



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Mike

Best live music venues in Chicago

Chicago, 1 Day

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Chicago is an extremely musical city. Local bands in all genres have shot to national and international stardom, and touring groups always make a point to stop in the windy city. Whether you're in the mood for a quiet, sit-down experience or a rockin' dance party, there is a great venue to suit your needs. Ranging from tiny to enormous, all-ages to adult nightclub, these 10 venues are Chicago's best. Photo: Fuzzy Gerdes

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Chicago



The Hideout

The best performance bar in the land



Congress Theatre

Music in a beautiful setting.



Schubas Tavern

Eclectic Local Dance and Drink



Green Mill

Swinging former speakeasy



Aragon Ballroom

Once glamorous ballroom, now a concert venue



Jay Pritzker Pavilion

Music in the air



Vic Theatre (The Vic)

Concerts and films



The Empty Bottle

Only the bottle is empty



Metro

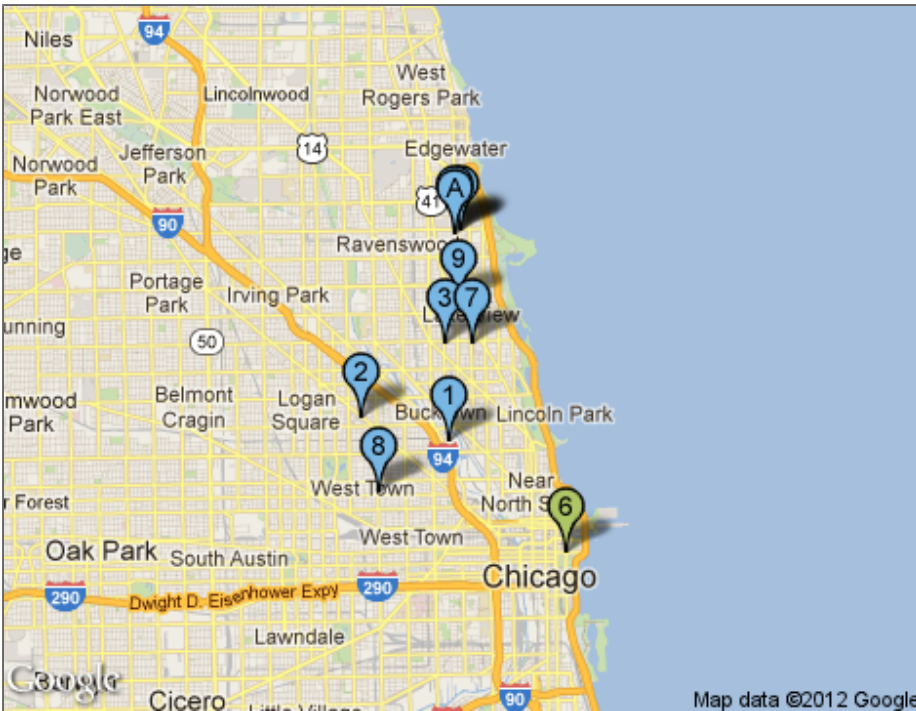
Live alternative/rock



Riviera Nightclub (The)

Great rock venue

Day 1 - Chicago



QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: 773 227 4433

fax: +1 773 227 3650

<http://www.hideoutchicago.com/>

location:

1354 West Wabansia Avenue
Chicago IL 60622-1519

hours:

8p-2a M, 4p-2a Tu-F, 7p-3a Sa

1 The Hideout

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The bar is very hard to find, and is hidden among factory warehouses. Take a cab.

DESCRIPTION: This friendly tavern's OLD STYLE BEER sign shines like a beacon, guiding roots-music fans through the grimy industrial neighborhood that surrounds it. The owners' beer-can collection and some "celebrity" memorabilia are on display in the front room. In back, local musicians play country, rock, and bluesy tunes on a small stage backed by an impressive stuffed sailfish. It's no-frills, all right, but the Hideout also books some of the best lineups of folk and "alt country" bands in the city, including Jeff Tweedy (of Wilco), Kelly Hogan, and the New Duncan Imperials. © Frommer's



Hideout

contact:

tel: 773 252 4000

<http://www.congresschicago.com/>

location:

