURST** Mount Vernon

One million lights sparkle along the 1-mile walking path around the Cedarhurst Center for the Arts campus. Fun photo ops and firepits with s'mores kits add to the excitement.

#### November 15–January 5 **LIGHTSCAPE**

*Glencoe*  
Pair a playlist with dazzling LED installations, including the 110-foot Winter Cathedral, throughout the Chicago Botanic Garden.

#### November 16–January 4 **ILLUMINATION: TREE LIGHTS AT THE MORTON ARBORETUM**

*Lisle*  
Vibrant colors and animations flood the arboretum's trees. Visitors walk and wonder while sipping hot chocolate.

#### November 22–December 24 **CHRISTKINDLMARKET**

*Chicago (open daily) and Aurora (open Thursdays through Sundays, plus December 16–18, 23)*  
The outdoor markets in Daley Plaza and Wrigleyville, plus RiverEdge Park in Aurora, offer a taste of German tradition. Snack on soft pretzels while browsing holiday decor.

#### November 23 **THE MAGNIFICENT MILE LIGHTS FESTIVAL**

*Chicago*  
The Windy City kicks off the holiday season with

1 million lights illuminated by Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse from Walt Disney World Resort. The parade's festive finale features Santa Claus.

#### Late November–late December **ILLUMINATED: A LIGHTED GARDEN EXPERIENCE**

*Rockford*  
Thousands of white lights woven through the Anderson Japanese Gardens' landscape and canopy brighten the evening. Carolers sing on Friday and Saturday nights; wood-fired pizza and food trucks are there nightly.

#### **CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND**

*Alton*  
No headlights are necessary: millions of bulbs line the roadway as carloads of spectators drive through Rock Spring Park.

#### November 29–January 1 **EAST PEORIA FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS WINTER WONDERLAND**

*East Peoria*  
After night falls, drive through a dizzying array of intricate holiday light displays. Past installations include dinosaurs, spaceships and trolleys.

#### November 30, December 7, 14, 21 and 28 **FIREWORKS, NAVY PIER**

*Chicago*  
Celebrate at 9 p.m. with multicolored booms and blasts over Lake Michigan.

#### December 6–28 **THE NUTCRACKER**

*Chicago*  
The magical Joffrey Ballet at the Lyric Opera House is a Christmas classic set in 1893 during the Chicago World's Fair.



Photo by Kevin Schamber

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The Nutcracker, Chicago ←

**Late December  
KWANZAA  
CELEBRATION**

*Chicago*  
Shop for handmade jewelry and clothing after learning about the philosophy that inspires this celebration of African American culture at Malcolm X College.

**NEW  
YEAR'S EVE**

*Ring in 2025.*

**December 31  
FIRST NIGHT**

*Springfield*  
Bring the whole family for a night of musical and comical performances before downtown fireworks.

**FIREWORKS,  
NAVY PIER**

*Chicago*  
The city's signature spot for explosive color welcomes 2025 with extra flair at midnight.

**LUNAR  
NEW YEAR**

*Celebrate the Year of the Snake (January 29).*

**February 9  
LUNAR NEW YEAR  
PARADE**

*Chicago*  
Traditional dragon and lion dancing teams, floats, and marching bands stride through Chinatown.

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**Festival of the Vine** Sept. 6-8  
**Christmas Walk** Dec. 6  
**House Tour** Dec. 6 & 7



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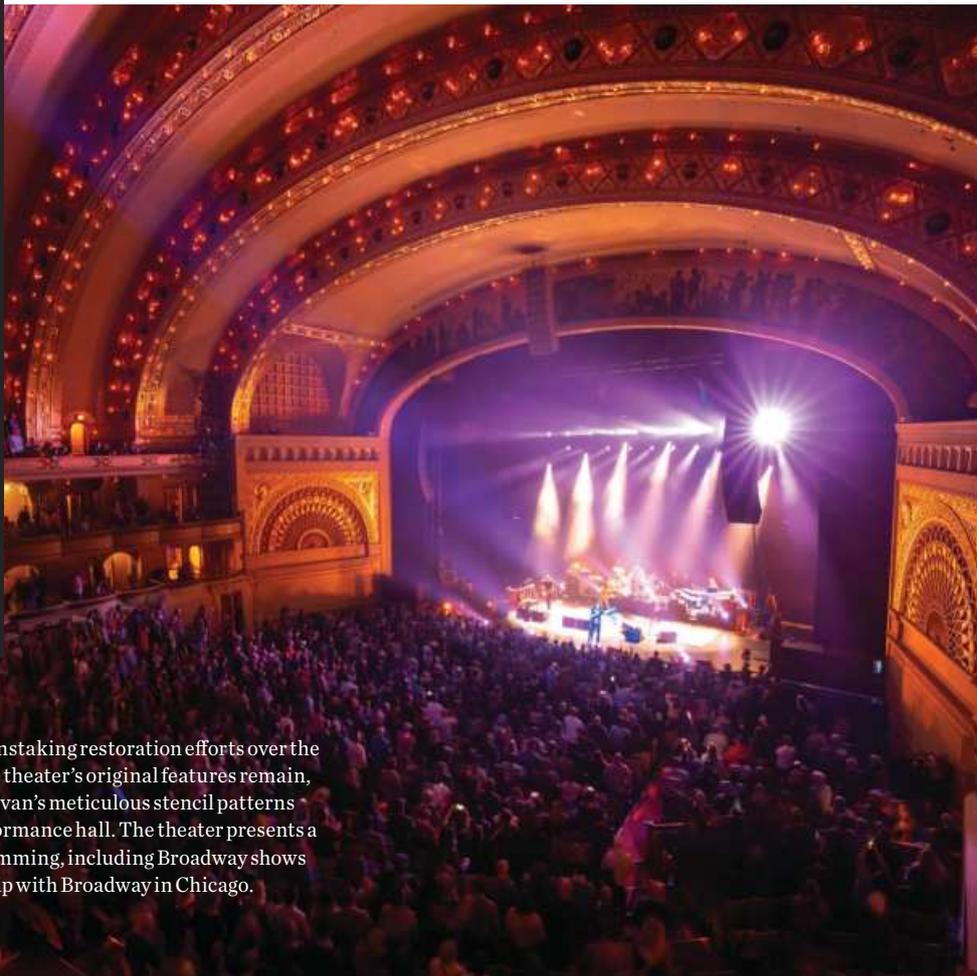
# Gilded Glory

*The dynamic design duo of Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan made Chicago's 1889 Auditorium Theatre so majestic, even curmudgeonly Frank Lloyd Wright considered it "the greatest room for music and opera in the world."*



## THEN

One of the first public buildings with air-conditioning and electric lights, the theater wowed visitors with its soaring gold-leaf arches, intricate floor mosaics and murals spanning many walls. The series of dramatic ceiling arches also helped provide state-of-the-art acoustics.



**NOW** Thanks to painstaking restoration efforts over the decades, many of the theater's original features remain, including Louis Sullivan's meticulous stencil patterns throughout the performance hall. The theater presents a wide array of programming, including Broadway shows through a partnership with Broadway in Chicago.



## UPCOMING BROADWAY IN CHICAGO SHOWS

SEPTEMBER 10—FEBRUARY 1, 2025

### HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD

*James M. Nederlander Theatre*

This special-effects-packed play by J.K. Rowling picks up where the last book in the *Harry Potter* series ends.

OCTOBER 22—NOVEMBER 3

### SOME LIKE IT HOT

*Cadillac Palace Theatre*

Based on the 1959 comedy smash film, the brassy show takes the audience on a tap-filled trip through Prohibition-era Chicago and beyond.

NOVEMBER 26—DECEMBER 1

### MEAN GIRLS

*Auditorium Theatre*

Don't forget to wear your Wednesday pink to this fetch adaptation of the 2004 film that starred Lindsay Lohan. Tina Fey wrote the book, so you're in for plenty of laughs.

DECEMBER 3—15

### & JULIET

*Cadillac Palace Theatre*

Some of the catchiest pop tunes of the late 1990s and into the 2000s frame this clever reimagining of the Shakespeare play that cranks up the girl power.



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Explore the  
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Road's natural  
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the Mississippi.

TGIF

**THANK GOODNESS  
IT'S FALL**

*It's that special time of year: Afternoon sun streams through orange and yellow leaves, warming your skin. Later, the moon shines on ripened vines, inspiring harvest celebrations. These weekend getaways seize fall's magical moments.*

WRITER JEN NILSSON



*Scan the code  
for the Fall  
Color Tracker.*

## SCENIC RIVER TOWNS

### *A Road Trip Above the Rest*

*This prime segment of the Great River Road features three rivers and a cluster of charming towns.*

The Great River Road follows the mighty Mississippi for more than 2,000 miles, including the entire 550-mile western state line. Between Grafton and Hartford, the Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri rivers converge into a 33-mile stretch known as the **Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway**. Due to the close proximity of towns, you can explore it all in a day—or over the course of a weekend.

### **Grafton**

**Aerie's Resort** in Grafton serves as the perfect hub for a weekend of exploring the Great River Road. After checking into your suite, head outside for the **Grafton SkyTour**. Choose either an enclosed gondola or open-air chairlift and watch the vivid fall colors spread out beneath you as you soar above the trees. Back on top of the bluff, you can double down on thrills with more Aerie's attractions: an alpine roller coaster ride (open year-round) and a zipline-and-canopy tour. Alternatively, relax with dinner, drinks and live music on the terrace.

