

2010 CHICAGO MARATHON FOODIE GUIDE

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

I'm a foodie/gastronaut/eater. I also run. When I travel I like to find places that fit a few criteria: unique, local, not deathly unhealthy. It is with that spirit that I have put together a very abbreviated but hopefully useful guide to some great eats around Chicago, specifically for the 10/10/10 Chicago Marathon. The Windy City is chock full of awesome food, but it can be daunting to find it. If you are a more intrepid eater with time to burn, here are my sources if you'd like to dig deeper: egullet.org, chowhound.com, roadfood.com, lthforums.com, chicagogluttons.com, chicagofoodies.com

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

1. Call ahead, for the love of pizza. Marathon weekend the more well-known joints (which are most of these, 'cuz otherwise how could I find them, eh?) could get a bit crazy and you want to make sure that a) they're open and b) there isn't a 4 hour wait.
2. I am NOT going to break it out by neighborhood, since I am not a reliable local navigator. The best way to use this guide is pull out your smartphone (or GPS) and Google for the restaurant and see how close it is to you, and/or if it is near a train stop. That being said, MOST of the recommendations are within the downtown-ish area instead of in the suburbs.
3. Chicago's local transit is awesome and will take you nearly anywhere. Definitely anywhere if you don't mind walking several blocks. There are even smartphone apps with live schedules for easy planning. Here's the transit schedule:
http://www.transitchicago.com/travel_information/maps/htsystemmap.aspx

ABOUT CHICAGO

BOY, oh boy did you pick a big foodielicious city. In one sense, it is hard to go wrong if you just pick a place that looks good and is relatively crowded.

I beseech you to *avoid chains at all costs*. Far too much good stuff exists to have to fall back on a Johnny-Chili-Garden-Morton-Hole. When in doubt, use your nose to lead you to something delicious. Or ask someone on the train. Or your cab driver. Or the concierge at your hotel, but don't ask them where you should go, ask them where THEY go. Something WILL be nearby, I assure you. Thanks.

Now for the food.

CAN'T MISS LOCAL TREATS

Because when you're in a totally new town, why should you go out for the same stuff you can get at home? You'd want your visiting friends to Albuquerque to go out for New Mexican, so why not let Chicago show you what she can do?

CHICAGO DOG: The Chicago dog is a thing of style (and relative health), with a salad bar strewn across the top.

Portillo's (below is just ONE location)
100 West Ontario Street
(312) 587-8910
<http://www.portillos.com/portillos/>

Portillo's started as "The Dog House" in 1963 and specializes in both Chicago Dogs as well as Italian Beef (see below). Dozens of locations, making it easy wherever in town you are.

SuperDawg.
Since 1948. A true original drive-in.
6363 N Milwaukee Ave (10+ miles from downtown)
(773) 763-0660

<http://www.superdawg.com/>
<http://roadfood.com/Restaurant/Reviews/87/superdawg>

Hot Doug's:
3324 North California (Avondale neighborhood, 7 miles from Millennium Park)
(773) 279-9550
<http://www.hotdoug.com>

loooooong lines - not open Sunday - local foodie haven - the best/weirdest hot dogs you will EVER have. Think duck hotdogs with fig relish, that sort of thing.

ITALIAN BEEF:

Al's #1 Italian Beef
I ate in 2008 - very good. Get the 'wet' version where they dunk it in au jus
169 W Ontario
(312) 943-3222
<http://www.alsbeef.com>

Mr. Beef
666 n. orleans st
(312) 337-8500
<http://www.roadfood.com/Restaurant/Reviews/1307/mr-beef>



Photo courtesy of Vienna Beef Company

GOURMET MEXICAN

Chicago (and Illinois) have the largest Mexican population outside of Mexico. Did you know that? So.... if you seen something that looks south-of-the-border and interesting, don't hesitate and go.

But “gourmet Mexican”??? That's the province of Rick Bayless. He's made the homestyle food of Mexico something to sit down at a tablecloth for. Absolutely delicious if you can get a table or a reservation.

