

# South Loop & Near South Side

SOUTH LOOP | CHINATOWN | NEAR SOUTH SIDE

## Neighborhood Top Five

- 1 Sizing up Sue the T-rex, the towering totem poles and magnificent mummies at the **Field Museum** (p180).
- 2 Seeing beluga whales and reef sharks swim by the glass windows at **Shedd Aquarium** (p181).
- 3 Viewing the stars and Chicago skyline from **Adler Planetarium** (p182).
- 4 Nibbling chestnut cakes and almond cookies at bakeries in **Chinatown**.
- 5 Hearing the best bluesmen in the biz bend frets at **Buddy Guy's Legends** (p189).



For more detail of this area see Map p316 ➔

## Explore: South Loop & Near South Side

What you'll see when you come to the South Loop – and come you will, since this is where the Field Museum, the Shedd Aquarium and Adler Planetarium sit on the lake-shore – is a whole lot of shiny newness. The neighborhood went development crazy in recent years with high-rise condos and Columbia College's expansion, so it's also home to loads of young urbanites. The Museum Campus itself is lovely, jutting out into the blue-green lake and providing skyline views. Tranquil 12th St Beach and North-erly Island offer escapes if the crowds get to be too much.

Blues fans will want to make the pilgrimage further south to the old Chess Records site, a humble building where Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf plugged in their amps. History buffs will appreciate mansion-filled Prairie Ave between 16th and 20th Sts. The area around Chess, which abuts the massive McCormick Place convention center, is slated to be developed into an entertainment district with restaurants and music venues. Keep an eye on this space.

To top off the wealth of offerings, the neighborhood is also home to Chicago's small but busy Chinatown, where pork buns, steaming bowls of noodles and imported wares reward an afternoon of exploring.

## Local Life

- ➔ **Global Dance Party** Learn to salsa, rumba or tango with Chicagoans at SummerDance (p190).
- ➔ **Chinatown Square** The plaza and mall are at their wonderful noisiest on weekends, when neighborhood families swarm in to eat and shop.
- ➔ **Blues Heaven** Locals stop by Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven (p186) to see who's plugging in for the free Thursday night concerts.

## Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Bus** Number 146 goes to the Museum Campus/Soldier Field; bus 1 goes to Prairie Ave and sights on S Michigan Ave. In summer, bus 130 joins the action, running between State St in the Loop and the Museum Campus.
- ➔ **El Red Line** to Harrison for Printer's Row and the photography museum; Red Line to Cermak-Chinatown for Chinatown.
- ➔ **Metra** Roosevelt Rd stop for Museum Campus/Soldier Field; 18th St for Prairie Ave Historic District; 23rd St for McCormick Place.
- ➔ **Car** The Museum Campus boasts plenty of lot parking (from \$15 per car on nonevent days); meter parking is available but scarce in the South Loop, and readily available in Near South Side.

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

In summer it's a good idea to buy advance tickets for the Shedd Aquarium, the most popular of the Museum Campus attractions. It's less necessary for the Field Museum unless there's an all-the-rage exhibit going on. For the Adler Planetarium and for the Shedd and Field in winter, there's no need for e-tickets. Save yourself the service charges.

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Sweet Station (p188)
- ➔ Yolk (p188)
- ➔ Lao Sze Chuan (p189)
- ➔ Panozzo's (p188)
- ➔ Lawrence's Fisheries (p189)

For reviews, see p188 ➔

## Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Little Branch Cafe (p189)
- ➔ Weathermark Tavern (p189)

For reviews, see p189 ➔

## Best Places to Shop

- ➔ ShopColumbia (p190)
- ➔ Giftland (p191)
- ➔ Woks N Things (p191)
- ➔ Loopy Yarns (p190)
- ➔ Aji Ichiban (p191)

For reviews, see p190 ➔