KidPaths

FAMILY ADVENTURE SERIES



ILLINOIS

50 Activities

Chicago

A Family Activity Guide

Museums · Lakefront · Zoos & Gardens
Family Entertainment · Free Activities

FREE SAMPLE · PAGE NUMBERS REFER TO THE FULL GUIDE

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FROM THE EDITOR

Saturday morning, and nobody has a plan yet

The kids are up, the weather can't decide, and someone is already asking what we're doing today. Chicago is a good city for that morning. The Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium and Adler Planetarium share one campus on the lake, Lincoln Park Zoo is free, and there is usually an indoor plan a short ride from an outdoor one.

The seasons decide a lot here. Beaches have lifeguards only in summer, and Crown Fountain splashes only in the warm months. When cabin fever sets in, the big museums and the Maggie Daley Park Skating Ribbon carry the winter.

> *"Pick the outing your youngest can enjoy, then leave room to linger."*

Money bends with the calendar too. Several major museums set aside free dates or hours for Illinois residents each year, Art Institute general admission is free for children under 14, and children under 7 ride CTA trains and buses free with a paying rider.

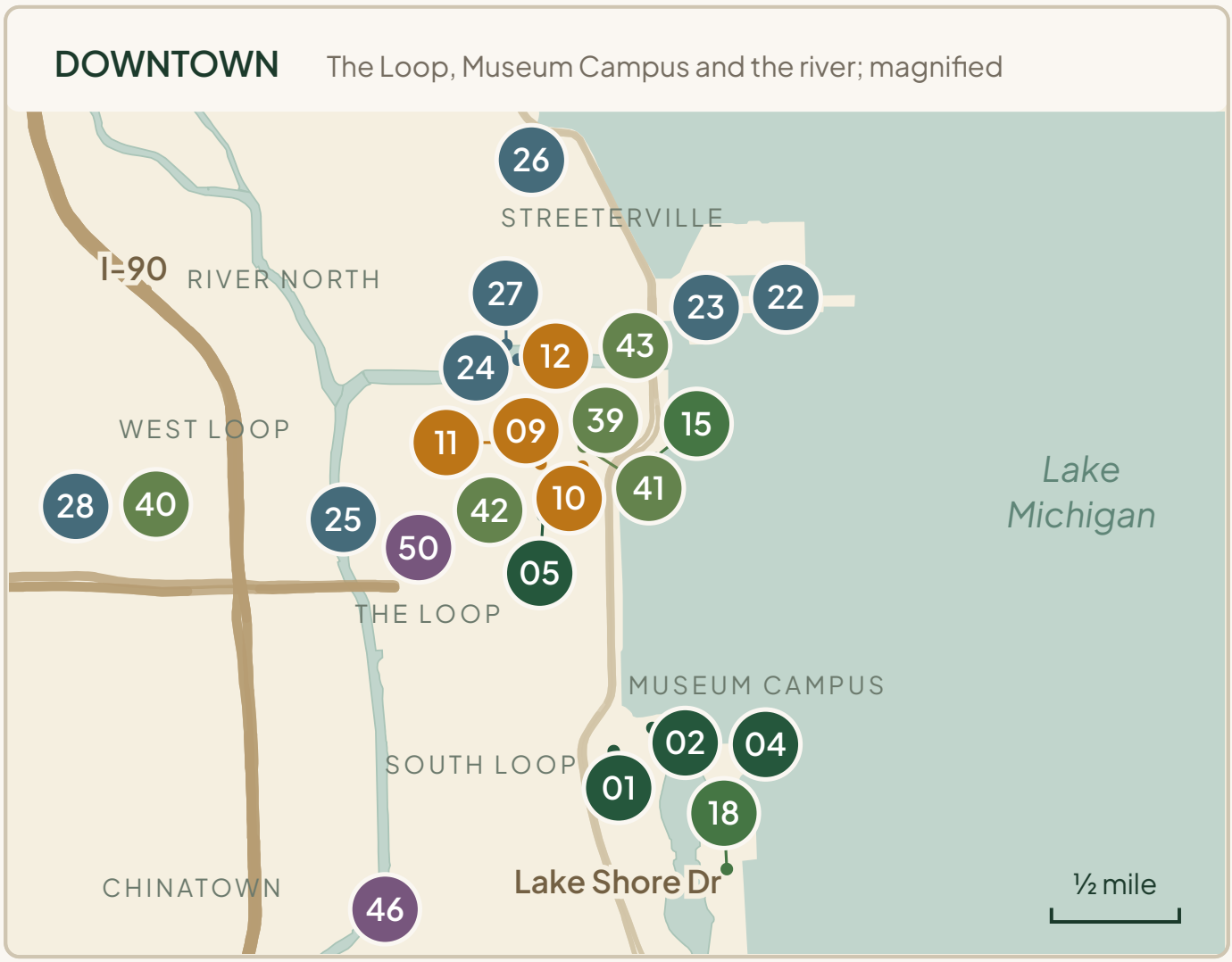
Use it however your family decides. Pick a section by what your child wants to do, or open one of the five itineraries at the back and follow it. Each listing links to the venue for tickets and hours, and Before You Go covers what to book, so the plan is settled before anyone looks for shoes.



