

# The West Loop

Want to experience the trendiest neighborhood in town? The West Loop, just blocks away from Chicago's Greektown and the United Center (home of the Chicago Bulls and Chicago Blackhawks), is defined by boutique shopping, public art and adventurous dining. Switch your camera on, because everything you eat, drink and do here will be Instagram-able. There are sights, sounds and tastes to enjoy.

## Location

The West Loop is one of Chicago's fastest growing neighborhoods. It's located about 35 minutes from Chicago O'Hare International Airport and Midway Airport. You catch the CTA Blue Line from the airport and ride it downtown to transfer to the CTA Green Line at Clark/Lake in the Loop. There, it's an easy (and free!) transfer to the Green Line, which you can ride to Clinton, Morgan or Ashland and find yourself in the West Loop. You can also take the westbound #20/Madison bus from State/Madison.

You can also grab an Uber/Lyft from the airport to the West Loop for approximately \$35.

If you want to head to downtown Chicago from the West Loop, an Uber/Lyft gets you there in about 10-15 minutes and costs about \$10.

## Where to Stay

On the border of the West Loop and the equally hip Fulton Market District, [The Hoxton](#) offers a complimentary breakfast featuring overnight yohurt and granola and orange juice. Their hotel restaurant, Cira, also offers hot breakfast. You'll find bookshelves curated by select Chicago creatives, locally sourced art and Bluetooth speakers in every room. You can also enjoy one of Chicago's best bars — The Lazy Bird — in the basement lounge, available with reservations. And take advantage of their "flexy time" check-in/out to fit your schedule, a shared workspace, three bars, a full food menu and enough activities to tempt you to stay in.

For a truly unique experience, [The Publishing House Bed & Breakfast](#)--housed in the former Free Methodist Publishing House built in 1909--balances modern style and Midwest hospitality. The B&B hosts just 24 guests at a time across 11 private rooms, each with an in-suite bathroom (complete with claw-foot tub), highly personalized service and fully customized breakfast options.

Enjoy a vibrant urban experience at [Hampton by Hilton](#) and [Homewood Suites](#) by Hilton, blending the industrial architecture of the West Loop with the modern glass high rises that now define the city skyline. Look out over Chicago's Fulton Market District from your poolside perch on the sky deck [of Hyatt House Chicago](#). It's just steps from Randolph Street--Chicago's Restaurant Row--where chic eateries, wine bars and clubs line the avenues of this historic neighborhood.

## Best Restaurants

The West Loop has attracted many of Chicago's greatest culinary talents, and rightfully acquired the "restaurant row" label. The neighborhood now houses more critically acclaimed restaurants and bars than any other part of the city, which means you'll need some help sorting out the cr me de la cr me.

### Mediterranean

- Explore [Aba's](#) fresh spin on Mediterranean small plates, boasting big flavors and reimagined classics from Greece, Israel, Lebanon, and Turkey.
- [Rose Mary](#), a Croatian spot, have things like a refreshing and flavorful salad with tomato, farro, and asparagus, a delicious crni rizot that tasted like it was made with stock from the tears of a hundred lobsters (that's a compliment), and incredible pastas.
- [Avec](#) is a staple in the neighborhood and you must order chorizo-stuffed bacon-wrapped dates and the taleggio flatbread!

## American

- [Au Cheval](#) has an excellent burger. But this casual spot has a lot of other fantastic things on the menu, too. Dishes like the chilaquiles, chicken wings, and foie gras with eggs should also be on the table. They don't take reservations, and waits can be a pain, but sometimes you just need to commit.
- If you love meat and potatoes, [Green Street Smoked Meats](#) brings smokey, Texas BBQ. Rana says the pork belly is like eating a desert.
- This place works well for a date or dinner with a small group when you can't get a reservation at Bavette's or Gilt Bar.
- [Bavettes](#) is a traditional Chicago steakhouse with a modern New American twist. **Reservations should be made in advance**, but if you plan early, it is totally worth the dining experience at this ornate, upscale spot.
- Located slightly East near Millennium Park, [Gilt Bar's](#) playful elegance and cozy seating make this New American eatery and lounge worth a visit. It can be tough to get into, so we recommend reservations in advance.
- Few Chicago restaurants possess the staying power that [Girl & the Goat](#) has been able to maintain since 2010, when it opened on Restaurant Row in the West Loop. It's still tough to nab a reservation at Top Chef Stephanie Izard's flagship spot, where diners can nosh on wood-grilled broccoli, smoked apple pierogies, duck tartare and wood-oven-roasted pig face. Don't forget to check out its sister restaurant [Little Goat](#) for brunch.

