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Chicago

Chicago[a] is the most populous city in the U.S. state of Illinois and in the Midwestern United States. With a population of 2,746,388, as of the 2020 census,[9] it is the third-most populous city in the United States after New York City and Los Angeles. As the seat of Cook County, the second-most populous county in the U.S., Chicago is the center of the Chicago metropolitan area, often colloquially called "Chicagoland" and home to 9.6 million residents.

Located on the shore of Lake Michigan, Chicago was incorporated as a city in 1837 near a portage between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River watershed. It grew rapidly in the mid-19th century.[10][11] In 1871, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed several square miles and left more than 100,000 homeless,[12] but Chicago's population continued to grow.[11] Chicago made noted contributions to urban planning and architecture, such as the Chicago School, the development of the City Beautiful movement, and the steel-framed skyscraper.[13][14]

Chicago is an international hub for finance, culture, commerce, industry, education, technology, telecommunications, and transportation. It has the largest and most diverse finance derivatives market in the world, generating 20% of all volume in commodities and financial futures alone.[15] O'Hare International Airport is routinely ranked among the world's top ten busiest airports by passenger traffic,[16] and the region is also the nation's railroad hub.[17] The Chicago area has one of the highest gross domestic products (GDP) of any urban region in the world, generating $689 billion in 2018.[18] Chicago's economy is diverse, with no single industry employing more than 14% of the workforce.[15]

Chicago is a major destination for tourism, including visitors to its cultural institutions, and Lake Michigan beaches. Chicago's culture has contributed much to the visual arts, literature, film, theater, comedy (especially improvisational comedy), food, dance, and music (particularly jazz, blues, soul, hip-hop, gospel,[19] and electronic dance music, including house music). Chicago is home to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera of Chicago, while the Art Institute of Chicago provides an influential visual arts museum and art school. The Chicago area also hosts the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois Chicago, among other institutions of learning. Professional sports in Chicago include all major professional leagues, including two Major League Baseball teams. The city also hosts the Chicago Marathon, one of the World Marathon Majors.

Chicago
City

The Loop

Chicago River

"L" train

Wrigley Field

Navy Pier

Art Institute of Chicago

Buckingham Fountain

Flag

Seal

Logo

Etymology: Miami-Illinois: *shikaakwa* ('wild onion' or 'wild garlic')
Nicknames: The Windy City and others
Mottoes: Latin: *Urbs in Horto* (City in a Garden); I Will

Etymology and nicknames

The name *Chicago* is derived from a French rendering of the indigenous Miami–Illinois name *Šikaakonki*, the locative form of the word *šikaakwa* which can mean both "skunk" and "ramps," a wild relative of onion and garlic known to botanists as *Allium tricoccum*.[20] The first

known reference to the site of the current city of Chicago as "*Checagou*" was by Robert de LaSalle around 1679 in a memoir.[21] Henri Joutel, in his journal of 1688, noted that the eponymous wild "garlic" grew profusely in the area.[22] According to his diary of late September 1687:

> ... when we arrived at the said place called "Chicagou" which, according to what we were able to learn of it, has taken this name because of the quantity of garlic which grows in the forests in this region.[22]

The city has had several nicknames throughout its history, such as the Windy City, Chi-Town, Second City, and City of the Big Shoulders.[23]

History

Beginnings

Traditional Potawatomi regalia on display at the Field Museum of Natural History
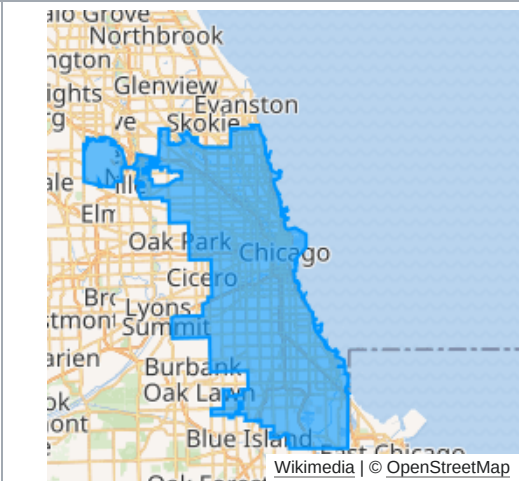

