

Gold Coast

Neighborhood Top Five

- 1 Getting high at the **John Hancock Center** (p84) by taking the 20mph elevator to the 96th-floor lounge for a tall drink and sparkling views.
- 2 Perusing the avant-garde paintings, sculptures and videos at the **Museum of Contemporary Art** (p85).
- 3 Ogling the genteel mansions on **Astor St.**
- 4 Examining the eerie gallstones and cadaver murals at the **International Museum of Surgical Science** (p87).
- 5 Wandering along **Rush St** during the see-and-be-seen weekend nights (p87).



For more detail of this area see Map p296 ➡

Explore The Gold Coast

The Gold Coast has been the address of Chicago's crème de la crème for more than 125 years. When you stroll through the neighborhood, especially the Astor St area, you'll take in some of the most beautiful old mansions in Chicago. One of them belonged to Hugh Hefner and was the original Playboy Mansion.

Beyond the sky-high John Hancock Center and the underappreciated Museum of Contemporary Art, there aren't many sights in the Gold Coast. The best way to get a feel for the neighborhood's moneyed present is to spend an afternoon browsing luxuriant designer wares around Oak and Rush Sts, or an evening among the glittering high heels and good cheekbones of the neighborhood's nightlife. On Friday evening, see-and-be-seen crowds glide through bars and restaurants at Rush and State Sts, where businessmen carve porterhouses while downing martinis and ogling the action – no wonder locals call the area the 'Viagra Triangle.' For window-shopping and people-watching, Chicago offers no finer spectacle.

East along Michigan Ave the shopping gives way to high-rise malls that will be likely destinations for anyone with kids. American Girl Place, Hershey's and the Lego Store send out their siren call from here. Oak St Beach is a stone's throw away, offering a bit of breathing room from the high-rise jungle and a fine place to dip your toes in the lake.

Local Life

- **Hidden Treats** Only neighborhood folks know that Hendrickx Belgian Bread Crafter (p87), purveyor of top-notch chocolate croissants, hides inside the bland apartment building on Walton St.
- **Low-Key Drinks** Locals looking for a well-made cocktail without the usual Gold Coast sceney vibe head upstairs to the relaxed bar at Le Colonial (p90).
- **Late-Night Munchies** When the bars and clubs close, everyone heads to Tempo Cafe (p90), open 24/7 for skillet-fried replenishment.

Getting There & Away

- **El** Red Line to Clark/Division for the northern reaches; Red Line to Chicago for the southern areas.
- **Bus** Number 151 runs along Michigan Ave; 70 runs along Division St before swooping south to the Newberry Library.
- **Car** Resident-only streets stymie street parking. Try LaSalle St, much of which is unmetered.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

The Gold Coast may be one of Chicago's most moneyed neighborhoods, but it offers several freebies to take advantage of: the **International Museum of Surgical Science** (p87) and **Charnley-Persky House** (p86) are free on Tuesday and Wednesday respectively, while the **Newberry Library** (p87) and City Gallery at the **Water Tower** (p86) are always free.

Best Places to Eat

- Le Colonial (p90)
- Francesca's on Chestnut (p90)
- Hendrickx Belgian Bread Crafter (p87)
- Pizano's (p90)
- Tempo Cafe (p90)

For reviews, see p87 ➡

Best Places to Drink

- Signature Lounge (p91)
- Coq d'Or (p91)
- Pump Room (p91)
- Lodge (p91)

For reviews, see p91 ➡

Best Places to Shop

- Open Books (p93)
- Flight 001 (p93)
- Burton Snowboards (p94)
- American Girl Place (p94)
- Hershey's (p94)

For reviews, see p93 ➡