Off-property opportunities include nearby **Pere Marquette State Park**, known for its limestone bluffs and 9 miles of hiking trails. Stop at the visitors center for a map and recommendations on the best trails to explore. If you'd rather take a leisurely drive, follow Scenic Drive, stopping at its multiple overlooks. The 1930s wood-and-stone lodge has a massive (700 ton!) fireplace, a supersized chessboard, an indoor pool, a restaurant (try the fried chicken) and winery.

### **Alton**

The 20-mile **Sam Vadalabene Bike Trail** parallels the scenic byway between Alton and Grafton. Snap a selfie next to the Piasa Bird mural painted on a rocky bluff in Piasa Park before hitting the trail. The **National Great Rivers Museum** has interactive exhibits showing the impact of the river on people and nearby land. Peruse the eclectic shops and boutiques along Broadway in downtown Alton, and visit the statue of the **World's Tallest Man**. Stop for lunch at **Tony's Steakhouse**, a family-owned restaurant celebrating its 70th anniversary this year.

### **Hartford**

Climb the 180-foot-tall **Lewis and Clark Confluence Tower** with three overlooks (at 50, 100 and 150 feet) of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, honoring the place where the Corps of Discovery began its expedition. Learn more at the visitors center, which tells the history of the byway and towns through interactive exhibits and videos.

↓ **BELOW FROM LEFT** *Aerie's Alpine Coaster, Grafton; Grafton SkyTour, Grafton*



*Harpole's  
Heartland Lodge, Nebo*



## ALL OUTDOORS

### *A Weekend in the Country*

*With an ideal mix of outdoor adventure and indoor luxury, this hunting lodge and resort is built for guests who dream of bagging fall game—as well as those who just want to get away from it all.*

**Harpole's Heartland Lodge** makes a good base camp for a rural respite with more than 1,200 acres of private trails, prairies and cornfields. Choose from three luxury lodges or six cabins that dot the hilltops and bluffs in Nebo between the Mississippi and Illinois rivers.

Each lodge has a distinctive vibe. The Original boasts a stone fireplace with a hand-carved mantel and Frederic Remington statues. For guests looking for a touch of luxe, check into the Prairie Ridge Lodge, where each of the seven suites comes with a fireplace, two-person hot tub and private deck. The Sunset Valley Lodge lives up to its name with spectacular sunsets seen from the back deck.

Lodge guests who purchase the meal plan (highly recommended) feast on a family-style brunch and dinner. This plan also includes a bonfire and snacks.

### *Plan Your Stay*

*Opt for a rejuvenating combination of adventure and relaxation when you stay at Heartland Lodge.*

**Shoot** The hunting package includes a guide to the grounds where white-tailed deer roam and waterfowl migrate. Closer to the lodge, you can shoot your way through a 15-station sporting clays course or on-site pistol range.

**Ride** Heartland's ATV park includes gentle trails for beginning riders and mud holes for the more advanced. For a bit of romance, take a guided horse ride, complete with a picnic for two.

**Unwind** Join a sunset hayride along the old stagecoach route that traces the Mississippi bluffs. Afterward, gather around the bonfire to make s'mores or relax on a deck with a glass of local wine.



## WINE WEEKEND EXCURSION ONE

### *Sipping in Shawnee Hills*

*A dozen family-owned wineries make up the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail in the heart of the Shawnee National Forest. Due to the expansive area and winding roads, tour operators such as Shawnee Shuttle and Wrightway Transportation assist travelers with crafting custom itineraries to the sunny patios, intimate tasting rooms and outdoor firepits. For ambitious travelers who want to see all the wineries in one weekend, kick off your weekend challenge in Carbondale.*

An outdoor wood-burning fireplace warms the patio at **Honker Hill Winery**. Sip sangria here or wander down by the pond before heading to **Rocky Comfort Cabins** in Makanda. The hobbit-style hideaway, with a distinctive curved door, comes with a private outdoor hot tub, perfect for a late-night or early-morning soak. Follow the foot path to **Blue Sky Vineyard** and savor award-winning wines from the patio overlooking the lake or in a tasting room that looks like a Tuscan villa.

Saturday starts with a brisk hike at **Giant City State Park** before a crisp glass of white paired with cheese on the deck of **Kite Hill Vineyards**. Taste tart apple and sweet strawberry wines in the wooded garden of **Pomona Winery** before drinking in the awe and sprawl of the Shawnee Hills from the vineyard picnic tables at **Hickory Ridge Vineyard**. Head to Alto Pass for a German-inspired lunch of sausage and pretzels at **Von Jakob Winery**

and **Brewery** before listening to live music while sipping from a bottle of Heartland Red on the welcoming lawn of **Alto Vineyards**. An artisan cheese platter at **Peachbarn Winery and Cafe** is perfect for sharing before kicking back to live music and a nightcap of Chambourcin red aged in oak at **StarView Vineyards** in Cobden. It's about a 10-minute drive back to Rocky Comfort Cabins.

Ease into your Sunday morning with a cup of coffee on the patio or in front of the gas fireplace before heading back to Cobden. The menu at **Owl Creek Vineyard** features apps, entrees and the Vineyard Picnic (cheese, sausage, grapes and crackers), which you can take with you to **Wichmann Vineyard**. The winery does not serve food but welcomes guests to bring their own to snack on while sipping wines like Crush, a dry rosé. Listen to live music as you toast a successful weekend with a glass of fruity red on the deck at **Feather Hills Vineyard and Winery**.

*Pomona Winery,  
Pomona*





## WINE WEEKEND EXCURSION TWO

### Nouveau Wine Weekend

*During this annual celebration of Nouveau wine—vintages harvested, bottled and sold in just a few weeks time—Galena rocks with live music and tasting events all weekend long.*

This party finds its legs Friday afternoon on Galena's pedestrian-friendly Main Street. Stay downtown and step into history at a boutique hotel. The 1855 **DeSoto House** has 55 Victorian-styled rooms and three restaurants, or check into one of seven stylish suites at **Ulysses Suites**, some with full kitchens.

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22

**Noon** The celebration is officially uncorked with the first toast to the Nouveau wine at the **Galena Cellars** release party and luncheon (Main Street location).

**2:30 p.m.** Watch as the Nouveau wine is ceremoniously delivered to Main Street merchants by way of a jubilant parade starring horse-drawn carriages and trolleys.

**3:00 p.m.** Live music courses through downtown all afternoon and evening. Start dancing at the decades-old **Paradise Bar and Grill** and keep the party flowing at **Miss Kitty's Grape Escape**, known for its martinis and late-night food service.

**6:30 p.m.** *Bon appétit!* Galena restaurants like **Bread and Vine Bakery** serve French-inspired menus with entrees such as Moules Frites (mussels and fries) paired with \$5 glasses of Nouveau wine.

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23

**11:00 a.m.** Brunch is an honored pastime at **Otto's Place**, where sweet potato hash soaks up Otto's signature Bloody Mary. Or stop for a croissant Danish or weekend-only Pain au Chocolat at **Galena Bakehouse**.

**1:00 p.m.** Rejoin the party at the Galena Cellars countryside vineyard, 6 miles from downtown. Sip hot-spiced or caramel apple wine while exploring the property and listening to Keith Scott, a Chicago-based Blues musician.

**4:00 p.m.** Join **The Haunted Galena Tour Company** for their weekend Spirits and Spirits Tour, where guides tell stories of hauntings at DeSoto House, Galena Cellars and Galena Brewing Company. Each spooky stop includes a specialty cocktail.

**5:30 p.m.** Pop into downtown shops like **Outside the Lines Art Gallery** and **Nine Generals**, a men's store known for its hand-rolled cigars and handsome accessories. Still hungry? Stop in Galena Cellars Tasting Room for a roasted pumpkin salad and a pancetta, fig and goat cheese flatbread; Kara Gordon serenades the crowd until 8 p.m.

**WINE TIME** *If you can't make an official wine weekend, there is always an opportunity to celebrate the fruit of the vine. Assemble your own tour of Galena's numerous wineries and tasting rooms, including Massbach Ridge Winery, Fergedaboutit Vineyard and Winery, and Rocky Waters Vineyard and Winery.*



*Bread and Vine Bakery, Galena*



*Galena Cellars, Galena*

**ILLINOIS INSIDER** September is Illinois Wine Month, which makes harvest time a great time to explore the state's 165 diverse wineries and tasting rooms.

# WARM & COZY

Go ahead. Embrace creature comforts like warming yourself in front of a crackling fire or savoring breakfast in bed. Here are six feel-good ways to relish the colder months.

WRITER ANDREA MINARCEK JESSUP

*Smyth, Chicago*



COZY IS ...

## a delectable meal prepared just for you

At **The Inn at Irish Hollow** in Galena, the autumn overnight package includes a seven-course Autumn Harvest Dinner (recent menus starred spiced pumpkin bisque, heirloom tomato salad and pork tenderloin) and their signature full country gourmet breakfasts. Come winter, borrow the inn's snowshoes to explore the property's rolling 500 acres of forests and pastures, then warm up in front of a blazing fire—there are fireplaces in every room and cottage at the compound. In Chicago, splurge for a memorable meal at West Loop's **Smyth** or Lincoln Park's **Alinea**—the city's two restaurants have earned three Michelin stars each, a distinction awarded to just 13 eateries in the United States. An open kitchen and living room-style lounge lend Smyth the comfortable vibe of a friend's house. For an even more personal dinner, reserve the 3.5-hour Chef's Table experience, during which culinary artists serve and explain each course. You can find a similarly intimate meal at The Kitchen Table, Alinea's completely private dining option for groups up to six people. Those lucky enough to secure a reservation can expect equal parts theater and gastronomy: Scented vapors, smoke gels and liquid nitrogen are frequently employed tableside to dazzling, delicious effect.



