

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



IT'S HANDMADE,
HOMEMADE AND
LOCALLY MADE.
IT'S ILLINOIS MADE.

MEET THE MAKERS



MAKING A MARK



LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT, THEY SAY. FOR THE MANY SKILLED ARTISANS AND CREATIVE CRAFTSPEOPLE ACROSS ILLINOIS, THAT PHILOSOPHY MAY BE EVEN SIMPLER: LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE.

These enterprising entrepreneurs pour their time, energy, heart, soul, blood, sweat and tears into producing handmade, homemade and locally made goods. Their small businesses exemplify the authentic experiences and innovative products that make Illinois a special place to explore. Because these businesses start from personal passions—like art, food, beverages, apparel or decor—they are labors of love. And in the end (with apologies to The Beatles), perhaps the love you take is equal to the love of what you make.



ILLINOIS SPARKLING COMPANY, UTICA
On a quiet hillside overlooking the Illinois River, founders Mark and Teri Wenzel create sparkling wines using a traditional and ancestral method—each step is performed by hand. Pét Nat Rosé, \$23; iscbubbly.com



Owner and executive chef Erick Williams (third from left); Virtue Restaurant, Chicago

Coffee Roasts, from \$15; firedeptcoffee.com →



Hewn, Evanston

EAT AND DRINK

The Windy City's world-class food and beverage scene is powered by people with dreams and determination. From downtown to the neighborhoods, suburbs and small outlying towns, you can taste flavors that bear the human touch. In Hyde Park, the virtues of hospitality,

humility, equality and gratitude guide **Virtue Restaurant**. Chef Erick Williams, a James Beard Award winner, turns his love of Southern cooking into gumbo, gizzards and cornbread with house-made butter and local honey. **Hewn** in Evanston and Libertyville rises to the top with scratch-made breads, pastries and sandwiches. The breads are hand-shaped and naturally fermented, with no commercial yeast, preservatives or additives. Even better: Local farmers supply the grains. Inspired by coffee's importance in keeping firefighters alert through long shifts, **Fire Department Coffee** in Rockford is a veteran-owned business run by active and retired firefighters. Besides serving fresh, locally roasted coffee, FDC supports injured first responders. Try their signature medium roast or a spirit-infused brew.





Lambs Farm, Libertyville



LAMBS FARM, LIBERTYVILLE

It's a farmyard, pet center, cafe-bakery, thrift shop, country store and more. Even more importantly, it's a place where adults with developmental disabilities can live, work and thrive.



Cofounders Nick Nagele, Jamie Walter and Jim Walter; Whiskey Acres Distilling Co., DeKalb

Straight Bourbon Whiskey, from \$40; whiskeyacres.com →



HOME GROWN EXPERIENCES

Not far from urban bustle—or even in the middle of it—Chicago harbors fun and fertile respites. Whether it's spring tulips, late-summer sunflowers, fall pumpkins or yuletide Christmas trees, Richardson Farm in Spring Grove is an all-season favorite. Six generations of the Richardson family have worked the farm, which features attractions like the “world’s largest” corn maze. Corn also plays a big role at Whiskey Acres Distilling Co., where a fifth-generation DeKalb farm family uses their abundant Illinois-grown grain to craft award-winning bourbon and rye in Chicago’s backyard. Their seed-to-spirit approach focuses on knowing the land and sweating the details. On Chicago’s South Side, once vacant lots now produce flowers for chic arrangements—and empower at-risk youth and young adults—thanks to Southside Blooms, an urban-based farm-to-vase florist. The company supports the environment and the community: Flowers are grown using no pesticides, herbicides or synthetic fertilizers, and every purchase helps local job-creation efforts.

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Owner Mark McMahon; McMahon Gallery, Lake Forest

Steep N' Clay, Elgin

ARTS, CRAFTS AND CULTURE

Chicago's rich cultural tapestry is woven with threads spooled from diverse backgrounds and influences. In downtown Elgin, you can come for a spot of tea at Steep N' Clay and leave the shop with a beautiful handmade ceramic piece. Owner Tom Hill sells teas from all over the world, plus he maintains a pottery studio where he creates cups, bowls, mugs, teapots, plates and trays. Inspired by her Latin heritage and family traditions, Yezenia Tejada set out to craft something that would provide others with the same comfort and serenity she felt around her parents. The result is Warm Wick, a Brookfield company that makes natural soy wax candles in relaxing aromatherapy scents. High school friends Maureen McClure and Elizabeth Leipold launched a skin care line emphasizing locally sourced, plant-based ingredients. After selling through Etsy and pop-ups, the two opened Scratch Goods in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood. Their 36-person Mask Bar lets you experiment with masks and oils.

