

north suburban chicago guide

North suburban Chicago guide serves as a comprehensive resource for anyone looking to explore or relocate to the vibrant communities just outside of Chicago. The north suburbs are known for their picturesque landscapes, excellent schools, and a variety of recreational activities. This guide will delve into the highlights of these areas, including attractions, dining options, education, transportation, and community events, making it an essential read for locals and newcomers alike.

Overview of North Suburban Chicago

The north suburbs of Chicago are a collection of diverse communities that offer a blend of urban amenities and suburban tranquility. Some well-known suburbs include Evanston, Skokie, Glenview, and Northbrook, among others. Each town has its unique character, yet they share a common charm that appeals to families, young professionals, and retirees.

Geographical Layout

- Lake Michigan: The northern suburbs border Lake Michigan, providing ample access to waterfront activities and scenic views.
- Major Highways: The area is accessible via key highways such as I-94 (Edens Expressway) and I-290, making commuting to Chicago and surrounding areas convenient.
- Public Transportation: The Metra train service connects many suburbs to downtown Chicago, allowing for easy travel without the hassle of driving.

Historical Context

Many north suburban communities have rich histories that date back to the 19th century. For instance:

- Evanston: Founded in the 1850s, it was originally established as a temperance community and is home to Northwestern University.
- Skokie: Once known for its agricultural roots, Skokie has transformed into a bustling suburban hub over the years, especially post-World War II.

Attractions and Entertainment

Whether you're interested in outdoor activities, cultural experiences, or family-friendly outings, the north suburbs have something to offer everyone.

Parks and Recreation

- Skokie Northshore Sculpture Park: This beautiful park features a collection of outdoor sculptures along a 2-mile walking path, making it a perfect spot for art lovers and nature enthusiasts.
- Glenview Park District: Offers numerous parks, sports facilities, and recreational classes for residents of all ages.
- Northbrook Court: A popular shopping destination featuring a wide variety of retail stores, dining options, and a movie theater.

Cultural Venues

- Evanston Arts Center: A hub for art education and exhibitions, this center hosts classes for all ages and regularly features local artists.
- North Shore Center for the Performing Arts: Located in Skokie, this venue hosts theater productions, concerts, and dance performances.

Family-Friendly Activities

- Adler Planetarium: Offers educational programs and exhibits about space and the universe.
- Skokie Water Playground: A fun summer destination for families, featuring water slides, spray features, and a lazy river.

Diverse Dining Options

The north suburbs boast a wide range of dining experiences, from casual eateries to upscale restaurants. Here are some notable mentions:

Casual Dining

1. Portillo's: Famous for its Chicago-style hot dogs and Italian beef sandwiches, this casual dining spot is a must-visit.
2. Lou Malnati's Pizzeria: A staple for deep-dish pizza lovers, this chain has several locations in the north suburbs.

Fine Dining

1. The Capital Grille: An upscale steakhouse in Northbrook, known for its dry-aged steaks and extensive wine selection.

2. Ramen Misoya: Located in Skokie, this restaurant offers authentic Japanese ramen in a cozy atmosphere.

Education and Schools

Education is a significant draw for families considering a move to the north suburbs. The area is home to some of the best public and private schools in Illinois.

Public School Districts

- Evanston/Skokie School District 65: Known for its strong academic programs and diverse student body.
- Glenbrook High School District 225: Comprising Glenbrook North and Glenbrook South, this district consistently ranks among the top in the state.

Higher Education Institutions

- Northwestern University: Located in Evanston, this prestigious university offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs and contributes to the local economy and culture.
- Oakton Community College: A great option for students looking for affordable education and vocational training.

Transportation Options

Getting around the north suburbs and commuting to Chicago is convenient, thanks to various transportation options available.

Public Transit

- Metra Train: The North Line connects several suburbs to downtown Chicago, making it a popular choice for commuters.
- Pace Bus Service: Offers local bus routes that fill in the gaps not covered by the Metra, providing access to shopping centers, schools, and parks.

Road Access

- Major Highways: The Edens Expressway (I-94) and I-290 are key routes that facilitate travel to Chicago and other suburbs.

- Airport Access: O'Hare International Airport is approximately 30 minutes away, while Midway Airport is about 45 minutes, offering residents easy access to national and international flights.

Community Events and Festivals

The north suburbs are rich in community spirit, with various events and festivals throughout the year that bring residents together.

Annual Festivals

- Evanston Ethnic Arts Festival: Celebrates the diverse cultures of Evanston with food, music, and art from around the world.
- Skokie Fair: A summer tradition featuring rides, games, and food, perfect for families looking for a fun day out.

Farmers Markets

- Evanston Farmers Market: Open year-round, this market is a great place to find fresh produce, artisanal goods, and local crafts.
- Skokie Farmers Market: Operates seasonally and offers a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and handmade products.

Conclusion

The North suburban Chicago guide encapsulates the essence of what makes this region a wonderful place to live, work, and play. From its vibrant communities and rich history to its excellent schools and diverse dining options, the north suburbs offer an appealing lifestyle for people of all backgrounds. Whether you are considering a visit or contemplating a move, this guide serves as your roadmap to discovering all that the north suburbs have to offer. Embrace the charm of these communities, and experience the unique blend of urban and suburban living that makes this area one of Chicago's most desirable places to call home.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the top attractions to visit in North Suburban Chicago?

Some of the top attractions include the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, the Ravinia Festival in Highland Park, and the historic downtown areas of Evanston and Lake Forest.

What are the best outdoor activities available in North Suburban Chicago?

Outdoor activities include hiking and biking on the Des Plaines River Trail, enjoying the beaches at Lake Michigan, and exploring the nature reserves like the Skokie Lagoons.

Which towns in North Suburban Chicago are known for their dining scene?

Evanston, Highland Park, and Wilmette are known for their diverse dining options, featuring everything from gourmet restaurants to cozy cafés and international cuisine.

How does public transportation work in North Suburban Chicago?

Metra trains and Pace buses provide extensive public transportation options, connecting the suburbs to downtown Chicago and other areas, making it easy to navigate without a car.

What family-friendly activities can be found in North Suburban Chicago?

Family-friendly activities include visiting the Illinois Science and Technology Park, the Children's Museum in Oak Park, and various local parks with playgrounds and sports facilities.

What cultural events are popular in North Suburban Chicago?

Popular cultural events include the Highland Park Festival of the Arts, the Evanston Art and Craft Fair, and various seasonal farmers' markets that showcase local artisans and produce.

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