*Alinea, Chicago*



*Open since 1979, Lynfred Winery is the state's oldest and largest continuously operating winery.*



## COZY IS ... sharing a bottle of locally crafted wine

In December, **Grafton Winery** opens its popular heated igloos, which perch on the rooftop of the adjacent Brewhaus and overlook the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. You and eight friends can share a bottle (or two!) of sweet Riverbend Red and order from a full food menu, including favorites like Bavarian soft pretzels, a Cuban sandwich and breaded catfish. Inside the Brewhaus, there's live music every weekend. For a production tour, tasting and tantalizing food, head to The Vineyards at the Grafton Winery, a 10-minute drive away among orchards and farmland. In New Berlin at **Danenberger Family Vineyards**, you'll find a similar mix of low-key and lively. Winemaker and owner Susan Sullivan Danenberger produces award-winning Cabernet Franc in a region better known for sweet fruit wines and soybeans on her family's fifth-generation Centennial Farm. Danenberger's WineRocks stage hosts country line dancing lessons and tribute bands several times a week throughout the year. **Lynfred Winery** has five tasting locations. Start at its flagship venue in Roselle, which exudes an old-world vibe in the Chicago suburbs with its ivy-laced exterior. Sample a mix of red, white or sparkling wines with a tasting flight of three or six samples. And be sure to take home a bottle of its unique chocolate-covered wine. The bottle is coated in seven layers of chocolate with a white- and dark-chocolate drizzle that you break off and eat as you drink.



*Grafton Winery, Grafton*

*Giant City Lodge,  
Makanda*



COZY IS...

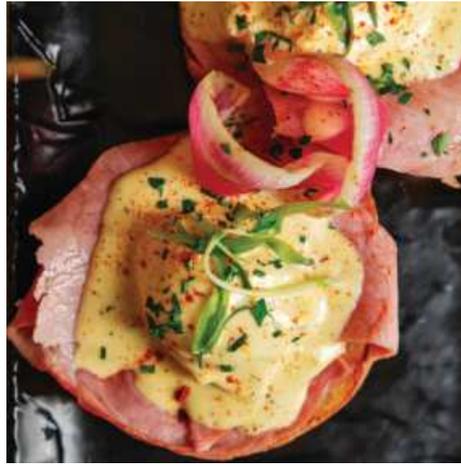
## a toasty fireplace

Southern Illinois' mild climate makes a brisk hike along Makanda's Giant City State Park's eight hiking trails a tempting activity even in winter months, especially since you can warm up after in the park's **Giant City Lodge**. Its showstopper, two-story-tall fireplace is framed by white oak timber and was made from locally quarried sandstone in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Indulge in a hearty meal at the on-site restaurant, famous for its all-you-can-eat fried chicken dinners. January and February are prime months to spot bald eagles around the **Pere Marquette Lodge and Conference Center** in Grafton. Observe these majestic native birds along the Illinois River, then head inside for a portrait in front of the 700-ton limestone fireplace, which dominates the lodge's great room and restaurant. Go ice-skating, sledding or snowshoeing at **Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa**, then roast s'mores over firepits in Galena. Warm up with a bottle of Eagle Ridge Signature Wine in a heated igloo. Inside the resort, find more welcoming nooks near the lobby and lounge fireplaces. After exploring the Windy City's Gold Coast, **Ambassador Chicago** offers respite. The nearly century-old boutique hotel exudes charm and opulence. Unwind with a cocktail in front of the fireplace in The Library before heading to your room or suite, some with city views.

DOWNTOWN GALENA

*Midwest Living* recently named Galena one of its 10 favorite Midwest towns for holiday shopping.



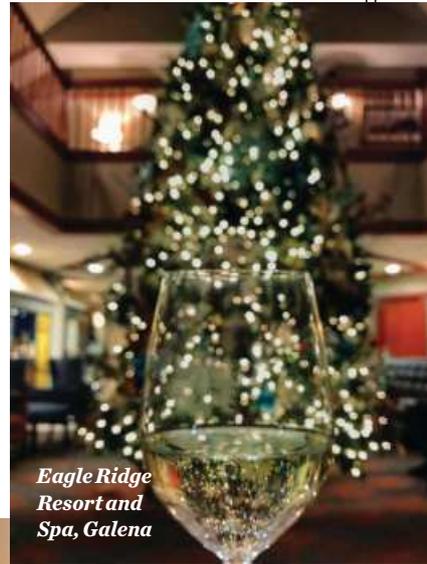


←  
*About Last Knife boasts comforting bistro fare like the Benedict.*

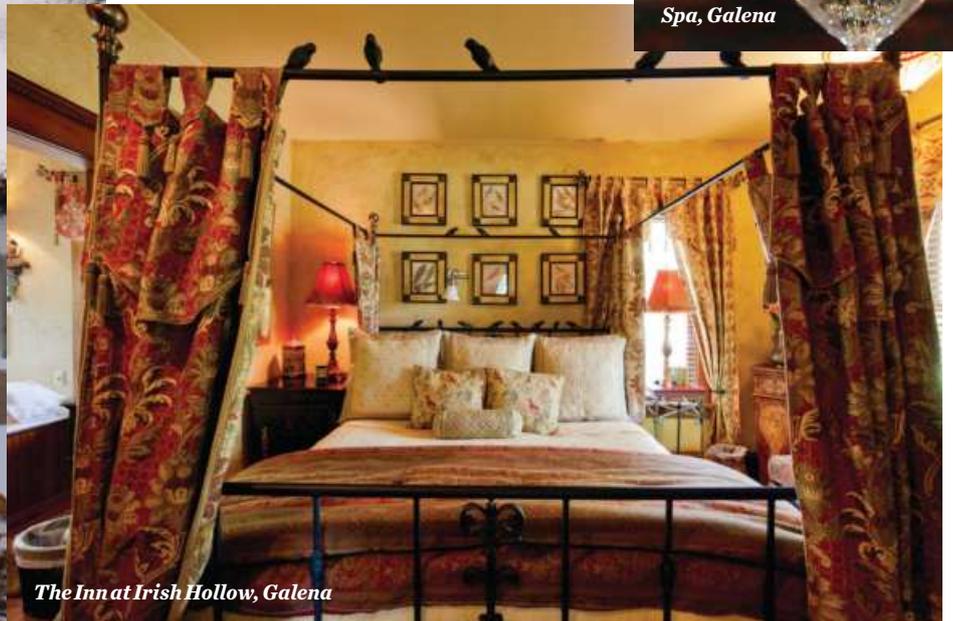
COZY IS ...

## breakfast in bed

Even along Alton's "Millionaire's Row" of historic homes, the **Beall Mansion** stands out: Stately white columns frame the double wood-and-glass front doors, and 12-foot-tall ceilings, crystal chandeliers and marble statues greet you inside. The mansion was built in 1902 and was once home to state Sen. Edmond Beall. Today, the three-story inn's decadent amenities match its upscale decor and pedigree. There's a 24-hour complimentary chocolate buffet—a mix of small-batch fine chocolates and classic favorites like Hershey's Kisses—and in the rooms, you'll find four-poster feather beds, fireplaces and whirlpool tubs. Get some extra Z's and ask for a gourmet breakfast of fresh coffee and fruit, Tortuga rum French toast, and a salmon-and-spinach omelet delivered to your room. Over in Chicago, steps away from Millennium Park and Navy Pier, you can order in breakfast from **Arlo Chicago's** on-site gastropub, **About Last Knife**. From 7 to 11 a.m., smoked salmon bagel spreads, chilaquiles, and chicken and waffles can magically appear bedside.



*Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa, Galena*



*The Inn at Irish Hollow, Galena*



*Deer Path Inn, Lake Forest*



*theWit, Chicago*



Skydeck Chicago

COZY IS...

## a comfy perch above it all

The best way to wind down after a hustle-bustle day exploring the Windy City? Enjoying a bite or drink from a peaceful bird's-eye vantage point, high above the fracas of the streets below. On Thursday and Friday evenings, **Skydeck Chicago** inside the Willis Tower stays open late for 10 p.m. Pie in the Sky dinners, 1,353 feet (or 103 floors) up in the air. Just seven tables are available to create a VIP vibe, and the three-course meal is catered by beloved deep-dish stalwart Giordano's Pizza. On a clear night, the Skydeck affords views of up to 50 miles and four states. The rooftop bar on **LondonHouse Chicago's** 21st floor overlooks the Chicago River. Watch water taxis and yachts cruise by and order from a full menu, including small plates (coconut shrimp and Parmesan truffle fries), lunch and dinner (steaks, salads and short ribs), weekend brunch (waffles and king crab Benedict),

and cocktails (the Snowbird has rum, allspice liqueur and passion fruit). At **CloudBar at 360 Chicago**, mirrored ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows amplify panoramic views of Lake Michigan and the city skyline from the 94th-floor observation deck. Bring the kids for an afternoon soft-serve treat, or make it a date night and sample CloudBar's cocktails.



**Open in 2022,**  
**citizenM**  
**conveniently sits**  
**between the Chicago**  
**Riverwalk and**  
**Millennium Park.**

COZY IS...

