

# ITINERARIES

## Chicago to Chain-of-Rocks

**Chicago**—Start your Illinois tour “where the road begins” as you visit Grant Park, the Art Institute and Buckingham Fountain—the eastern terminus of Route 66. Take in the splendor of Chicago’s skyline and beautiful Lake Michigan.

Serving breakfast all day, dine at Lou Mitchell’s Restaurant (1923), located at Jackson and Jefferson. Their unique traditions include a free box of milk duds for all guests.

**Cicero**—begins at Cicero Avenue. One mile south is the Chicago Motor Speedway at Sportsman Park, and the Hawthorne Racetrack. This is a popular area for auto and horse racing.

**Willowbrook**—Dell Rheas Chicken Basket. This place dates back to 1946 when it was also a Blue Bird bus stop. All Route 66 ‘roadies’ make it a point to stop here.

**Lemont**—White Fence Farm restaurant has a magnificent collection of antique machines, cars and numerous other items. Outside in the back is a very nice free zoo.

**Joliet**—The Rialto Theatre known as the “Jewel of Joliet” was built in 1926 and originally conceived as “A Palace for the People” is now considered as one of the most beautiful theaters in the nation.

**Wilmington**—No trip on Route 66 is complete without a stop at the Launching Pad Drive-In. It’s a must to have your picture taken with the Gemini Giant. He has welcomed Route 66 travelers since the 50’s.

**Braidwood**—The Polka-Dot-Diner is a great place for dessert. This restaurant opened in 1956 and is a popular stop with the 50’s to 60’s crowd—a nice Route 66 theme. Be sure to visit with Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Betty Boop and the Blues Brothers.

**Dwight**—Drive by the Ambler-Becker Texaco (Marathon) Gas Station. In downtown Dwight, visit the 1891 train depot and Historical Society museum, the First National Bank (designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright), and view the five Tiffany-style windows inside the Fox Developmental Center (the Keeley Institute) at the top of the grand staircase. The Keeley Institute was world renown as the first medical institution to treat alcoholism as a disease. The Country Mansion (1891) was designed by Julian

Barnes and is a popular restaurant and bakery. It’s easily found by looking for the landmark windmill.

**Odell**—Boasts a classic 1932 Standard Oil Filling Station, on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Pontiac**—The Old Log Cabin Restaurant, dating back to 1926 and the birth of Route 66, is a wonderful, classic example of a true Illinois Route 66 restaurant. Originally it fronted the old pavement beside the RR tracks, but was turned clear ‘round to face the four-lane 66 bypass in the 1940’s.

The North Creek Bridge on Ladd St. recently was replaced, but the original IL Route 4 marker (predating IL Route 66) was saved. Visit the Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum at 110 W Howard St for exhibits of memorabilia from Hall of Fame members.

**Towanda**—Take a walking tour along the defunct roadway on the Historic Rooter 66 Illinois “A Geographic Journey.” The trail is complete with displays honoring all eight states and “Burma Shave” signs.

**Funks Grove**—This community, settled by the Funk family (circa 1891) is where the world-famous pure maple sirup is made. (Yes, it is spelled that way on purpose.)

**McLean**—The Dixie Travel Plaza began as the Dixie Truckers Home in 1928, and was the original host to the “Route 66 Hall of Fame.”

**Atlanta**—Don’t skip this friendly little town. Fast becoming a must-stop on the IL Route 66 circuit, it features the Bunyon Giant (formerly of Cicero and brother to the Gemini Giant) complete with giant hot dog; the 1903 era J.H. Hawes Grain Elevator Museum; and the 1908 octagonal Atlanta Public Library with its 40-foot clock tower which is wound by hand every eight days. Everywhere you look in Atlanta, you’ll see the work of the Walldog Jam mural painters with replica, vintage advertising on the sides of many buildings. Stop by the newly restored Palms Grill Cafe for a blue plate special.

**Lincoln**—The only town named for our 16th president during his lifetime, it was christened by Lincoln himself in 1853 with the juice of a watermelon. Great restored downtown district; an original concrete alignment on the outskirts of town; and the fantastic neon sign of the Tropics.

Receiving recognition by the Guinness Book of Worlds Records as the World’s Largest Covered Wagon, the Railsplitter and its driver, Abraham Lincoln, welcome Route 66 visitors.

**Elkhart**—Drive up the hill and visit the Gillett family cemetery with its beautiful family chapel. The only privately-owned church in Illinois, this unique Chapel is nestled in the Elkhart Cemetery where generations of the Gillette family rest, as well as the resting place of Governor Ogelsby. A true gem.

