

illinois



Image courtesy of Paramount Pictures

ferris bueller's day(s) off

Few movies have captured the iconic experiences of the Chicago area quite like *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. But what if Ferris had called in sick for four days, instead of just one?

Here's your chance to experience an extended version of the world's most famous day off—with many of the spots Ferris and friends visited in the movie, some others they would have known well, and a few more we just know they'd love. Remember, life moves pretty fast—so take this opportunity to look around and Enjoy Illinois.



4 days
275mi
(Approx)



The Art Institute of Chicago



Millennium Park



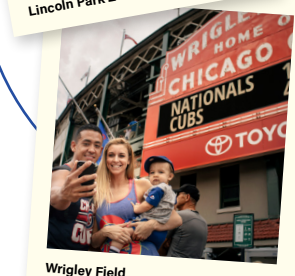
The Bean



Field Museum



Lincoln Park Zoo



Wrigley Field



Lou Malnati's



The Ledge at Skydeck



Chicago Riverwalk

Day 1: The Original Chicago Adventure

Make your first stop the **Art Institute of Chicago**. Those bronze lions are still there guarding Michigan Avenue, just as they were when Ferris, Cameron, and Sloane passed them on their way through the museum entrance. Inside, you'll find that famous Georges Seurat painting where Cameron had a minor existential crisis—A Sunday on La Grande Jatte—but there are plenty of other treasures that could have caught Ferris' eye, like Edward Hopper's moody Nighthawks and Grant Wood's stern-faced American Gothic.

While much has stayed the same since Ferris' day, a lot has changed, too. Those train tracks glimpsed briefly in the movie? **Millennium Park** takes their place now. We think Ferris would have appreciated **Cloud Gate** (aka **The Bean**)—it reflects his knack for seeing things from a different angle. During the summer, you'll find free concerts and movies under the stars around these parts, which feels like just the kind of spontaneous fun Ferris lived for.

If Ferris and friends had time for even more culture, they might have made their way to the **Field Museum** (home to Sue the T. rex, who's been on her own extended day off for about 67 million years), or the **Griffin Museum of Science and Industry**. Or maybe they'd have stopped by **Lincoln Park Zoo**—after all, Sloane does say “sooner or later, everybody

goes to the zoo.” Just about every Chicago kid has a story about meeting the residents there, and admission is free!

Back to Ferris' itinerary and on to **Wrigley Field**, where the hand-operated scoreboard has tracked every **Chicago Cubs** victory (and heartbreak) since 1937, including what our heroes watched back in the '80s. It's a good place for a hot dog, but remember, asking for ketchup will reveal your tourist status faster than Ed Rooney spotting Ferris' fake parents.

The party spills beyond the ivy walls into all of **Wrigleyville**, even when there's no game happening. Right next door, **Gallagher Way** keeps the good vibes going with yoga mornings and movie nights under the historic ballpark lights.

After all that exploring, you'll need some hearty fare, and there's scarcely anything heartier than Chicago deep dish. Head to **Lou Malnati's**, where they've been perfecting that butter crust since the 1940s, or to stuffed-pizza legend **Giordano's**. Sure, deep dish isn't what the locals eat all the time, but you've got to try it at least once.

Get some rest at the **21c Museum Hotel**, where every floor doubles as an art gallery, or crash at the **ACME Hotel** in River North, right in the middle of after-dark action—and a good starting point for your second day.

Day 2: Digging Deeper into the City

No need to bury your head under the covers on this day off: it's time to hit the streets and follow the parade route to **The Loop** and beyond to the **Chicago Board of Trade Building**. Its title of “Chicago's tallest structure” was taken away in 1965, but you can never take away its status as one of the city's most striking sights, and one of the team's first stops on their adventure. Then twist, shout, and stop at Alexander Calder's big red **Flamingo sculpture**, home to Cameron and Sloane's big heart-to-heart. It's perfect for deep and meaningful conversations, or just to sit around the office workers taking lunch.

During their day off, our heroes headed up Sears Tower to look down on the city. It's known as **Willis Tower** now, but no local will blame you for using its former name. Head out to the **Skydeck** and **The Ledge**, put your forehead against the glass like Cameron did, and on a clear day, you'll see Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan beyond... as well as the pavement 1,353 feet below.

