



Scan to  
Discover the  
Enjoy Illinois  
Press Kit



Chicago Skyline



Camel Rock at Garden of the Gods,  
Shawnee National Forest

## Only in Illinois

Experience everything Illinois has to offer



### Chicago

From world-class museums, to shopping along the Magnificent Mile to one-of-a-kind outdoor spaces like [Millennium Park](#), which is celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2024 - there is something for everyone in Chicago. Take in a sky-high view from one of Chicago's thrilling observation decks – [Skydeck Chicago](#) or [360 CHICAGO](#). Snap a selfie at Cloud Gate, commonly referred to as “The Bean.” Stroll down [Chicago's Riverwalk](#), stopping for a drink along the way. Savor mouthwatering deep-dish pizza and listen to live music – including classic Chicago blues and jazz – at iconic venues. Soak in the city's spectacular skyline while riding [Navy Pier's](#) Centennial Wheel and enjoy Chicago's vibrant arts scene, inspiring architecture and a warm Midwest welcome.



### Great Lakes Cruises from Chicago

Chicago is now a port for American Queen Voyages' multiday cruises with the Ocean Navigator's maiden arrival from Toronto to Chicago - touching all five of the Great Lakes.



### Historic Springfield

Illinois' capital, Springfield, is located along Route 66 and is home to numerous historic attractions including the [Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum](#) – voted one of the top experiences in the world by TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards. Visit several of Springfield's most historic sites for free!

- [Lincoln Home National Historic Site](#)
  - [Illinois State Capitol](#)
  - [Old State Capitol](#)
  - [Dana–Thomas House](#)
  - [Lincoln Tomb](#)
  - [Illinois Governor's Mansion](#)
- (Rub Lincoln's nose for good luck!)



### Big Things in a Small Town – Casey

The small town of Casey is home to 12 of the world's largest things as certified by the Guinness Book of World Records including the World's Largest Teeter-Totter, Wind Chime, Mailbox, Rocking Chair, Barbershop Pole and more!



### Illinois Frank Lloyd Wright Trail

The Illinois Frank Lloyd Wright Trail is a self-guided architectural adventure featuring 13 Wright-designed buildings throughout the state, all open to the public. The [Frederick C. Robie House](#) and [Unity Temple](#) in Oak Park are now designated UNESCO World Heritage sites.



### Shawnee National Forest

The Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois sits between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and is filled with hiking trails that meander through canyons under forest canopies. [Garden of the Gods](#), a breathtaking overlook, offers spectacular views of towering sandstone cliffs formed millions of years ago. Experience thrilling outdoor adventures such as rock climbing, ziplining and wildlife photography tours, as well as a unique glamping experience at the newly-opened [Shawnee Hills Glamping property](#).



### Historic Main Street – Galena

Nestled near the Mississippi River, Galena offers breathtaking views and plenty of stops to explore the great outdoors all year round including kayaking along the Galena River. Visitors can travel the [Great River Road](#) with a new [EV-friendly itinerary](#).



Galena River, Galena

## 66 Get Your Kicks on Route 66

- Begin a legendary 300-mile journey down the Mother Road starting in the heart of downtown Chicago where Route 66 begins at the iconic Route 66 “Begin” sign.
- Tour the [Old Joliet Prison](#), best known for being a favorite filming location for movies and TV shows such as *The Blues Brothers* and *Prison Break*.
- Stop in Springfield for a visit to Motorheads, a restaurant and museum that is home to the world's largest [Route 66](#) sign and a new live entertainment venue, the Motordome!
- Experience the new [Legends Neon Sign Park](#) at the Illinois State Fairground in Springfield. The park is an homage to the incredible signs found along the Mother Road.
- Experience Route 66 by EV using the new [“Zero Emissions”](#) road trip itinerary featuring 13 charging stations.



## Route 66 Photo Opportunities

- [NEW Muffler Man and Car “Spindle” sculpture](#) in Berwyn
- [NEW GIGANTAR](#) 24-foot guitar (the largest handmade guitar in the world) at the Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 in Joliet
- [Gemini Giant](#) at the Launching Pad Diner in Wilmington
- [Route 66 Shield Mural](#) located on the Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum Wall in Pontiac.
- The newly renovated [Doc's Just Off 66](#) in Girard
- [Pink Elephant Antique Mall](#) in Livingston
- [World's Largest Catsup Bottle](#) in Collinsville
- The [Bunyon Giant](#) in Atlanta



Alpine Coaster, Grafton

## Outdoor Adventures

### Alpine Coaster at Aerie's Resort in Grafton

This thrilling new ride – the first of its kind in Illinois – features two-person sleds that travel down the hillside over 3,000 feet of track at speeds up to 25 miles per hour. Visitors can travel through the seasonal foliage that Grafton is known for, and twist and turn around the landscape.

