

Chicago

A visitor's guide for conference attendees at the Palmer House



★ THE HOTEL

Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel
17 E. Monroe St., between State and Wabash
Front desk (312) 726-7500

★ TIME & DAYLIGHT

Central Time, one hour behind the East Coast.
Clocks fall back Nov. 1, so it is dark by about
4:40 p.m.

★ TRAINS AT THE DOOR

Monroe (Red Line) 1 min · Monroe (Blue Line) 2
min · Adams/Wabash (Brown, Green, Orange,
Pink, Purple) 3 min

★ WEATHER & PACKING

Highs in the upper 40s to low 50s °F, nights in
the 30s. Bring a wind-resistant coat, layers, hat,
gloves, an umbrella and walking shoes.

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Getting there & around

The train is the cheapest, most predictable way in: about 45 minutes from O'Hare and 25 from Midway, with stations a few minutes' walk from the hotel.

FROM	O'HARE (ORD)	MIDWAY (MDW)
CTA train	Blue Line • \$5 • ~45 min. Get off at Monroe (Blue) and walk 2 min east.	Orange Line • \$2.50 • ~25 min. Get off at Adams/Wabash and walk 3 min north.
Taxi	About \$40 plus tip • 25–90 min	About \$25 plus tip • 15–40 min
Rideshare	About \$35–50; surges can top \$140	About \$25–40; surges can top \$100
Shuttle van	Over \$25 per person	Over \$15 per person

Estimates from the CTA; tips not included. Travel times depend on traffic.

FROM O'HARE	FROM MIDWAY	HEADING HOME
From Terminals 1, 2 or 3, follow "CTA Trains" signs — under 10 minutes from baggage claim. From Terminal 5, take the free airport train to Terminal 2 first. Blue Line trains run 24 hours.	Follow "CTA Trains" signs and the orange line painted on the floor through the enclosed walkway. The Orange Line does not run overnight; the N62 bus covers those hours.	Allow 90+ minutes to O'Hare, more on Friday afternoon; board toward O'Hare at Monroe & Dearborn. Union Station (Amtrak, Metra) is a 15-minute walk west.

Fares

'L' train ride	\$2.50
Bus ride	\$2.25
Up to 2 transfers within 2 hrs	Free
1-Day pass	\$5
3-Day pass	\$15
7-Day pass	\$20

Tap a contactless card or phone at the turnstile — no ticket needed. A pass bought at the airport machine skips the \$5 O'Hare fare. CTA fare chart, Oct. 20, 2026.

Stations near the hotel

- **Monroe (Red Line)**, State St. — 1 min. North to the Magnificent Mile, south to the Museum Campus.
 - **Monroe (Blue Line)**, Dearborn St. — 2 min. O'Hare and Wicker Park.
 - **Adams/Wabash** — 3 min. Elevated Loop lines: Orange to Midway, plus Brown, Green, Pink and Purple.
 - **State/Lake is closed** for rebuilding until 2029.
- Buses:** the #146 on State St. runs to the Museum Campus; the #151 runs up Michigan Ave. **Apps:** Ventra for passes and train times; Divvy for bikes.

★ Chicago classics

Deep dish, Italian beef and old-school taverns, most within a five-minute walk. Times are from the hotel's Monroe St. entrance.

RESTAURANT	ADDRESS	FROM HOTEL	PRICE
Miller's Pub Old-school pub under the 'L'; burgers, ribs, late hours	134 S. Wabash Ave.	2 min walk	\$\$
Exchequer Restaurant & Pub Deep dish since 1969 in a former speakeasy	226 S. Wabash Ave.	3 min walk	\$\$
Pizano's Pizza & Pasta Deep dish from the son of the style's pioneer	61 E. Madison St.	3 min walk	\$\$
The Berghoff German classic since 1898; schnitzel and house root beer	17 W. Adams St.	3 min walk	\$\$
Italian Village Chicago's oldest Italian restaurant, open since 1927	71 W. Monroe St.	4 min walk	\$\$
Giordano's Famous stuffed pizza; allow 45 minutes to bake	130 E. Randolph St.	10 min walk	\$\$
Lou Malnati's (South Loop) Many locals' favorite deep dish; get the butter crust	805 S. State St.	Red Line to Harrison	\$\$
Portillo's Chicago hot dogs, Italian beef, chocolate cake shake	100 W. Ontario St.	Red Line to Grand	\$
Mr. Beef on Orleans The Italian beef stand that inspired <i>The Bear</i>	666 N. Orleans St.	Red Line to Grand	\$

Quick lunch between sessions

Sterling Food Hall (formerly Revival), 125 S. Clark St., 5 min. Kimbap, NY-style slices, sandwiches, BBQ and a bar. Weekdays only.

Momento Cantina — tacos and tostadas on house-pressed corn tortillas.

