

# illinois

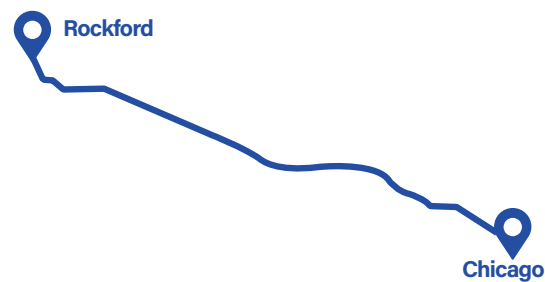
Chicago & Beyond



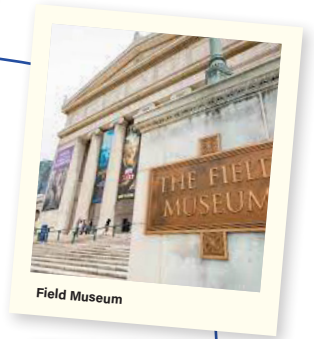
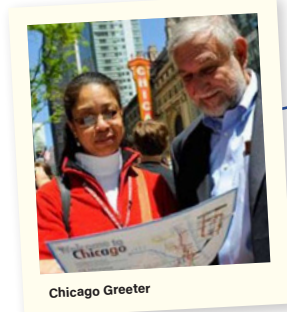
## immersed in hispanic cultural heritage

**Incredible food and art headline the Northeast Illinois' Latino scene**

Whether you're celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15) or looking to dive into Latino culture during any season, a Chicago-Rockford road trip is tough to beat. Enjoy authentic Mexican food, experience world-class public art and support local Latino-owned businesses during this exciting three-day getaway.



**3 days**  
**89mi**  
(Approx)



Many attractions have reopened with limited capacity or different operating hours. Inquire with attractions ahead of time for up-to-date travel policies and health and safety information.

## 📍 Day 1

To ensure your trip kicks off with a happy belly, stop at one of four **Cafe Tola** locations spread across the city. Enjoy the vibrant Mexican vibe, choose from a variety of breakfast tacos and burritos, and grab an authentic Cuban coffee to go as you embark on your adventure.

If you're unfamiliar with the city or have no clue where to start, the **Chicago Greeter** program is a wonderful option. You'll get a customized guided tour based on your choice of neighborhoods and interests, and you can even request a Spanish-speaking guide.

Those following their own agenda can head to the **Art Institute of Chicago**, which showcases a number of artworks from Aztec culture, including the Coronation Stone of Motecuhzoma II. If you have time, stop by the **Field Museum** to feast your eyes on Máximo (which translates to "maximum" or "most" in Spanish). It's the largest dinosaur ever discovered, living more than 100 million years ago in what is now Patagonia.

Take a break from your educational endeavors at **Navy Pier**, where you can sit down for a lunch of Latin-inspired cuisine at **Lirica** before checking out some of the Pier's attractions. After that, pop over to the Magnificent Mile plaza that houses the statue of Benito Juárez, and gaze up at the first and only indigenous President of Mexico.

To round out your Latin American history experience, travel up to the **Newberry Library**, where you'll find plenty of fascinating materials directly related to the Aztec and Nahua people, Tenochtitlan, and more.

A modest walk of a few blocks will lead you to **Tzucó**, an imaginative French Mexican restaurant led by Chef Carlos Gaytán - the first Latin American to earn a Michelin Star. After relaxing over appetizers and drinks, meander through the brightly lit city streets to **Jaleo** for dinner, where you'll experience Chef José Andrés and his creative take on rich Spanish cuisine.