2135 North Milwaukee
Avenues
Chicago IL 60647

2 Congress Theatre

DESCRIPTION: The Congress theatre hosts a number of musical acts, ranging from indie-popsters Belle and Sebastian to Mexican singer Alejandra Guzman. The theatre holds 2,890 seats and dates back to the 20's when it was a movie palace. It's also an excellent architectural example of Italian Renaissance and Classical Revival styles. Most shows are

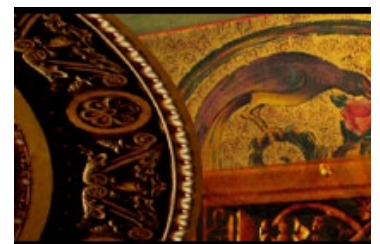


Photo courtesy of (insert name of point of interest)

open to all ages, but call ahead to check -- sometimes they're 18 and up. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: 773 525 2508

fax: 773 525 4573

<http://www.schubas.com/>

location:

3159 North Southport Avenue
Chicago IL 60657

hours:

2p-2a M-F, 11a-3a Sa, 11a-2a
Sun

3 Schubas Tavern

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Make sure to use the photo booth, which has been around for many years and the jukebox, which some claim is the best in the city!

DESCRIPTION: This tavern is housed in one of the former Schlitz bars, but the Schlitz is gone. Instead, you will find a good collection of beer and a wonderfully eclectic variety of live music on a stage in an adjoining room. You can drink at the bar for no extra charge, but to hear the music, you have to pay a cover fee. Both parts of the tavern, performance and bar areas, tend to host a mix of locals from the Lakeview neighborhood and others from throughout the city who have come to check out this week's jazz, rock or folk act. If you get hungry, you can sneak away to the Harmony Grill, which is owned by the same person and attached to the bar. © wcities.com



citysearch

contact:

tel: +1 773 878 5552

<http://www.greenmilljazz.com/>

location:

4802 North Broadway Avenue
Chicago IL 60640

hours:

Su to Fr from 12:00 PM to
04:00 AM, Sa from 12:00 PM
to 05:00 AM

4 Green Mill

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Located in a seedy neighborhood, be prepared to take a cab for late night shows.

DESCRIPTION: This is the absolute best place to see jazz in Chicago! The Green Mill is a former speakeasy from days of Prohibition, where it was the headquarters Chicago gangsters, including the infamous Al Capone. Also famous for being the location where Joe E. Lewis was attacked with a knife. The ornate, sophisticated, and dark atmosphere has not changed much from the old days, and neither has the music. It has definitely upheld its mission to uphold a "mix of down-to-earth friendliness and class." There are different regular acts every night, with Big Band swing on Thursdays, Sabertooth Jazz Qunitet on Saturday and Sunday after 1am, and even a Poetry Slam on Sundays.
© NileGuide



citysearch

contact:
tel: 773 561 9500
<http://www.aragon.com/>

location:
1106 West Lawrence Avenue
Chicago IL 60640

hours:
Mo to Fr from 09:00 AM to
06:00 PM

5 Aragon Ballroom

DESCRIPTION: A Chicago institution, this concert hall has staged rock shows with the likes of Nirvana, Santana and The Smashing Pumpkins since the mid-1960s and has featured live entertainment since the 1920s. It earned the nickname of the Ballroom because of the folding chairs that are sent flying during mosh pit formation. Drinks are served in plastic cups and are overpriced like most strictly performance venues. The theater features occasional salsa and blues nights. The Aragon is somewhat run down these days, only a shade of its former, more glittery self. Call for performance schedule. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:
tel: +1 312 742 1168
http://www.millenniumpark.org/artandarchitecture/jay_pritzker_pavilion.html

location:
Columbus Drive and
Randolph Street
Chicago IL 60601

6 Jay Pritzker Pavilion

DESCRIPTION: This 120 feet tall location is home to some of the largest and most well-known musical performances in United States, accomodating approximately 11,000 people at a time. Named in the fond memory of businessman Jay Pritzker, this pavilion hosts a number of rock as well as classical concerts. Latest state-of-the-art sound system adds to the experience. The Pavilion also organizes annual prestigious shows like the Grant Park Music Festival. Admission to most events is free. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Jay Pritzker Pavilion

contact:
tel: 773 472 0366 / 773 472 0449
fax: 773 4723933
<http://www.victheatre.com/>

