

Lincoln Park & Old Town

Neighborhood Top Five

1 Meandering through **Lincoln Park** (p98) and hearing lions roar in the zoo, smelling exotic flowers in the conservatory and finding the calm of the hidden lily pool.

2 Laughing and drinking during an improv show at **Second City** (p107).

3 Digging into space-age, Jetsonslike cuisine at **Alinea** (p104).

4 Joining the fun in the sun at **North Ave Beach** (p109).

5 Seeing a provocative play at **Steppenwolf Theatre** (p107).



For more detail of this area see Map p298 →

Explore: Lincoln Park & Old Town

Lincoln Park – the green space – is the city's premier playground. Almost 50% larger than Central Park in New York, Lincoln Park is where Chicagoans flock when the weather warms to savor the lakefront oasis of ponds, paths and exotic creatures in the free zoo.

Lincoln Park is also the name for the abutting neighborhood, which is home to the city's yuppie population mixed with DePaul University's large student body. The area is alive day and night with people walking dogs, riding bikes, pushing strollers and looking for a place to park so they can shop in the swanky boutiques and eat in the excellent restaurants. Add in several theaters (led by world-renowned Steppenwolf) and lively blues and rock clubs, and you've got a day's worth of action here.

Old Town was the epicenter of Chicago's hippie culture in the 1960s. A few trippy holdovers from the old days remain, but now stylish stores and eateries stuff the neighborhood, which joins Lincoln Park to the south. Wells St is in the main vein and most visitors make a pilgrimage here at some point – it's the home of the comedy club and improv bastion, Second City.

Local Life

- ➔ **Funny Bar** Performers from Second City often duck into the Old Town Ale House (p106) for a beverage after the show.
- ➔ **Blues Jam** Musicians aged 17 to 70 tune up for the free blues jam at Kingston Mines (p107) every Sunday.
- ➔ **Farmers Market** Chicagoans flock to the park to stock up on farm fare at Green City Market (p103) on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **El** Brown, Purple or Red Line to Fullerton or Brown, Purple Line to Armitage for Lincoln Park; Brown, Purple Line to Sedgwick, or Red Line to Clark/Division for Old Town.
- ➔ **Bus** Number 151 runs north from downtown via Michigan Ave and Lake Shore Dr and is good for reaching all the sites in the park itself; number 22 connects the Loop to Lincoln Park (the neighborhood) and runs along Clark St.
- ➔ **Car** Parking is difficult. In Lincoln Park, try the meters along Diversey Harbor. In Old Town, try the pay garage at Piper's Alley, at North Ave and Wells St.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

While you have to pay admission to see shows at **Second City** (p107), there's free improv afterward. You heard right: show up at the Mainstage or etc stage after the last show of the evening (Friday excluded) and you can watch the performers riff through a half-hour of improv. The freebie begins at 10pm Monday to Thursday, 1am Saturday and 9pm Sunday. Arrive 15 minutes prior.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ La Fournette (p105)
- ➔ Twin Anchors (p105)
- ➔ Pequod's Pizza (p104)
- ➔ Alinea (p104)
- ➔ Balena (p105)

For reviews, see p103 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Old Town Ale House (p106)
- ➔ Delilah's (p106)
- ➔ Goose Island Brewery (p106)
- ➔ Weeds (p106)
- ➔ J Parker (p106)

For reviews, see p106 ➔

Best Places for Entertainment

- ➔ Steppenwolf Theatre (p107)
- ➔ Second City (p107)
- ➔ BLUES (p107)
- ➔ Kingston Mines (p107)
- ➔ Lincoln Hall (p107)

For reviews, see p107 ➔