## 📍 Day 2

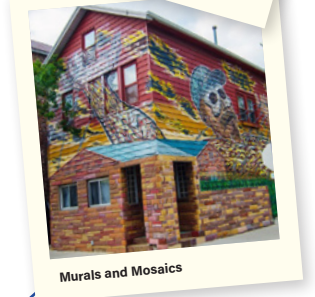
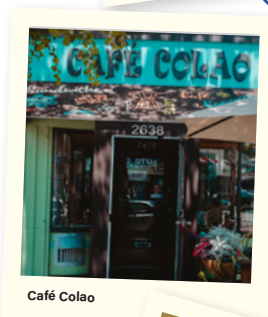
If a big, delicious dinner hasn't zapped your energy, stop by **Cruz Blanca Cervceria** in the West Loop for a tasty Mexican craft beer before calling it a night. Stay at the **Wicker Park Inn**, a charming Latina-owned bed and breakfast.

Perk up in the morning with a pastry and a cup of Puerto Rican coffee from **Café Colao**, then stretch your legs with a leisurely stroll through Humboldt Park. The neighborhood is a hub for Latino culture, as Chicago's newest landmarks, the enormous steel Puerto Rican flags that bookend Division Street, will attest. You can even make it a guided, educational walk by booking ahead with **Paseo Boric Tour Company**.

Next, make the trek down to Pilsen, another neighborhood famous for its Hispanic heritage. Once you get a feel for the area, walk along 18th Street to the **National Museum of Mexican Art**, where you can discover numerous centuries' worth of fascinating collections. When you're ready for a break, refuel with lunch at **Azul 18**.

Fill your afternoon taking in the sights of the neighborhood - and we assure you, they are plentiful. You'll find an assortment of streetscapes (such as Sun Stones and Plaza Tenochtitlan), the historic Casa Aztlán mural, and a wide variety of additional **murals and mosaics** that celebrate the community's Mexican identity.

Before settling into your hotel in Rockford, head over to Hacienda San Jose for dinner and margaritas. If you're feeling particularly adventurous, stick around for karaoke on weekend nights. Get your beauty rest at **Embassy Suites by Hilton Rockford Riverfront** in the downtown area.







Chicago & Beyond

## 📍 Day 3

An authentic Mexican breakfast at **Taqueria La Chiquita** is a surefire way to get started on the right foot. For your next stop, meander to the downtown area and check out a few striking Latino-inspired murals, including “Puro Pa Delante” and “Thinking of Rockford” on South Main Street and “RKFD” on East State State.

Next up is another worthwhile cultural destination you won’t want to miss. During Hispanic Heritage Month, the **Ethnic Heritage Museum** is celebrating with “We Got Latin Soul” – a special exhibition and art show highlighting local Hispanic artists.

For a truly authentic lunch, stop by **Isla Del Mar**, a favorite of Mexican seafood enthusiasts. If ceviche is your thing, don’t forget to include it in your order – it’s delicious.

Burn off your meal by exploring 155 acres of woodlands and natural landscapes at the **Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden**, the largest public garden in Winnebago County. After a couple hours of trekking, reward yourself at **Lesslys Ice Cream Shop**, where you can get classic ice cream, paletas, mangoneadas, biñicos and even elotes!

Before ceasing your wanderings, consider a retail stop at **La Esmeralda Jewelry** or **Novedades Azteca** clothing store, both of which are lovely Latino-owned shops.

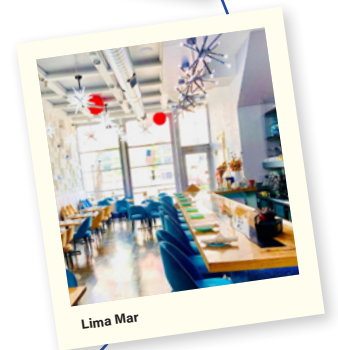
If you’re looking for a memorable dining experience to close out your trip, you can’t go wrong with **Lima Mar**. Enjoy exceptional, artistic dishes of South American cuisine in a beautiful space before calling it a night.



Ethnic Heritage Museum



Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden



Lima Mar



[enjoyillinois.com](http://enjoyillinois.com)