**Springfield**—Abraham Lincoln sites abound: Lincoln’s Home, Tomb, and Presidential Library and Museum are musts for Lincoln buffs. While in downtown Springfield, tour the Dana-Thomas house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

No Route 66 trip through Springfield is complete without a visit to Bill Shea’s Historic 66 Museum, jam-packed with Route 66 memorabilia. Bill has become an international icon representing all that was good on Route 66. Leave plenty of time to hear some amazing stories.

Snack at the Cozy Dog Drive-In, the sometimes haunt of Route 66 artist Bob Waldmire, who’s father is famous for inventing the hot dog on a stick, commonly known as a corn dog.

Before leaving town, travel Wabash Ave. (1926-30 alignment) and visit the last of the three giant “brothers” on IL Route 66—the Lauterbach Giant. The Lauterbach Giant lost his head during the tornados in the spring of 2006, but thanks to his popularity, he was restored and his head replaced.

**Farmersville**—Glance at the often photographed Art’s Motel sign. Stop for some dinner at this unique restaurant dating back to 1920 then-known as Hendrick’s Brothers Service Station. Rebuilt in 1952 after a fire destroyed the original building, Art’s recently has been refurbished and reopened in early 2006. The classic neon sign is newly restored.

**Waggoner**—“Our Lady of the Highways” shrine has guarded visitors to Route 66 for decades. A series of signs along a nearby fence recite the “Hail Mary.”

**Litchfield**—Drive by the Skyview Drive-In for a peek at one of the oldest remaining drive-in theaters on Route 66. The Skyview continues to show movies Thursday—Sunday throughout the summer months. Try to eat at the Ariston Restaurant. It’s a wonderful classic, with a touch of class, dating back to 1924 and perfectly maintained by owner Nick Adams.

**Mount Olive**—Visit the Mother Jones monument and soak in the rich heritage of this Route 66 community. Soulsby Station (1926), restored to its original red and yellow Shell Oil colors, sold gas on Route 66 for 65 years. It's another Hall of Fame location.

**Hamel**—Stop by Scotty's Route 66 Grille, an old roadhouse.

**Edwardsville**—Drive through one of Illinois' oldest towns on your way to the Chain of Rocks Bridge.

**Mitchell**—You can't miss a trip to the Luna Café (1924). The Luna has a great neon sign and quit a history. Stop in for stories about Capone, gambling, and the "ladies" whose presence was announced by the lighting of the red cherry on the neon sign.

**Chain of Rocks Bridge**—Hike across the famous "bent" bridge from here.

## *Chicago to Joliet*

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Serving breakfast all day, dine at Lou Mitchell's Restaurant (1923), located at Jackson and Jefferson. Their unique traditions include a free box of milk duds for all guests.

**Cicero**—begins at Cicero Avenue. On Ogden Avenue don't forget to stop and take some pictures of the Castle Car Wash. It was built in 1925 and was known as a popular hideout for Al Capone.

Stop at Henry's Drive-In for lunch or dinner. The hot dogs here are famous for being a meal in themselves.

**Berwyn**—Visit Berwyn with a little side-trip to Cermak Road to Harlem Avenue to the Cermak Plaza Shopping Center where you can enjoy a great display of "kitschy" public art, such as The Spindle.

**Willowbrook**—Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket. This place dates back to 1946 when it was also a Blue Bird bus stop. All Route 66 'roadies' make it a point to stop here.

**Lemont**—White Fence Farm restaurant has a magnificent collection of antique machines, cars and numerous other items. Outside in the back is a very nice free zoo. If you happen to be traveling the Mother



Road on a weekend in the summer, check out Montana Charlie's Flea Market located on Joliet Road south of I-55.

**Joliet**—The Joliet Area Historical Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center offers interactive exhibits for all ages. They offer a unique gift shop, selling not only keepsakes but games, toys, etc. Located on the corner of Historic Route 66 & the Lincoln Highway, this is one of only 2 places in the nation that those two famous roads cross. Both are now National Scenic Byways.

The Rialto Theatre known as the "Jewel of Joliet" was built in 1926 and originally conceived as "A Palace for the People" is now considered as one of the most beautiful theaters in the nation. Take in a show or schedule a tour on Tuesdays to see the Theatre that is noted to be one of the 10 most splendid theaters in the nation.

## *Joliet to Towanda Red Carpet Corridor*

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**Elwood**—A great stop for history buffs is the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. This is a last resting place that honors those who have served and fallen.

**Wilmington**—Known as Will County's antique capital. Stop along Water Street and browse the many antique shops. The corner of Historic Route 66 and Water Street is also occupied by the old Eagle Hotel which is known to be the oldest building in Will County. No trip on Route 66 is complete without a stop at the Launching Pad Drive-In. It's a must to have your picture taken with the Gemini Giant. He has welcomed Route 66 travelers since the 50's.

