



A SAGE GUIDE TO

Relocating to Chicago



THE CHICAGO GUIDE TO RELOCATING



Chicago



So, you've decided to make the move to Chicago! Whether it's for a new career, a fresh start or whatever the case may be, you're probably full of questions.

Exploring everything from neighborhoods to the concept of "dibs," we hope this guide is a helpful tool in your new journey, and we can't wait for you to start writing your own Chicago story.

Best wishes in your move,

Sage Haus

Wondering about these?

01 The Questions

You probably have a few things on your mind.

02 Transportation

So, what is the best way to get around the city?

03 Pick a Neighborhood

What kind of life do you want to live?

04 Move to Chicago

Start writing your next chapter.

05 This & That

We did promise all the information.





01 THE QUESTIONS

General Questions

Is Chicago Safe?

Legally, we can't speak to the safety/crime of the city, but we genuinely love living here! Like most other large cities, common sense & street smarts are key.

What's your favorite neighborhood?

We honestly don't have a favorite. Each neighborhood has its own unique personality that we can appreciate.

Is the action mostly downtown or are there fun things to do within the neighborhoods?

Most neighborhoods are filled with restaurants, nightlife & fun activities. Personally, we find ourselves frequently exploring various neighborhoods to make the most of the diverse offerings.

What is 3-1-1?

Meet your new go-to phone number: 3-1-1. Whether it's a car blocking the alley, concerns with your landlord, or if you need to connect with the police or fire department for a non-emergency, simply dial 3-1-1. They're your one-stop solution for anything you need assistance with—they'll guide you in the right direction.

Are summers truly that good?

Absolutely! It's indescribable how, the moment the weather takes a turn for the warmer, the entire city seems to come alive. Experiencing a Chicago summer is nothing short of magical. Whether it's the plethora of activities or simply unwinding at one of our beaches (yes, we have beaches), we embrace summer as if it's our first time enjoying the sun.

Winter Weather

Is "dibs" real?

In certain neighborhoods, you might encounter residents saving their freshly shoveled parking spaces using items like lawn chairs. However, in many areas, people would simply disregard such placeholders and claim the spot as finders keepers.



Are winters really that bad?

Well, they're undeniably cold, and we usually experience at least one snow day a year. Yet, with a reliable winter coat and some sturdy snow boots (no judgment on the fashion front – we're all in ugly boots at some point), you'll weather it just fine!

During the harsh weather, it's a common practice to hibernate a bit. Let's face it – not many people enjoy venturing out in the winter. But don't worry; you'll have the entire summer to make up for it!

How does snow work?

Chicago mobilizes its fleet of snow plows to clear the streets efficiently. However, it's worth noting that alleys are not publicly serviced. If you own a car, be prepared to grab your shovel or rely on the possibility that another car has paved a path for you.

When parking on the street during a snowstorm, you might find yourself having to dig out your car due to the accumulation from snow plows. Fortunately, this only happens 2-3 times a year at most.



Something to note, in some areas you cannot park on a street if there are more than 2 inches of snow. Always look at the street signs where you're parking!

Living With Pets

Is Chicago pet friendly?

The city is remarkably pet-friendly, particularly for dogs. Whether it's enjoying dog-friendly restaurant patios or exploring a variety of dog parks & dog beaches, your pup will love city living.

Why do dogs wear booties in the winter?

It's because the salt used to melt ice can be harmful to their paws & very painful, so we make them wear these funny little booties — all in the name of safety.

Is living with a dog in Chicago hard?

In various neighborhoods, you'll find ample green spaces for your dog to do their business, but many dogs also adjust to using sidewalks & dog runs. Just be sure to always pick up after your pet!



02 TRANSPORTATION

How do you get around Chicago?

We're spoiled by the ease of navigating Chicago. There are four main ways we get around:

- Walking
- Bicycle
- Public Transportation
- Car

Will I get lost?

Chicago's streets are laid out as a grid system that make it easy for anyone who is directionally challenged. After a few weeks, you'll be a pro.

Take a Walk

Is it safe to walk around?

Absolutely! We love walking around the city. Like anywhere in the world, always be aware of your surroundings.

Biking Around

How is biking in the city?

A lot of people bike! In addition to the 606 & Lake Shore Trail, Chicago is creating more & more lanes dedicated to bicycling.

What are Divvy bikes?

If you don't have your own bicycle, you can rent a Divvy bike. With over 600 stations around the city, it's a convenient bike share program.

[Check out Divvy for more info](#)

Do I need to wear a helmet?

You're not legally required to wear a helmet unless you're using a bike, scooter, or motorcycle for work. However, we always recommend safety first.

