

Chicago: The Start of Route 66

Few Americans pay attention to a brown street sign on East Adams Street in downtown Chicago. If you are not looking for it, it is easy to ignore. But every few minutes a group of international tourists take a picture in the front of the sign. It reads, "Historic Route - Illinois U.S. 66 - Begin."

The sign marks the modern-day starting point of an iconic American journey: the historic U.S. Route 66, the Main Street of America.

Chicago is the largest city in U.S. Midwest and the third-largest city in the country. It is more famous for its pizza, museums, and skyscrapers than its place in Route 66 history.

If you like tall buildings and interesting architecture, Chicago is the city for you. Skyscrapers were born in Chicago.

Chicago's downtown is called "The Loop." Chicago's train system, the L, circles this part of the city, giving the area its name. "L" stands for elevated. The train tracks run several meters above Chicago's streets. The public transportation system is a Chicago icon. More than 700,000 people board the trains every weekday.

One way to end a day of exploring Chicago's museums, parks, and architecture is by eating at one of the city's exceptional pizzerias.

Chicago-style pizza is very different than the pizza from other American cities.

If the windy city, as Chicago is known, had a soundtrack, the music would have to be jazz and blues. The city is famous for the all-American sounds. Jazz and blues clubs are scattered throughout the town.

Jazz Showcase is among the best of them. The historic club opened up in 1947. It is the oldest continuously operating jazz club in Chicago.

Chicago is not a typical Route 66 city. Aside from the official "start" and "end" signs, it can be difficult to find particular Route 66 sites in the city.