

TRUE NORTH

Bahá'í House of Worship
for North America in
Wilmette, Ill.



THINKSTOCK; COURTESY OF CHICAGO'S NORTH SHORE CVB

Chicago's North Shore offers visitors a long list of great expectations

By Matt Alderton

CHICAGO PROPER IS TEEMING with attractions, restaurants and nightlife, but as a superior vacation destination, its suburbs are equally vibrant in their own right. On its esteemed North Shore, the swath of affluent communities whose magnificent mansions hug the shores of Lake Michigan from Chicago north toward Wisconsin, breathtaking beaches, verdant forest preserves and quaint downtowns make the word "suburbs" feel grossly inadequate. Perhaps that's why many opt to be called "villages" instead.

"It's interesting how people have their ideas about what it's like up here," says Gina Speckman, executive director of Chicago's North Shore Convention & Visitors Bureau. "In the summertime, when I go to the lake I feel like I'm on Cape Cod with its beautiful, sandy beaches," she says. "It's as if you're on vacation somewhere far away from Chicago. And yet the city is right there. It's not at all what you'd expect."

Because vacations of the "unexpected" variety are often the greatest kind, the North Shore might be the best destination your family never thought to visit. Here's where to go:

PUTTING THE 'URBAN' IN SUBURBAN

Evanston/Skokie/Wilmette

Because it borders Chicago, Evanston is a cultural turnstile between the city and the suburbs. It has the best of both, according to Gina Speckman of the Chicago's North Shore convention bureau. "Evanston is a very diverse community. It's a college town, so it has all the cool things that college towns have — lots of culture, great restaurants and tons of things to do," she says. Accessible from Chicago via the L train, downtown Evanston, like Chicago's urban neighborhoods, has high-rise condos, fun bars, cute shops and destination restaurants, including a new Mediterranean spot — **Terra & Vine** — coming this summer from Alpana Singh, former host of the Emmy Award-winning PBS show *Check, Please!*

► 1701 Maple Ave.; downtown
evanston.org; terraandvine.com

A stroll through **Northwestern University** in Evanston reveals stunning architecture and student sports, theater, art and music — even in summer.

► 633 Clark St.; northwestern.edu

CONTINUED »



Evanston lakefront

COURTESY OF CHICAGO'S NORTH SHORE CVB



Just south of Northwestern is Dawes Park, the lakeside site of numerous summer festivals, including the **Evanston Ethnic Arts Festival** celebrating ethnic art and food July 16–17, and the **Lakeshore Arts Festival** Aug. 6–7.

► 1700 Sheridan Rd.; 847-448-4311; cityofevanston.org/festivals-concerts

West of Evanston in Skokie are poignant exhibits at the **Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center**. Adult admission, \$12; children, \$6.

► 9603 Woods Dr.; 847-967-4800; ilholocaustmuseum.org

In Wilmette, visit the **Bahá'í House of Worship for North America** for its elegant architecture or as a place to stop and meditate. The building is the Bahá'í Faith's oldest surviving temple, the only one in North America.

► 100 Linden Ave.; 847-853-2300; bahaitemple.org



COURTESY OF CHICAGO'S NORTH SHORE CVB



OUTDOOR ADVENTURES Northeastern Lake County

In the state's northeastern corner, Lake County is best known for its theme parks and water parks:

Six Flags Great America

► 1 Great America Parkway, Gurnee; sixflags.com/greatamerica



SIX FLAGS GREAT AMERICA

KeyLime Cove Indoor Waterpark Resort

► 1700 Nations Dr., Gurnee; keylimecove.com

For a pure North Shore experience, opt for rolling waves at **Illinois Beach State Park**, where 6.5 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline encompass beaches for swimming, ponds for fishing and nearly 7 miles of trails for hiking. "When you drive north into Lake County you see a lot more wide open spaces — a lot of natural beauty that people don't get in the city," says Maureen Riedy, president of the Lake County, Illinois Convention & Visitors Bureau.

► 1 Lakefront Dr., Zion; dnr.illinois.gov

For boating and fishing enthusiasts, Winthrop Harbor at the tip of the state is home to **North Point Marina**, where you can book a charter, and **Harbor Days**, a weekend festival held every August.

► 701 North Point Dr., Winthrop Harbor; npmonline.com; winthropharbortourism.com

The Independence Day celebration July 3–4 at the U.S. Navy's only "bootcamp," **Naval Station Great Lakes**, allows the public on base for carnival rides, fair food and fireworks. "It's a fascinating place," Riedy says.

► 530 Farragut Ave., Great Lakes; 847-688-5591; military.com/base-guide/naval-station-great-lakes



AL FRESCO ENTERTAINMENT Glencoe/Highland Park

If the North Shore's middle communities like Highland Park look familiar, thank the late filmmaker John Hughes, who attended high school and filmed some of his most famous movies here, including *The Breakfast Club*, *Home Alone* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. The latter is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year with **Ferris Fest**, a series of events honoring the film May 20–22.

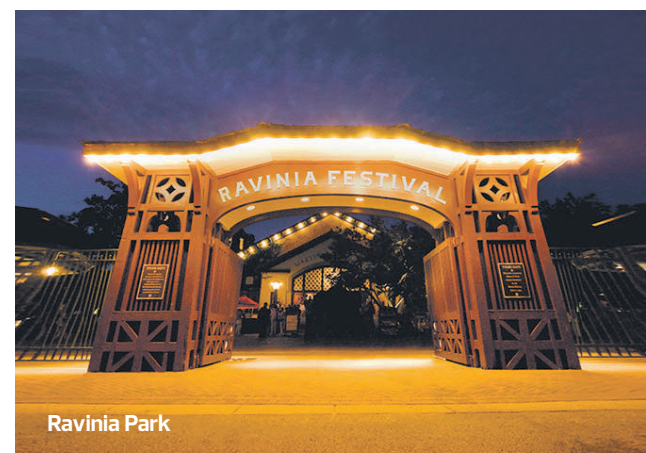
► ferrisfest.com

While in the area, explore 385 acres of flora at the **Chicago Botanic Garden** in Glencoe. Among its numerous displays are a Japanese bonsai collection with nearly 200 trees and more than 5,000 roses in the Krasberg Rose Garden. "It's beautiful," says Speckman, who notes the garden hosts evening concerts throughout the summer, including a one-hour carillon concert every Monday night. Free admission.

► 1000 Lake Cook Rd., Glencoe; 847-835-5440; chicagobotanic.org

For even more music outdoors, nearby **Ravinia Park** hosts the **Ravinia Festival**, the country's oldest outdoor music festival. Sit in the open-air theater or claim a spot on the lawn and still enjoy the music as you picnic on a blanket. This year's lineup includes Paul Simon, Patti LaBelle, Indigo Girls, Tony Bennett, Dolly Parton and, for its 80th anniversary residency, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

► 200 Ravinia Park Rd., Highland Park; 847-266-5100; ravinia.org



Ravinia Park

COURTESY OF RAVINIA FESTIVAL

Close by is **Madame ZuZu's Tea Shop and Art Studio** — a quirky tea house owned by Smashing Pumpkins frontman Billy Corgan, a local resident.

► 582 Roger Williams Ave., Highland Park; 847-926-7434; madamezuzus.com

Downtown Highland Park is home to upscale outdoor shopping and special events such as the popular **Taste of Highland Park**, held Aug. 26–28 in conjunction with the Port Clinton Art Festival to offer food from local restaurants and wares from local artists.

► 847-780-4293; amdurproductions.com ●