MCMAHON GALLERY, LAKE FOREST

Three generations of a nationally and internationally known art family—Mark, Carolyn, Franklin, Meryl, Drew and Elise McMahon—are represented in this Market Square gallery's eclectic collection of paintings and prints.

Scratch Goods Bike a Bee Honey All Over Butter, \$18; scratchgoods.com



Cofounders Maureen McClure and Elizabeth Leipold with their families; Scratch Goods, Chicago





EAT AND DRINK

The rippling waters and limestone bluffs of Western Illinois have long inspired wanderlust. A similar spirit—only smaller and sweeter—will fuel your exploration of the region’s tradition of handcrafted treats. **Underbrink’s Bakery** owner Amy Stevens still follows founder Claude Underbrink’s recipes from the 1920s to create the shop’s beloved angel food cupcakes. She also offers tours (by reservation) of the downtown Quincy destination that showcases nearly a century of baking tools and appliances. Unable to satisfy his sweet tooth, Chillicothe baker Harreld Webster Jr. took matters into his own hands. **Triple Dipple’s Treats and Delicacies** specializes in marrying comfort-food flavors (sweet potato pie, root beer float, PB&J) with rich and creamy cheesecake.



Cofounders Lauren Pattan and James Rogalsky with their son, Murray; Old Bakery Beer Company, Alton

HOMEGROWN EXPERIENCES

History and heritage course through the current craft beverage boom throughout Great Rivers Country. Led by principal distiller Chris Ober, **Black Band Distillery** has revived spirit production in Peoria, a city hailed as the Whiskey Capital of the World prior to Prohibition. You can sample their whiskey, bourbon, gin and vodka in bottled expressions or as craft cocktails, like the Dragon’s Breath Old Fashioned, at their farm-to-table restaurant, The Bar at Black Band. The grain-to-glass ethos at **Old Bakery Beer Company** perfectly matches the legacy of its headquarters, a former Colonial Bakery factory in Alton dating to the late 1800s. In addition to a menu of organic beers, the tasting room and on-site restaurant feature seasonal sandwiches, salads and soups that rely on local ingredients.



ARTS, CRAFTS AND CULTURE

Unfurling along the state’s western border and fed by the Missouri and Illinois rivers, the Mighty Mississippi attracts diverse talent and inspires creative endeavors. In the northern corner of the state, **Galena Spoon Co.** sells new and vintage handmade wooden utensils, cutting boards and bowls. Watch owner and artist Paul Pendola demonstrate carving techniques and then try your hand with a three-hour introductory spoon-carving workshop. Dorothy “Dot” Beach-Lawrence had been throwing pots before she and husband Dan decided to embrace their passion and open **Dot’s Pots**, a pottery studio and shop in Moline. The couple creates wheel-thrown and hand-built pieces using food- and microwave-safe glazes, as well as one-of-a-kind miniature animal sculptures and face mugs. Handcrafted bar soaps, lotion bars, bath bombs and sugar scrubs from **Water Sweets Soap Company** in Edwardsville and O’Fallon contain no added/unnatural preservatives or alcohol, and utilize only rich oils like olive, coconut and avocado. Owners Gregg and Lisa Sutterfield’s line of “bare” soaps and lotions are either unscented or scented with essential oils, ideal for people with sensitive skin.



Galena Spoon Co.



MY JUST DESSERTS, ALTON

Carrying on an Alton culinary tradition after her twin sister Yvonne’s passing, My Just Desserts owner Evelyn Campbell serves up about 10 flavors of pie daily from a recipe collection of more than 150 delicious creations.





EAT AND DRINK

The Land of Lincoln is home to culinary creators who are putting their own spin on classic favorites, spotlighting local ingredients and adding to the rich local flavor. **Epiphany Farms Hospitality Group** in Bloomington is a joint effort between three “CheFarmers” dedicated to producing sustainably sourced meals from their own farm. Ken and Nanam Myszka and team sow, weed, grow, harvest, cook, preserve and serve with grace at their four restaurant brands and on-site Farm Dinners and events. At **CBPB Popcorn Shop** in Champaign, co-owners Alven Allison, Ajza Allison and Isis Griffin hand-pop unique flavors, like cashew clump, blue cheese ranch, and Cajun. Their hand-dipped, handpicked caramel apples are also a hit.



Epiphany Farms Hospitality Group, Bloomington



Owner Steve Meadows; S.D. Meadows Folk Art Gallery, Palestine



Ornaments, from \$35; prairiefireglass.com

ARTS, CRAFTS AND CULTURE

Get a new perspective on central Illinois’ Americana charm through the lens of local artisans. At **Prairie Fire Glass**, artist and owner Jim Downey has been handcrafting glasswork for over 20 years. Peruse the colorful, functional artwork—think vases, bowls and jewelry—at the combination studio and gallery in Monticello, where you can also catch seasonal live glassblowing demonstrations. For a more eclectic art experience, head to the **S. D. Meadows Folk Art Gallery** in Palestine, where artist Steve Meadows gives new life to salvaged materials like doorknobs, bike tires and dustpans by transforming them into eye-catching, conversation-starting sculptures.