Now it's time to hear some of the best stories in town. Stories about the architecture, the history, about a city that made a river flow backwards and pulled itself up after the Great Chicago Fire. Head to the **Chicago Riverwalk** and hop on a

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Chicago River Architecture Tour



Segway Tour



Navy Pier



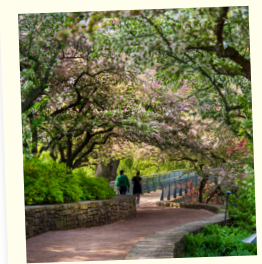
Cindy's Rooftop



Buddy Guy's Legends



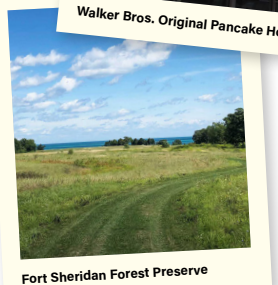
The Second City



Chicago Botanic Garden



Walker Bros. Original Pancake House



Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve

Chicago River Architecture Tour to hear all the tales and see the city in a whole new way. If you'd still like a little more intel, zip through the streets on a **Segway tour**.

Put a new spin on a fancy Chez Quis-style lunch at **François Frankie**—and we really do mean “spin,” as this is a bar that actually rotates while you dine. (It's surprisingly on-brand for Ferris, too: legend says the movie's closing line was originally “Life is a carousel” before they switched to the iconic “Life moves pretty fast.”) If you prefer your lunch static, **La Grande Boucherie** is a good call with its old-school French vibes.

Sure, Ferris never made it to **Navy Pier**, but its **Centennial Wheel** serves up exactly the kind of carefree moments he lived for—it has an aptly named Ferris wheel, after all. **FlyOver Chicago** lets you soar above the city streets, and **Offshore Rooftop** (the largest rooftop bar in the country) offers the perfect spot to take in the views. If you're there in the summer, catch the fireworks over the lake on Wednesday and Saturday nights.

You've had a classic Chicago day so far, so for dinner, hit one of the classic Chicago steakhouses.

Gene & Georgetti's has fed Chicago's power players since 1941 (keep an eye out for Abe Froman, the Sausage King of Chicago), **Bavette's** mixes French style with Chicago muscle, and **Swift & Sons** pays tribute to the stockyards that built this town. If you have a taste for something a little different – like a goat empanada – the global flavors and unique dishes at **Girl & The Goat** will deliver an unforgettable meal.

The city skyline has a whole different feel after dark, so head up to **Cindy's Rooftop** for drinks and sweeping skyline views from its glass atrium. Then, it's time for the kind of entertainment you'll find only in Chicago. Live music at **Buddy Guy's Legends**, where the man himself still plays every January. **Andy's Jazz Club**, which has kept the beat since 1951. **The Second City**, the stage that launched Bill Murray, Tina Fey, Steve Carell, and maybe, just maybe, tomorrow's comedy legend.

📍 Day 3: The North Shore Excursion

You've seen Ferris' city haunts. Today, it's time to explore his home turf in the suburbs. There you'll find locations from the movie that are still how they were, along with a whole bunch of fun activities and sights to keep the adventure humming.

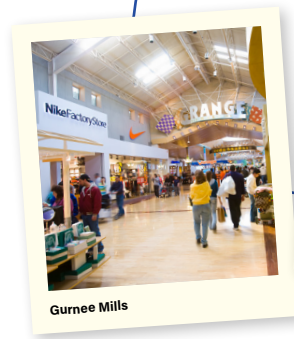
Get started at **Glenbrook North High School** in Northbrook, where Ferris was supposed to be on his day off. This school is the real deal, so there's no walking the halls or visiting Rooney's office, but you can snap a photo at the stairs where Ferris picks up Sloane in a Ferrari.

There's plenty to do on a day off on the North Shore. **Techny Prairie Park and Fields** preserves 83 acres of real Illinois prairie and wetlands, and makes for a peaceful morning stroll. Over in **Deerfield Historic Village**, a cluster of 1850s buildings tells the story of suburban life before cars, commuter trains, and purloined Ferraris. That one-room Little Red Schoolhouse isn't quite like the classroom seen in the movie, but you're still welcome to ask “Bueller? Bueller? Bueller?”—you'll get exactly the same response the teacher got in the movie.

While you won't be able to stand among the trees at Cameron's modernist home in Highland Park (as in the movie, it's a private residence), you can enjoy the **Chicago Botanic Garden's** many arboreal wonders nearby. With 27 gardens spread across 385 acres, even Cameron would have found his calm spot here.

