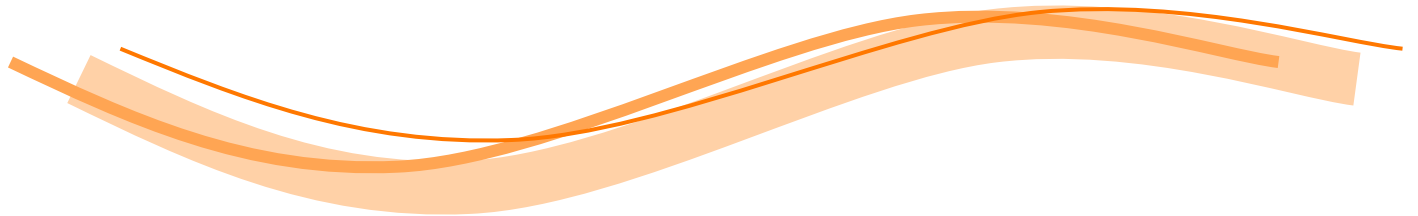




ILLINOIS





ILLINOIS

“Mile After Magnificent Mile”: explore the diverse State of Illinois! Discover Chicago and so much more - with scenic river towns, resorts and spas, outdoor activities and world class shopping and dining. Illinois is perfect for Girlfriend’s Getaways, Couples Escapes and outdoor adventure.

Chicago greets you with a sweeping skyline punctuated by the Willis Tower – the tallest building in America. View it from up high at 1,300 feet from the Willis Tower, at Skydeck Chicago. Or zoom up 1,000 feet for a 360-degree view of four states from the John Hancock Observatory. Or admire it from the Chicago River aboard the official Chicago Architecture Foundation river cruise aboard Chicago’s First Lady Cruises. The tour is led by a certified Chicago Architecture Foundation tour guide and describes the history and design of over 50 fantastic buildings.

Walk miles of sandy beaches along Lake Michigan’s waters. Savour Michelin-starred cuisine. And browse works of art that begin in museums and spill into city squares and lakeside parks. Explore the Magnificent Mile—a veritable mecca for shoppers with all the stores you could wish for along stunningly beautiful Michigan Avenue. And when the sun sets, theatre and music are in abundance.

Chicago is also a great starting point to explore Route 66, Mississippi River Country, presidential history, and other Illinois attractions that reveal the American way of life.

Looking for rest and relaxation after a city break in Chicago? **Galena** is a picturesque resort town on the banks of the great Mississippi River. Pack your clubs for one of 10 scenic golf courses, soothe your body at a spa, and watch the sun rise or set from a hot air balloon. Galena's beautiful red brick Main Street boasts more than ninety 19th-century storefronts. Boutiques offer crafts and locally made products, local wines, confectionery, and more. The Trolley Tour is a great way to learn about Galena’s history and to see its elegant mansions, the Hotel Desoto (the oldest hotel in Illinois) and more.

Illinois’ western border is defined by the **Mississippi River**. Worlds old and new collide along a beautiful scenic byway known as The Great River Road. Between towns, take in mile after mile of sweeping vistas and a must stop is in Moline, part of the Quad Cities. The Quad Cities features family adventures, challenging golf courses, art galleries, wineries, and bike and hiking trails. Hop aboard a paddle boat or water taxi to really appreciate the Quad Cities from the vantage point of the

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	<p>Mississippi. For big kids and small – tour the John Deere Pavilion where you can get up close with monster combine harvesters and try your hand at driving them through exciting simulators.</p> <p>An absolute must see in Illinois is the State Capital of Springfield. Illinois is the “Land of Lincoln” and you can step back in time and follow in the footsteps of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th U.S. president. Visit the home where he lived, the law offices and the Old State Capitol where he worked and the Lincoln Tomb Historic Site where he finally came to rest. You can walk easily between these sites and they all provide rich “living” interpretation. The past moves into the present in the state-of-the-art Abraham Lincoln Museum and Presidential Library. Live like a local and try their famous “Horseshoe” sandwich, or cozy dog. And partake in the festivities, every fall, during their annual International Route 66 Mother Road Festival.</p> <p>The famous Route 66 begins in Chicago at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Michigan Avenue, just steps from Buckingham Fountain. From there, you can explore more than 400 miles of the “Mother Road” in the Illinois countryside. A favourite stop in Springfield is Shea's Gas Station Museum. Visitors are still greeted by ninety year old Bill Shea, who has a charming and eclectic collection of gas station memorabilia that spans 50 years.</p> <p>The town of Pontiac is a must-see destination along this historic byway as it offers the finest collection of memorabilia associated with the history of Route 66 in Illinois. The Hall of Fame features displays and plaques, plus many other attractions of historical interest - including the bus and van of Route 66 Artist and Icon, Bob Waldmire, and the World's Largest Route 66 shield. The Pontiac-Oakland Automobile Museum & Resource Center recaptures the history of the Oakland and Pontiac car brands as seen through 15 classic cars, dealer artifacts and more.</p> <p>Fly to Illinois with Porter Airlines – flying refined. Porter flies direct from Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to Chicago Midway Airport, with convenient connections from Montreal. Both Billy Bishop and Chicago Midway are smaller, more pleasant airports to navigate. And Porter has connecting flights from Montreal via Toronto.</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>Illinois is located in the Midwest Region of the United States and is one of the nine states and Canadian Province of Ontario in the bi-national Great Lakes region of North America.</p> <p>Illinois' eastern border with Indiana consists of a north-south line from Lake Michigan to the Wabash River above Post Vincennes. The Wabash River continues as the eastern/southeastern border with</p>

