

# Chicago's Lakefront Navy Pier Tour



**VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS**

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# Tour Summary

Located at the convergence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, Navy Pier was originally opened in 1916 as a shipping and recreation facility. Today it has evolved into a premier family entertainment and shopping center. It also provides conference and trade show space, along with a restored Grand Ballroom from the original plan. All of these elements makes Chicago's Navy Pier the state's top leisure and tourism destination--drawing over eight million visitors annually. With a hundred-year anniversary coming soon, the landmark's new role as a family-friendly recreation and entertainment destination has a wide appeal to visitors and native Chicagoans alike. What's more, Navy Pier is surrounded by world-class parks and beaches.

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# Navy Pier Intro





A combination of historic and modern, Navy Pier is today the most visited attraction in the state of Illinois. But it wasn't always that way, as the pier was in disrepair for many decades. The reconstruction of Navy Pier in the 1990s was inspired by the successful use of the pier as a public gathering place in the 1920s.



Let's come down to earth and have a look around this famous Chicago landmark. This hot air balloon attraction, called AeroBalloon, is located in Gateway Park

near the entrance. It is one of the many rides available at Navy Pier.



Also in the shadow of the original Navy Pier turrets is an interactive play fountain around a sculpture garden within Gateway Park. Inside the front doors is a mall that we will visit, along with the Chicago Children's Museum.





Catch a current movie or IMAX show, have dinner inside or outdoors, or go shopping. There is never a dull moment year 'round inside Navy Pier, as free performances at the Family Performance Stage always attract a crowd.



The second quadrant of Navy Pier just outside the Crystal Gardens is the Navy Pier Park with all sorts of amusement rides and attractions. Arguably the most popular, but certainly the most visible, is the giant Ferris Wheel affording great views from the easternmost point of Chicago.



We'll try out all the rides at the Navy Pier Park in this tour, along with playing some miniature golf and seeing what kind of fun we can have in the fun house.



Navy Pier is also a major departure point for boat cruises on Lake Michigan, or along the Chicago River. There are also dinner cruises by the *Spirit of Chicago*, *The Odyssey*, and on the Mystic Blue Cruise lines.



The Chicago Children's Museum is easy to find by following the children. More than a museum, it is where play and learning connect!



Navy Pier has also been home to the Chicago Shakespeare Theater since the year 2000. The seven-story, 810,000 square-foot facility is one of the largest theatre stages in Chicago.



The Grand Ballroom is the farthest point on Navy Pier, a fitting place to quench your thirst in an outdoor beer garden, or have your picture taken next to a giant anchor.



One of the most identifiable symbols of the new Navy Pier is the scheduled firework shows every Wednesday and Saturday evening during the summer months. We'll



stay on the pier after dark and check out the evening attractions.



That was so much fun let's come back another day. In the final section, we will take a walk immediately outside of Navy Pier and see what else we can do in this heart of the city, where the river meets the lake alongside the most iconic of all Chicago landmarks.

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