Da Local Boy — counter-service Hawaiian rice plates and one of the Loop's top-rated spots.

Potter's Bar, in the Palmer House — try the brownie, widely credited as invented here for the 1893 World's Fair.

★ Dinner near the hotel

Sit-down spots within a 10-minute walk. For groups of six or more, reserve ahead on OpenTable or Resy — Thursday and Friday nights fill up.

RESTAURANT	ADDRESS	FROM HOTEL	PRICE
The Gage Lively gastropub facing Millennium Park; good for groups	24 S. Michigan Ave.	4 min walk	\$\$\$
Acanto Regional Italian and a deep wine list, next to The Gage	18 S. Michigan Ave.	4 min walk	\$\$\$
Perilla Korean American Steakhouse Korean barbecue cooked at your table	S. Dearborn St. area	~5 min walk	\$\$\$
Cindy's Rooftop Rooftop views over Millennium Park and the lake	12 S. Michigan Ave.	5 min walk	\$\$
Remington's Steaks and seafood across from Millennium Park	20 N. Michigan Ave.	6 min walk	\$\$\$
Bistro Monadnock French bistro in the landmark Monadnock Building	53 W. Jackson Blvd.	6 min walk	\$\$\$
The Dearborn American tavern, popular before theater shows	145 N. Dearborn St.	8 min walk	\$\$

Breakfast & coffee

Wildberry Pancakes & Cafe, 130 E. Randolph St., 10 min. Very popular; expect a wait after 8:30 a.m.

Café Pisolino, ground floor of Italian Village, 71 W. Monroe St. An Italian espresso bar, 4 min away.

Lou Mitchell's, 565 W. Jackson Blvd., about 20 min walk. Classic diner since 1923 and the traditional start of Route 66.

Without leaving the hotel — the Lockwood restaurant serves breakfast, and a Starbucks is about a minute's walk.

★ **Paying the bill.** Downtown restaurant tax is about 11.75%. Tip 18–20% at sit-down restaurants and check the receipt first — some places add a service charge.

★ Things to see

Three headline sights are five minutes from the lobby. Prices are adult, non-resident rates.

Walkable from the hotel

SIGHT	WHERE	COST & HOURS
Art Institute of Chicago <i>Nighthawks, American Gothic, the Impressionists, the Thorne Miniature Rooms</i>	111 S. Michigan Ave. · 5 min	\$32. Mon, Wed, Fri–Sun 11–5; Thu 11–8; closed Tue
Millennium Park & Cloud Gate "The Bean," Pritzker Pavilion and Lurie Garden	Michigan Ave. at Washington · 5 min	Free. Best at sunrise or dusk
Chicago Cultural Center The world's largest Tiffany glass dome; free exhibits	78 E. Washington St. · 6 min	Free. Check hours before going
The Rookery & Loop lobbies Frank Lloyd Wright's light court, Monadnock, Board of Trade	LaSalle & Adams · 5–8 min	Free. Business hours
Chicago Riverwalk 1.25 miles along the river, lined with skyscrapers	Wacker Dr. at State · 10 min	Free. Many vendors closed for the season
Skydeck at Willis Tower 103rd-floor views and the glass-floored Ledge	233 S. Wacker Dr. · 15 min	From about \$32. Book timed tickets online

Worth a short ride

SIGHT	GETTING THERE	COST
Architecture River Cruise Chicago Architecture Center's 90-min docent tour aboard <i>First Lady</i>	112 E. Wacker Dr. · 12 min walk	From \$57. Running Nov. 5–7; season ends late Nov.
Field Museum Natural history, including SUE the T. rex	#146 bus, ~15 min	From about \$30
Shedd Aquarium Large aquarium on the lakefront	#146 bus, ~15 min	About \$40
Adler Planetarium Sky shows plus the best skyline view from its lawn	#146 bus, ~20 min	From about \$25
Magnificent Mile & 360 Chicago Michigan Ave. shopping; 94th-floor observatory	Red Line to Grand or Chicago	Free to browse; observatory ticketed
Navy Pier —Centennial Wheel and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre— Pete's Place, a Hilton Hotel · 17 E. Monroe St.	#66 bus or 25-min walk	Free entry

★ Short on time?

Ideas for a gap between sessions. Every one starts and ends at the Palmer House lobby.

30–60

MINUTES

Public-art loop • free, about 40 min. Chagall's *Four Seasons* mosaic at Chase Tower plaza (Dearborn & Monroe), Calder's red *Flamingo* at Federal Plaza (Dearborn & Adams), then north to the Picasso at Daley Plaza and Miró's *Chicago* across the street.

The Bean and the Tiffany dome • free, about 45 min. Walk east to Cloud Gate in Millennium Park, then up Michigan Ave. to the Chicago Cultural Center's glass dome.

