

# Travel in Chicago (v.2)

Ron Kaminecki (hey, I'm local)

## General Location

The conference hotel is **The Drake Hotel** (140 E. Walton Place, <https://www.thedrakehotel.com/>) which is located at the northernmost end of the high-end shopping/business district of North Michigan Avenue in what is called the Magnificent Mile (check the hotel website for a lot more activities than are listed here). Many small shops and chains have a presence here, along with major businesses, including marketing companies and many foreign consulates. The Drake hotel is bordered by East Walton Street, Michigan Avenue and Lake Michigan. The general area is called Rush Street on the west and Streeterville just south of the hotel.

## Travel

To get there from either O'Hare International Airport or Midway Airport, we recommend taking a ride share, shuttle bus or taxi (<https://yellowcabchicago.com/>; <https://checkertaxichicago.com/>) to the hotel because there is no direct train/bus to the hotel. However, below are methods for taking the L-train from either airport and then on a bus or walking to the hotel. The distance from the Blue Line Clark/Lake L-train stop to the hotel is about a mile and a quarter.

### O'Hare to the Drake Hotel

Ride share, (**Uber, Lyft**) or taxis are recommended, but...

You can take the Blue Line (<https://www.transitchicago.com/blueline/>) from the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) train station in the basement of O'Hare Airport to the Clark and Lake Station, about a 45 minute ride. At this point, you will be about a mile and a quarter from the conference hotel. Suggestions:

Walk up to the surface and then head east to Michigan Avenue and either take the northbound 151 bus to Oak Street which is where the hotel is located or easier yet is to take a ride share or taxi from surface outside of the train station to the hotel.

You can also walk and while it is a long walk, it is a nice trip up Michigan Avenue to the hotel. To find Michigan Avenue, look north of the station for the Chicago River and look east for the Trump Tower as it has an outsized sign and is located on Wabash Street, one block east of Michigan Avenue. Head east to Michigan Avenue (about two blocks) and then head north on Michigan Avenue about a mile to the hotel. From the train station you will be about 300 north; the hotel is about 900 north and because it is the furthest north that the tall buildings can be found on the east side of the street, you will see it easily enough as you will run out of sidewalk!

### Midway Airport to the Drake Hotel

Take the Orange Line (<https://www.transitchicago.com/orangeline/>) to the State and Lake station. Head down to the street level and walk north (towards the Chicago River) and look for the Trump Tower (a huuuuuge sign on the side will tell you so) which is north and east of you. Head towards that building and the next street past it is Michigan Avenue. Turn left (north), cross the river, and walk about six blocks

to the Drake hotel. Or, take a ride share/taxi from the train station. Or, head east to Michigan Avenue and hop on a northbound 151 bus to Oak Street.

### **Driving**

Best to exit Route 90/94 (Kennedy expressway from the north, Dan Ryan from the south) at the Ohio Street exit, then head east about a mile until you hit Michigan Avenue, then head north (left from Ohio) about a half mile until you arrive at the hotel. The Drake hotel is the last of the tall buildings on the east side of Michigan Avenue as the lake bulges west just north of the hotel.

### **Parking**

Street parking in the area of the Drake Hotel is very limited and there are usually fees for street parking, though easily paid via the Park Chicago app (<https://parkchicago.com/>). Parking is available at the hotel, but at a premium price (about \$70/night). Availability of less expensive options (as low as \$25/night) can be found on SpotHero.com (<https://spothero.com/>) or Laz Parking (<https://www.lazparking.com/>).

There is also a major hospital (**Northwestern Memorial Hospital**; <https://www.nm.org/patients-and-visitors/parking-options>) about two blocks south and east of the Drake hotel which has a large parking lot.