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	Indiana until the Wabash enters the Ohio River. This marks the beginning of Illinois' southern border with Kentucky, which runs along the northern shoreline of the Ohio River. Its western border with Missouri and Iowa is the Mississippi River. Its northern border with Wisconsin is fixed at 42° 30' north latitude. The northeastern border of Illinois actually lies within Lake Michigan, within which Illinois shares a water boundary with the state of Michigan.
Geography	Though Illinois lies entirely in the Interior Plains, it does have some minor variation in its elevation. In extreme northwestern Illinois, the Driftless Area, a region of unglaciated and therefore higher and more rugged topography, occupies a small part of the state. Charles Mound, located in this region, has the state's highest elevation above sea level at 1,235 feet (376 m). The floodplain on the Mississippi River from Alton to the Kaskaskia River is known as the American Bottom.
Name	Illinois is an Algonquin Indian name for "tribe of superior men". Illinois' nickname is Land of Lincoln or The Prairie State.
Population	Nearly 13 million and the 5 th most populous US state. Chicago's population of 2.7 million makes it the 3 rd most populous city in the US
Language	English
Currency	US Dollar – which is currently close to parity with the Canadian Dollar, so there's great value in the States right now for Canadians!
Tipping	The custom of tipping personnel is a generally accepted practice in Illinois, as elsewhere in the US: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-20% for restaurant wait staff, bartenders and taxicab drivers for standard service. • About \$2 for hotel doorman and valet parkers. • \$2 per bag for bellhops.
Government	The Illinois General Assembly, composed of a 59-member Senate and a 118-member House of Representatives, is responsible for enacting, amending, or repealing laws, passing resolutions, adopting appropriation bills and conducting inquiries on proposed legislation. It also acts on amendments to the United States Constitution submitted by Congress, proposes amendments to the Illinois Constitution, and takes responsibility for impeachment and conviction of executive and judicial officeholders in the state. Pat Quinn was elected Governor in 2009; I have had the pleasure of meeting Governor Quinn and can vouch that he is an all-around-nice guy!
Documentation	Passports are required for all Canadian citizens.
Time zone	Illinois is in the Central Standard Time Zone (six hours earlier than GMT). CST is one hour earlier than EST in Toronto and Montreal.
Health	Excellent services available but ensure that you have travellers' health insurance as health costs in the US can be very high.

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Safety tips	This is a relatively safe destination for the tourist. One should use the same precautions as when traveling anywhere - try not to travel alone and avoid deserted areas at night.
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CLIMATE	
General climate	Because of its nearly 650km distance between its northernmost and southernmost extremes, as well as its mid-continental situation, Illinois has a widely varying climate. Most of Illinois has hot, humid summers and cold winters. The southernmost part of the state, from about Carbondale southward, borders on a humid subtropical climate, with more moderate winters. Average yearly precipitation for Illinois varies from just over 48 inches (1,219 mm) at the southern tip to around 35 inches (889 mm) in the northern portion of the state.
Today's weather	Chicago is 28C and sunny on August 4 th 2012.
Best time to visit	For seeing the sights, spring, summer and fall are the best seasons to visit, but the winter months also have much to offer in the cities, especially Chicago where there are a number of winter festivals.

GETTING AROUND	
Getting There	More than 37 non-stop flights travel from Canada to Illinois every day. Fly to Illinois with Porter Airlines - flying refined. Porter flies direct from Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to Chicago Midway Airport, with convenient connections from Montreal. Both Billy Bishop and Chicago Midway are smaller, more pleasant airports to navigate. There are 6 flights daily Monday to Friday and up to 4 flights daily at the weekend. Taxis are plentiful and easy to hail in downtown Chicago and offer a convenient way to get around the city. Expect to spend approximately \$35-\$40 for a taxicab ride from O'Hare Airport to downtown Chicago and \$28-\$30 from Midway Airport.
Cities	Springfield Rich in history, culture and fun, the Illinois' state capital features historic sites, museums, art galleries, parks, theatre and shopping. Step back in time and follow in the footsteps of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th U.S. president, take a ride on historic Route 66 or stroll through one of Springfield's tranquil parks. Springfield is a city with endless opportunities in the heart of Illinois. Abraham Lincoln spent the majority of his career as a lawyer and legislator in Illinois. He served four consecutive terms in the Illinois State Legislator from 1834 to 1841 and built a successful law practice in Springfield. Lincoln served one term in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1847 to 1849. Throughout the 1850s, Lincoln unsuccessfully campaigned for the U.S. Senate twice. Lincoln's

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	<p>senatorial attempts catapulted his anti-slavery rhetoric onto the national platform and drove his successful 1860 presidential campaign. Springfield boasts a plethora of historic sites dedicated to the legendary president. Visitors can tour the Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site, Lincoln Herndon Law Offices, Old State Capitol State Historic Site, Lincoln Home National Historic Site and much more. www.visit-springfieldillinois.com</p> <p>Chicago A multicultural hub in America’s heartland, Chicago is a city buzzing with world-class entertainment, dining, and arts and culture. The city, located on the shore of the great Lake Michigan, features towering skyscrapers, vast parks and endless attractions and excitement for all to enjoy. A trip to Illinois is not complete without a visit to Chicago, recently crowned the No. 2 “Top Cities in the U.S. and Canada” by <i>Travel and Leisure</i>. Visitors to Chicago can learn about architecture’s significant role in the city’s history. The Great Chicago Fire in 1871 nearly destroyed the city and left \$200 million worth of property damage. After a brief period of shock, the city began to rebuild into the mecca it is today. The city features the work of some of the world’s most famous architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Daniel Burnham, Holabird & Rouche, and Mies van der Rohe. www.choosechicago.com</p>
Touring	<p>Illinois features several America’s Byways: Great River Road, Historic National Road, Historic Route 66, Illinois River Road, Lincoln Highway, Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Route, Ohio River Scenic Byway</p>
Ferries	<p>Channel Cat Water Ride – Explore the mighty Mississippi River in the Quad Cities aboard the Channel Cat. The open-air, pontoon-style boats allow visitors to explore a variety of Quad Cities’ destinations by water. Riders can even get a taste of an area once known as the Rock Island Rapids. Tickets are for all day, unlimited use on the day of purchase. To view a full time schedule, see gogreenmetro.com.</p>
Trains	<p>Amtrak provides rail service to over 25 cities in Illinois, allowing you to easily travel beyond Chicago. http://www.amtrak.com/home</p>
Car Rental	<p>All well known car rental brands are available both at the airports and in the major cities.</p>
Buses	<p>The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is very efficient and you can plan your travel on their website at www.transitchicago.com</p>