## a luxurious stay at the newest downtown Chicago hotels

Exploring Chicago's headliner sights—Navy Pier, the Magnificent Mile, Millennium Park and the rest of downtown's delights—is all the more enjoyable when, afterward, you can saunter just a few blocks away to a chic hotel and kick back in your own comfy room. Along the Chicago River with views of Lake Michigan, **The St. Regis Chicago** is the world's tallest building (101 stories) designed by a woman—Jeanne Gang. Every room comes with butler service, which includes assistance in unpacking and packing, delivering complimentary beverages, and pressing your clothes. Plus, there's afternoon tea for guests. Soundproof windows and blackout curtains make each of the 280 rooms in **citizenM** feel like a quiet oasis, even though the hotel is just around the corner from Michigan Avenue. All rooms come with king-size beds; rainfall showers; and iPads that control the lights, blinds and other electronics. For night-owl types, **theWit** hotel's on-site State and Lake Chicago Tavern serves pub favorites like burgers, deviled eggs and pommes frites until 11 p.m. (midnight on Saturdays). Or head to **ROOF**, a sleek lounge atop the 27th floor with late-night cocktails, bottle service and rotating live DJs. In the West Loop neighborhood, **Level Fulton Market** has studios, one-, two-, and three-bedroom furnished apartments available for nightly and monthly stays. Each of the 56 options has fully equipped kitchens and laundries, plus rainfall showers and deep soaking tubs, so you get the comforts of home with hotel perks.



Cloudbar at 360 Chicago

SNOW

LET IT

**ACCUMULATE ADVENTUROUS DAYS AND BANK DAZZLING NIGHTS. THESE 30 COLD-WEATHER**

**ACTIVITIES PROVE IT'S POSSIBLE TO BUNDLE UP AND BEFRIEND THE FROST.**

SNOW



*Did you know?*

—

THE AVERAGE ANNUAL SNOWFALL IN ILLINOIS IS 20 INCHES.



### GO ON A MOON HIKE

Explore the grounds of **Allerton Park** in Monticello under the glow of a full moon. Nighttime guided hikes give guests a strong chance to hear an owl or the howl of coyotes. Not so nocturnal? Opt for Allerton Folk School's daytime workshops or reserve a room in the historic mansion.

### CHASE WATERFALLS

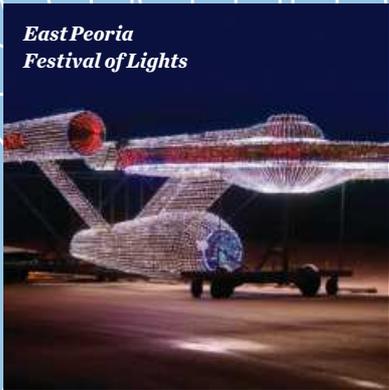
Find impressive icefalls at **Starved Rock State Park** in Oglesby, where numerous canyons draw adventure seekers with the training and certification to scale them. (An exhilarating new short documentary, *Ice Climbers of Starved Rock*, showcases the sport.) Hiking in to take a look? Be sure to wear proper winter gear, including durable traction cleats, before hitting the trails.



### WATCH SNOW SCULPTING

Artists who participate in the annual **Illinois Snow Sculpting Competition** embrace a medium that melts (January 22–25). Watch them at work in Rockford's Sinnissippi Park as high school and adult teams from across the state come together to carve whimsical designs from 6-foot blocks of the white stuff.

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## SKI AND SNOWBOARD

Powder chasers love **Chestnut Mountain Resort's** 19 runs and ample après-ski options in Galena. Suburban skiers can take to the towropes at **Four Lakes Alpine Snowsports** in Lisle. Snowboarders are also welcome at both, but might set their sights on **Snowstar's** extensive terrain park near Andalusia. Watch elite skiers as they launch off a 70-meter jump during the **Norge Winter Ski Jump Tournament** in Fox River Grove (late January).

## RIDE THE POLAR EXPRESS

Passengers of all ages don their coziest pajamas to sip hot chocolate and sing along with carolers during an hour-long train ride to the "North Pole" via the **Monticello Railway Museum Wabash Depot**. As in the classic children's book, those who can still hear Santa's bells receive a railway surprise.

## GO TUBING

Weekends when there's plenty of snow, head to **Mount Hoy** near Warrenville. Here, a \$10 Forest Preserve District-issued rental tube is your ticket to a full day of sliding down the 800-foot hillside. Or get groovy at **Snow Park at Alpine Hills** in Rockford, which offers Friday night glow tubing opportunities. They make their own snow when the conditions are right.

## SNOWMOBILE

See historic stone aqueducts, canal locks and panoramic views of the Illinois River via snowmobile. The extensive **Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Area** features various access points to 61 miles of groomed trails running from Rockdale to LaSalle. Life-size steel silhouettes placed throughout tell stories of historical figures.

## SLED

Traipse the frozen fairway of The Galena Territory's **Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa**, where sledding down the signature 10th hole of The General golf course provides a bird's-eye view of the grounds. Or follow in the footsteps of generations by treading up 125 limestone steps to then sled from the top of the 100-foot-tall **Swallow Cliff Woods** bluff in Palos Park, south of Chicago.

## DISC GOLF

Practice your power shot amid the powder at **Dellwood Disc Golf** in Lockport. When it's snowy, staff shovel out the tee pads along the 27-hole course and canyon. The shop stocks cold-weather equipment like glow-in-the-dark tape for playing after winter's early sunsets. Flex-start tournaments are great for a group.

## CROSS-COUNTRY SKI

**Sagawau Environmental Learning Center** in Lemont nods to Nordic heritage. Here, cross-country skiers can enjoy the low-impact, cold-weather sport in a serene setting. Beginners can find rentals, lessons, and groomed and tracked trails 35 miles southwest of Chicago. The mile loop at **Lakewood Forest Preserve's** winter sports area offers experienced skiers a series of hills.



*Snow Park at Alpine Hills, Rockford*



*Chestnut Mountain Resort, Galena*



### DID YOU KNOW?

**Chestnut Mountain Resort pumps 5,000 gallons of water a minute from the Mississippi River when all of its snow guns are at capacity.**

### ↑ KISS A REINDEER

In central Illinois, get up close and personal with Santa's hooved helpers at **Hardy's Reindeer Ranch** in Rantoul (through December). The ticketed Reindeer Experience Tour includes admission to the animals' enclosure and a chance to feed one a treat. Afterward, check out the selection of fresh-cut trees, wreaths and garlands.

### WATCH EAGLES

Bring binoculars to the river towns of Alton, Quincy or the Quad Cities to observe wintering American bald eagles. During the winter, Illinois sees more of the species than any other state outside Alaska. These riveting raptors often nest along the banks of the **Mississippi River** and dive for fish between ice floes.

### TRAVERSE THE TRAILS

Extend the hiking season by snapping into cross-country skis or stepping into snowshoe frames (rentals begin in January) at **The Morton Arboretum** in Lisle. Snowshoe at the **Red Oak Nature Center** in North Aurora. Both offer access to groomed trails. As you move through tranquil winter landscapes, try to ID leafless trees based on their bark and branches.



*Alton*



*The Morton Arboretum, Lisle*

## FAT BIKE

Navigating a fat-tire bike around the groomed loop at **Wildlife Prairie Park** outside Peoria is an adventure in itself. The trail includes challenging uphill as it runs along Kickapoo Creek. Admission includes access to the animal viewing areas, home to bison, elk, cougars, wolves and other creatures once abundant here.

## MEET A LION IN THE SNOW

Brutus and Titus, **Brookfield Zoo Chicago's** African lions, always enjoy celebrity status at the park. But even the big cats might admit the “mane” event in November and December is the annual Holiday Magic lights festival, which involves large-scale illuminated animal displays, millions of LED lights and visits with Santa (through December 23).

## TAP INTO MAPLE SYRUP

When sap from the sugar maples at **Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area** starts to flow (early March), trek to the forest preserve in Riverwoods. This sweet spot for syrup production hosts hour-long hikes that end in a taste. Or buy a bottle from **Funks Grove Pure Maple Sirup** in Funks Grove (15 miles southwest of Bloomington). The Sirup Shop usually has bottles available for purchase on March 1.

## GO BIRDING

Watch the sky, trees and brush at **Volo Bog State Natural Area** in Ingleside, southeast of Fox Lake, to catch many bird species in flight and resting along both the boardwalk and trail. In winter, the feeders by the visitors center are also popular. Warm up inside and enjoy other nature programs held here.

## DROP A LINE

Ice-fishers can bring home bluegill, crappie, largemouth bass, channel catfish, walleye and muskellunge at Sterling Lake at **Van Patten Woods** in Wadsworth, west of Illinois Beach State Park. Just wait until the lake freezes to the depth of at least 4 inches. Competitive anglers might also enjoy **Blackwell Forest Preserve**, which hosts an ice-fishing tournament each winter in Warrenville.

## FEEL THE GLOW

Community light displays across the state each put different twists on their twinkle. **East Peoria Festival of Lights** features a lighted nighttime parade and drive-through display with horse-drawn wagon rides. In the St. Louis area, **The Way of Lights**, which benefits the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, depicts the biblical Christmas journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem with more than 1.5 million lights.



**SEE SHOOTING STARS** Gaze across the Milky Way at **Middle Fork River Forest Preserve** northeast of Champaign, where the North Waterfowl Management Area is open 24 hours to accommodate night-sky viewing. Recognized as an International Dark Sky Park, this serene setting is protected from light pollution, delighting astronomers and animals alike.



*Did you know?*

THIRTEEN INCHES  
OF SNOW EQUALS  
1 INCH OF RAIN.

*Centennial Wheel,  
Chicago*

## SHINE BRIGHT

**Lincoln Park Zoo** is the place to experience some wild lights among the wildlife. Wander a 49-acre area featuring festive photo ops, dazzling displays and family entertainment after dark. ZooLights is free on Monday evenings; ticket sales on other nights support conservation efforts and keep the beloved park free for everyone the rest of the year.