Some public lots nearby, both with more information on *SpotHero* or *Laz Parking* above:

**100 East Walton**, one block away from Drake Hotel, valet parking.

**221 E. Chestnut**, a five-minute walk away, valet parking.

### **Things to do, places to eat while visiting Chicago**

The Drake hotel is located in an excellent location at the corner of East Walton Street and Michigan Avenue on the north side of the city and is bordered by Lake Michigan on the east and the Rush Street area on the west. This area is called the Gold Coast, due to the upscale shops and restaurants nearby. The stretch along Michigan Avenue is called the Magnificent Mile and it heads south from the hotel to at least the Chicago River about a mile away. A short walk south of the hotel is nice, and feel free to Also wander along the side streets as there are exclusive shops/restaurants a block or two either side of Michigan Avenue with more on the western side of the street.

#### **A short walk west:**

Continuing west is the famous **Newberry Library** (60 W. Walton St.; <https://www.newberry.org/>) which has a first folio of Shakespeare's works, plus a piece of papyrus from Homer's *Iliad*. There is a free exhibit off the lobby about Mr. Kelly's, a famous night club that featured many up and coming stars.

#### **A walk south:**

**900 North Michigan Avenue Shops Shopping Mall** ( <https://www.shop900.com/> – located one block directly west of the hotel, featuring luxury items

**360 Chicago** (<https://360chicago.com/home>) is located in the Hancock Building (875 N. Michigan) where you can take an elevator to the top floor (though it does cost \$30)

**Water Tower Place Shopping Mall** (875 N. Michigan; <https://www.shopwatertower.com/>) is entered via a long escalator on Michigan Avenue which will take you to a glass elevator that you can take to the top (eighth) level and then escalate down. It is named after the **Water Tower**, a structure that survived the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 (<https://www.architecture.org/learn/resources/buildings-of-chicago/building/chicago-water-tower/>).

**Museum of Contemporary Art** (220 E. Chicago; <https://mcachicago.org/>) one block east of Michigan Avenue between East Pearson Street and East Chicago Avenue (\$22).

**Starbucks Reserve Roastery** (<https://www.starbucksreserve.com/en-us/locations/chicago>) on Michigan Avenue between Erie and Ontario. Unlike the ubiquitous Starbucks locations on every block, there are only four Reserve Roasteries in the United States. The building used to be the flagship store for Crate and Barrel, which will become apparent when you see it. Take the curved escalator up to one of the various coffee or alcohol bars in this larger than a Trenta (31 ounce cup) of Starbucks

Keep heading west from the Starbucks Reserve Roastery about two blocks and lose all of your money gambling at **Bally's Casino** (<https://casinos.ballys.com/chicago/>). Pinball manufacturers like Bally's have been a staple in Chicago for decades.

**Eataly** ([https://www.eataly.com/us\\_en/stores/chicago](https://www.eataly.com/us_en/stores/chicago)), an Italian themed series of restaurants can be found almost two blocks west of Michigan Avenue on Ohio.

Pass by the **Museum of Ice Cream** (<https://www.museumoficecream.com/chicago/>) due to its \$35 admission price, but do check out the old Tribune Tower's façade (free) (<http://galleries.apps.chicagotribune.com/chi-130103-tribune-tower-fragments-history-pictures/>) which contains chips and stones from many exotic locations. The building now contains private residences/offices and the Trib's Freedom Center printing plant (west of the hotel about a mile) will soon be a Bally's Casino, as Chicago has its priorities!

Across the street from the Tribune Tower, you will find (a) the Wrigley Building, made famous by chewing gum and now into many different streams of candy products and (b) a stairwell taking you down one level to the original **Billy Goat's Tavern** (<https://www.billygoattavern.com/locations/michigan/>), made famous by the old Saturday Night Live routine "cheeseburger, cheeseburger, cheeseburger, chips, no fries" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puJePACBoLo>). Due to its location across from the Tribune and even closer to the old Chicago Sun-Times building (now the Trump Tower), it was a hangout of many writers and columnists, though now caters to people who want a dive bar experience, though cheap. One level down on the stairs in front of the **Realtor's Building** (430 North Michigan Avenue). Note that this area of the city has a lower level, with mostly shipping docks below which also have been used as backdrops for various movies, especially Batman movies.

Facing west on the Michigan Avenue Bridge over the Chicago River and you can see **Marina City** (<https://www.marinacity.org/>); two structures that resemble corn cobs. Adjacent to them is the House of Blues (<https://www.houseofblues.com/chicago>), a music venue.