location:
3145 North Sheffield
Chicago IL 60657-4416

7 Vic Theatre (The Vic)

DESCRIPTION: The people who patronize the Vic Theatre do not seem to mind that it is somewhat rundown, dreary, dilapidated, dank and falling apart. It is all part of the charm of a crumbling once-luxurious five-story vaudeville house with floors and stairways of Italian marble. Customers pack in to hear various rock acts like Skinny Puppy, the Black Keys and Jackson Browne. On non-concert nights (which means three to four nights a week), the Vic is home to "Brew & View," an ongoing series of second-run and cult films (during screenings of which, moviegoers can drink cheap booze and smoke pack after pack of Marlboros. It is just like your living room back home, with a bigger screen, better acoustics, a balcony (with wonderful sight lines) - and a funkier smell. The Vic can easily accomodate 1400 people with seating for 1000. See Vic website for concert calendar. See Brew & View website for movie showtimes. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Vic Theatre (The Vic)

contact:
tel: 773 2763600
<http://www.emptybottle.com>

8 The Empty Bottle

location:
1035 North Western Avenue
Chicago IL 60622

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Monday night is the night to go for free cover and \$1.50 PBR.

DESCRIPTION: This alternative-rock club in the Ukrainian Village neighborhood is a haven for young arty scenesters drawn here for camaraderie, obscure bands, and cheap beer. Offerings are diverse, with experimental jazz on Wednesday, and other nights given over to a DJ's underground improvisations. © Frommer's

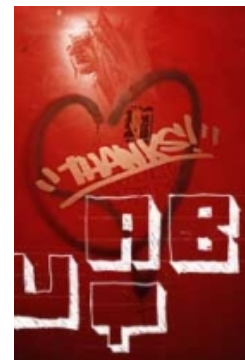


Photo courtesy of The Empty Bottle

contact:
tel: 773 549 0203
fax: +1 773 549 0337
<http://www.metrochicago.com/>

9 Metro

location:
3730 North Clark Street
Chicago IL 60613

DESCRIPTION: Featuring live alternative/rock bands hoping to break into the big time, Metro is the place to see tomorrow's bands today. Metro's self-described mission is to bring a cross-platform of the best local, regional, and national emerging artists, and they have been successful thus far. Names like Liz Phair, the Smashing Pumpkins, Creed, Pete Dinklage, Papa Roach, and more have all performed at the venue. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Metro

hours:
Box Office: Tu-Sa noon-8p,
Su noon-6p, Show M noon-8p

contact:
tel: 773 275 6800
<http://www.jamusa.com/Venues/Riviera/>

A Riviera Nightclub (The)

location:
1805 Geary Boulevard
Chicago IL 60640

DESCRIPTION: This nightclub showcases some of the most famous acts in rock music. The venue dates back to the 1940s, and is an eye-catching building, with lush balcony seats and VIP-boxes. Its lower arena is usually filled with grungy teens or punk rockers ready to mosh. The Riviera is not known for its subtle use of the sound system, so bring earplugs if you want to be able to hear when you reach middle age! Ticket prices vary. © wcities.com



Riviera Nightclub (The)

Chicago Snapshot

Local Info

Chicago is "The City that Works" and "The City of Big Shoulders." It boasts North America's tallest building and one of the world's largest office buildings. With the ubiquitous elevated trains creating a continuous clatter, the city looks, feels and, in fact is, big.

At first glance, Chicago can be overwhelming. But, like any city, it is the sum of its parts, and its parts are diverse. Also known as "The City of Neighborhoods," Chicago comprises more than 75 official neighborhoods. Each features its own distinct quality and character.

So, when trying to digest Chicago, don't try to take it all in with one big bite. Break it up into manageable portions.

The Loop

This area takes its name from the elevated train, the "El," that loops around the city's central core. While the downtown area stretches beyond these boundaries, much of the lifeblood that invigorates the rest of the city also pumps through the Loop. The Sears Tower, North America's tallest building, is here, as is the Chicago Board of Trade, one of the biggest options and futures trading floors in the world. City government offices are based here, as well as the home offices of several major corporations.

When it's time for the city that works to relax, the Loop does not disappoint. The city's magnificent Harold Washington Library, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Chicago Cultural Center are all here. While not as ritzy as the city's Magnificent Mile where State Street is a shopping mecca.