XOCO (Lunch/breakfast)

449 North Clark Street

(312) 334-3688

Frontera Grill & Topolobampo (Lunch or evening meal; great margaritas; excellent food)

445 North Clark Street

(312) 661-1434

All three of Rick's restaurants are linked here: <http://www.rickbayless.com/>

Another upscale spot (some people say it is even better than Rick Bayless' places):

Salpicon

1252 north wells street

(312) 988-7811

<http://www.salpicon.com>

CHICAGO DEEP DISH PIZZA

It's unique, it's often replicated but rarely as good as it seems when you're actually in Chicago. Two styles exist: single crust and stuffed. They are both hugely thick and use a crunchy oil-heavy outer crust, but the “stuffed” version has a 2nd crust on top and is even thicker. Here, let Wiki tell you all about it: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago-style_pizza

Or, let a company show you the way: <http://www.sliceofchicagopizzatours.com/>

Pizzeria Uno/Due (same folks)

<http://www.unos.com/>

Pizzeria Due: 619 North Wabash Avenue

312-943-2400

Pizzeria Uno: 29 East Ohio

312-321-1000

Pizano's (in the Loop)

61 East Madison Street

(312) 236-1777

<http://www.pizanoschicago.com/>

Gino's East (two downtown-ish locations)

633 North Wells Street (312) 943-1124

162 E Superior St (312) 266-3337

<http://www.ginoseast.com/>



<http://www.upchicago.com/chicago-deep-dish>

Lou Malnati's (this is likely the family who invented the deep-dish style, originally worked for Uno's)
805 S. State Street (south Loop)
312-786-1000
<http://www.loumalnatis.com/>

Double-crust "stuffed pizza":

Giordano's (several near downtown, here are two:)
730 N. Rush St (312) 951-0747
135 E Lake St (312) 616-1200
<http://www.giordanos.com/>

My brother ate here in 2008 and said it was quite fabulous and of course way too much food.

OTHER PIZZA, NOT DEEP DISH

Coalfire
1321 West Grand Avenue
(312) 226-2625
<http://www.coalfirechicago.com/>

I went in 2008 and it is absolutely FAN-freakin'-tastic. Like Farina but even better. True Italian style thin crust, like Il Vicino but done well.

CHICAGO SAMPLER:

Ricobene's (Deep Dish, Italian Beef, breaded steak, desserts, etc)
252 W. 26th Street
(312) 225-5555
<http://www.ricobeneson26th.com/>
<http://roadfood.com/Restaurant/Reviews/98/ricobenes/>

MISC LOCAL STUFF

Garrett Popcorn (The "Chicago mix"): two stores located downtown (and one in O'Hare, too!) - crazy tourist lines, but so good.
4 E Madison St
(312) 263-8087
<http://www.garrettpopcorn.com>

Vosges Chocolates (they started out in Chicago!)
520 N. Michigan Avenue (North Bridge Mall)
312-644-9450
Hours: Mon-Sat. 10-8, Sun. 11-6
<http://www.vosgeschocolate.com/>

Takashi (Hangover Cure)
Authentic Japanese noodles served Sunday lunch only; dinner is also outstanding, but I'd pick elsewhere if you can do Sunday lunch in lieu
1952 N. Damen Avenue (near Armitage Ave)
773 772 6170
<http://www.takashichicago.com/>

BY CUISINE

Now for a more standard list – because I know you'll want to pick a place based on type of food that sounds good at the moment.