Cross the Chicago River on the Michigan Avenue double-cantilevered (look it up – it's in two parts and levers up from each shore) bridge. Stand in the middle between the two parts and when a bus rolls over the bridge you will feel a minor earthquake. On the southeast side of the river is a dock for the Chicago

Architecture Foundation's boat tour. There are also docks for another cruise, the Wendella's, on the northwest corner of the bridge.

Look east along the bridge and you may see a huge water spout across the river; this occurs hourly and celebrates clean water. Note that over a hundred years ago, the Chicago River flowed into Lake Michigan, but because the lake was the source of Chicago's drinking water, the flow was reversed, so that people downstream in the Mississippi River will have to deal with our problems. Good luck, St. Louis!

The south shore of the river can be accessed via stairways and you can walk along the river walk about a half mile west or all the way to Lake Michigan to the east. Seasonal popup restaurants/bars can be found along here, away from the hustle of upper Michigan Avenue.

The street above is Wacker Drive, which is the only street that has a north, south, east and west address since it follows the curving Chicago River. Lower Wacker Drive has been the site of many movies.

Wander down Michigan Avenue two more blocks to the very corner of **Millennium Park** (named after the turn of the century, not the group of people born between 1981 and 1996; <https://www.choosechicago.com/articles/parks-outdoors/millennium-park-campus/>). Head east to the first break in the trees and then south the same distance to see the **Cloud Gate** (aka **The Bean** which will become apparent when you see it; <https://www.choosechicago.com/articles/tours-and-attractions/the-bean-chicago/>), a huge mirrored sculpture that is quite nice. Walking east from there will take you to the Millennium outdoor concert area (**Jay Pritzker Pavillion**, as in the Pritzker family, who donated the funds for it, and J.B. Pritzger is the governor of Illinois). Further east is a climbing wall and a snaky bridge back to the lakefront.

Head south another two blocks and arrive at the **Art Institute of Chicago** (111 S. Michigan Ave.; <https://www.artic.edu/>) which is well worth a visit. See "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grand Jatte" (<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/27992/a-sunday-on-la-grande-jatte-1884>) a pointillism masterpiece, which is larger than you may have imagined, or the many Picasso's, including the Old Guitarist (<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/28067/the-old-guitarist>) which if you look very closely, you will see the outline of a picture of a woman's face underneath. The artist probably couldn't sell the one picture so painted over it. Of course, this only shows up on the original which you can see here.

Just south of the Art Institute is the southernmost part of the Chicago Fire of 1871, which spread all the way to the Water Tower, just south of the conference hotel. The area along the lakefront east of Michigan Avenue was created by the city dumping the leftovers of the buildings into the lake. A bit further south along Michigan Avenue near Adams Street is the start of **Route 66** (<https://www.nps.gov/articles/route-66-overview.htm>).

Heading west from here will take you to the theatre district where there are theatres on almost every block.

### **A walk north along the lakefront**

Walking north along the beach there are passageways about every half mile under DSLSD leading to areas like:

North Avenue (1600 North); **The Second City** complex of several stages including comedy and improvisation is on North Avenue, just west of Wells, about a half mile west of the lake. **Zanie's Comedy**

**Club** is on Wells about one block south of Second City. See listings for more information elsewhere in this guide.

Head out of the hotel, walk to Michigan Avenue (to the right, or west) and walk to the corner of Michigan Avenue.

If you want to go to the lake, turn right (north). Cross Oak Street and walk through the tunnel under DuSable Lake Shore Drive (DSLSD) and at the end turn right (north) or left (south)

This will place you at Oak Street Beach; sand and concrete beaches can be found north along the lakefront, and there is a walking and a bicycling path along the lakefront stretching for several miles. About ten minutes north (at North Avenue) you will find an open chess pavilion near the peninsula where you can watch or play; there will always be chess hustlers here.