Thanks to a burgeoning theater district, the Loop is increasingly becoming a place to visit when the workday ends. The restored Ford Center for the Performing Arts-Oriental Theatre hosts lavish Broadway productions while the Chicago Theatre has several musical concerts. The landmark Auditorium Theatre, considered by some the most beautiful theater in America, hosts musicals, concerts and other performances in the South Loop area. The renowned Goodman Theatre also offers several performances throughout the year. This North Loop site includes dining and retail options.

Many restaurants, such as The Original Heaven on Seven, Italian Village and Berghoff, vie to whet every Loop-goer's appetite. Boutique Hotels such as the Hotel Allegro, Hotel Burnham Chicago and Hotel Monaco compete for guests with the more traditional Palmer House and Chicago Hilton Plaza and Towers.

While technically just outside the Loop's borders, Grant Park should not be missed. Hugging Lake Michigan, this park is often referred to as "Chicago's Front Yard." The majestic Buckingham Fountain is here, as is a plush rose garden and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's outdoor home, the Petrillo Music Shell. The park is immense, with the capacity to hold up to three million people, as is tested annually by the Taste of Chicago festival. Grant Park also plays host to many music and arts festivals during the summer, including Jazz Fest and Blues Fest.

Near North Side

Just to the north of the Loop, bordered by the Chicago River on the south, the Lake on the east and North Avenue on the north, is Chicago's Near North Side neighborhood. This area is in turn made up of several other smaller districts.

The city's "Magnificent Mile" (known as the "Mag Mile" to locals) is one of the Near North's most famous offerings. Stretching along Michigan Avenue from the Chicago River to Oak Street, this shoppers' paradise is home to high-scale chains like Neiman Marcus and Bloomingdale's at the 900 North Michigan Avenue Shops, as well as the lavish boutiques of Marilyn Miglin and Room & Board. The city's early monument to modernity, the John Hancock Center, is just a few blocks from the city's links to its past, the Water Tower and the Chicago Water Works, two of the few buildings that survived the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Water Tower Place, an upscale indoor shopping mall, houses numerous other chain stores. You can enjoy RL Restaurant or Ralph Lauren's, the designer's largest retail store and its hip adjoining restaurant. Nordstrom, Crate & Barrel and Saks Fifth Avenue can be found a few blocks south on Michigan Avenue.

If you are wondering where the people who can afford to shop at the more expensive stores on Michigan Avenue live, head east

to Streeterville, or the adjoining Gold Coast neighborhood. Theoretically, the Gold Coast is named for the African coast of the same name, but the moniker also describes the area's opulence. The neighborhood is the nation's second wealthiest, surpassed only by New York City's Central Park East.

Just north of the Chicago River and a few blocks west of the Mag Mile is River North, home to an eclectic mix of swanky galleries, trendy cafes and theme restaurants like the Hard Rock Café. While many of the city's residents pretend they have never been to these restaurants, they most likely have — so go and enjoy with a clear conscience.

South Loop

In stark contrast to the garish designs of the chain restaurants, the South Loop offers a quaint, Old World charm, neighborhood bars and smaller restaurants. Once home to one of the largest publishing centers in the Midwest, the warehouses left behind have been renovated and taken over by young, affluent professionals who wish to walk to their jobs in the Loop. The area's focal point, Dearborn Station, sets the tone for the neighborhood. The former rail transportation hub's façade has been lavishly restored.

Beyond Downtown

Lake Shore Drive, one of the city's major north-south arteries, runs along the picturesque lakefront. While the Drive will take you to many of the city's attractions, do not forget that this boulevard is an attraction in itself. The lake view, the bold skyline and even the Drive's own tree-lined medians offer some of the most breathtaking views in the city. However, Chicagoans have little patience for "Sunday drivers" gawking at the sites. So when you get on Lake Shore Drive, have a destination in mind.

Lincoln Park

Once you pass North Avenue, you will enter Lincoln Park, one of the city's more gentrified areas. Tree-lined Fullerton Avenue, with its brownstones converted into condos, gives you a feel for the neighborhood residents. Lincoln Park also surrounds the DePaul University neighborhood. A variety of bars, dance spots and inexpensive restaurants cater to the college and just-out-of-college crowd.