## PARTICIPATE IN POLAR ADVENTURE DAYS

Kids will get a kick out of the activities at this celebration held at a city park (location to be determined). See Husky teams sled, listen to storytellers, enjoy marshmallows at a bonfire and make crafts as part of the Night Out in the Parks initiative, which features more than 1,000 annual citywide cultural and arts activities.

## LAND ON RUDOLPH'S ROOFTOP

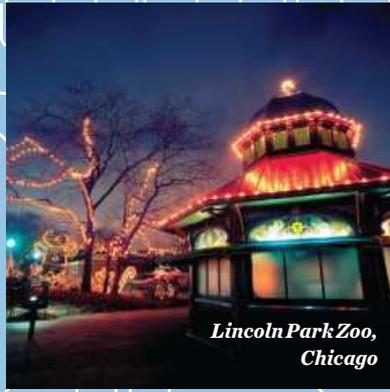
When Santa's sleigh stops in the Windy City, **LondonHouse Chicago's** 22nd-story terrace is a tantalizing place to touch down. Mid-November through the end of January, the top-floor restaurant and bar at this swanky Michigan Avenue hotel shimmers like the prettiest package under the tree. Even the red-nosed reindeer is bucking for a reservation.

## BELLY UP TO A HOLIDAY POP-UP BAR

The "intoxicated creative minds" behind **Butch McGuire's** started decking the pub with window decorations from Goldblatt's department store in the '60s. Today, over-the-top taverns abound. **Tinseltown at The Pink Squirrel** is perfect for a party, and **Wrigleyville Wonderland** temporarily transforms the neighborhood into the North Pole with more than 20 holiday-themed watering holes and businesses.



*Scan the code  
for more  
cold-weather  
getaways.*



Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago



↑  
**ICE-SKATE**

Spin, glide or skate arm-in-arm surrounded by skyscrapers. The winding **Ice Skating Ribbon at Maggie Daley Park** is twice the length of a lap around a traditional rink. Or step onto **The Peninsula Chicago Sky Rink**, a 2,100-square-foot hybrid surface. You can rent skates at both postcard-worthy spots.

**SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS**

Survey a snowy scene from 200 feet above in the enclosed, climate-controlled gondolas of the **Centennial Wheel**. A slow-moving trip in this newer icon of Navy Pier includes three rotations, offering observers time to enjoy 360-degree views of the city that first introduced its famous Ferris wheel in 1893.

↑  
**WINDOW SHOP**

Generations of Chicagoans consider peering into department store window displays a peak holiday pastime. **Macy's State Street Holiday Windows** wow crowds with a different theme each year. Work up a wish list there, or scope out more than 450 stores along **The Magnificent Mile**, Michigan Avenue's stretch from The Bean to Oak Street.



*The Magnificent Mile*



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Illinois' coldest recorded temp was 38 degrees below zero on January 31, 2019, in Mount Carroll.

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Illinois Shakespeare Festival  
First Friday Artists Showcase  
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CHICAGO & BEYOND  
GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY  
LAND OF LINCOLN  
TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

# TRIP IDEAS AROUND THE STATE



*Rendleman Orchards,  
Alto Pass*



*Scan the code for more places to go and things to do.*

STORY: GARY THOMPSON. PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN NOLINER



CHICAGO & BEYOND

# Rosemont

*Seemingly all roads (and runways) lead to Rosemont, long a hub for busy travelers en route, but now with more reasons than ever for a leisurely visit.*



## POPULATION

3,672

## OF NOTE

The village's water tower, intricately painted to resemble a rose, has been a beloved landmark since 1982.



↑  
**FASHION  
OUTLETS OF  
CHICAGO**  
*Shop from more than  
130 designer brands  
like Gucci, Versace  
and Burberry.*

Squeezed between two attention-grabbing neighbors—the city of Chicago and O'Hare International Airport—the village of Rosemont has been punching above its weight since incorporation in 1956. Though best known as a way station of hospitality for travelers flying in or out of the Windy City, Rosemont is a worthy destination in its own right. And you can ride the L train there from downtown Chicago (30–45 minutes on the Blue Line).

The Blue Line Station in Rosemont is conveniently close to Parkway Bank Park, the village's entertainment complex built around a green gathering space. The enclave offers upscale dining, comedy, cinema, bowling and more, and

the lawn hosts concerts, festivals and a winter ice rink. Not far away, the Pearl District beckons with more restaurant options, plus boutique lodging and arcade games.

Speaking of games, Rosemont's state-of-the-art Impact Field is home to the Chicago Dogs, an independent professional baseball team. The stadium seats 6,300 for games and more than 10,000 for concerts. Allstate Arena, with a capacity of 18,500, is one of the Chicago area's largest indoor facilities. It provides home ice for the Chicago Wolves of the American Hockey League, as well as a venue for wrestling, monster trucks and concerts by big-time artists. (Taylor Swift has performed there.)

**SPARKLE  
LIGHT  
FESTIVAL**  
*Lights dazzle  
alongside  
activities for the  
whole family.*



## DO

Test your belly laugh at the Rosemont location of legendary **Zanies Comedy Club**, founded in Chicago 46 years ago. Walk through a million lights, visit with Santa, ice-skate, glide down a two-story ice slide and ride the Holly Trolley during **Sparkle Light Festival** at Impact Field (mid-November through December).

## EAT

**Carmines** in the Pearl District promises classic Italian dishes. Expect tang and twang at **Bub City** in Parkway Bank Park, where barbecue, whiskey and live country music form a potent trio.

## STAY

A room at **Aloft Chicago O'Hare** in Parkway Bank Park puts you within walking distance of major attractions. **Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel** boasts a downtown vibe but is only five minutes from the airport and has an on-site gastropub, The Ashburn. Both hotels are across from luxe shopping at **Fashion Outlets of Chicago**.

## DO

Route 66 is famous for its quirky attractions, and you'll find several in Logan County. Take a selfie with the **World's Largest Covered Wagon** in Lincoln. (Abe's in the driver's seat.)

## EAT AND DRINK

Try a Route 66 Amber or one of the other core beers at **Spirited Republic/Limerick Brewing Company** in Lincoln. It's run by three local home brewers who decided to share their creations with the rest of the town. They've been making doughnuts for 60 years at **Mel-O-Cream Lincoln**, and though new owners assumed the longtime family business a few years ago, the sweet tradition continues. Go early for the best selection.

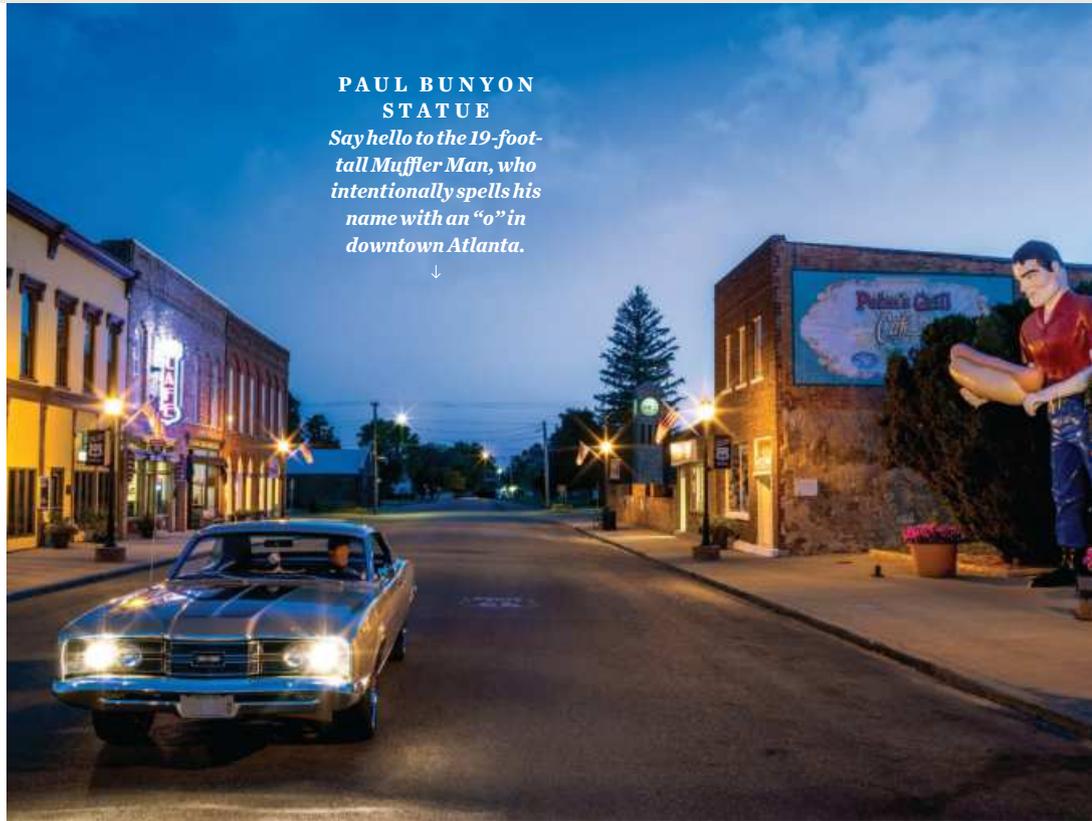
## STAY

Catch a historical vibe at **Lincoln's Loft**, a rental row house apartment in Lincoln.

