

Lincoln Park & Old Town

Neighborhood Top Five

1 Lincoln Park (p97) Meandering the park's byways and hearing lions roar in the zoo, smelling exotic flowers in the conservatory and finding the calm of the hidden lily pool.

2 Second City (p105) Laughing and drinking and shouting out plot sugges-

tions during an improv show at this legendary comedy venue.


3 Alinea (p103) Digging into space-age, Jetsons-like cuisine in one of the world's best restaurants.

4 North Avenue Beach (p108) Joining the fun in the sun with a kayak, stand-up

paddleboard, beach yoga class, volleyball game or frosty margarita.

5 Steppenwolf Theatre (p105) Seeing a provocative play from the Pulitzer Prize-winning, movie-star-filled ensemble.



For more detail of this area see Map p296 

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

While you have to pay admission to see a show at Second City (p105), there's free improv afterward. You heard right: show up at the Mainstage or ETC stage after the last show of the evening (Friday and Saturday excluded) and you can watch the performers riff through a half-hour of improv. The freebie begins around 10pm. Arrive 15 minutes prior.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Alinea (p103)
- ➔ La Fournette (p104)
- ➔ Pequod's Pizza (p99)
- ➔ Balena (p103)
- ➔ Twin Anchors (p104)

For reviews, see p99 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Old Town Ale House (p104)
- ➔ Delilah's (p104)
- ➔ Eva's Cafe (p105)
- ➔ J Parker (p105)

For reviews, see p104 ➔

Best Entertainment

- ➔ Steppenwolf Theatre (p105)
- ➔ Second City (p105)
- ➔ BLUES (p106)
- ➔ Kingston Mines (p106)
- ➔ Lincoln Hall (p106)

For reviews, see p105 ➔

Explore Lincoln Park & Old Town

Lincoln Park 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 up 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 live-music 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 stronghold, Second City.

Local Life

- ➔ **Funny bar** Performers from Second City often duck into the Old Town Ale House (p104) for a beverage after the show.
- ➔ **Blues jam** Musicians aged 17 to 70 tune up for the free blues jam at Kingston Mines (p106) every Sunday.
- ➔ **Farmers market** Chicagoans flock to the park to stock up on farm fare at Green City Market (p98) on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **El Brown, Purple, Red Line** to Fullerton for Lincoln Park; Brown, Purple Line to Sedgwick for Old Town.
- ➔ **Bus** Number 151 from downtown (along Michigan Ave) for zoo and park sites.
- ➔ **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.