Chicago Snapshot continued

Not all of Lincoln Park hustles and bustles. In fact, the park from which the neighborhood takes its name is one of the city's largest and most pastoral. Designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, who also drew up the blueprints for New York's Central Park and Lincoln Park encompasses more than 1,000 acres. It includes a Zoo, the Lincoln Park Conservatory, a driving range, dozens of ball fields and several biking and running paths connecting it to lakefront beaches. You'll find many pickup games of soccer and ultimate Frisbee here on warm summer days.

Lakeview

Heading further north brings you to Lakeview, a neighborhood that serves as a popular nightlife center for both the straight and gay communities. These groups tend to party separately, with the standout exception being Berlin, a late-night dance club where hipsters of every orientation party together.

Halsted Street between Belmont Avenue and Irving Park Road serves as the headquarters for gay nightlife. The area is not hard to find; just look for the gigantic rainbow-colored pylons that line the streets. For dancing, head to Roscoe's Tavern or Spin.

If partying is not your thing, don't despair. The area also offers its share of restaurants, from Angelina Ristorante and Yoshi's Cafe to the 24-hour Melrose Restaurant.

For the straight set, head a few blocks west to Wrigleyville, a bar area that gets its name from the nearby Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs. The numerous taverns here make for excellent bar-hopping, so stop in the Cubby Bear or The Metro, a bar that features live music and up-and-coming rock bands like the Smashing Pumpkins, who

played here before they made it big and returned for their final two shows.

Diners can satisfy a variety of tastes in Wrigleyville, including Asian, Cajun, Italian and Mexican. Those who prefer to stick with the bar scene can eat well at Bar Louie, John Barleycorn Memorial Pub or Sluggers.

Uptown

For more live music, head farther north, where you'll find the Aragon Ballroom, the Riviera and the prohibition-era jazz bar, Green Mill. When you're strolling through this area, a word of caution is in order. As the once grand, now deteriorating buildings that house the Aragon and the Riviera suggest, this formerly posh neighborhood has changed drastically over the years. Still, some of the best music in the city (be it jazz, rock, or something in between) can be found here.

Wicker Park/Bucktown

A hot spot for artisans and heavy drinkers alike is the Wicker Park/Bucktown area. Hang out at bars like the Blue Note and Holiday Club or restaurants like Northside Bar & Grill and Beat Kitchen and it won't be long before some hipster starts talking to you about gentrification.

The South Side

If you are visiting the city, do not make the mistake many North Siders do by forgetting that Lake Shore Drive also runs south of downtown.

As you cruise south on Lake Shore Drive, admire the Museum Campus where the Shedd Aquarium, Adler Planetarium and the Field Museum converge. If you have the time, you could easily spend a day in each museum, but it's also well worth a stop just to enjoy the lake views and watch sailboats go by.

Just south, you will pass Soldier Field, home of the Chicago Bears. Immediately

after gazing at Soldier Field you will need to guard against whiplash as you turn to stare at the sprawling McCormick Place, one of the largest convention centers in North America and home to numerous annual trade shows, like the Boat & RV Show and Auto Show. The space includes more than 2.2 million square feet of exhibition space, Chicago's largest ballroom and the Arie Crown Theater.

Comiskey Park, home of the Chicago White Sox, lies on the west side of Lake Shore Drive. The modern stadium features an exploding scoreboard that sets off fireworks along with a Sony Jumbo Screen.

Further south, the charming Hyde Park neighborhood has a quaint, old-world look to it. Home to the world-famous University of Chicago, the area boasts interesting restaurants like the Dixie Kitchen and Medici, great used book stores like O'Gara & Wilson's (the oldest used bookstore in the country), and the quaint 57th Street Art Fair. Hyde Park is also home to the gigantic 350,000 square-foot Museum of Science and Industry. This monument to 20th century technology houses a replica coal mine, a German U-Boat and a Zephyr train all under one roof.

After visiting the museum, push away thoughts of industriousness long enough to take a leisurely stroll through Jackson Park. Like its sister to the north, Lincoln Park, Jackson Park was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead. It features a Japanese garden, a bird sanctuary, a reflecting pond and a golf course.

All in all, do not be overwhelmed by Chicago's size or grit. Just find a corner of this city that suits you and celebrate its diversity.

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