CHINESE (YES, CHINESE)

Little Three Happiness

209 W Cermak (Chinatown – easy to get to with the train, I ate here in 2008 and it was lovely)

(312) 842-1964

<http://www.lthforum.com/bb/viewtopic.php?t=3716>

ITALIAN

Just a few of many, many spots:

Sabatino's Restaurant

4441 W Irving Park Rd

(773) 283-8331

<http://www.sabatinoschicago.com>

La Scarola (Best Italian in the City; probably a front, but who gives a damn with food this good)

721 West Grand Avenue

(312) 243-1740

<http://lascarola.com>

Cafe Spiaggia

980 North Michigan Avenue

312-280-2750

<http://www.spiaggiarestaurant.com/>

Coco Pazzo Cafe

636 N St. Clair St

312-664-2777

<http://www.cocopazzochicago.com/>

Quartino

626 N. State St. Corner of State & Ontario

312-698-5000

<http://www.quartinochicago.com/>

Trattoria #10

10 N. Dearborn St

(312) 984-1718

<http://www.trattoriaten.com/>

BREAKFAST

One place that is pretty consistently good and handles hungry runners is:
Original Pancake House. There are a bunch around town – do a Google search.

Here's a run-down: <http://roadfood.com/Restaurant/Reviews/1327/original-pancake-house>

Bongo Room

1152 S. Wabash Ave. (Roosevelt Rd.)

Phone: 312-291-0100

Pancakes you'd probably commit grand larceny for, with things like bacon and pretzels in them. Yep. Definitely will be a wait, but everyone says it is worth it. Can you say, "carb loading"???



from Foodspotting.com

Green City Market - Saturday 7 to 1 - awesome array of local food; great for breakfast

1750 N Clark St

<http://www.chicagorencitymarket.org/>

DINER/AMERICAN/PUB

White Palace Grill – Chicago. Old-School. Diner. Like The Frontier or the Plaza Cafe – local, casual.

1159 s canal st

(312) 939-7167

<http://www.whitepalacegrill.com>

The Gage (right near Millennium Park!) - well-regarded pub and brunch, Irish-themed

24 s. michigan ave

(312) 372-4243

<http://thegagechicago.com>

The Publican:

837 W. Fulton Market

312-733-9555

<http://www.thepublicanrestaurant.com/>

Brew hall, communal seating, *must have reservations*, holy trinity of food: oysters, pork, and beer

SPANISH/CATALAN:

Mercat a la Planxa - right across from Millennium Park; fabulous drinks

638 Michagan Ave.

(312) 765-0524

<http://www.mercatchicago.com/>

Avec - no reservations, Basque food, very good people watching (same group as The Publican)

615 w. Randolph

312-377-2002

<http://www.avecrestaurant.com/>

Cafe Iberico (Tapas)
737 N Lasalle Blvd
(312) 573-1510
<http://www.cafeiberico.com/>

DRINKS & COCKTAILS – FOR AFTERWARDS!

Violet Hour - Wicker Park - Great cocktails circa Victorian era and fantastic nibbles
NoMi (Terrace) - River North - Views, views, views... expensive sushi, expensive drinks, beautiful people
Peninsula Hotel Bar (Pen Bar) - sexy, dark, great cocktails
Long Room - River North - cocktail trollies, pretty people, rockin' music on the weekends
Map Room - Bucktown - one of most comprehensive beer lists in the city, hipsters

AND JUST FOR GOOD MEASURE (LOCAL HANGOUTS)

Where you'll find the locals (or local food snobs):

Bari - West Town - the best sub in town - always a line on weekends
1120 W Grand Ave (between Aberdeen St & May St)
(312) 666-0730

MK - upscale food joint - foie and cake and shake are the best
868 N Franklin
312-482-9179
<http://mkchicago.com/>

The Girl and the Goat (Top Chef winner's restaurant)
809 W Randolph St
(312) 492-6262
<http://girlandthegoat.com/>

Gaztro-Wagon (trendy Food Truck)
773-942-6151
<http://www.gaztro-wagon.com/>
Follow them on Twitter to find the current location: <http://twitter.com/wherzthewagon/>

THANK YOU, EAT WELL, AND EAT LOCAL!

If you have questions (though I can't promise a local's level of knowledge) – just email me:
chicago@dukecityfood.com