### Rooftop Cinema Club in Chicago

Visitors can now watch their favorite movies against the backdrop of the Chicago skyline! Located on the fifth floor terrace of The Emily Hotel, Rooftop Cinema Club offers a high-end approach to moviegoing, complete with tropical decor, lawn games, state-of-the-art LED screens and individual wireless headphones. Guests can also order beer, wine, boozy slushies and snacks, plus a range of cocktails curated by The Emily Hotel's mixologist.

### Hoof It & Sip It in Galena

Stroll with a glass of wine in hand and a goat by your side. Return from the walk to enjoy tastings from a local vineyard and winery, Fergedaboudit, while overlooking incredible views of Galena Country.



Hoof It & Sip It, Galena

## Total Solar Eclipse - April 8, 2024

Located on the eclipse's path of totality, Southern Illinois will experience the total solar eclipse for 4 minutes and 9 seconds! Plan your trip to experience this phenomenon!

### Southern Illinois Crossroads Eclipse Festival

Southern Illinois University in Carbondale will host one of the largest solar eclipse viewing events at its football stadium hosted by Mat Kaplan of Planetary Radio. Viewers will experience a total eclipse for 4 minutes and 9 seconds, one of the longest durations across the U.S.

### Total Solar Eclipse Farm Dinner

Take your eclipse viewing to another level with the Ryder Family Farm's multi-course, farm-to-table dinner in Golconda. Guests will experience four courses of a locally sourced farm dinner creatively planned around the solar eclipse.



## New Events and Exhibits

### American Giants Museum in Atlanta – NOW OPEN

The new American Giants Museum (AGM) presents the story of International Fiberglass which produced giant, fiberglass statues designed as roadside advertising pieces in the 1960s - commonly referred to as Muffler Men or American Giants. The AGM will house the largest collection of Muffler Men anywhere along the length of Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica, including an extremely rare 24-foot-tall TEXACO Big Friend giant.

### Illinois State Fair Route 66 Experience featuring Legends Neon Sign Park in Springfield – NOW OPEN

This self-guided Route 66 experience includes vintage billboards, a drive-in movie theater and the Legends Neon Sign Park where visitors can bask in the bright lights of the Mother Road 365 days a year.

## Notable New Hotels and Casinos

### Neighborhood Hotel in Little Italy (Chicago) – FALL 2023

### Arlo Chicago – NOW OPEN

### Hard Rock Casino Rockford – NOW OPEN

### St. Regis Hotel in Chicago – NOW OPEN

### Walker's Bluff Casino Resort in Carterville – NOW OPEN

### Freedom to Equality Guided Tours in Alton – MAY 2024

These new guided tours (running through Nov. 2024) highlight Black history in Alton, beginning with the famed Underground Railroad, and follow history through the fight for civil liberties and includes the cultural contributions that shaped not only Alton but the United States.

### NASCAR 2024 Chicago Street Race - JULY 2024

Start your engines for NASCAR returning to the streets of Chicago. The two-day event (July 6-7) will feature exhilarating races and a lineup of global music headliners.

### International Route 66 Mother Road Fest, Springfield – SEPT. 2024

Returning Sept. 27-29, the International Route 66 Mother Road Fest highlights the cars, the music, the fun and nostalgia that Route 66 has brought to generations in Illinois.

## Looking Ahead

### Democratic National Convention, Chicago – AUGUST 2024

### The Obama Presidential Center, Chicago – OPENS 2025

### Route 66 Centennial – 2026

### Medinah Country Club to host Presidents Cup, Medinah – 2026

## Illinois Accolades

### TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards

#### Travelers Choice Awards

- **Green Tree Inn B&B** in Elmhurst awarded for the third consecutive year
- **Deer Path Inn** in Lake Forest ranks #25 for Top Hotels in the U.S.
- **CitizenM** in Chicago ranks #4 for Hottest New Hotels in the U.S.

#### Top Inns and B&Bs

- **Aldrich Guest House** in Galena ranks #17 in the US

### The Peninsula Hotel in Chicago

- **Named the "#2 Hotel in the World"** by La Liste
- **Named "Best Hotel in Continental U.S."** by Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards 2023

### USA Today 10 Best in 2021

- **Best Small Town for Adventure** – Savannah ranked #1 for third year in a row
- **Best Boat Tour** – Chicago Architecture Foundation ranked #2

### Condé Nast Traveler

- Chicago ranks #1 in the Reader's Choice list of **Best Big Cities in the U.S.** for the 7th consecutive year

### Michelin Guide Chicago

- Chicago is home to **21 Michelin-starred restaurants** and 46 Bib Gourmand rated restaurants

### Big 7

- Chicago's **Christkindlmarket** ranked #1 in the country and #3 in the world

### U.S. News and World Report

- **Best Weekend Getaways in the Midwest** – Chicago ranked #1
- **Best Foodie Cities in the U.S.** – Chicago ranked #3

### World Heritage Sites

- **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site**, Collinsville
- **Frederick C. Robie House**, Chicago
- **Unity Temple**, Oak Park