Exposed brick, a spiral staircase and original 18-foot-tall tin ceilings evoke an earlier era. There's a hidden entrance behind a bookcase too. Laze on the front porch amid relaxing rural views at the **Historic Gillett Farm** in Elkhart. Once the caretaker's home, it's now a modern rental with three bedrooms, two baths, a full kitchen and a laundry.

## PAUL BUNYON STATUE

Say hello to the 19-foot-tall Muffler Man, who intentionally spells his name with an "o" in downtown Atlanta.



## LAND OF LINCOLN

# Logan County

*Past and pastoral merge in Logan County, the state's geographic center, where the histories of Abraham Lincoln and Route 66 overlap against a bucolic backdrop.*

If Illinois were a dartboard, the bulls-eye would be somewhere in Logan County. It's not only smack-dab in the middle of the state, but also a high-value target for history buffs. Lincoln, the county seat, is the only U.S. town named for Abraham Lincoln before he became president—Abe himself christened the place in 1853 by slicing open a watermelon. The town was born from the need for a railroad stop about halfway between Springfield and Bloomington, then later became a stop on Route 66, the storied Mother Road stretching from Chicago to California. Route 66 also passed through nearby Atlanta, a town where Lincoln the young lawyer spent time as he traveled around the 8th Judicial Circuit.

Visit Lincoln's stately Logan County Courthouse, built in 1905 and still in use. Inside, see the stained-glass dome, a mosaic of the Illinois State Seal, and historical murals and portraits. Statues and markers dot the surrounding lawn.

In addition to its rich history, Logan County is worth exploring for its natural beauty. Small farming towns and villages have grown up on some of the world's richest soil, while other parts of the land remain undeveloped prairie, covered in lush grasses, trees and flowers—not much different from how Native Americans and early settlers found it. Soak in the scenery on a leisurely drive through the countryside, or get closer to the land by riding bike trails, playing golf or picnicking in a nearby park.



**POPULATION**  
27,590

**OF NOTE**  
Some of Route 66's oldest sections—dating to 1926—run through the towns of Atlanta, Lincoln and Elkhart.



**LINCOLN'S  
LOFT**  
*Rent the downtown  
Lincoln apartment.*

GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY



# Macomb Area

*Locals lovingly call their west-central home Forgottonia, but the Macomb area makes for a memorable getaway, thanks to its noteworthy history and playful spirit.*



**POPULATION**  
26,839 (McDonough County)

**OF NOTE**

Civil rights leader C.T. Vivian was raised and educated in Macomb. A downtown mural celebrates his life and legacy.



Residents in a 16-county region of west-central Illinois long felt overlooked by government and business leaders, especially when it came to investments in transportation and infrastructure. In the 1960s, they started calling themselves The Republic of Forgottonia. There was even a satirical secession

←  
**FORGOTTONIA BREWING**  
*Sip a glass in the taproom or out in the covered beer garden.*

service back to the area—you can still ride Amtrak to Chicago. Since then, locals have retained and embraced the

movement that drew national media interest. Spoiler alert: Forgottonia did not secede, but the publicity helped bring passenger train

Forgottonia name as a playful chip on their shoulder, a way to show their deep allegiance to the region and their irreverent refusal to be forgotten again.

Macomb, the McDonough County seat where Forgottonia was born, is home to Western Illinois University and a retail-diverse downtown with a historic courthouse square. In 1858, Abraham Lincoln had his portrait taken at a studio on the square, one of two significant stops he made in Macomb during the time of his famous debates with Stephen Douglas. While there, Lincoln discussed debate strategy with his advisers, talks that changed the course of his political career—and the nation. You never know what might happen on a visit to Macomb.

**DO**

Play the world's largest Monopoly board on Macomb's courthouse square. **Macombopoly** pays homage to the classic game and its inspiration, The Landlord's Game, which was invented by Macomb resident Elizabeth "Lizzie" Magie-Phillips.

**EAT**

Start your day with a grilled cinnamon roll at **The Old Dairy**, where breakfast is served all day. Illinois-grown hops flavor some of the craft beer at **Forgottonia Brewing** in Macomb. Where's the beef? It's at **Chubby's Smoke and Steakhouse** in Macomb. Favorites include the brisket sandwich, the Brisket Mac N Cheese Stacker and a breaded pork tenderloin sandwich.

**STAY**

**University Union Hotel**, on the second floor of the Western Illinois University Student Union, offers 27 guest rooms and two spacious suites. **The Best Western Macomb Inn**, in a convenient location on the east side of town, has free breakfast and a heated indoor pool.



**MCDONOUGH COUNTY COURTHOUSE**  
*Look for giant sculpted Macombopoly game and pieces on the square.*



PHOTOGRAPHS: (BEER) FORGOTTONIA BREWING, (MONOPOLY BOARD) VISIT UNFORGETTABLE FORGOTTONIA, (HIKERS) CARSON DOWNING, (INN) JOHN NOLTNER

## DO

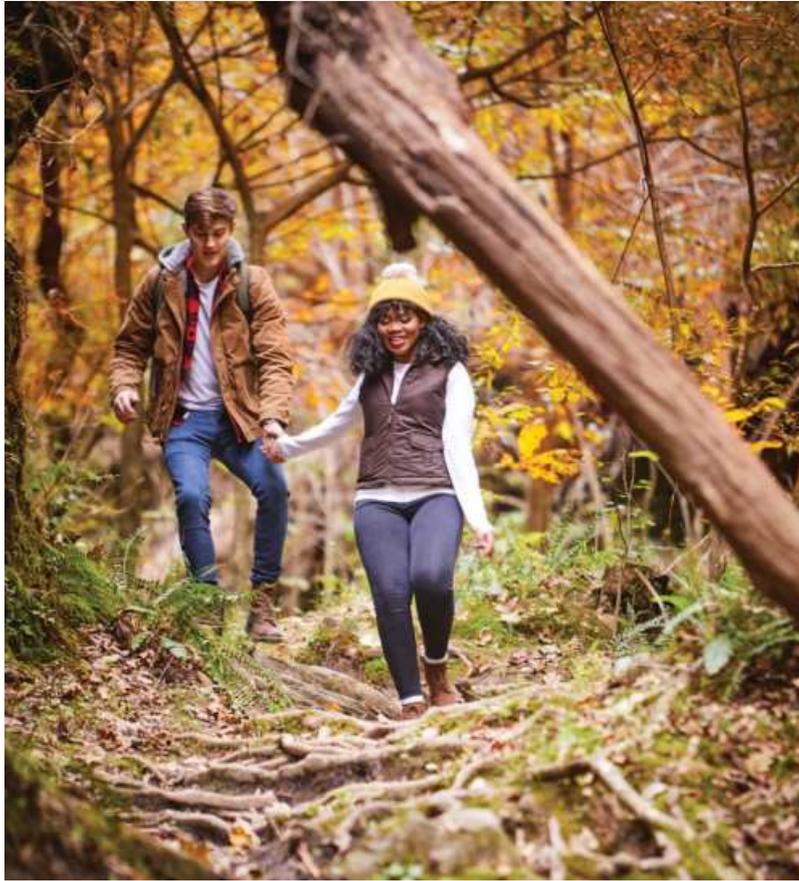
Pick your own pumpkins and flowers on a visit to **Rendleman Orchards** in Alto Pass. Down the road, drink up wine and views from the rooftop Vine Deck of **Alto Vineyards**. For a steeper ascent, scale the massive sandstone blocks at **Holy Boulders**, a climbing area near Pomona. Call it old-school pottery: **Alto Clay Works** is in the former Alto Pass grade school. Shop for pieces and take a class.

## EAT

Pork out with your fork out at **17th Street BBQ** in Murphysboro, founded by the late Mike Mills, a legendary pitmaster. Try the pork and the brisket, both seasoned with their signature Magic Dust. House-made flatbreads highlight the changing menu at **The Peachbarn Cafe** in Alto Pass, which focuses on seasonal, locally sourced fare.

## STAY

Go rustic without roughing it at **Persimmon Lodge** in Carlyle. The two cabins are close to nature but far from primitive—you get central heat and air, a stone fireplace, and a full kitchen. It's always a classy stay at the **Davie School Inn** in Anna, a 1910 schoolhouse-turned-boutique inn. Each subject-themed suite features a king-size bed, whirlpool tub, kitchenette and original chalkboard.



### TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

## Route 127

*Experience a cornucopia of flavors and a corridor of colors on a scenic journey through the state's southernmost parts. Small towns here are big on ways to enjoy the outdoors.*

That old expression “taking the scenic route” is never more accurate than when you’re driving Illinois Route 127 between Carlyle and Jonesboro in southern Illinois. The 90-mile north-south trip bridges the Big Muddy River and slices through a rolling region of natural wonders, such as Shawnee National Forest, Trail of Tears State Forest and Giant City State Park. Plus, acres of fertile land have been cultivated as orchards and vineyards that sustain U-pick farms and wineries.

Even some cold-hardy palm trees will grow in the relatively mild climate, which sometimes feels more southern than northern. History has put down deep roots in the soil too. The third

Lincoln-Douglas debate of 1858 took place in Jonesboro—see historical markers in Lincoln Memorial Park, which is a lovely place for a walk.

In fall, beauty and bounty merge to produce a harvest of hues and flavors. Get a commanding view of blazing trees at Little Grand Canyon in Shawnee National Forest. A 3-mile loop trail leads to scenic overlooks more than 300 feet above the canyon floor.

Celebrate the abundance of apples in pie, cider, butter and more at the annual Murphysboro Apple Festival in September. A big parade—one of Illinois’ longest—caps off the five-day event. Grains grow in bumper crops, too, providing fodder for craft breweries.