Heading inland from North Avenue Beach will put you close to the Chicago History Museum which is at North Avenue and Clark Street. Going a bit further will put you at North and Wells which is in the heart of Old Town where you can find **Second City** comedy club (enter on North Avenue west of Wells) which is actually multiple stages with different acts. South of North Avenue is **Zanies Comedy Night Club** where John Mulaney has appeared as he grew up near here. There are many restaurants near here, including **Topo Gigio Ristorante** (Italian; 1516 N. Wells), **Adobo Grill** (Mexican; 1610 N. Wells), **Old Town Pour House** (huge sports bar with an entire wall of screens showing different games; 1419 N. Wells) and **Roots Handmade Pizza** (Non-Deep dish pizza, though the taco pizza is good; 1610 N. Wells, in Piper's Alley with the entrance to Second City).

Further north is Fullerton Avenue (2400 North) where the free **Lincoln Park Zoo** (at the Fullerton Ave. exit from the lakefront; <https://www.lpzoo.org/>) can be found and also is across the street from **the Peggy Notebaert Museum** (<https://naturemuseum.org/>) which has a huge collection of live butterflies.

A few exits northward at Addison (3600 North) is **Wrigley Field**, (1060 W. Addison; <https://www.mlb.com/cubs/ballpark>) the home of the Chicago Cubs, is about a mile west of the Addison (3600 North) exit from the lakefront.

### **A walk south along the lakefront**

Heading south along the lakefront you will be able to see **Navy Pier** (<https://navypier.org/>), about a mile away; look for the Ferris wheel. Navy Pier access is free and is home to various stages, restaurants, shops and a large boat dock. The PIUG boat ride will probably leave from this dock.

Further south, past Buckingham Fountain (<https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/clarence-f-buckingham-memorial-fountain>) is **The Museum Campus** <https://www.choosechicago.com/articles/museums-art/chicagos-museum-campus/> which is best reached by bicycle or taxi. It consists of the **Shedd Aquarium**, **The Field Museum of Natural History** and the **Adler Planetarium** on a peninsula into Lake Michigan which affords a great view of Chicago. Further south is **McCormick Place**, a convention center. Adjacent to the convention center is a long peninsula which used to be Meigs Field, an airport. It disappeared one night when the mayor of Chicago didn't like it.

More options: <https://www.choosechicago.com/articles/museums-art/chicagos-museum-campus/>

## Bicycling

There is a bicycle and a walking path along the lakefront from the northern edge of the city to the southern edge, a distance of about thirty miles. You can ride south to the state of Indiana and visit Three Floyd's Brewery, passing by the Flyway bridge over the Chicago River, the museum campus and the Museum of Science and Industry along the way. Heading north you will pass by many beaches, all artificial with sand shipped in from Michigan which is carried away by wave action back to Michigan. After Hollywood Avenue (about 6300 north), you can follow several bicycle paths almost to Wisconsin. A great path is the **The Bloomingdale Trail at the 606** (<https://www.the606.org/>) which is north of North Avenue about two miles west of the lake and while only 3.2 miles long, it is on an elevated railway bed and has different zones of horticulture, making for a great view through different plantings. There is also a cushioned running bed along the sides. The western edge of the trail is about a mile away from **Walt Disney's Birthplace** (<https://www.thewaltdisneybirthplace.org/>). Yes, Walt Disney was born in Chicago and his house is being converted into a museum. Along the way is L. Frank Baum's location (his house at 1667 N. Humboldt Blvd. (<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/residential-real-estate/yellow-brick-road-honors-oz-author-site-his-home>) was torn down) which is highlighted by yellow bricks since he wrote The Wizard of Oz. There is even an Oz Park in Lincoln Park, about a mile west of the lake north of Fullerton Avenue. Contact Ron Kaminecki ([ron@kaminecki.com](mailto:ron@kaminecki.com)) for suggested bicycle routes.

## Restaurants near Drake Hotel

The closest restaurant, **Doc B's**, at 100 East Walton is located across Michigan Avenue, just across the street from the front of the Drake hotel; (<https://www.docbsrestaurant.com/locations/chicago-gold-coast>). Food is varied, good, prices are reasonable and its location is a minute away. Sounds like DocDB, but that's an EPO database!

