

Here's 63 seconds of summer in Chicago



By CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS JUL 03, 2018 | 5:00 AM



This video, shot as the summer of 2018 began in Chicago, gives a high-speed sampling of sunny-day options in the city. You'll see Lake Michigan, the Chicago River, Millennium Park and many architectural highlights.



If you find yourself in Chicago on a mild summer day, don't waste a minute.

As I was reminded on a rainy/sunny/rainy visit last week, no weather lasts long there. So these early days of summer, even if they get a bit steamy, or a thunderstorm stops by for half an hour, are a prime time for a newcomer to make hay. This video may give you some ideas.

If you're new to the town — well, odds are good that somebody has already told you about Navy Pier and the Art Institute of Chicago. Here are four more options, most of which show up in the video.

Laze around in Millennium Park. These days, it's hard to imagine Chicago's downtown Loop area without this green space, but it opened only in 2004. Its shiniest attraction is "Cloud Gate," a.k.a. "the bean," a highly reflective and curvaceous stainless-steel sculpture that has become a selfie mecca. A short stroll away are the shallow waters and towering video displays of Crown Fountain. Keep an eye on the ever-changing 50-foot-tall video faces — every once in a while they squirt water with firehose force and volume. You can also build your visit around a picnic, in which case I recommend the sandwiches from Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine at 53 E. Lake St.

Take a [Chicago Architecture Foundation](#) cruise on the Chicago River. Many newcomers don't realize the city has a river and a lakefront. It does, and the tour boats that ply the river give a great view of the city's stylish skyline. Many start along the 1.25-mile-long Chicago Riverwalk, which also has restaurants and other attractions. The vessels operated by [First Lady Cruises](#) offer 90-minute trips, costing \$47, or \$52 for the dusk cruise. Similar cruises are offered by [Shoreline Sightseeing](#) and [Chicago Line](#) cruises. If you want to burn more calories and control your own route, try a kayak tour instead. Among the operators doing that: [Kayak Chicago](#), [Wateriders](#) and [Urban Kayaks](#).

See the [Cubs](#) play at Wrigley Field. The fun starts when you see Wrigleyville, the North Side ballpark neighborhood, awash in blue Cubs shirts and hats. And then there's the ballpark itself, built in 1914, beloved for its ivy-covered outfield walls and day games. (Management didn't install night lights until 1988.) The daytime play continues, with about two-dozen afternoon games from July through September.

Catch old-school blues at the recording studio where Muddy Waters recorded "Hoochie Coochie Man," Chuck Berry recorded "Johnny B. Goode" and Etta James recorded "At Last." The former Chess Records building at 2120 S. Michigan Ave. is now home to the [Willie Dixon Blues Heaven Foundation](#), which stages a free [summer concert series](#) in its garden. The shows, which feature leading local musicians, are Thursdays, usually 6-7:30 p.m., rain or shine. (There's also an impressive exhibit called "AMPLIFIED: Chicago Blues" through Aug. 10 at the [Chicago History Museum](#) at the edge of Lincoln Park.)



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Born and raised in California, Christopher Reynolds has written about travel, the outdoors, arts and culture for the Los Angeles Times since 1990. Since 2009, he has climbed Mayan pyramids, roamed Red Square in a snowstorm, been shushed at the New York Public Library and jumped from the tallest building in Soweto (rope attached). He takes no freebies or press discounts.