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# 36 Hours in Chicago

By **FRED A. BERNSTEIN**

ALL cities have their ups and downs, but Chicago has been on the rise by playing to its strengths, adding parks, architectural crowd pleasers and public art. Much of this has happened on the watch of Mayor **Richard M. Daley**, who, after 21 years in office, announced this month that he would be stepping down. How will the city fare without him? Just fine, probably, thanks to the raft of improvements that has left Chicago fortified both by 19th- and 20th-century public spaces brimming with 21st-century attractions.

## Friday

**4 p.m.**

### 1) LOOP THE LOOP

Chicago is a city of **architecture** tours, but one of the best is right above you: the "L," the elevated subway that circles the Loop ([transitchicago.com](http://transitchicago.com)). Get on the brown, orange or pink lines — it doesn't matter which color, as long as you sit in the first car by the front-view window — and round the two-square-mile area. If you're going clockwise, look to the left. Among landmarks you'll see are Bertrand Goldberg's spectacular Marina City, the new **Trump International Hotel and Tower**, **Frank Gehry's** Pritzker Pavilion band shell and Louis Sullivan's historic Auditorium Building. Miss one? No problems. The \$2.25 ticket buys unlimited loops.

**8 p.m.**

### 2) MIDWAY FARE

Credit the recession, but a number of good midprice but high-style restaurants have opened in Chicago in the last two years. A favorite is **Gilt Bar** (230 West Kinzie Street; 312-464-9544;

with a gorgeous selection of Art Deco and Art Nouveau furniture and objets. It's a short walk from there to the [Museum of Contemporary Art](#) (220 East Chicago Avenue; 312-280-2660; [mcachicago.org](#)), which has a spectacular exhibition of works by [Alexander Calder](#) — and works inspired by Calder — through Oct. 17.

**2 p.m.**

## **6) FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD**

Walking around Hyde Park, a leafy enclave about seven miles south of the Loop, it's easy to see why the Obamas settled there. Their house, on South Greenwood Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets, is nearly invisible behind Secret Service barricades. Luckily, the nearby [Robie House](#) (5757 South Woodlawn Avenue; 800-514-3849; [gowright.org](#)), a [Frank Lloyd Wright](#) masterpiece, is open for tours. See if you can find an abstracted male figure in the Japanese-inspired leaded-glass windows. Across the street, the beautifully landscaped [University of Chicago](#) campus is worth exploring for an afternoon.

**7 p.m.**

## **7) LIVESTOCK MENU**

Chicago was once the meatpacking capital of the world, and it still knows what to do with offal. Take [Girl & the Goat](#) (809 West Randolph Street, 312-492-6262; [girlandthegoat.com](#)), a much-blogged-about new restaurant where the Top Chef winner Stephanie Izard takes livestock parts seriously. The often-updated menu recently included lamb ribs with grilled avocado and pistachio piccata (\$17), and braised beef tongue with masa and beef vinaigrette (\$12). If you're not a carnivore, try chickpeas three ways (\$11), and for dessert, potato fritters with lemon poached eggplant and Greek yogurt (\$8). The soaring dining room, designed by the Chicago design firm 555 International, is warm and modern, with exposed beams, walls of charred cedar and a large open kitchen. Reservations essential.

**10 p.m.**

## **8) FUNNY BONE**

The owners of the [Ontourage](#) nightclub (157 West Ontario Street; 312-573-1470; [ontouragechicago.com](#)) were tired of waiting until midnight for the crowds to gather, so they began offering comedy shows at 10 on Saturdays. You won't find big names, but a hit-or-miss