HOMEGROWN EXPERIENCES



Experience the nostalgic charm of the American heartland at one—or a few—of the picturesque family farms dotted across central Illinois. **Marcoot Jersey Creamery** in Greenville has come a long way from its 1840s beginnings—today, it’s a seventh-generation dairy farm churning out artisan cheese made from the farmstead’s own milking cows and matured in the creamery’s underground aging cave. Another 1800s farm-turned-family business is **Danenberger Family Vineyards**, an award-winning winery and music venue in New Berlin. What began as a traditional crop farm has transformed into a thriving vineyard, using the seven types of grapes grown on the land to produce around a dozen wines. At **The 200 Acres** in Arthur, six generations have been tending the land. The farm is home to The Homestead Bakery, where guests can grab made-from-scratch Amish baked goods (including 18 flavors of angel food cake), and The Great Pumpkin Patch, a seasonal attraction where visitors can take their pick from around 300 varieties of pumpkins, squash and gourds.

← **Blanc**, \$22; danenbergerfamilyvineyards.com



Owners Ginny and Mac Condill; The 200 Acres Great Pumpkin Patch, Arthur

JOHN BOOS AND CO., EFFINGHAM For more than a century, this Land of Lincoln Maker has been crafting high-quality butcher blocks, cutting boards and island countertops using sustainable and renewable North American hardwoods.

Cherry Rustic Edge (21x12x1.75-inch thick), \$139; →
Cherry Edge Grain (24x18x1.5-inch thick), \$198; johnboos.com





EAT AND DRINK

Disconnect and delight in Southern Illinois, where the forests and bluffs inspire exploration by foot, bike or even zipline. Those kinds of adventures require sustenance—and you won't have any trouble finding sips and snacks rooted in the region. Five miles from Shawnee National Forest in Ava, **Scratch Brewing Company's** brewmasters—led by founders Aaron Kleidon and Marika Josephson—scour the local flora, collecting mushrooms, berries and leaves to craft their delectable saisons or IPAs, best consumed on their patio. A visit to Brett and Regina Morrison's **StarView Vineyards** near Cobden will help keep the front-porch vibes going. Enjoy your Merlot or dry rosé on the winery's deck or lounge in the shade of its massive oak tree. Farther north, you'll find the barbecue capital of Illinois in Murphysboro. **17th Street BBQ**, founded by "The Legend" Mike Mills, is a big reason why. His slow-cooked, grand-world-champion ribs have inspired countless pilgrimages to his no-fuss, all-flavor eatery. Just make sure you get your order in before that day's ribs vanish.



Co-owner Marika Josephson; Scratch Brewing Company, Ava



17th Street BBQ, Murphysboro



← **CROWN BREW COFFEE CO., MARION** Jump-start your day with a coffee, tea or toast that's meticulously crafted before your eyes. Owner Joshua Benitone, along with his attentive staff, love to tell the story behind each cup they brew. **Seasonal Blend, \$18; crownbrewcoffee.com**



Alto Clay Works, Alto Pass



Dinger Bats, Ridgway

↑ **Handmade Honey Goat's Milk Soap, from \$9; getcsbees.com**

ARTS, CRAFTS AND CULTURE

Southern Illinois' rocky, rolling terrain is as distinct as its artisans who cater to both visitors and the stars. Professional baseball players Jazz Chisholm Jr. and Rhys Hoskins tote **Dinger Bats** to the plate. CEO Kyle Drone and craftspeople build them, along with maple bats for every age of player. See how they're made during a factory tour in Ridgway. At **Alto Clay Works**, Stephen Grimmer molds bowls, plates and vases then fires them in a woodburning kiln. Observe the creation process at the former Alto Pass Grade School.



Co-owner Morgan Stevenson; Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch, Makanda



Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch, Makanda



HOMEGROWN EXPERIENCES

Beyond the Shawnee National Forest, the land and its creatures work hand in hand—or hive—to help visitors personify the "shop local" spirit. At **C's Bees**, in Anna's Annabelle Market, all of beekeeper Crystal Housman's honey originated from her hives or nearby beekeepers' inventories. Same goes for beeswax products, and her lavender originates from a local farm. At **Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch** near Makanda, visitors can walk among the alpacas before buying ultrasoft leggings or socks. Judy Hoepker and Morgan Stevenson—the farm's mother-daughter owners—can even teach you how to crochet or weave alpaca yarn.



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1 The Milk House Ice Cream, Pingree Grove 2 Wayward Wovens, Du Quoin 3 George's Shoeshine and Hatters, Peoria
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