

Elmhurst, Illinois



Inside Wilder Park Conservatory.



Scan me

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.



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.

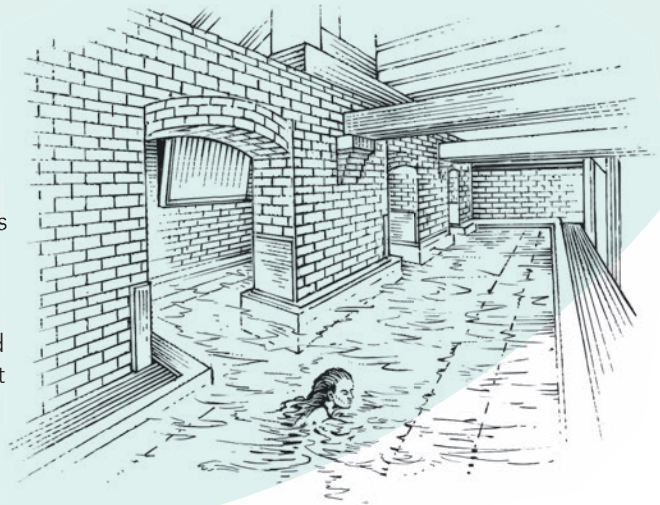
Stay: Courtyard by Marriott Chicago Elmhurst (◆◆◆)

Cap off your day relaxing under custom duvets or going for a swim at this centrally located hotel.

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



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.



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community
news

Start Smart

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.

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PLACES

to Learn Something New



AIR Aerial Fitness

At this fitness studio's three Chicago locations, instructors lead students through aerial exercises using silklike hammocks to promote flexibility and core strength.

airfitnow.com



Copper Pot Cooking Studio

Sharpen your skills in Greek classics, French street food and more in Springfield, Illinois. At the "community kitchen" sessions, make a classic dish, like fresh pasta, and take home the tasty results.

copperpotclasses.com



Art Barn School of Art

The rolling fields of a 19th-century farm just east of Valparaiso, Indiana, may inspire your next big oeuvre. In a restored barn, try your hand at watercolor, ceramics or digital photography.

artbarnschool.org



Comfort food from Fried Green Tomatoes.

the place to be

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** (💎💎💎) 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** (💎💎💎) 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** (💎💎)—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–Feb. 9 **Chicago Restaurant Week**

Break out of your dining comfort zone with new prix fixe deals for lunch and dinner across the entire city. choosechicago.com

25–26 **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**

Woodstock, Illinois—where Bill Murray filmed *Groundhog Day*—celebrates with movie-themed fun, like film site tours and trivia games. On Feb. 2, witness Woodstock Willie surface and ask yourself—shadow or no shadow? woodstockgroundhog.org



Chocolate fever at Morton Arboretum.

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