Stay put. Coffee and the original brownie under the Palmer House's painted lobby ceiling.

1–2

HOURS

Art Institute highlights. Head straight for *Nighthawks*, *American Gothic*, the Impressionist galleries and the Thorne Miniature Rooms. Thursday evening, open until 8, is quietest.

Loop architecture lobbies. The Rookery's light court (209 S. LaSalle), the Monadnock Building (53 W. Jackson) and the Art Deco Chicago Board of Trade (141 W. Jackson). Finish with lunch at Bistro Monadnock.

2–3

HOURS

Architecture river cruise + Riverwalk. Walk 12 minutes to the *First Lady* dock at Michigan & Wacker for the 90-minute docent tour, then stroll the Riverwalk back toward State St.

Skydeck + Union Station. Ride up Willis Tower, then cross the river to Union Station's Great Hall, one of the city's grandest interiors.

After 5

EVENINGS

Skyline drinks. Cindy's Rooftop (12 S. Michigan Ave.) looks out over Millennium Park and the lake.

A concert or a show. The Chicago Symphony is four minutes away; Second City is a short Brown Line ride. See page 7.

★ **Events Nov. 5–7**

What's on in the city during the conference. Listings were checked October 20 — confirm times and tickets before you go.

BEST BET · 4 MIN WALK

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra:
Beethoven 5 & Mao Fujita**

Marek Janowski conducts Wagner's *Prelude to Parsifal*, R. Strauss's *Burlesque* with pianist Mao Fujita, and Beethoven's Fifth.
Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.

Thu Nov 5	7:30 p.m.
Fri Nov 6	1:30 p.m.
Sat Nov 7	7:30 p.m.

WHEN	EVENT	WHERE · GETTING THERE
Thu Nov 5, to 8 p.m.	Art Institute late hours — a quieter evening visit	111 S. Michigan Ave. · 5 min walk
Through Sun Nov 8	<i>Jekyll & Hyde</i> (Broadway In Chicago)	Broadway Playhouse, 175 E. Chestnut St. · Red Line to Chicago
Fri–Sat 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.	The Second City Mainstage 114th Revue — the sketch-comedy theater behind generations of <i>SNL</i> stars	1616 N. Wells St. · Brown Line to Sedgwick
Sat Nov 7, 3 p.m.	Chicago Fire FC vs. Columbus Crew (MLS soccer)	Soldier Field · #146 bus, ~15 min
Sat Nov 7, 7 p.m.	Bert Kreischer stand-up	Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State St. · 8 min walk
Sat Nov 7, 7:30 p.m.	Ballets Jazz Montréal: <i>Dance Me</i> , set to the music of Leonard Cohen	Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Ida B. Wells Dr. · 8 min walk
Sat Nov 7, 7:30 p.m.	Dave Matthews Band	United Center · taxi, ~15 min
Sat Nov 7	Northwestern vs. Iowa (Big Ten football)	Evanston · Purple Line or Metra, ~1 hr

NOT WHILE YOU'RE HERE

The Lyric Opera is dark until *Don Pasquale* opens Nov. 12. The Bulls and Blackhawks have no home games Nov. 5–7.

FIND MORE

do312.com lists concerts and shows by date; choosechicago.com/events is the city's official calendar.

★ Practical tips

Downtown Chicago is easy on foot. Budget for high taxes and dress for the wind off the lake.

Money & tipping

Sales tax is about 10.25%. Restaurant bills downtown carry about 11.75%, and hotel room tax is about 19%.

Tip 18–20% at sit-down restaurants, \$1–2 per drink at a bar, 15–20% for taxis and rideshares, and a few dollars a night for housekeeping.

Safe & comfortable

The Loop is busy on weekdays and much quieter at night and on weekends. Stick to lit, busy streets after dark, and take a taxi or rideshare late.

On trains, keep phones and bags in hand near the doors. Late at night, ride in the first car, near the operator.

On a cold or rainy day, the underground Pedway links several Loop buildings and stations.

Emergencies & essentials

911 311

Emergency City non-emergency

Nearest major ER: Northwestern Memorial Hospital, 251 E. Huron St., about 10 min by taxi.

Pharmacy: CVS, about 2 min walk.

Hotel front desk: (312) 726-7500

Apps & links

Ventra — transit passes and train times

Transit or Google Maps — live CTA arrivals

OpenTable / Resy — reservations

Divvy — bikes and scooters

choosechicago.com — official visitor guide

weather.gov/lot — Chicago forecast

Sources, checked Oct. 20, 2026: CTA fare chart and airport transit pages; Art Institute of Chicago; Chicago Symphony Orchestra 2026/27 calendar; Broadway In Chicago; Do312; Lyric Opera of Chicago; The Second City; The Infatuation; Chicago Loop Alliance; National Weather Service. Prices, hours and schedules change — confirm before you go.