Kit
EDITOR, KIDPATHS CHICAGO

Downtown & the Lakefront

THE LOOP, MUSEUM CAMPUS, NAVY PIER AND CHINATOWN

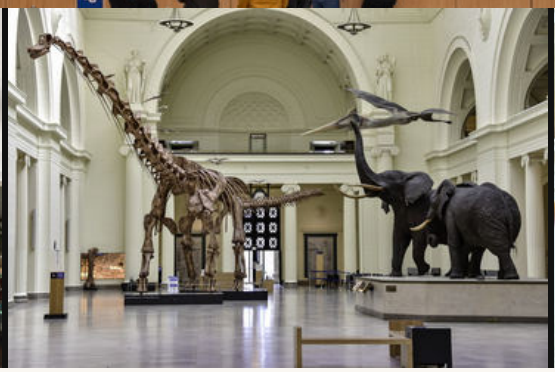


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Dots mark locations; leader lines separate labels. North is up.









01 • FEATURED VENUE • SECTION 01

Field Museum

All ages; PlayLab for 2 to 6 | Museum Campus

★ 4.7 (32,000+ reviews)

Máximo the titanosaur stretches 122 feet across Stanley Field Hall and stands 28 feet tall at the head. Find SUE the T. rex in the Griffin Halls of Evolving Planet, where children can even smell her carnivorous breath and other Cretaceous scents.

Follow your child's question through the other halls. Inside Ancient Egypt holds 23 human mummies and more than 30 animal mummies. Underground Adventure shrinks visitors to 1/100th of their size to explore life in the soil. Both come with General Admission.

For children ages 2 to 6, the Crown Family PlayLab is a space built for them and their grown-ups, usually open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is included with admission, so a younger sibling can play while an older one is still with the dinosaurs, if you have two adults.

Ticketed and temporary exhibitions change through the year, and some need an add-on ticket. A themed show can give a child an easy way into the real science, but the permanent halls are a full day on their own.

Insider Tips

- Bring snacks for the Siragusa Center tables or the ground-level tables near the Sea Mammals.
- Strollers are welcome; park them outside the ground-level theaters before a 3D movie.
- South-door lockers on the main level cost $7, $10 or $15 by size, when available.
- Take the Red, Orange or Green Line to Roosevelt, then bus 146 to Museum Campus.
- An EBT (Link) or WIC card from any state admits up to six people at $3 each. Buy in person.

ADDRESS 1400 S. DuSable Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60605 ↗

HOURS Regular hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., last entry 4 p.m.; select dates have late hours; closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

PRICE General admission from $30; Chicago residents from $21; Illinois residents free Wed; under 3 free

DETAILS Current venue details ↗



Allow 2 to 3 hours · Hours vary by day; check the Shedd calendar
1200 S. DuSable Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60605 ↗

Current venue details ↗

02

Shedd Aquarium

Good for all ages | Museum Campus

Chicago residents: $19.95 adult, $14.95 ages 3 to 11; other rates vary

★ 4.5 (33,000+ reviews)

WHY GO: **A weatherproof choice for a child who cannot get enough of animals.**

Shedd is where a child can touch the animals as well as watch them. Look for Sea Star Touch and Sturgeon Touch, and check which encounters are running when you arrive. Animal Spotlights feature belugas and dolphins in the Abbott Oceanarium. Other exhibits include Wild Reef and the Polar Play Zone.