Take Oak Street west towards Rush Street. To the north can be found **Gibson's Steak House** or **Lou Malnati's Pizza**, both about three blocks away. See more information on these restaurants below.

**Adorn Bar and Restaurant** (120 e Delaware; <https://www.adornrestaurant.com/>), in Four Seasons hotel.

**Somerset Restaurant** (1118 n state; <https://www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/chicago/somerset>).

**Fig & Olive** (104 E. Oak St. <https://www.figandolive.com/location/fig-and-olive-chicago/>) Mediterranean cooking about one block west of the Drake hotel. Medium pricing.

## Pizza

Do not mistake Chicago pizza for thick crust; Chicago style is deep dish, consisting of a crust lining a two inch thick pan, covered with marinara sauce, cheese and toppings like Italian sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms or other vegetables like onions or broccoli. It has to be eaten on a plate with a fork and knife. Local pizzerias include:

**Lou Malnati's** (1120 N. State; <https://www.loumalnatis.com/chicago-gold-coast>) – Here the Lou's special has a butter crust and is topped with an entire layer of sausage.

**Gino's East** (162 E. Superior; only three blocks south and east of the hotel; <https://giordanos.com/locations/gold-coast-magnificent-mile/>).

**Giordano's** 730 n rush <https://giordanos.com/locations/gold-coast-magnificent-mile/>

### Steak

**Gibson's Bar and Steakhouse** 1028 N. Rush Street <https://www.gibsonssteakhouse.com/gibsons-chicago/>. A real Chicago steak house where you pick out your steak when a tray of options is brought to your table. All ala carte with prices to match, but most portions are shareable.

**Rosebud Steakhouse** 192 E. Walton <https://rosebudsteak.com/locations/rosebud-steakhouse-magnificent-mile/> An old style Chicago steakhouse less than a block east of the Drake, just left out of the front door.

### A bit further:

**Eataly** (43 E. Ohio; [https://www.eataly.com/us\\_en/stores/chicago/restaurants](https://www.eataly.com/us_en/stores/chicago/restaurants)) A combination of a large store of all foods Italian plus Italian restaurants, including take out and delivery.

### Casual Food:

**Portillo's** (100 W. Ontario; <https://www.portillos.com/index.html>) – a fast casual restaurant featuring Italian Beef (thinly sliced beef bathed in a rich sauce, served on a roll which can be served after being dipped in the sauce for the asking along with cooked sweet peppers or hot peppers). It is worth trying though can be very sloppy. Italian sausage sandwich also comes with sweet or hot peppers; can be combined with Italian beef as a combination. Chicago hot dogs (all beef sausage in a poppy seed roll slathered with yellow mustard, covered in white onions and pickle relish, served with a pickle slice and optional sport peppers). Inexpensive and fast, with other fast food options and salads and soups.

**Fannie May Candies** (343 N. Michigan Avenue on the southeastern shore of the Chicago River and Michigan Avenue; <https://locations.fanniemay.com/il/chicago/chocolate-store-152.html>) – Many people do not know that Chicago has many sugary snack companies, including Wrigley's, M&M Mars, Brach's, Frango Mint, but also the non-mortgage version called Fanny May.

**Garrett's Popcorn** (625 N. Michigan Avenue at Ontario, though there are other locations <https://www.garrettopcorn.com/>) – try the Garrett blend which consists of a blend of freshly popped popcorn covered in powdered cheese and also covered with caramel. Try to put two kernels in your mouth at the same time and then try to stop eating them.

### A ride away:

**Buddy Guy's Blues Legends** (700 South Wabash; <https://buddyguy.com/>), a very nice and roomy blues club owned by one of the legends of blues (hence the name). Casual food (burgers, Po'Boys, chicken sandwiches, gumbo, salads) is served and is inexpensive.

**Second City** (1616 N. Wells; <https://www.seconcity.com/>) where many of Saturday Night Live's stars got their start (John Belushi, Bill Murray, Tina Fey, Chris Farley...) and now has several stages in the same building.

**Zanie's Comedy Club** (1548 N. Wells; <https://chicago.zanies.com/>) has featured many comics.