**LITTLE GRAND CANYON TRAIL**  
*Discover scenic overlooks, colorful cliffs and seasonal waterfalls.*

←

**DAVIE SCHOOL INN**  
*Choose from eight themed suites and three romantic luxury suites at this former school-turned-inn.*



**POPULATION**  
16,398

### OF NOTE

Abraham Lincoln stayed two nights at a friend's home in Anna before and after his 1858 debate with Stephen Douglas in nearby Jonesboro.



# Travel Resources

## Visitors Bureaus

### CHICAGO & BEYOND

**Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
630/256-3190,  
enjoyaurora.com

**Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
888/895-8233, 708/895-8200,  
visitchicagosouthland.com

**Chicago's North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
847/763-0011,  
visitchicagonorthshore.com

**Choose Chicago**  
312/567-8500,  
choosechicago.com

**DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
877/335-2521, 815/756-1336,  
dekalbcountycvb.com

**DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/232-0502, 630/575-8070,  
discoverdupage.com

**Elgin Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/217-5362, 847/695-7540,  
exploreeginarea.com

**Heritage Corridor Destinations**  
844/944-2282, 800/926-2262,  
heritagecorridorcvb.com

**Kankakee County Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
815/935-7390,  
visitkankakeecounty.com

**Meet Chicago Northwest**  
800/847-4849, 847/490-1010,  
chicagonorthwest.com

**Naturally McHenry County**  
815/893-6280,  
naturallymchenrycounty.com

**Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/521-0849, 815/963-8111,  
gorockford.com

**Rosemont Convention and Tourism Bureau**  
847/823-2100, rosemont.com

**Visit Lake County**  
847/662-2700,  
visitlakecounty.org

**Visit NW Illinois**  
815/946-2108,  
visitnorthwestillinois.com

**Visit Oak Park**  
708/524-7800,  
visitoakpark.com

#### Visitor Information Centers

*Prairie View South I-57, rest area southbound, Monee*

*Turtle Creek I-90, rest area southbound, South Beloit*

### GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY

**Discover Downstate Illinois**  
618/257-1488, downstateil.org

**Galena Country Tourism**  
815/776-9200, visitgalena.org

**Galesburg Tourism and Visitors Bureau**  
309/343-2485,  
experiencegalesburg.com

**Great Rivers and Routes of Southwest Illinois**  
800/258-6645, 618/465-6676,  
riversandroutes.com

**Henry County Tourism Bureau**  
309/937-3402

**Macomb Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
309/833-1315,  
visitforgottonia.com

**Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/747-0302, 309/676-0303,  
peoria.org

**Quincy Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/978-4748, 217/214-3700,  
seequincy.com

**Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau**  
800/248-4373, 618/833-9928,  
southernmostillinois.com

**Visit NW Illinois**  
815/946-2108,  
visitnorthwestillinois.com

**Visit Quad Cities**  
800/747-7800,  
visitquadcities.com

#### Visitor Information Center

*Homestead I-55, rest area northbound, Hamel*

### LAND OF LINCOLN

**Bloomington-Normal Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/433-8226, 309/665-0033,  
visitbn.org

**Danville Area Visitors Bureau**  
800/383-4386, 217/442-2096,  
visitdanvillearea.com

**Decatur Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/331-4479, 217/423-7000,  
decaturcvb.com

**Discover Downstate Illinois**  
618/257-1488, downstateil.org

**Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/772-0750, 217/342-5310,  
visiteffinghamil.com

**Experience Champaign-Urbana**  
800/369-6151, 217/351-4133,  
experiencecu.org

**Jacksonville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
800/593-5678, 217/243-5678,  
jacksonvilleil.org

**Lake Shelbyville Area CVB/Shelby County Tourism**  
800/874-3529; 217/774-2244,  
lakeshelbyville.com

**Logan County Tourism Bureau**  
217/732-8687,  
destinationlogancountyil.com

**Visit Springfield**  
800/545-7300, 217/789-2360,  
visitspringfieldillinois.com

#### Visitor Information Centers

*Cumberland Road I-70, rest area westbound, Marshall*

*Salt Kettle I-74, rest area westbound, Oakwood*

### TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

**Discover Downstate Illinois**  
618/257-1488,  
downstateil.org

**Mt. Vernon Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
618/242-3151,  
enjoymtvernon.com

**Rend Lake Area Tourism Council**  
630/360-1701,  
rendlake.com

**Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau**  
800/248-4373, 618/833-9928,  
southernmostillinois.com

**Visit SI**  
800/433-7399, 618/997-3690,  
visitsi.com

#### Visitor Information Centers

*Fort Massac 5402 Hwy. 45 S, Metropolis*

*Rend Lake North I-57, rest area northbound, Whittington*

*Rend Lake South I-57, rest area southbound, Whittington*

# TRAVELER INFORMATION

## DRIVING IN ILLINOIS

Illinois highways and roads are well maintained and provide posted signage for drivers, so taking a road trip is a breeze. Chicago is a day's drive or less from major cities including Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Toronto.

State law requires you to wear a seatbelt when traveling by car. Speed limits are posted in miles per hour (mph) and vary between 70 mph on rural interstates and freeways and 45 mph on urban interstates and freeways.

You may not use your cell phone for texting while driving, and you must use hands-free technology to make calls.

For construction updates, maps, seasonal road conditions and other information, visit [gettingaroundillinois.com](http://gettingaroundillinois.com)

## ILLINOIS TOLLWAYS

Some northern Illinois highways require tolls for use. Rates vary; not all toll plazas have attendants. Electronic toll collection is available through I-PASS or any transponder that's part of the E-ZPass system.

Drivers who miss tolls have 14 days to pay online. Note the date, time and locations of unpaid tolls—that information will be required when submitting payments online.

For maps, rates, online payment options and other info, visit [illinoistollway.com](http://illinoistollway.com)

## REST AREAS AND WELCOME CENTERS

The state of Illinois serves drivers with 30 rest areas and 11 welcome centers, located on highways throughout the state. Open 24 hours a day, they offer restroom facilities, picnic areas, lighted walkways, maps, security cameras and parking for recreational vehicles, among other services. For locations, visit [idot.illinois.gov](http://idot.illinois.gov)

## ARRIVING BY PLANE

Domestic travelers can fly direct to destinations including Belleville, Bloomington-Normal, Champaign-Urbana, Marion, Moline, Peoria, Quincy, Rockford and Springfield, as well as Chicago.

Once you land at either of Chicago's two major airports, Chicago Transit Authority trains can get you downtown. For info, go to [transitchicago.com](http://transitchicago.com)

Regular shuttles to many Chicago downtown hotels leave from each airport. You can also get a taxi or rideshare. For more information on getting to and from Chicago's airports (including renting vehicles or arranging car services), visit [flychicago.com](http://flychicago.com)

**From O'Hare International Airport**, the Blue Line elevated train (known as the L) takes passengers to downtown Chicago in about 45 minutes. Follow the CTA Trains or Trains to City signs at the airport. If you arrive at the international terminal, follow the signs to the Airport Transit System, where you can get a free ride to Terminal 2 and then catch the L into the city.

**From Chicago Midway International Airport**, the CTA Orange Line L train takes about 25 minutes to get to downtown Chicago.

## OTHER TRANSIT AROUND CHICAGO

Metra runs commuter rail services from downtown Chicago to outlying suburbs and surrounding cities. For maps, schedules, alerts and more, visit [metra.com](http://metra.com)

The Regional Transportation Authority serves Chicago and its many suburbs. Its RTA trip planner can help you figure out how to get where you want to go. Visit [rtachicago.org](http://rtachicago.org)

Amtrak runs trains to 29 cities in Illinois, and Greyhound Lines serves most major Illinois cities. Go to [amtrak.com](http://amtrak.com) or [greyhound.com](http://greyhound.com)

## 21 AND OLDER

*Legal statewide, alcohol, gambling and other substance use by adults may vary by city or municipality.*



If you drink, don't drive. Instead, hail a cab or use a rideshare app. The state's legal limit for blood alcohol is 0.08.



Fifteen casinos operate throughout the state; some of these are riverboat casinos.



The Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act legalizes the lawful use of cannabis for adults (21 years and older).



The Smoke-Free Illinois Act prohibits smoking in most public places, including theaters, museums, casinos, restaurants and bars.

