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istock / Agnieszka Gaul

Chicago is one of those enigmatic cities that's home to myriad distinct cultures and communities, but somehow maintains its own unmistakable identity. It's more than the windy city grit or the unique challenge of being a Cubs fan. With its galleries, theatres and jazz lounges, Chicagoland is the beating heart of culture between the coasts, but you'll still find touches of Midwestern modesty. As long as you don't start talking sports, that is.

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# Hotels



The Wit

- **The Blackstone**

Past and present are equal partners in casual sophistication at this recently restored historic hotel. Rich wood panelling, marble details and grand crystal lighting evoke its 1910 provenance, while pop-inspired palettes, mid-century furnishings and local contemporary art quietly modernize. Absorb superior views of Lake Michigan and neighbouring Grant Park from a plush leather lounge in a generously spacious room.

*636 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 800-468-3571, [blackstonerenaisance.com](http://blackstonerenaisance.com) Add Remove*

- **Hotel Burnham**

If you've ever fantasized about going back in time - to, say, the ornate, metal-filigreed 1890s - without giving up modern luxuries like in-room spa service, American café classics on call and easy access to some of the world's best retail, consider checking into Hotel Burnham (situated in one of Chicago's oldest and most beautifully preserved skyscrapers, the Reliance Building).

*1 W. Washington St., Chicago, 877-294-9712, [burnhamhotel.com](http://burnhamhotel.com) Add Remove*

- **The Wit**

Downtown Chicago's newest statement piece looks, feels and smells (with its signature building-wide diffused aroma) like "The Future of Hotels." It might seem as though it's trying too hard - the neon green zigzagged façade, the HD movie theatre, the multimedia library, the trendy rooftop club (named, seemingly with a straight face, Roof) - but it works.

*201 N. State St., Chicago, 312-467-0200, [thewithotel.com](http://thewithotel.com) Add Remove*

- **The Dana Hotel and Spa**

The Dana blends laid-back, earthy style with luxurious flourishes. Its serene rooms -featuring floor-to-ceiling vistas - feel like mini-spas, with plank wood flooring and sea-coloured walk-in rain showers. The Zen vibes extend to the indoor/outdoor Vertigo Sky Lounge and the in-house restaurant Aja, where sharing custom-spiced Asian dishes is encouraged.

[660 N. State St., Chicago, 888-301-3262, \*danahotelandspa.com\* Add Remove](#)

- **The James**

This modern boutique spot is stylish without sacrificing comfort - your stay is like being invited to house-sit for your most fashionable friend. Fresh flowers, art and design books, in-room café tables with cushy seating and bathrooms stocked with Kiehl's products are just a few of the better-than-home homey touches. Reserve a complimentary bike for a cruise around the Loop.

[55 E. Ontario St., Chicago, 877-526-3755, \*jameshotels.com\* Add Remove](#)

- **The Elysian**

This new hyper-luxe boutique property in the posh, lakefront Gold Coast is out to set a new bar for opulence. Think polished silver, white marble tubs, fine Italian linens and in-room fireplaces. Think two in-house restaurants - Balsan and Ria - that were generating excited chatter among critics months before they opened and luxury retail on the premises (Marc Jacobs has signed a lease). Think about booking far in advance.

[11 E. Walton St., Chicago, 800-500-8511, \*elysianhotels.com\* Add Remove](#)

- **Amalfi Hotel Chicago**

An attractive and modern River North property, the Amalfi stands out with a super-attentive staff (they call their concierges "experience designers") and boutique touches like coffee and sweets on every floor.

[20 W. Kinzie St., Chicago, 877-262-5341, \*amalfihotelchicago.com\* Add Remove](#)

- **Sofitel Chicago Water Tower**

A dazzling 415-room glass tower designed by Jean-Paul Viguier, the Sofitel Chicago Water Tower offers a modern French retreat within steps of the Magnificent Mile.

[20 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, 800-763-4835, \*sofitel.com\* Add Remove](#)

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