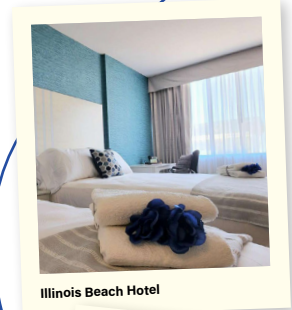
It's lunchtime, and for that, Ferris and friends would be familiar with the apple pancake at **Walker Bros. Original Pancake House**. It's been drawing crowds since their parents were in high school, and one bite explains the six-decade-long success story. **Bluegrass** and its Southern BBQ came a little later, but hey, what fits the “stop and look around” spirit better than slow-cooked BBQ? Locals know it's a great source of great sauces.

Get some steps in at **Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve**, where the trails wind past some of the most dramatic lakefront bluffs you'll find anywhere in Illinois. Or if you'd like a gentler stroll, shopping at **Lake Forest Market Square's** boutiques feels like stumbling into an English village—how's that for a day off?



But that's just the warmup for the king of shopping experiences, **Gurnee Mills**. It's the kind of place Ferris would have picked up his snazzy vest, maybe before heading to **Six Flags Great America**, where the mighty American Eagle wooden roller coaster has been a rite of passage for generations of local Buellers.

Round out your North Shore day with dinner at **The Shanty** in Wadsworth. Life might move pretty fast, but that fish boil recipe hasn't changed since 1921, and it's just the way locals like it. Or dine at **Nolan's Restaurant**. It's part of the **Illinois Beach Hotel**, which is the only spot where you can sleep right on Lake Michigan's Illinois shore. A truly special place to prepare for your final Ferris-fueled adventure.



📍 Day 4: Where Life Slows Down

As the man himself said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." So if you've got some extra time to play hooky in Illinois, follow Ferris' advice, with a leisurely journey beyond Chicago to some places that move at a slightly slower pace. No rushing past the architecture, no hurrying through the art galleries. These are the kinds of places Ferris would have led his friends to decompress after their big city escapades.

Start in **Rockford** at **Anderson Japanese Gardens**. Since 1978, these 12 acres have shown how the Midwest can hit just the right note of Zen. The **Laurent House** next door breaks the mold—Frank Lloyd Wright designed it for a client with physical disabilities back in 1949, when pretty much no one else even thought about accessibility (there's some Ferris-like thinking for you). At **Midway Village Museum**, 13 historic buildings bring 1890s Rockford roaring back to life.

Then it's on to **Galena**. First, grab lunch at **Chestnut Mountain Resort**. The dining room sits 3,000 feet above the Mississippi, serving up views of three states—Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. From up here, you can watch the river traffic glide by, just like it has for centuries.

Then it's time to explore **Galena's Main Street**, a charming slice of small-town America that retains a mid-1800s look and a timeless warmth. Pop into any of the unique boutiques, art galleries and shops for the same kind of shopping experience locals have enjoyed for more than 150 years.

That's not all the history you can absorb. President Grant once called this place home, and his **1860s residence** still stands as a reminder of

the town's glory days. But there are much older buildings still, the oldest being the limestone landmark **Dowling House**, dating all the way back to 1826. Feeling a little too much like that history class Ferris skipped? The **Galena Trolley Tours** connects the dots between the mining boom, the architecture, and all those presidential connections in a lively and engaging way. Or if you just want to enjoy traditions in a different way, enjoy some fine vintages at **Fergedaboutit Vineyard** and **Galena Cellars**.

We're almost at the end of the road, but there are still a few more chances to enjoy the days off and reflect on everything you've experienced. Dinner at the upscale **Fried Green Tomatoes** puts you in an 1854 building where the tin ceilings and brick walls speak to the town's mining days. Then, live music at **Miss Kitty's Grape Escape** is a great way to unwind in another slice of well-preserved 19th-century history. Finally, it's time to rest up at the **Goldmoor Inn**, where the golden rays of tomorrow's sunrise will remind you exactly why Ferris was right about stopping to look around.

Because that guy really did know what he was talking about, and by the end of this journey, you'll have mastered travel in true Ferris style: enjoying the best of fast-paced big city life, and the rewards of slowing down. Ferris Bueller's Day Off writer, director and Illinois' own John Hughes once said, "Chicago is what I am. A lot of Ferris is sort of my love letter to the city." Now it's over to you to write yours.

And remember: SAVE FERRIS!



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