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Passes	Buy a Chicago CityPASS booklet for entrance to five of Chicago's finest attractions. One low price gives you admission to the Shedd Aquarium, the Skydeck Chicago at the top of the Willis Tower, The Field Museum, the John Hancock Observatory or the Museum of Science and Industry and The Adler Planetarium or the Art Institute of Chicago.
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ACCOMMODATION TYPES	Every type of accommodation is available in this state, from 5-star deluxe hotels to the many B & B's dotted around the countryside. One of my personal favourites from my recent trip is: Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa in Galena is 231 kms from Chicago. Located on 6,800 acres six miles from Galena, Eagle Ridge offers accommodations ranging from traditional inn rooms to 1-8 bedroom villas and distinctive homes, 63 holes of championship golf and spa.
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LIFESTYLES	
Kids	In Moline in the Quad Cities, the John Deere Pavilion – The newly redesigned Pavilion offers an up-close look at the company's history, products and solutions to provide food for the world's growing population. New interactive displays, original artifacts, product simulators, an expanded children's area and a plethora of media make a trip to the Pavilion an enriching experience for the whole family. The John Deere Pavilion is a free attraction. For more information, visit deere.com . There's also a huge Six Flags water park near Chicago for cooling them off on a hot day!
Teens	Teenagers will love the buzz and the many attractions of Chicago, but take them outside the city to discover the many other wonders of the state. There's lots of soft adventure opportunities in the Trails to Adventure region in the south, including biking the Tunnel Hill State Trail through tunnels and over trestles. The many Route 66 attractions will also likely appeal.
Romance	There is much to kindle the flames of love in this cultural and historic destination. From cozy inns in the countryside to paddle boats on the Mississippi, to exploring the byways of Route 66... Surprise your loved one with a trip to Illinois and they will not be disappointed.
Seniors	Seniors can enjoy a state that makes travel easy. Take one of the many tours available or just explore on your own and at your own pace – the countryside will enchant you and in particular the region around Galena in the state's northwest will delight you.

UNIQUES	Get your kicks on Route 66! America's Road of Dreams is so iconic of Mainstreet USA and there's so much to experience. You can hike on sections that remain paved with bricks, meet ninety year old Bill Shea who still welcomes visitors at his Route 66 Gas Station Museum, ogle
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	<p>the cars at the Pontiac Oakland Automobile Museum, revel in the Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum and view the Route 66 murals in Pontiac ...all en route from Chicago where Route 66 begins its 4,500 kilometer journey to Los Angeles.</p> <p>The road served as the main connection between Chicago and Los Angeles for nearly six decades. In the mid-1980's, the road was deemed obsolete and it was decommissioned. However, the tales and legends of the "Mother Road" continue to be passed down from one generation to the next. The mom and pop stores that used to be stops along Route 66 are now attractions. In Illinois, Route 66 is considered a National Historic Byway and boasts an abundance of attractions and sites for travelers to explore. Check out illinoisroute66.org.</p>
<p>Surprising</p>	<p>The Cahokia Mounds</p> <p>One of the greatest cities of the world, Cahokia was larger than London was in AD 1250. The Mississippians who lived here were accomplished builders who erected a wide variety of structures from practical homes for everyday living to monumental public works that have maintained their grandeur for centuries. Cahokia Mounds is located in Collinsville, Illinois off Interstates 55/70 and 255. Cahokia Mounds is just fifteen minutes east of St. Louis.</p>
<p>History</p>	<p>Native Americans lived along the waterways of the Illinois area for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. The Koster Site has been excavated and demonstrates 7,000 years of continuous habitation.</p> <p>Cahokia, the largest regional chiefdom and urban centre of the Pre-Columbian Mississippian culture, was located near present-day Collinsville, Illinois. They built more than 100 platform and burial mounds, a 50 acres plaza and a woodhenge in a planned design expressing the culture's cosmology. Monks Mound, the center of the site, is the largest precolumbian structure north of the Valley of Mexico and is 100 feet (30 m) high, 951 feet (290 m) long, 836 feet (255 m) wide and covers 13.8 acres (5.6 ha). The civilization vanished in the 15th century for unknown reasons, but historians and archeologists have speculated that the people depleted the area of resources.</p> <p>The next major power in the region was the Illinois Confederation or Illini, a political alliance among several tribes. The Illinois people numbered about 25,000 in 1700, but systematic attacks and warfare by the Iroquois reduced their numbers by 90 percent. Gradually, members of the Potawatomi, Miami, Sauk, and other tribes came in from the east and north. In the American Revolution, the Illinois and Potawatomi supported the American colonists' cause.</p> <p>European exploration</p> <p>French explorers Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet explored the Illinois River in 1673. In 1680, other French explorers constructed a fort</p>

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at the site of present day Peoria, and in 1682, a fort atop Starved Rock in today's Starved Rock State Park. As a result of this French exploration, Illinois was part of the French empire until 1763, when it passed to the British with their conquest of New France. The small French settlements continued; a few British soldiers were posted in Illinois, but there were no British or American settlers. In 1778, George Rogers Clark claimed the Illinois Country for Virginia. The area was ceded by Virginia to the new United States in 1783 and became part of the Northwest Territory. The Illinois-Wabash Company was an early claimant to much of Illinois. The Illinois Territory was created on February 3, 1809, with its capital at Kaskaskia.

