Elmhurst, Illinois

Breakfast: Our Kitchen
Wake up to fluffy apple pancakes and chili-topped omelets at this family-run diner that also has a gift shop.

Visit: Elmhurst Art Museum
Get inspired by new major artists and their works, and visit the McCormick House, one of three single-family homes in the United States designed by legendary architect Mies van der Rohe.

Explore: Wilder Park Conservatory
Imagine (and experience) spring’s arrival under a glass roof that shelters palms, woodland flowers, cacti and more.

See: Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art
Recently relocated from Elmhurst to neighboring Oak Brook, the museum houses one of the largest assortments of cut and polished stone art in the world.

Dinner: Livia Italian Eatery
Dress up for dinner in this warm and inviting space, where flatbreads, cheeses, charcuterie and more arrive at your table on wooden serving trays.

Stay: Courtyard by Marriott Chicago Elmhurst
Cap off your day relaxing under custom duvets or going for a swim at this centrally located hotel.

AAA inspectors ensure that all AAA Diamond-rated restaurants and hotels meet the same standards for cleanliness and service. Then, they rate them from One to Five Diamonds—from budget-oriented to ultraluxe. Scan to learn more.

have you seen it?

Bath Time

In a restored 1902 factory in River West, near Chicago’s West Loop, AIRE Ancient Baths works to rebuild your spirits. In the tradition of Greek, Roman and Ottoman baths, the spa invites you to dip in cold and warm pools. (The hot water relaxes muscles; the cold water improves blood circulation and invigorates the mind.) It’s all part of a unique spa experience that includes Himalayan salt stone massages, holistic olive oil rituals and more. beaire.com
Parents play a critical role in teaching their teens how to drive safely—a task that can be stressful and overwhelming for everyone involved. To help parents, AAA created a one-stop shop at TeenDriving.AAA.com that includes tips, safety research and state-specific licensing laws.

A great resource for parents on the site is the AAA StartSmart online program. This two-hour course explains the licensing process, shows how to reinforce what teens are learning in driver education and shares how to make the most of practice time with teens. (There is a $24.95 fee for the course.)

For more information, parents can sign up for the complimentary StartSmart newsletter, which offers advice on how to talk with teens about safe driving practices. Also, consider signing up teens for a free Associate Membership—available to newly licensed drivers with a learner’s permit. Just go to AAA.com/Membership and click on Teen Driver in the left column.

We want to hear from you! Scan this code to join our Facebook group for Chicago-area residents. Answer a few questions to get approval to join the group; then come back to share your favorite hidden treasures and local delights, connect with other readers, and more.

Ring in the New

On Feb. 2, Chicago’s Chinatown will welcome the Year of the Rat during its annual Lunar New Year Parade. Colorful floats and marching bands keep pace alongside traditional spectacles like lion dancers (costumed performers executing a dance that’s said to bring good fortune) and a dragon puppet that’s more than 90 feet long.

Before the action: Wander around Chinatown Square, the trendy heart of the neighborhood jammed with beauty boutiques, tearooms and noodle shops.

After the action: Grab dim sum at Triple Crown, a Cantonese hot spot that rolls out bite-size delicacies until 2 a.m. on weekends.

Get more parade info at ccc-foundation.org.
Valentine’s Day is all about showing that special someone how much you care. What better way to do that than with a romantic dinner? Try one of these shareable meal ideas:

**For rustic charm**
Start with the namesake dish at AAA Three Diamond-rated Fried Green Tomatoes (弭弭弭) in Galena, Illinois. Then move on to blackberry pork ribeye with bourbon glaze—all served in an atmosphere that feels ripped from a Southern romance novel. friedgreen.com

**For international flair**
Savor the Asian fusion menu at AAA Three Diamond-rated Asparagus (弭弭弭) in Merrillville, Indiana, and take turns diving into a Thai specialty like seafood panang loaded with shrimp, scallops and mussels. asparagusrestaurant.com

**For classic romance**
Share a Lady and the Tramp moment over a plate of spaghetti puttanesca at AAA Two Diamond-rated Piccolo Mondo (弭弭) noted for its classic, white-tablecloth formality—in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. piccolomondo.us

---

**Dinner for Two**

Valentine’s Day is all about showing that special someone how much you care. What better way to do that than with a romantic dinner? Try one of these shareable meal ideas:

**For rustic charm**
Start with the namesake dish at AAA Three Diamond-rated Fried Green Tomatoes (弭弭弭) in Galena, Illinois. Then move on to blackberry pork ribeye with bourbon glaze—all served in an atmosphere that feels ripped from a Southern romance novel. friedgreen.com

**For international flair**
Savor the Asian fusion menu at AAA Three Diamond-rated Asparagus (弭弭弭) in Merrillville, Indiana, and take turns diving into a Thai specialty like seafood panang loaded with shrimp, scallops and mussels. asparagusrestaurant.com

**For classic romance**
Share a Lady and the Tramp moment over a plate of spaghetti puttanesca at AAA Two Diamond-rated Piccolo Mondo (弭弭) noted for its classic, white-tablecloth formality—in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood. piccolomondo.us
Do Dates

JANUARY

Now—Jan. 26  Mean Girls
With a book by Emmy winner Tina Fey, this musical about growing up in the Illinois ‘burbs is comedy at its sharpest. See it at Chicago’s James M. Nederlander Theatre. broadwayinchicago.com

20  Black Creativity Family Day and Innovation Studio Opening
In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, this Museum of Science and Industry workshop introduces you to the African Americans—scientists, engineers and health care leaders—who are transforming Chicago. msichicago.org

22–25  Illinois Snow Sculpting Competition
The average snowman is overshadowed in favor of animals and outer-space creatures, all made by the participants in Rockford’s annual event. ilsnowsculpting.com

24–26  Bald Eagle Watch Weekend
Wander majestically frozen canyon trails and see the mighty birds soar over Starved Rock State Park’s bluffs. starvedrockstatepark.org

30—Feb. 2  Groundhog Days

FEBRUARY

8–9  Chocolate Weekend
Nurture your sweet tooth at Morton Arboretum near Chicago during this annual event that celebrates the cacao tree with shopping and lots of samples. mortonarb.org

12–23  Summer: The Donna Summer Musical
From gospel choir girl to dance-floor diva, Donna Summer broke barriers. The inspiring message rings clear when the show hits Chicago’s James M. Nederlander Theatre. broadwayinchicago.com

28—March 1  The Boat Show
Imagine your next lakefront adventure as you cruise around the latest models of fishing boats, pontoons, wakeboard vessels and more in Springfield, Illinois. theboatshowinspringfield.com