THE CATCH: Some experiences may be unavailable during renovation, and there's no re-entry once you leave.

Pro tip: For Illinois Resident Free Hours, reserve by phone at 312-939-2438, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., to avoid the $5 online fee. Park strollers before Animal Spotlights; they cannot enter the Oceanarium seating then.



Allow 3 to 4 hours · Usually 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; closed Thanksgiving and Christmas.
5700 S. DuSable Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60637 ↗

Current venue details ↗

03

Griffin Museum of Science and Industry

All ages; Idea Factory for 10 and under | Hyde Park

Admission varies; special experiences, tours, labs and films extra

★ 4.7 (36,000+ reviews)

WHY GO: **For the child who asks how every machine works.**

Griffin MSI lets children explore its exhibits. The Coal Mine Tour walks through a darkened underground exhibit and includes a short ride on a train car. The U-505 Submarine has its own interactive exhibit, with an optional tour of the interior. Idea Factory is a research space built for scientists 10 and under, with a family restroom and a nursing room. Entry is timed and capacity-limited.

THE CATCH: The mine tour is dark and loud, and cannot accommodate strollers or wheelchairs.

Pro tip: Buy a Coal Mine Tour slot when you buy admission, and get to the meeting point early. Tours run every 30 minutes and last about 25 minutes, and late guests can't join.

DAY PLAN 02 OF 05

The Loop and Riverwalk Day

Every stop on this day is a walk from the one before, so the car can stay parked. Start at the playground while energy is high, and keep the Art Institute short: it suggests 45 to 90 minutes can be plenty, depending on your child's age. Skip Tuesday, when the museum is closed.

ITINERARY 02

A play ship, The Bean and art with free general admission under 14

9:00 a.m.

Maggie Daley Park

Kids 5 to 11 head for the Slide Crater and the big metal ship at The Sea. Ages 2 to 5 get their own full-sized play boat at The Harbor.

---- Cross the BP Pedestrian Bridge west into Millennium Park, except during events when it is exit-only.

10:00 a.m.

Millennium Park

Find Cloud Gate, known as The Bean, on Grainger Plaza. Public restrooms are on the lower level by the McCormick rink, so stop there first.

---- Walk south on Michigan Avenue to the Art Institute's Michigan Avenue entrance at 111 S. Michigan Ave.

11:00 a.m.

Art Institute of Chicago

The doors open to everyone at 11. See the Thorne Miniature Rooms, then let children build and play in the Ryan Learning Center, open 11 to 3.

---- Walk north on Michigan Avenue to lunch at Giordano's, 130 E. Randolph St. Then go west to State Street, then north to the river. Take the east-side ramp down to the Riverwalk.

2:00 p.m.

Chicago Riverwalk

Stroll west along the river and count the bridges overhead. Head back up to street level by 3:30 to stay on schedule.

MONEY

For two nonresident adults and two children ages 6 and 9, Art Institute general admission totals $64. The three outdoor stops are free; lunch and transport are extra. Garage rates vary by date, so book online, or take the L to Washington/Wabash.

Change of plan: On a Tuesday, use the free Chicago Cultural Center instead; check holiday closures. In warm months, add a Crown Fountain splash and pack a towel. Skating needs a reserved session; some own-skate sessions are free. For ages 12 and up, a cruise costs extra: reserve ahead and arrive 30 minutes before sailing.

KidPaths

FREE SAMPLE · CHICAGO FAMILY ACTIVITY GUIDE

One day is planned. The rest of your Chicago trip is in the full guide.

When this plan is done and someone asks what is next, the full Chicago guide has every outing, map and day plan in one place, ready on your phone.

50	5	3	60
OUTINGS	DAY PLANS	MAPS	PAGES

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