During the discussions leading up to Illinois' admission to the Union, the proposed northern boundary of the state was moved twice. The original provisions of the Northwest Ordinance had specified a boundary that would have been tangent to the southern tip of Lake Michigan. Such a boundary would have actually left Illinois with no shoreline on Lake Michigan at all. However, as Indiana had successfully been granted a 16km northern extension of its boundary to provide it with a usable lakefront, the original bill for Illinois statehood, submitted to Congress on January 23, 1818, stipulated a northern border at the same latitude as Indiana's. But the Illinois delegate, Nathaniel Pope, wanted more. Pope lobbied to have the boundary moved further north, and the final bill passed by Congress did just that; it included an amendment to shift the border to 42° 30' north, which is approximately 82 km north of the Indiana northern border. This shift added 22,000 km² to the state, including the lead mining region near Galena. More importantly, it added nearly 80 kms of Lake Michigan shoreline and the Chicago River. Pope and others envisioned a canal which would connect the Chicago and Illinois rivers, and thus, connect the Great Lakes to the Mississippi. In 1818, Illinois became the 21st U.S. state. The capital remained at Kaskaskia, headquartered in a small building rented by the state. In 1819, Vandalia became the capital, and over the next 18 years, three separate buildings were built to serve successively as the capitol building. In 1837, the state legislators representing Sangamon County, under the leadership of state representative Abraham Lincoln, succeeded in having the capital moved to Springfield, where a fifth capitol building was constructed. A sixth capitol building was erected in 1867, which continues to serve as the Illinois capitol today.

Though ostensibly a "free state", Illinois had slavery. The French owned black slaves as late as the 1820s. Slavery was nominally banned by the Northwest Ordinance, but that was not enforced. When Illinois became a sovereign state in 1818, the Ordinance no longer applied, and there were about 900 slaves there. As the southern part of the state, known as "Little Egypt", was largely settled by migrants from the South, the

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section was hostile to free blacks and allowed settlers to bring slaves with them for labor. Most citizens were opposed to allowing blacks as permanent residents, and efforts to make slavery official failed in 1822. Nevertheless, some slaves were brought in seasonally or as house servants. The Illinois Constitution of 1848 was written with a provision for exclusionary laws to be passed. In 1853, John A. Logan helped pass a law to prohibit all African Americans, including freedmen, from settling in the state.

In 1832, the **Black Hawk War** was fought in Illinois and current day Wisconsin between the United States and the Sauk, Fox (Meskwaki) and Kickapoo Indian tribes. The Indians withdrew to Iowa; when they attempted to return, they were defeated by U.S. militia and forced back to Iowa.

By 1839, the **Mormons** had founded a utopian city called Nauvoo. Located in Hancock County, along the Mississippi River, Nauvoo flourished and soon rivaled Chicago for the position of the state's largest city. But in 1844, the Mormon leader Joseph Smith was murdered in the Carthage Jail, about 50kms away from Nauvoo. Soon afterward, after close to six years of rapid development, Nauvoo saw a rapid decline after the Mormons' new leadership led them out of Illinois in a mass exodus to present-day Utah.

Chicago gained prominence as a Great Lakes port and then as an Illinois and Michigan Canal port after 1848, and as a rail hub soon afterward. By 1857, Chicago was Illinois' largest city. With the tremendous growth of mines and factories in the state in the 19th century, Illinois played an important role in the formation of labor unions in the United States. From Sunday, October 8, 1871, until Tuesday, October 10, 1871, the **Great Chicago Fire** burned in downtown Chicago, destroying 10 km²

During the American Civil War, over 250,000 Illinois men served in the Union Army, a figure surpassed by only New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Beginning with President Abraham Lincoln's first call for troops and continuing throughout the war, Illinois mustered 150 infantry regiments'

At the turn of the 20th century, Illinois had a population of nearly 5 million. Whites were 98% of the state's population. Bolstered by continued immigration from southern and eastern Europe, and by the African American Great Migration, Illinois grew and emerged as one of the most important states in the union. By the end of the century, the population had reached 12.4 million.

The Century of Progress World's Fair was held at Chicago in 1933. Oil strikes in Marion County and Crawford County lead to a boom in 1937, and, by 1939, Illinois ranked fourth in U.S. oil production. Chicago became an ocean port with the opening of the Saint Lawrence Seaway

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	<p>in 1959. The seaway and the Illinois Waterway connected Chicago to both the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean. In 1960, Ray Kroc opened the first McDonald's franchise in Des Plaines (which still exists today as a museum, with a working McDonald's across the street).</p> <p>Three presidents have claimed Illinois as their political base: Lincoln, Grant, and Obama.</p> <p>Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky, but moved to Illinois at the age of 21; he served in the General Assembly and represented the 7th congressional district in the US House of Representatives before his election as President.</p> <p>Ulysses S. Grant was born in Ohio and had a military career that precluded settling down, but on the eve of the Civil War, and approaching middle age, Grant moved to Illinois and thus claimed it as his home when running for President.</p> <p>Barack Obama was born and raised in Hawaii (other than a four year period of his childhood spent in Indonesia) and made Illinois his home and base after completing law school.</p> <p>Only one person elected President of the United States was actually born in Illinois. Ronald Reagan was born in Tampico, raised in Dixon and educated at Eureka College. Reagan moved to Los Angeles as a young adult and later became Governor of California before being elected President</p>
<p>Books</p>	<p>Frommer's USA 2012</p> <p>Route 66 Stick Kicks by Rick Antonson – an account of a road trip on Route 66 beginning in Chicago and reviewed on the Travel Show website: http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Planning/ChrisBookPicks.aspx</p>
<p>1000 Places to See Before You Die</p>	<p>Chicago has many entries in the USA and Canada Edition...Here is a selection:</p> <p>Chicago's Architecture – a vast open air museum</p> <p>The Magnificent Mile – 14 blocks of Michigan Avenue shopping bliss</p> <p>Millennium Park – a wonderful green connection to the lake</p> <p>Art Institute of Chicago – an amazing repository of masterworks</p> <p>Chicago's Blues Scene – experience the Blues like nowhere else</p> <p>Frank Lloyd Wright tour – Oak Park and the Prairie School</p>
<p>Must Sees</p>	<p>Galena is a delightful, historic town with fabulous boutiques and craft shops tucked away in the northwest corner of the state, about a 3 hour drive from Chicago. The whole town is a National Historic District on the banks of the Galena River. Many of the gracious mansions are now B&Bs and we took an informative trolley tour to see it all. Main Street is picture perfect, with stepped streets leading up the valley side from its plethora of craft shops. Across the river with views to the town is the</p>

