

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Luxury leads new city guide from Illinois Office of Tourism

February 13, 2024



Looking to attract luxury travelers, the state agency has published a new guide focused on high-end experiences. Image credit: Illinois Office of Tourism

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

The Illinois Office of Tourism is advertising the many ways that the state and its biggest city could be a desirable destination for affluent travelers.

The agency has published a [series of itineraries](#) that detail the high-end offerings peppered around the “Middle of Everything.” Touching on hotels, restaurants, bars, shopping and more, the “Luxe By Illinois” guide collection has the potential to attract more top-paying visitors and boost the region’s luxury reputation.

“Our team was in part inspired by the unparalleled luxury experiences offered in Illinois, and Chicago, which has been recognized as the number one Big City in the U.S.’ for the seventh year in a row voted by over 520,000 Cond Nast Traveler readers,” said Daniel Thomas, Deputy Director of the [Illinois Office of Tourism](#), Itasca.

“Plus, we have seen great growth in our high-end travelers seeking unique and customizable experiences in the luxury category,” Mr. Thomas said. “Our state has a unique balance of urban sophistication with small-town charm, like Galena, just a three-hour drive northwest of Chicago, which presents the perfect opportunity for us to showcase both opulent retreats and outdoor adventures which make Illinois a premier destination for luxury travelers.”

The Middle of Everything

Publishing a range of ideas for tourists and locals wanting a staycation alike, the Illinois Office of Tourism is doubling down on the state’s luxury appeal.

In the “Luxe” itinerary collection and a 30-second video, Chicago is the star. The city’s opulent hotels, shopping districts, experiences and eateries are featured throughout the various guides.



Those wanting to have a luxury trip in Illinois now have access to local-approved guides. Image credit: Four Seasons

Prestige hospitality staples are included, like the Four Seasons, with its panoramic views and spa treatments, and The Peninsula, which often tops lists as being the number one stay in the country. Hilton's Waldorf Astoria and St. Regis are also among the properties in the spotlight.

"A visitor can land at one of our commercial gateways or various private airports and base themselves in The Magnificent Mile district which houses the luxury epicenter of it all from the world's top-rated and favorite hotels like The Peninsula Chicago, The Ritz-Carlton, Waldorf Astoria, The Four Seasons or our newest luxury addition of The St. Regis Chicago with private butlers to cater to every need," said Mr. Thomas.

"Luxury also extends outside Chicago to charming B&Bs and inns like Goldmoor Inn & Spa and Jail Hill Inn in Galena, Deer Path Inn in Lake Forest (a 45-minute drive from Chicago), or safari-inspired Camp Aramoni in Tonica (Starved Rock area a 1 hour and 45-minute drive from Chicago)," he said. "Illinois caters to travelers seeking indulgence across the state."



Chicago has become famous for its tasting menus, boundary-pushing concepts and gastronomic experimentation. Image credit: Alinea

Local teams also dig into the culinary wonders seen in Chicago, which is home to numerous Michelin-starred restaurants.

With 22 dining institutions given the title, the metropolis is known for its experimental restaurant scene, which has attracted many top-talent chefs. As a result, visitors can enjoy some of the most exclusive eating experiences in the world.

Alinea, a spot with a multicourse tasting menu, is among them. Offering ultra-creative presentations and modernist cuisine, the eatery has a plug in the "Luxe By Illinois" itineraries.

The first Filipino restaurant to be awarded a Michelin star, Kasama, is on the list as well. Also included is Indinee, Chicago's premier Indian institution to receive the honor.



Top-rated hotels in the city appear in the itineraries, including The Peninsula Chicago. Image credit: The Peninsula

Finally, shopping and other immersive activities find their way into the guides.

"Illinois' reputation for luxury is further exemplified in Chicago by its world-class hotels, high-end spas, exquisite global cuisine, chic bars and endless nightlife," said Mr. Thomas.

"Mixed with iconic architecture, our vibrant art scene and renowned luxury shopping districts make it the ultimate high-end destination in the U.S.," he said. "Indulge in premier, high-end shopping on The Magnificent Mile or neighboring Oak Street, enjoy world-class productions at Broadway in Chicago theaters and explore masterpieces at The Art Institute of Chicago or MCA.

"These experiences epitomize the luxury offerings that set Chicago apart as a top destination for visitors."

Plugging indulgence

Local tourism bureaus around the country continue to aim marketing ploys at luxury travelers.



High-end dining often serves as a center point in tourism boards' commercials. Image credit: The Girl and the Goat

Following the COVID-19 lockdowns, many global regions sought to restore plunging visitor numbers ([see story](#)). In the United States, cities have been embracing prestige trends like top-end wellness and influencers, and showcasing them in their campaigns ([see story](#)).

The Beverly Hills Conference and Visitors Bureau recently made its own bid to attract affluent trip-takers.

Accentuating its history, identity and cultural offerings in a film ([see story](#)), the California location's advertisement read very similar to Chicago's current move. In line with "Luxe By Illinois," opulent experiences were celebrated.

As indulgent trips become more popular ([see story](#)) and investors show deepened interest in the sector ([see story](#)), the long-held practice of tourism boards elevating destinations will only intensify ([see story](#)).

Presenting Luxe by Illinois

Now, the Middle of Everything joins the group, spotting the value of attracting luxury travelers.

"Illinois' diverse range of luxury experiences within a one-mile radius is partly what distinguishes it from surrounding states, the rest of the U.S. and the world," said Mr. Thomas.

"Illinois boasts high-end spas, 22 Michelin-starred restaurants, sophisticated bars, iconic architecture, live Broadway shows and

acclaimed art museums, such as The Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary Art, in addition to premier shopping destinations like The Magnificent Mile and Oak Street,” he said. “The combination of Illinois’ urban allure and natural beauty, exemplified by the world-class city of Chicago and numerous charming small towns like Galena, offers a luxurious escape that is truly unrivaled.”

© 2024 Reliance Relocation Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.