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Be sure to visit with Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Betty Boop and the Blues Brothers.

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**Odell**—Boasts a classic 1932 Standard Oil Filling Station, on the National Register of Historic Places. Known as the "house with canopy."

**Pontiac**—Visit the Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum for exhibits of memorabilia from Hall of Fame members. This unique Route 66 museum offers a look into the history of Route 66 and tells the story about how the "Mother Road" became a symbol of freedom as it connected communities from the mid-west to the west coast. Don't forget to look on the back side of the building at the largest Route 66 shield mural in Illinois. The Old Log Cabin Restaurant, dating back to 1926 and the birth of Route 66, is a wonderful, classic example of a true Illinois Route 66 restaurant.

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**Chenoa**—See an original 1889 pharmacy which houses some of the most beautiful original cabinetry and poster size original photographs you'll find. Another great stop on the tour is the Matthew T. Scott home built in 1855.

**Lexington**—Take a stroll down "Memory Lane", an original stretch of Route 66 pavement for walking or biking. Open to auto traffic on special occasions, Memory Lane is filled with unique signage reminiscent of the 66 era. As you leave Memory Lane, just before the curve, look to the right on Wall Street, you will see Scrogin Cemetery sitting high up on the hill. This unique cemetery was started in 1850, over time the headstones were scattered about in disarray and in 1981 the cemetery was restored to a very nice monument. As you enter downtown look to your right for the large mural that tells visitor's of Lexington's history.

**Towanda**—Take a walking tour along the defunct roadway on the Historic Roter 66 Illinois "A Geographic Journey." The trail is complete with displays honoring all eight states and "Burma Shave" signs.

*For complete and up-to-date info on Illinois Route 66 please visit [www.illinoisroute66.org](http://www.illinoisroute66.org)*

## Springfield to Staunton Route 4 Alignment

**Springfield**—Abraham Lincoln sites bound—Lincoln's Home, Tomb, and Presidential Library and Museum are musts for Lincoln buffs. While in downtown Springfield, tour the Dana-Thomas house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

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**Chatham/Auburn**—Drive a rare stretch of brick road (1926-30 alignment) between these two towns.

**Thayer/Virden**—Follow the road through small farming communities. Coming soon is the monument to the Virden Mining Riot, which ties into the Mother Jones monument further down the road in Mt. Olive. Must see for history buffs!

**Girard/Nilwood**—Drive the original alignment between these two communities to get a real feel for the early road—narrow and twisting with cracked concrete.

**Carlinville**—A definitive picturesque small town, Carlinville lays claim as one of the "Best 100 Small Towns in America." Brick-paved streets and a gazebo in the town square are just the beginning. Known for its 'million dollar courthouse' and castle-like old county jail, Carlinville abounds in history. The county seat of Macoupin County, its home to the Historical Society's Anderson Mansion (rumored to be part of the Underground Railroad). Carlinville also boasts the largest collection of Sears & Roebuck mail-order homes—Standard Addition.

About five miles south of Carlinville, keep a look-out for abandoned sections of the original road. Turn onto Deerfield Drive and follow along as the road curves along a scenic section through forest and hills. The currently-blocked southern loop crosses a stout little concrete bridge (1920) recently saved from destruction.

**Gillespie/Bend**—Keep an eye out for the Coliseum Ballroom in Bend, a recipient of the IL Route 66 Hall of Fame. The area is rich in mining and prohibition history. In its heyday, Bend was home to 18 nationalities, and was infamous as one of Al Capone's get-a-ways when things got too hot in Chicago.

As a little side-trip, look up the Holy Dormition Russian Orthodox Church—one of only a few Catholic churches still associated with Moscow. The interior iconography is incredible. The church soon will be converted to a monastery.

**Staunton**—Visit Henry's Raóóit Ranch & Route 66 Emporium, a must-see for all Route 66 roadies, and DeCamp Junction, another famous roadhouse and Hall of Fame recipient.

## Route 66 License Plates! Get Yours Today!

Route 66 is a cultural icon that represents the spirit of America and reflects the modern expansion of transportation and commerce in our county. The roadway gets it's start right here in Illinois and connects with nearly 90 communities between Chicago and the Mississippi River.

**Availability:** Illinois Route 66 license plates are multi-year and may be displayed on passenger vehicles, trucks, sport utility vehicles and vans weighing 8,000 pounds or less.

**How to Register:** Online at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com) or call 800-252-8980 or 217-785-5215 or visit any license service facility