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	<p>home of President Ulysses S. Grant, 18th President of the US. Galena www.galena.org Attractions:</p> <p>Galena's Main Street – One of the most historic streets in the Midwest, Galena's Main Street features over 100 storefronts that boast art galleries, rustic antique stores, eclectic boutique shops and world renowned cuisine. Spend a day exploring the unique shops and uncovering Galena's treasures. To learn more, check out www.galenadowntown.com</p> <p>U.S. Grant Home – The 18th President of the United States was presented with the Galena home in 1865 after returning as a Civil War hero. Grant lived in the home with his family during his 1868 presidential campaign and for brief periods during his presidency and retirement. Visitors can experience the Grant Home through a guided tour and view exhibits on Grant's life.</p> <p>Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa Golf – Four award-winning championship courses at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa offer the best golf experience in the Midwest. The rolling hills make each course challenging and rewarding. To learn more, visit www.eagleridge.com .</p> <p>Springfield is the City of Lincoln in The Land of Lincoln. Here Abraham Lincoln worked and was elected 16th President of the U.S. Springfield is a must-see on any Illinois trip. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum offers immersive experiences for all ages and is a truly world-class attraction that successfully sits astride Disney style 'edu-tainment' and more in depth analysis of this game-changer leader. Abe launched his Senate campaign from the Old State Capitol ("A House Divided...") and argued cases before the Illinois Supreme Court here – the tour of this finely preserved building is highly recommended. As is a visit to Lincoln's Home National Historic Site where you can sense Abe the man, father and husband rather than the historic icon; looking out from the home's back porch your view is Lincoln's view of the 1850's. A fitting close to your Abraham Lincoln day is a visit to the Lincoln Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery to see the 114th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry lower the flag as the evening sun burnishes the monument to perhaps America's most loved President.</p>
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SPORTS ACTIVITIES	Two Major League Baseball teams are located in the state. The Chicago Cubs of the National League play in the second-oldest major league stadium (Wrigley Field) and are widely known for having the longest championship drought in all of major American sport: not winning the World Series since 1908. The Chicago White Sox of the
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	<p>American League won the World Series in 2005, their first since 1917. The Chicago Bears football team has won nine total NFL Championships, the last occurring in Super Bowl XX in 1986. The Chicago Bulls of the NBA is one of the most recognized basketball teams in the world, due largely to the efforts of Michael Jordan, who led the team to six NBA championships in eight seasons in the 1990s. The Chicago Blackhawks of the NHL began playing in 1926, as a member of the Original Six and have won four Stanley Cups, most recently in 2010.</p>
Golf	<p>Illinois has literally hundreds of golf courses of all sorts. I stayed at Eagle Ridge Inn & Resort just outside Galena which has multiple courses. The General Course is the resort's crowning achievement. Golf Digest magazine ranks The General as one of America's top 100 greatest golf courses. 109 Eagle Ridge Dr., Galena, IL 61036 Southern Illinois even has a Golf Trail, featuring five acclaimed courses.</p>
Fishing	<p>Anglers in Illinois need to look no further than their immediate surroundings to enjoy quality fishing. Some of the best fishing opportunities in the US can be found in this state's million and a half acres of water. Illinois waters vary from the deep blue waters of Lake Michigan, to many great rivers, to crystal-clear smaller lakes and ponds. Try this website for detailed information: http://www.ifishillinois.org</p>
Horse riding	<p>There are stables all over the state of Illinois, so you will have plenty of choice in this destination. This website has a good listing of all the stables and equestrian centres: http://www.horse-riding.net/horseback-riding/Illinois</p>
Hiking	<p>Mississippi Palisades State Park. Located near the confluence of the Mississippi and Apple rivers in northwestern Illinois, the 2,500-acre Mississippi Palisades State Park is rich in American Indian history and has some great hiking. www.stateparks.com/mississippi_palisades_state_park_in_illinois.html</p>
Cycling	<p>The Prairie State was made for cyclists, with very few hills except in the northwest of the state. There are canal tow path trails, rail-to-trail lines and trails down the Mississippi Valley. Try the Sam Vadalabene Bike Trail in Great Rivers Country: Extending 32 kms from Alton to Pere Marquette State Park, the Sam Vadalabene Bike Trail runs parallel to the Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway along IL Route 100, as well as the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The route is completely paved and takes cyclists through the towns of Elsah and Grafton. Comfort stations are available at Piasa Park, Clifton Terrace Park, Elsah, Grafton Visitors Center, Grafton Harbor public restroom and Pere Marquette State Park. This is a great ride for cyclist of all ages, including families looking for a free day of fun!</p>

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<p>Driving Route 66</p>	<p>Pontiac A Route 66 mecca, Pontiac, located in central Illinois, is a must-see destination along the historic byway. The town is home to four wonderful museums - all with free admission. In addition, Pontiac boasts a fabulous collection of outdoor painted murals and nine “Looking for Lincoln” heritage sites. pontiac.org</p> <p>Pontiac Oakland Automobile Museum – See the world’s greatest collection of Pontiac and Oakland automobile brand items at the Pontiac Oakland Automobile Museum. The museum features antique and classic cars, thousands of dealer artifacts, and a comprehensive library of maps, brochures, original design drawings and service manuals. To learn more, check out pontiacoklandmuseum.org.</p> <p>Route 66 Museum and Hall of Fame - The museum offers free admission to thousands of artifacts and memorabilia related to Route 66. Most popular is Route 66 legendary artist and icon, Bob Waldmire's bus and van. The museum also boasts the world's largest Route 66 shield and other imaginative murals. For more information, visit il66assoc.org.</p> <p>Shea’s Gas Station Museum – A favourite stop on celebrated Route 66 in Springfield, the charming museum is filled with over half a century of gas station memorabilia. Owner Bill Shea, who has become an international celebrity, shares fascinating tales about his collection and over 50 years of life along Route 66. The museum is located at 2075 Peoria Rd. in Springfield. To learn more, see visit-springfieldillinois.com.</p>
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<p>CULTURE</p>	
<p>Arts</p>	<p>Chicago Architecture Foundation river cruise aboard Chicago’s First Lady Cruises – Hop aboard Chicago’s First Lady and see Chicago’s magnificent architecture while riding on a luxury river cruise vessel. The tour is led by a certified Chicago Architecture Foundation tour guide. It describes the history and design of over 50 fantastic buildings. Chicago’s First Lady Cruises has a 19-year partnership with the CAF offering one of Chicago's top tourist attractions. Their custom luxury vessels are a key element to the popularity of the CAF river cruise. Visit their website at www.cruisechicago.com</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>Jazz In the first great wave of black migration from the South just after World War I, jazz journeyed from the Storyville section of New Orleans to Chicago. Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong made Chicago a jazz hot spot in the 1920s, and their music lives on in a whole new</p>