## Italian

- [Trivoli Tavern](#) is in [Gin Alley](#), and from the same team as Au Cheval and Green Street Smoked Meats. This means they have a twinkly lit cobblestoned patio. Or you could sit inside, where it's dark and full of overstuffed leather furniture. They serve upscale bar food like fish and chips, handmade pastas, steaks, and a very good burger. This place works well for a date or dinner with a small group when you can't get a reservation at Bavette's or Gilt Bar.
- [Monteverde](#), has some of the best Italian food in the city. Every pasta dish here is fantastic, particularly the cacio e pepe.

## Japanese

- [Momotaro](#), designed by world-renowned restaurant and experience designers AvroKO, offers an elevated dining experience for lovers of Japanese cuisine. Downstairs the Izakaya bar and lounge transports guests back to the streets of old Tokyo.
- [Gajin](#) is a trendy new spot that offers Japanese comfort foods like yakisoba and okonomiyaki in unique styles specific to Osaka and Hiroshima alongside delicious shaved ice desserts and highballs.
- [Omakase Yume](#) offers a high-end 16-course sushi tasting curated by Chef SangTae Park.

## Kid Friendly

Although we're certain that there are things that any young ones can eat at the other restaurants on our list, these are our recommendations for more kid-centric dining:

- [Parlor Pizza Bar](#) is a warm and inviting meeting place where everyone can share unique pizzas and enjoy craft beers/cocktails with an expansive patio and rooftop.
- [Polombia](#) is a unique, Polish-Colombian fusion spot located in TimeOut Market, a food hall home to a number of other up and coming restaurants. The menu, although small offers a variety of eats that cater to both the more adventurous as well as reliable snacks, like potatoes, lentil soup and kolaczki.

## Bars and Nightlife

Drinking at [The Darling](#) is like falling down Alice's rabbit hole (the good parts, at least). Charming, intimate, and featuring a reservation-only library with hidden entrance and pop-up cabaret performances, the cocktail lounge serves a number of exquisitely balanced cocktails and food options while hosting some of the city's best DJs.

[The Aviary](#) offers an array of creative cocktails and intimate spaces that are bookable in advance online. They are part of Chicago's Alinea Group, a renowned collection of restaurants and cocktail lounges universally praised for their innovative approach to dining and crafting unique and memorable experiences for guests.

[Moneygun](#) is a hip, understated, booth-lined spot that serves traditional cocktails. Perfect for a night cap or to spend the night with friends, this is an excellent dressed-down option for a very Chicago-esque experience.

### Traveling with family?

If you're traveling with your spouse, children, friends or all of the above, here are a few excellent ways to spend your time between trainings and meals:

- **Museum of Contemporary Art:** The MCA is Chicago's contemporary and modern art museum. It features a rotating cast of their collected works – ranging from the likes of famous designer Virgil Abloh to local artists like Jeanne Dunning. It's featured exhibitions, often by ticket purchase only, touch on themes like ambiguity, The Internet, politics and poetry. **Admission is a suggested donation of \$3 with a "pay-what-you-can" policy, and the Museum is open 10am-9pm Wed-Sun, 10am-9pm Tues and closed Mondays.**
- **The Art Institute of Chicago:** This world-renowned museum is home to a number of iconic exhibitions such as a display of works by Mark Rothko as well as archives of ancient art from across the world. It's simply a must-see when in Chicago. **Tickets can be bought online or in-person and are \$19 with discounts for seniors and students. The Art Institute is open from 11am to 6pm on Mondays and Thursday through Sunday.**
- **Museums at Museum Campus:** Museum Campus is home to the Alder Planetarium, The Shedd Aquarium and the Field Museum of Natural History – all featuring their own sites and wonders in a single 57-acre museum park right by Lake Michigan. **Hours and ticket prices vary per museum and tickets can be bought in bundles here:**  
<https://www.enjoyillinois.com/explore/listing/chicago-museum-campus>

## SEASONAL

- [Ice Skating in Maggie Daley Park](https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-news/this-immersive-van-gogh-exhibit-in-chicago-lets-you-ice-skate-in-a-work-of-art): The iconic ice-skating ribbon in Maggie Daley Park is open through March 13<sup>th</sup>, and is a wonderful way to get outside, hit the ice and take in the sites of downtown Chicago. The skating rink features rentals, food vendors and, this season, a Vincent Van Gogh Skating. This is an immersive skating experience that projects the works of Van Gogh onto the rink at Maggie Daley Park. The park has day and evening hours. Tickets can be booked in advanced here: <https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-news/this-immersive-van-gogh-exhibit-in-chicago-lets-you-ice-skate-in-a-work-of-art>