

CHICAGO WINTER *BUCKET LIST*



Winter is one of the most magical times of the year in Chicago, when snow gives the city an added sparkle. Embrace the season and set off on a snow-dusted adventure with these top winter things to do in Chicago, from ice skating in the shadow of Cloud Gate (aka “The Bean”) to sipping cocktails on a cozy rooftop bar. Even after the holiday season winds down, you’ll find lots of reasons to love winter in Chicago.

ICE SKATING IN DOWNTOWN CHICAGO

Looking for the ultimate winter experience in Chicago? The **iconic ice rink in Millennium Park**, the curvy **Skating Ribbon in Maggie Daley Park**, and the **Sky Rink at The Peninsula** are bucket-list spots to take a spin on the ice. You’ll be surrounded by breathtaking winter views of downtown, including bustling Michigan Avenue, the surrounding skyline, and **The Bean** dusted in snow. In Hyde Park, head to a favorite Chicago neighborhood spot: the **Midway Plaisance Ice Rink** on the gothic University of Chicago campus. Fun fact: The rink stands on the exact spot where the first-ever Ferris wheel was erected for the 1893 World’s Fair.

WINTER ROOFTOPS

Stay warm while enjoying Chicago’s acclaimed **bar and restaurant scene** with cozy fire pits and toasty igloos at unique spots like the **IIO Godfrey** in River North, **The Kennedy** in Wicker Park, and **LH Rooftop** on the Chicago River with festive decor, twinkling lights, and personal igloos that make you feel like you’re in an enchanted snow globe.

OUTDOOR CURLING

Head upstairs to the charming **rooftop curling rink at The Gwen** in River North or to the West Loop neighborhood for **Kaiser Tiger**, which transform into outdoor curling rinks in the winter. Both are decked out with fire pits so you can cozy up between rounds.



WINTER BOAT CRUISES

Winter brings fun new ways to explore Chicago’s stunning waterfronts. On the Chicago River, rent a **hot tub boat from Chicago Boat Company**. These one-of-a-kind BYOB vessels fit six people and are a unique way to admire the city’s skyscraper-lined Riverwalk in the colder months. The company also rents heated and covered duffy boats.

For an unforgettable evening, check out the many **dinner cruises on the Chicago River and Lake Michigan**. These luxurious vessels offer elegant plated meals, live music and dancing, and breathtaking views of the sparkling Chicago skyline. Choose from elegant yachts on the lakefront or a unique glass-enclosed boat on the Chicago River.

SLEDDING, SNOWSHOEING, AND WINTER WALKING

Located on parkland surrounding historic Soldier Field, the **Soldier Field sledding hill** features a 220-foot slope that’s popular with thrill-seeking sledders, offering a panoramic view of Lake Michigan. Head to the **Lakefront Trail**, open to pedestrians year-round, for an up-close look and a picture-perfect angle of the skyline. Just outside Chicago, the **Morton Arboretum** offers a peaceful place for winter snowshoe walks.

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MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

There's no shortage of acclaimed cultural institutions in Chicago — and all of them are a great place to warm up during a chilly winter day. A good place to start is the lakefront **Museum Campus**, home to iconic spots like the **Field Museum**, **Adler Planetarium**, and the **Shedd Aquarium**. Also downtown, you'll find the **Art Institute of Chicago** — one of the country's oldest and largest art museums. Then, head to Museum Campus South to explore the interactive **Griffin Museum of Science and Industry**. Or head out into the city's neighborhoods to discover a treasure trove of **cultural heritage museums**, art galleries, and other hidden gems.

WINTER THEATRE AND PERFORMANCES

Winter is a great time to discover the city's diverse **theatre scene**. Check out what's playing from **Broadway in Chicago**, which brings touring productions, hit musicals, and pre-Broadway premieres to Chicago's historic downtown theatre district. Or see an original production staged at the city's many **Tony Award-winning theatre companies**, like the **Steppenwolf Theatre**, the **Goodman Theatre**, **Court Theatre**, and more. If you're looking for something one of a kind, you'll love the city's many **neighborhood theatres**, known for cutting-edge works and up-and-coming talent.

LIVE SPORTS

It may be cold outside, but Chicago's sports teams are always bringing the heat. In the winter, sports fans can head to the iconic (and indoor) United Center to catch two legendary teams — the **Chicago Bulls** (NBA) and the **Chicago Blackhawks** (NHL). On the lakefront, bundle up and watch the **Chicago Bears** (NFL) score some touchdowns at historic Soldier Field. The weather never slows down Bears fans, who will be tailgating in the parking lot before each game.



A HISTORIC ZOO

Chicago's free **Lincoln Park Zoo** is open for exploration 365 days a year. In the colder months, admire majestic polar bears, penguins, and snow monkeys as they play outside. Many of the animals move indoors during the winter, so warm up inside the animal houses, where you can watch penguins, gorillas, colorful birds, and more.

INDOOR GARDENS

Warm up at one of Chicago's indoor botanic gardens and conservatories. The **Lincoln Park Conservatory** is a free experience in historic Lincoln Park, with multiple rooms dedicated to exotic flora and flowers.

And don't miss the historic **Garfield Park Conservatory**, one of the largest conservatories in the nation, occupying two acres of lush greenhouse space.

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