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	<p>generation of talent. Chicago jazz is known for its collaborative spirit and a certain degree of risk-taking -- which you can experience at a number of lively clubs.</p> <p>Blues If there's any music that epitomizes Chicago, it's the blues. As African-Americans migrated northward in the years following World War II, they brought their musical traditions with them, including the mournful, guitar-and-harmonica-based sound known as Delta blues. In Chicago, the addition of electric guitar gave the traditional blues a jolt of new life, and local musicians such as Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, and Willie Dixon influenced generations of rockers that followed. Today, blues clubs remain a staple of the cultural scene, but one that attracts mostly niche audiences. Some spots cater to out-of-towners looking for an "authentic" blues experience, while others keep a relatively low profile, surviving thanks to the loyalty of die-hard blues aficionados.</p>
<p>Films</p>	<p>Many films have been shot in the state, from Home Alone to Halloween!</p>
<p>Museums</p>	<p>Illinois has numerous museums; the greatest concentration of these is in Chicago. Numerous museums in the city of Chicago are considered some of the best in the world. These include the John G. Shedd Aquarium, the Field Museum of Natural History, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Adler Planetarium, and the Museum of Science and Industry.</p> <p>The state of the art Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield is the largest presidential library in the country. Other historical museums in the state include Magnolia Manor in Cairo, the Elihu Benjamin Washburne and Ulysses S. Grant Homes, both in Galena, and the Polish Museum of America in Chicago.</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>History Comes Alive – Throughout the summer, Springfield visitors can step back in time to the Civil War era and experience the historic town through the eyes of legendary President Abraham Lincoln. History Comes Alive in Springfield seven days a week through September 2. Watch historical vignettes with Lincoln's neighbors, listen to Mr. Lincoln tell "Back-Porch" stories, meet General Grant or even experience a moving Lincoln speech. History Comes Alive is a unique and interactive way to experience the sites of Springfield. In addition to daily History Comes Alive attractions, special summer programming is offered to truly make a Springfield trip unforgettable. For full programing, see www.visit-springfieldillinois.com</p> <p>International Route 66 Mother Road Festival – On Friday, September 21, 2012 over 1,000 classic cars will roll into downtown Springfield for a weekend filled with live music, entertainment and fun. The free annual</p>

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	<p>festival celebrates the golden age of Route 66. Visitors can hear the rumble of engines from hot cars, cool trucks, vintage motorcycles, street rods and much more. To learn more, go to visit-springfieldillinois.com.</p> <p>Upcoming 2012 Events in Chicago:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lollapalooza Music Festival Chicago – August 3 to August 5 • Chicago Air & Water Show – August 18 to August 19 • Chicago Jazz Festival – August 30 to September 2 • Chicago Gourmet – September 29 to September 30
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ATTRACTIONS	
Beaches	<p>Yes, there are beaches in Illinois! Take a visit to one of the many Chicago beaches and you'll find beautiful blue water as far as the eye can see - you may think you've gone from Chicago to southern California!</p> <p>Best of Chicago Beaches for people watching is Oak Street Beach. Whether it's rollerblading, volleyball, relaxing and soaking in some rays or wanting to check out tiny swimwear, Oak Street Beach is steps away from the Magnificent Mile and a people-watching extravaganza right in the middle of a bustling Chicago.</p> <p>The largest of Chicago's Beaches is Loyola Leone Beach at 8 blocks long. Kid friendly with a play lot and stroller beach mats, this beach is also great for the sports enthusiast with baseball fields, basketball courts and a large bike rack. Hungry? Check out the excellent Heartland Concession stand.</p>
Wildlife	<p>Bald eagle watching is big in Illinois. Join one of the many eagle-watching tours and events offered in Alton on the Mississippi, or visit the Melvin Price Locks & Dam to get a bird's-eye view of the eagles soaring over the Mississippi River. There are approximately 2,000 eagles that migrate to the Middle Mississippi River Valley, making the region's overwintering population the second largest in the continental United States. The area's eagles come mainly from nesting territories in central Canada and the Great Lake states. When the water freezes up north the eagles migrate south to places like the Melvin Price Locks and Dam, the Alton Lake section of the Mississippi River, the Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge, Pere Marquette State Park, and the Clarksville area where conditions are favorable. The first eagles are usually spotted in December and they migrate back north in March.</p> <p>http://www.greatriverroad.com/Eagles/eagleCover.htm</p>
Parks	<p>The Illinois state parks system began in 1908 with what is now Fort Massac State Park, becoming the first park in a system encompassing over 60 parks and about the same number of recreational and wildlife areas.</p>