Public Transportation

Chicago has one of the best public transportation systems in the country, and it's also our absolute favorite way to get around the city.

- 'L'
- Bus
- Metra

[Click here for more info](#)



What's Ventra?

Ventra is our public transit pass. It's contactless, so you just tap your card onto the reader to board the L, bus or train.

Where can I buy a Ventra pass?

You can buy a Ventra Card from the following places:

- [Ventra website](#)
- Ventra App
- Ventra Vending Machine
- 1,300+ retail locations
- Ventra Customer Service Center located at 567 W. Lake St. in Chicago
- Call 1-877-NOW-VENTRA

[Click here for more info](#)



Sage Haus

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Website: sage-haus.com

What's the 'L' like?









The 'L' is our favorite method of public transportation. It's easy to manage and, in our opinion, is the most reliable.

You'll walk into the station, tap your Ventra pass on the turnstyle, and head to the platform.

There will be signs to tell you which side of the platform to stand on. If you have any questions, there's usually an attendant on duty, or ask a stranger—we're a pretty friendly bunch.



The 'L' Lines

-  Red
-  Blue
-  Brown
-  Green
-  Pink
-  Orange
-  Yellow
-  Purple

Do you have any tips & tricks?

1. Take off your backpack if it's a packed train. Please.
2. Go in the opposite direction. For example, if the northbound train is packed after a music festival, try taking a less crowded southbound train for a couple of stops, then switch directions at a less busy platform. Call us crazy, but it works.
3. Give yourself enough time to get to your destination. While the 'L' is usually reliable, delays do happen.
4. Download the Ventra App.

How is riding the bus?

Many of our friends & clients prefer the bus. With around 130 routes and over 1,850 operational buses, it's a popular choice.

Using the bus is straightforward. Locate your bus stop, stand near the sign, and board when it arrives. Check the destination sign on top to ensure it's the right one. When entering, you'll tap your Ventra pass at the front, and then, find a seat or stand.

When it's time to hop off, pull the stop request cord or push a stop request button along the window & exit through the rear. Easy as that!

The Metra Lines

- Milwaukee District North
- North Central Service
- Union Pacific North
- Union Pacific Northwest
- Heritage Corridor
- Metra Electric District
- Rock Island District
- SouthWest Service
- BNSF Railway
- Milwaukee District West
- Union Pacific West

Is riding the Metra easy too?

Taking the Metra requires a bit more planning, but once you've got it down, it's a breeze.

Visit Metrarail.com to determine the line and schedule you need. Arrive at the station a bit early, locate your platform, and stand on the correct side.

When the train arrives, simply board an open car! You can choose to sit on the main level or use the stairs for upper-level seating. There are even restrooms on the train cars.

An attendant will come by to scan your pass or check your ticket.

After that, you're good to go! Put on your headphones & enjoy the ride.

[CHECK OUT OUR METRA EXPRESS TRAIN SPREADSHEETS!](#)

What if I plan on reverse commuting?

Even better! Many bigger companies located in the suburbs offer shuttles & buses to their offices. It beats sitting in traffic!

What is the difference between Union Station & Ogilvie Transportation Center?

With both stations calling the West Loop home, it can be hard to decide if you should use either Ogilvie or Union Station. While they share similarities, each station does have its own personality. Everyone has their preference, but at the end of the day, both are reliable options in getting to your next destination.

The key distinction is that each station serves different lines, so it's important to be aware of your destination & choose accordingly!

Union Station

As the central hub for Metra & Amtrak trains, Union Station holds a prominent place in Chicago's rail system. This historic building showcases the unique charms of old world architectural design. While navigating the station may pose a bit of a challenge initially, it becomes fairly straightforward once you familiarize yourself with the layout.

Ogilvie Transportation Center

Ogilvie Transportation Center (OTC) is a beloved choice with a mall-like atmosphere. Nestled within a towering office building, Ogilvie provides conveniences such as nail salons & a food court. Don't miss French Market—it's a must-try experience.





Cars & Rideshares

While many people don't own cars in the city, there are still quite a few that opt to drive or use a rideshare service.

Will I need a car?

Probably not. With incredibly accessible public transportation & a city filled with amenities, it's sometimes easier to get around without a ca a

CHECK THE "WEATHER" SECTION ON PAGES 2-3 FOR A FEW MORE TIPS!

Should I worry about tow trucks?

Generally, tow trucks aren't a major concern, but it's crucial to take note of street signs and parking restrictions such as street cleaning or no parking zones. Additionally, if your car remains in one spot for 7 days, it might be deemed abandoned & subject to towing. If you suspect your car has been towed, use this vehicle locator or call 3-1-1.

