

illinois

Chicago & Beyond



a family-friendly summer road trip to chicago

From the local experts at Choose Chicago

Chicago is the perfect destination for a family-friendly road trip, especially in the summertime. That's when the city comes to life with one-of-a-kind adventures for all ages, from outdoor rock climbing to sightseeing cruises to lakefront amusement parks. Use this guide to start planning your road trip to Chicago, with activities for the whole family.



**3 days
26mi**
(Approx)

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Navy Pier



Chicago Children's Museum



Museum Campus



Chicago Riverwalk

Many attractions have reopened with limited capacity or different operating hours. Inquire with attractions ahead of time for up-to-date travel policies and health and safety information.

📍 Day 1

Head to Pier Park at **Navy Pier** for breakfast on the go and old-school thrill rides. Don't miss the famed Centennial Wheel, which offers views of the lakefront and skyline from almost 200 feet up. You'll also want to check out the Pepsi Wave Swinger (which is a whimsical 1920s-inspired carousel) and the **Chicago Children's Museum**.

From Navy Pier, take the Shoreline Water Taxi to the **Museum Campus**, where you'll find the Shedd Aquarium, the Field Museum, and stunning views of the city skyline. Highlights include joining a shark feeding tour and interacting with stingrays at the Shedd Aquarium, and grabbing a selfie with Máximo the Titanosaur (the largest dinosaur known to man) and SUE the T.rex at the Field Museum.

Spend the evening on the **Chicago Riverwalk**, a scenic stretch of waterfront walkway in the heart of downtown. You'll find charming cafes and restaurants, local vendors, public art, green spaces, and more. Make sure to get out on the water, whether your family prefers a seated dinner cruise, an educational architecture tour, or a guided kayak outing, there is something for everyone to enjoy. And don't miss Art on theMART, a spectacular light display that can be viewed on the Riverwalk after dark.

Time to get some rest after your fun-filled day and need somewhere to stay? [Search for Chicago hotels](#) to explore accommodations all over the city. And check out our [events calendar](#) to find more things to do in the city.

📍 Day 2

The first part of the day is all about discovering Lincoln Park. Grab breakfast outdoors at the picturesque The Patio at Café Brauer before exploring an ecology haven at the Nature Boardwalk. Kids love spotting birds, fish, insects, and wildlife as they meander the boardwalks surrounding the scenic pond. It's also a great spot to snap a family photo with the skyline as your backdrop.

Continue exploring at **Lincoln Park Zoo**, one of the oldest zoos in the nation and one of the few that offers free admission. In addition to lions and tigers and bears, you'll find an old-school carousel here, as well as locomotive rides and the Pritzker Family Children's Zoo.

While you're there, meet goats and ponies at the charming Farm-in-a-Zoo and discover a hidden garden within the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool. You can also soak in the sun at North Avenue Beach or visit the kid-friendly **Chicago History Museum**, both located nearby.

In the afternoon, head to **Maggie Daley Park** for roller skating, rock climbing, and mini-golfing. Plus, your kids will love the whimsical play gardens, where they'll find an enchanted forest, pirate ship, and more. Then cool off at **Millennium Park's Crown Fountain**, splashing in the shallow pool that stands between the interactive fountains. End the evening with views of **Cloud Gate, aka "The Bean,"** while enjoying dinner on the patio of Park Grill.



Lincoln Park Zoo



Chicago History Museum



Maggie Daley Park



Millennium Park's Crown Fountain



Cloud Gate, aka "The Bean"

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drive
on

The journey continues on the next page



Day 3

Start your day in Hyde Park at the **Museum of Science and Industry** where they offer an incredible array of interactive exhibits, such as the Marvel: Universe of Super Heroes, through October 24, 2021. Kids can step inside a tornado, view model trains, and explore a real submarine. While you're in the neighborhood, check out the nearby Garden of the Phoenix, **Bronzeville Children's Museum**, and an array of locally owned restaurants.

Then if you want to explore a little further, hop in the car and get ready for a day of outdoor adventures. Just outside the city, the **Chicago Botanic Garden** is home to millions of plants within 27 spectacular gardens. Walk

along the garden's six miles of lake shoreline, visit the beautifully manicured Japanese Garden and English Walled Garden, and see their renowned bonsai collection. You'll also be right by **Ravinia Festival**, an outdoor amphitheater with a diverse music lineup.

Also within a short drive from Chicago, **The Morton Arboretum** is an outdoor museum with a mission to appreciate, study, and protect trees. The grounds include 1,700 acres that hold more than 222,000 live plants, a visitors center, a restaurant, a children's garden, and 16 miles of trails.



Museum of Science and Industry



Bronzeville Children's Museum



Chicago Botanic Garden



Ravinia Festival



The Morton Arboretum



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