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	<p>Areas under the protection and control of the National Park Service include: the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor near Lockport; the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail; the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield; the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail; the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail; and the American Discovery Trail.</p> <p>Millennium Park – The expansive public park is located in the bustling Loop area of Chicago. It features a state-of-the-art collection of architecture, landscape design and art. The park boasts an abundance of programming including concerts, exhibitions, tours and family activities. Visitors to Millennium Park can see a reflection of the city’s skyline from Cloud Gate, a 110-ton elliptical sculpture forged from a seamless series of highly polished stainless steel plates. To learn more, see www.explorechicago.org .</p>
<p>Gardens</p>	<p>Chicago Botanical Gardens Experience the colors and aromas of the flowering Rose Garden. See the Victoria water lily in the Heritage Garden. It blooms for two nights only and turns from female to male. Discover remarkable delphiniums, blooming lamb's ears, and myriad plants in bloom. them. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Garden. Today, 2.5 million plants, 25 display gardens, and four natural areas thrive here. http://www.chicagobotanic.org</p>
<p>Historical Sites in Springfield</p>	<p>Abraham Lincoln Museum and Presidential Library – Opened in 2005, the ALPLM showcases the State of Illinois’ Abraham Lincoln Collection, the largest in the world. The Library is home to the 12 million-item Illinois State Historical Library and its world-renowned 46,000-piece Abraham Lincoln Collection. Museum visitors can experience key points in Lincoln’s life through reproductions including his boyhood cabin and the White House as it looked in 1961. Some of the most famous artifacts on display are Lincoln’s famous Gettysburg Address, a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Speech. For more information, visit alplm.org.</p> <p>Lincoln Home National Historic Site – Tour the place Lincoln and his family called home for seventeen years. The home is amidst a historic four-block neighbourhood that boasts various Lincoln exhibits. Learn about 1860 Springfield, the Lincoln family and the home’s preservation process. The historic site is free to the public and open daily. To learn more, check out visit-springfieldillinois.com.</p> <p>Old State Capitol Historic Site – See the recreation of the statehouse as it was during Lincoln’s years. The Old State Capitol is the site of the</p>

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	<p>site of Lincoln’s famous “House Divided” speech. Visitors can tour the building, view Lincoln artifacts and learn about his time spent at the capitol. Hours are seasonal. For more information, go to illinoishistory.gov.</p> <p>Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices State Historic Site – Lincoln practiced law at the Springfield law office from 1834 to 1852. The historic site includes an exhibit gallery and audiovisual theater, along with a room interpreted as an 1840’s post office facility. Visitors can embark on a guided tour of the site. Second floor rooms represent those used by the federal court and third floor rooms depict a “common room” and three lawyers’ offices. Hours are seasonal. To learn more, visit illinoishistory.gov.</p> <p>Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site – The 117-foot tall granite tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery is the burial site of Abraham Lincoln, his wife Mary, and three of his four sons, Tad, Eddie and Willie. Lincoln’s body rests below the floor in a steel and concrete-reinforced vault. The tomb underwent reconstruction in 1899 to deter grave robbers. It was designed by sculptor Larkin Mead and paid for by public donations. For more information, see visit-springfieldillinois.com.</p>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>For high end shops and boutiques, The Magnificent Mile along Chicago’s Michigan Avenue is world famous.</p> <p>Chicago Premium Outlets 1650 Premium Outlets Blvd. Aurora With 120 stores, it is a true bargain hunter's haven. You'll find impressive savings of 25% to 65% every day from leading designers and name brands including Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Calvin Klein, Coach, DKNY, Elie Tahari, Giorgio Armani, Kate Spade, Kenneth Cole, Lacoste, Michael Kors, Nike, OshKosh B'gosh, Reebok, Salvatore Ferragamo, St. John, TAG Heuer, Theory and many more.</p>
Markets	<p>Farmers markets can be found in most Illinois communities and are a really good way of meeting the locals and getting an authentic feel for the destination.</p>
Nightlife	<p>If you want to soak up the atmosphere of an authentic neighbourhood tavern or sports bar, it's best to venture beyond downtown in Chicago. Lincoln Park, Wrigleyville, and Bucktown/Wicker Park have well-established nightlife zones that abound with bars that range from bright and upscale to borderline-dingy but full of character. You'll also find numerous dives and no-frills "corner taps" in the blue-collar neighbourhoods.</p> <p>As for nightlife downtown, virtually every hotel in Chicago has some</p>

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	kind of bar. Many are little more than undistinguished groupings of tables and chairs in the lobby, but others have become trendy clublike hotspots. If you're looking for an old-school, cocktail-lounge vibe, the piano bar at The Drake Hotel, Coq d'Or, is a standout.
Casinos	There are many opportunities to visit casinos in Illinois, but perhaps the most memorable are the river boat casinos on the Mississippi. Try the Casino Queen in East St. Louis. The bright lights of Vegas have nothing on the Casino Queen! The Queen has had the loosest slots in the entire country for six years running, plus the hottest table games in town. Hungry? The Queen has you covered from fine dining to casual. Web site: http://www.casinoqueen.com

CUISINE	
Food	Don't expect to lose weight on your trip to Illinois! The food is first class and much of it is local. But the portions are HUGE! Your options stretch from 5-star dining in cities such as Chicago to roadside diners from the 1950's. Some of my recommendations are listed below.
Wine	You'll find more than 90 wineries in the state of Illinois. There are 20 wineries within a short drive of Chicago which can be found on the Northern Illinois Wine Trail , including several around Galena. There's another 7 wineries on the Illinois River Wine Trail that winds along the Illinois River National Scenic Byway. And there are another five wine trails in others parts of the state too.
Restaurants	Chicago Dine at The Signature Room on the John Hancock Center's 95th floor. Located atop the John Hancock Center, The Signature Room at the 95th offers diners exquisite food, superb service, and a dazzling skyline view. The elegant wood designs and art deco interior create an inviting and intimate atmosphere, while the floor-to-ceiling windows accentuate the stunning Chicago skyline and 360° degree views of the entire city. Dining in Galena (both personally recommended): Holy Mackerel – Located in a charming historic church 10 minutes south of Galena in Elizabeth, Holy Mackerel features delicious homemade dishes. The self-described, "seafood n steak joint," offers gourmet cuisine in a cozy dining room. Holy Mackerel was recently featured in the Chicago Tribune's travel section. To learn more, visit holymackerelizabeth.com . Otto's Place – The breakfast and lunch joint features comfort food in a relaxed and quiet atmosphere. Take a retreat to Otto's and taste

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homemade desserts, such as pineapple upside down cake. For more information, see ottosplace.com.