What if I need a car?

Between Uber, Lyft, Enterprise, Zip cars and more, you shouldn't have to worry!

How does parking work?

Chicago City Sticker

If you have a car, you need a Chicago City Sticker. You must purchase a Chicago Vehicle Sticker within 30 days of residing in the City or acquiring a new vehicle to avoid late fees and fines. A City Sticker for a passenger car costs about \$100. You can buy these online or in stores.

[Click here for more info](#)

Zoned Parking Permit

If you live within a Residential Parking Zone, you may be eligible to include a Zone Number on your City Sticker at an additional cost of \$25 per year (prorated for varying durations).

You're also eligible to purchase Chicago residential Parking Daily Permits, which are guest passes that are valid for 24 hours upon the date and time of display. Each pass is typically less than \$1.

[Click here for more info](#)





03 PICK A NEIGHBORHOOD

How do you decide on a neighborhood?

So, you've made your budget, and you're finally ready to find your first place in Chicago! But, where do you live?! Boasting 77 official community areas & even more neighborhoods, there are plenty of options to choose from. To kick off your search, here are a few key factors to consider:

- Lifestyle
- Budget
- Commute

Lifestyle

Who do you want to be, and what kind of life do you want to live?

In making significant life decisions, the answers often lie within ourselves. Do you value the convenience of walking down the street for drinks with friends, or are you comfortable living a few blocks away from public transit? Is proximity to the gym crucial? Does having green space or balcony matter to you, or have you been dreaming of showcasing your loft?

It all boils down to what brings you joy.

Budget

Evaluating your budget across various neighborhoods provides insights into the lifestyle you can afford & where. Properties closer to downtown tend to be pricier, but there are exceptions to this rule in certain areas.

In Chicago, we're accustomed to the idea of "compromise." This is where we suggest creating a list of your wants & needs. It's a quick way to streamline your options.

Commute

When considering your daily commute, prioritize your well-being & what you can handle without sacrificing sanity. Keep in mind that an hour-long commute translates to a two-hour round trip.

In a moment of job-hunting eagerness, a young KM once embarked on a daily commute of a one-hour Metra ride into Union Station, followed by a walk to the Jackson Blue Line, and another half a mile stroll to the office. While the experience of working on the Metra & relaxing on the 'L' was enjoyable, that commute only lasted four months before she landed in an overpriced 400-square-foot apartment in Lincoln Park.

Ultimately, what can you tolerate?





04 MOVE TO CHICAGO

How do I find a place?

Finding a home in Chicago is surprisingly straightforward, especially with the assistance of a Real Estate Broker.

Working with a Broker is a no-brainer, given that our services come at no additional cost for both buyers & renters. Once we understand you better and your daily life & commute expectations, we can identify available properties for you to choose from & tour.

If you're not able to come into town to find a place, that's fine too! We've moved folks virtually since 2015. We're pros at FaceTime tours.

Should I buy or rent?

It's up to you, but we recommend renting for a few months to a year. Each neighborhood truly has its own personality, and by renting, you're able to get a better idea of the areas you enjoy while not being tied down to a mortgage. If you're really set on buying, we'll never tell you no.



05 THIS & THAT

Utility Companies

Internet Providers

We're fortunate to have a choice in our internet providers. While we have three main companies, there are quite a few other options out there.

- Comcast
- AT&T
- RCN

These companies usually have first-time user promotions available!

Electric

Commonwealth Edison is our main provider of electricity.

Website: comed.com
Phone: 1.800.334.7661

Gas

People's Gas is our main provider of gas in the city.

Website: peoplesgasdelivery.com
Phone: 1.866.556.6001

Water

The Department of Water Management delivers nearly 1 billion gallons of drinking water to residents of Chicago & 125 suburbs daily from good old Lake Michigan.

If you're renting, this will likely be included in your rent.

Website: [Click here](#)

Phone: 312.744.4420

Trash & Recycling

The Bureau of Sanitation collects residential garbage from approximately 600,000 households in Chicago. Pick-ups are weekly, Mondays through Fridays. City crews service all single-family residences & apartment buildings of four units or less.

The City's Blue Cart program provides bi-weekly recycling services to single family homes & multi-unit buildings with four or fewer units.

If you live in a building with more than four units, it's the responsibility of the building owner/manager to provide recycling.

Website: [Click here](#)

Phone: 312.744.4611



What are the orange paper signs that keep popping up around the city?

Those are for street sweeping!