#ENJOYILLINOIS

# COLORS OF THE SEASONS

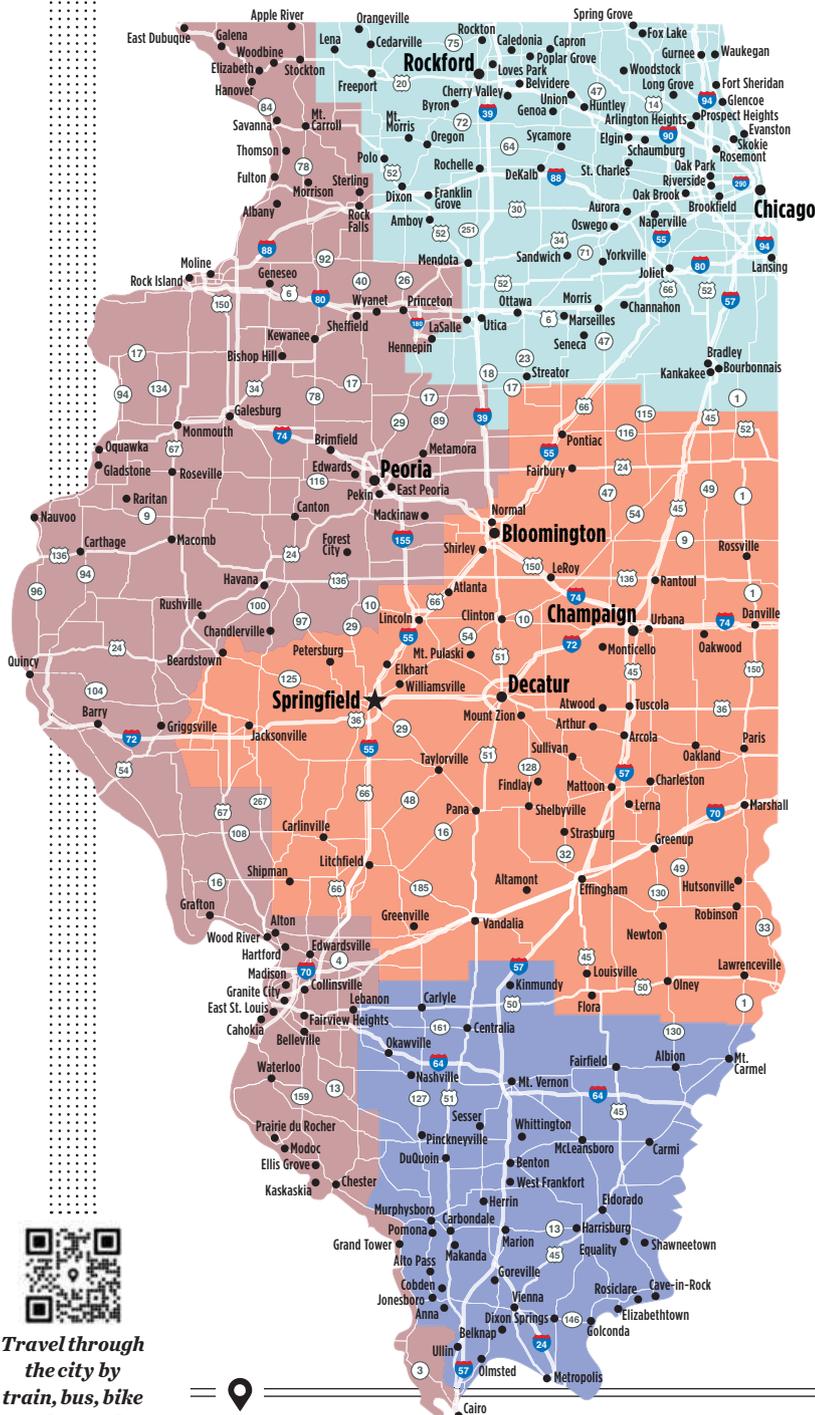
*Follow @enjoyillinois on Instagram to see pics from around the state. Tag #enjoyillinois for your chance to be featured.*



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT → Kishwaukee River Forest Preserve, Rockford @davide.olsonphotography; Deer Grove Forest Preserve, Palatine @wonder37713; Pere Marquette State Park, Grafton @shgreen99; North Avenue Beach, Chicago @vkark; Bethany @meghangarriott; Middleton @gwatergeo; East Peoria @melvir18; Galesburg @deadheadplantranch**

# GET AROUND

Plan your trip to one or more of Illinois' four geographic regions.



Travel through the city by train, bus, bike or foot with these visitor resources.

**CHICAGO TRANSIT** Metra ([metra.com](http://metra.com)) runs commuter rail services from downtown Chicago to outlying suburbs and surrounding cities. The Regional Transportation Authority ([rtachicago.org](http://rtachicago.org)) serves Chicago and its many suburbs.



## ARRIVING TO THE STATE

### BY PLANE

Domestic travelers can fly direct to destinations including Belleville, Bloomington-Normal, Champaign-Urbana, Marion, Moline, Peoria, Quincy, Rockford and Springfield, as well as Chicago.

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**AMTRAK / GREYHOUND** Amtrak runs trains to 29 cities in Illinois, and Greyhound Lines serves most major Illinois cities. [amtrak.com](http://amtrak.com) [greyhound.com](http://greyhound.com)

CHICAGO & BEYOND  
GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY  
LAND OF LINCOLN  
TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

## Visitor Information Centers

- **TURTLE CREEK**  
I-90, rest area southbound, South Beloit
- **PRAIRIE VIEW SOUTH**  
I-57, rest area southbound, Monee
- **HOMESTEAD**  
I-55, rest area northbound, Hamel
- **CUMBERLAND ROAD**  
I-70, rest area westbound, Marshall
- **SALT KETTLE**  
I-74, rest area westbound, Oakwood
- **FORT MASSAC**  
5402 Hwy. 45 S, Metropolis
- **REND LAKE NORTH**  
I-57, rest area northbound, Whittington
- **REND LAKE SOUTH**  
I-57, rest area southbound, Whittington



## MEET THE MAKERS

More than 275 businesses are part of the Illinois Made program, which includes local attractions that amplify visitor experiences along with innovative products that are made by hand and in Illinois.



## By the Numbers

*Did you know? Illinois has...*

**3**

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

**6**

STATE FORESTS

**1**

NATIONAL FOREST

**102**

COUNTIES

**64**

STATE PARKS

## Illinois' 7 National Scenic Byways

*No matter which one(s) you follow, you'll love the journey as much as the destination.*

### • GREAT RIVER ROAD

It was recently designated an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration, putting it among the country's best National Scenic Byways.

### • LINCOLN HIGHWAY

An early transcontinental route that's now a portion of US-30, it stretches 179 miles across northern Illinois from Chicago Heights to the Mississippi River near Fulton.

### • HISTORIC ROUTE 66

Get your kicks on Illinois' 301-mile leg of the legendary all-American roadway. It starts in downtown Chicago and ends in East St. Louis.

### • ILLINOIS RIVER ROAD

Wind along the wide Illinois River for 150 miles between Ottawa and Havana, hitting 10 counties and more than 100 natural and historic sites.

### • MEETING OF THE GREAT RIVERS

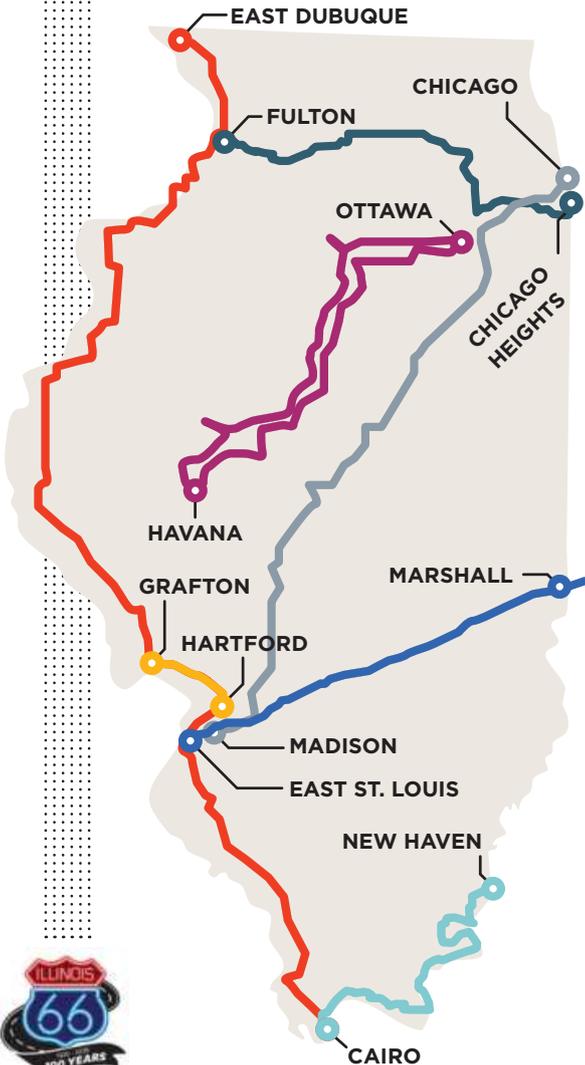
This is where the Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois rivers converge. The 33-mile route runs between Hartford and Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton.

### • HISTORIC NATIONAL ROAD

The first federally funded road in the U.S. opened Illinois to settlement. Today it covers 164 miles between Marshall and East St. Louis, mirrored by US-40 and Interstate-70.

### • OHIO RIVER SCENIC BYWAY

The byway runs parallel to the Ohio River through Southern Illinois for 188 miles, ending at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in Cairo.



Start planning now for an epic celebration—the Mother Road turns 100 in 2026.





# YOUR **DESTINATION** FOR WINTER ADVENTURE



Get ready for winter fun in Heritage Corridor Destinations! Hike to spectacular icefalls and watch bald eagles soar in Starved Rock Country. Explore the historic and charming I&M Canal Towns. Find adventure at every turn along The First Hundred Miles of the famed Route 66.

Find your adventure at [HCDestinations.com](http://HCDestinations.com)



Pictured  
Top - Starved Rock State Park (Oglesby)  
Bottom Left to Right - Lincoln Landing (Lockport),  
Heritage Quarries Recreation Area (Lemont),  
Final Cut Steakhouse at Hollywood Casino (Joliet)

enjoy  
**illinois**

# CHICAGO NORTHWEST



scan me



## ON THE EDGE OF **CHICAGO** AND IN THE MIDDLE OF EVERYTHING.

Embark on a journey through our vibrant food trails in the **Chicago Northwest** suburbs. Adventurous palates will discover a symphony of flavors and a melting pot of cuisines. Get on your way to build lasting memories in **Chicago Northwest** and share them with **#ChicagoNW**.

We are serving up inspiration at  
[ChicagoNorthwest.com/passports](http://ChicagoNorthwest.com/passports).