Dining in **Moline in the Quad Cities** (also personally recommended)

Johnny’s Italian Steakhouse – A stop in Moline is not complete without dining at Johnny’s Italian Steakhouse. The Italian eatery has six locations throughout the Midwest in Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and Wisconsin. A seventh location will open in Olathe, Kansas in August 2012. To learn more, visit johnnysitaliansteakhouse.com.

Lagomarcino’s – Take a trip back in time and visit an authentic soda fountain. In 1908, Angelo Lagomarcino, an Italian immigrant, founded the sweet confectionery. The Moline destination offers succulent homemade chocolates, tasty ice cream sundaes and creamy malts. Visitors can witness the preparation of the tasty treats while seated at Lagomarcino’s authentic soda fountain. For more information, check out lagomarcinos.com.

In Springfield:

Obed & Issac’s – The microbrewery and eatery pays homage to Obed and Cordelia Lewis, who lived one block west of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln. The Conn family, decedents of Obed and Cordelia, rescued the family home from demolition and moved it six blocks to its present location. The home now rests on the Lewis property, along with Obed Lewis’ original carriage house built around 1900. In September 2011, the Conn family began to develop the restaurant and brew pub on the historic property. Obed & Issac’s patrons can taste locally brewed beer and great food. Check out obedandisaacs.com.

Cozy Dog Drive In – Home of the one and only “Cozy Dog”, the Springfield landmark drive in serves up delicious hot dogs, dipped in batter and deep fried. Ed Waldmire Jr. developed the Cozy Dog, with help from an old college friend, when he served in the Air Force. Cozy Dogs officially launched at the Lake Springfield Beach House in June 1946 and served at the Illinois State Fair the same year. The drive in is a Springfield staple located at 2935 S. Sixth St. in Springfield. To learn more, visit cozydogdrivein.com.

MORE INFO	
Brochures	For a free Illinois Travel Guide: http://www.enjoyillinois.com/traveltools/travelTools.aspx A free Enjoy Illinois mobile app is available for iPhone and Android.

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	The app can be used to manage trips, browse nearby attractions and find deals in Illinois: http://www.enjoyillinois.com/apps/default.aspx
Websites	Website: www.enjoyillinois.com Connect with Illinois on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/EnjoyIllinois Follow Illinois on Twitter: https://twitter.com/enjoyillinois See Illinois on You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=UU8_IrEK-ybSuE1RQ-aeOzQ&feature=plcp

HOTEL PRIZE PARTNER	Chicago's Essex Inn 800 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605 USA Phone: (312) 939-2800 toll free: (800) 621-6909 Stay at the Chicago Essex Inn, right downtown on the Michigan Avenue Cultural Mile. It combines breathtaking panoramas of Grant Park, the Museum Campus and Lake Michigan. From the steel and glass lobby to contemporary rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows to an all-season rooftop pool, the Essex Inn offers amazing views and amazing value, including free wi-fi throughout the hotel. http://www.essexinn.com
Location	The hotel is located in downtown Chicago on the Michigan Avenue Cultural Mile. When you stay here, you're close to Grant Park, Soldier Field, and McCormick Place and near the CTA. A hotel shuttle bus is available to hotel guests, free of charge. It makes several stops along Michigan Avenue — as far north as the Water Tower Place. Stops also include Navy Pier and the Museum Campus.
Facilities	The sights from the rooftop deck will leave you weak in the bare knees. Fortunately, their fitness centre — complete with modern treadmills, lifecycles, weight machines and free-weights — will help you regain your strength. Whether you work yourself into a tizzy over exercise or seeing the beautiful sailboats on Lake Michigan, not to worry: simply turn from the balcony and stroll to the pool. It's big. It's cool. And it's next to a lovely sauna...
Accommodation	254 hotel rooms and suites (138 of which are doubles) All rooms feature LCD flat-screen TVs, wireless Internet access, sleek desks with a large work space, iPod- and MP3-compatible alarm clock radios, refrigerators, coffee/tea service and irons and ironing boards; roll-away beds are available upon request. Accessible guest rooms that include such accessible features as grab bars in the showers; ADA-compliant sitting stools for showering; hand held shower spray wands; ADA-compliant lavatory fixtures; lowered security "peep" holes on the doors; ADA-compliant door hardware; touch lamps; and TTY Kits for hearing & visual assistance A complimentary all-season rooftop pool offers views of Lake Michigan,

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	and a fitness centre with modern treadmills, lifecycles, weight machines and free-weights.
Restaurants	Brasserie by LM: This French inspired restaurant and bar (open daily 6:00am-10:30pm) offers a modern and casual setting for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Specialties include Onion Soup Gratinee, Lyonnaise Salad, Mussels Frites, Duck Confit and Croque Monsiuer. Guests can also enjoy domestic, French and German draft beers and a wine list complete with domestic and French options.
AIRLINE PRIZE PARTNER	Porter Airlines www.flyporter.com
Flight details	Porter flies direct from Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to Chicago Midway Airport, with convenient connections from Montreal. Both Billy Bishop and Chicago Midway are smaller, more pleasant airports to navigate. Flight time is just 1hr 45mins Toronto to Chicago.
CURRENT DEALS	Porter has some very good sales on its flights to Chicago, so check out their website when you want to book your trip to see what's on offer: www.flyporter.com
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	I have just returned from an eye-opening road trip to Illinois! See my Travel Blog at: http://www.chrisrobsontravelshow.ca/Blog/tabid/400/EntryId/77/Illinois-Mile-After-Magnificent-Mile.aspx I have also posted a host of photos from my trip on Pinterest at: http://pinterest.com/TravelShow/illinois

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