In residential areas you'll see orange paper signs with big letters on them noting the day of the week street cleaning will be & that parking is prohibited.

Usually, you'll get about 2 days notice of street sweeping to move your car, but sometimes it's only 24 hours notice.

Do not park your car in the zones during street sweeping times!

For more information about streets & sanitation visit:

Website: [Click here](#)

What is the Lakefront Trail?

The Lakefront Trail is where we spend most of our free time. It's an 18-mile paved path along the shore of Lake Michigan where you can run, walk, bike or rollerblade.

Along its path you'll find beaches, water fountains & bathrooms, which are great if you're a long-distance runner or biker. & the views are 🍷.

What is the 606?

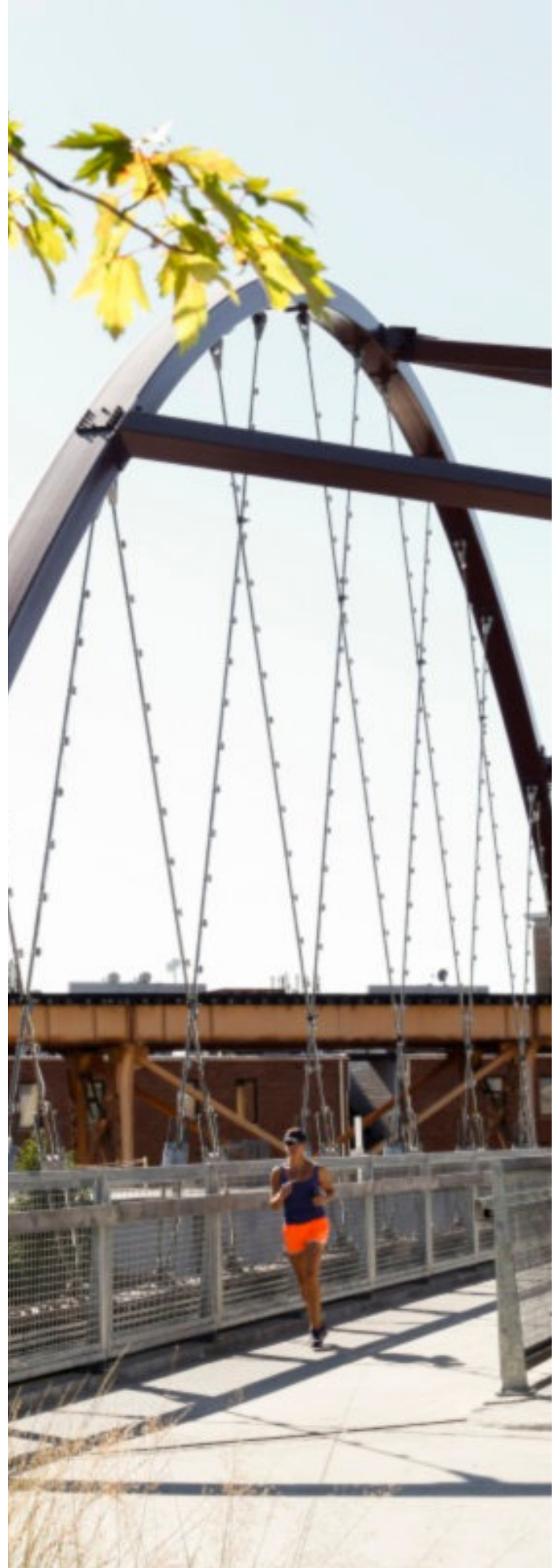
The 606 was once an abandoned rail line that has since converted into a 2.7 mile trail & park. Located on Chicago's west side, the 606 is a well-traveled commuter path for bicyclists & a great option for runners/walkers alike.

Why is it called the Windy City?

The nickname "Windy City" has unclear origins, with a few theories suggesting it could be due to the strong breeze from Lake Michigan or a playful reference to politicians' hot air. Despite its fame, locals rarely use the term "Windy City."

Is there anything else I should know?

Ketchup doesn't belong on a hot dog :)



I hope you found this guide helpful, and I can't wait for you to start writing your next chapter in Chicago.

Cheers to new beginnings!



Kourtney N. Murray
Senior Real Estate Broker
& Founder of Sage Haus

ABOUT SAGE HAUS

From first-time buyers to managing & selling multi-million dollar developments, we're committed to the belief that every client deserves the same level of care.

With creativity & perspective at the forefront, Sage Haus offers a unique approach to the real estate industry and builds relationships from a foundation of honesty & expertise. Through a transparent lens, our mission is to cultivate thoughtful experiences that move people.

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