An artist's rendering of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871

In the mid-18th century, the area was inhabited by the Potawatomi, an indigenous tribe who had succeeded the Miami, Sauk and Meskwaki peoples in this region.[24]

The first known permanent settler in Chicago was a trader Jean Baptiste Point du Sable. Du Sable was of African descent, perhaps born in the French colony of Saint-Domingue (Haiti), and established the settlement in the 1780s. He is commonly known as the "Founder of Chicago."[25][26][27]

In 1795, following the victory of the new United States in the Northwest Indian War, an area that was to be part of Chicago was turned over to the U.S. for a military post by native tribes in accordance with the Treaty of Greenville. In 1803, the U.S. Army constructed Fort Dearborn, which was destroyed during the War of 1812 in the Battle of Fort Dearborn by the Potawatomi before being later rebuilt.[28]

After the War of 1812, the Ottawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi tribes ceded additional land to the United States in the 1816 Treaty of St. Louis. The Potawatomi were forcibly removed from their land after the 1833 Treaty of Chicago and sent west of the Mississippi River as part of the federal policy of Indian removal.[29][30][31]

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Interactive map of Chicago

◉ Show map of Illinois
◯ Show map of the United States
◯ Show all
Coordinates: 41°52′55″N 87°37′40″W[1]

Country	United States
State	Illinois
Counties	Cook (majority) and DuPage (minority)
Settled	c. 1780
Incorporated (town)	August 12, 1833
Incorporated (city)	March 4, 1837
Founded by	Jean Baptiste Point du Sable

Government	
• **Type**	Mayor–council
• **Body**	Chicago City Council
• **Mayor**	Brandon Johnson (D)
• **City Clerk**	Anna Valencia (D)
• **City Treasurer**	Melissa Conyears-Ervin (D)

Area[2]	
• **City**	234.53 sq mi (607.44 km^2)
• **Land**	227.73 sq mi (589.82 km^2)
• **Water**	6.80 sq mi (17.62 km^2)

19th century

Home Insurance Building (1885)

On August 12, 1833, the Town of Chicago was organized with a population of about 200.[31] Within seven years it grew to more than 6,000 people. On June 15, 1835, the first public land sales began with Edmund Dick Taylor as Receiver of Public Monies. The City of Chicago was incorporated on Saturday, March 4, 1837,[32] and for several decades was the world's fastest-growing city.[33]

As the site of the Chicago Portage,[34] the city became an important transportation hub between the eastern and western United States. Chicago's first railway, Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, and the Illinois and Michigan Canal opened in 1848. The canal allowed steamboats and sailing ships on the Great Lakes to connect to the Mississippi River.[35][36][37][38]

A flourishing economy brought residents from rural communities and immigrants from abroad. Manufacturing and retail and finance sectors became dominant, influencing the American economy.[39] The Chicago Board of Trade (established 1848) listed the first-ever standardized "exchange-traded" forward contracts, which were called futures contracts.[40]

In the 1850s, Chicago gained national political prominence as the home of Senator Stephen Douglas, the champion of the Kansas–Nebraska Act and the "popular sovereignty" approach to the issue of the spread of slavery.[41] These issues also helped propel another Illinoisan, Abraham Lincoln, to the national stage. Lincoln was nominated in Chicago for U.S. president at the 1860 Republican National Convention, which was held in a purpose-built auditorium called the Wigwam. He defeated Douglas in the general election, and this set the stage for the American Civil War.

To accommodate rapid population growth and demand for better sanitation, the city improved its infrastructure. In February 1856, Chicago's Common Council approved Chesbrough's plan to build the United States' first comprehensive sewerage system.[42] The project raised much of central Chicago to a new grade with the use of jackscrews for raising buildings.[43] While elevating Chicago, and at first improving the city's health, the untreated sewage and industrial waste now flowed into the Chicago River, and subsequently into Lake Michigan, polluting the city's primary freshwater source.

Court of Honor at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893

The city responded by tunneling two miles (3.2 km) out into Lake Michigan to newly built water cribs. In 1900, the problem of sewage contamination was largely resolved when the city completed a major engineering feat. It reversed the flow of the Chicago River so that the water flowed away from Lake Michigan rather than into it. This project began with the construction and improvement of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, and was completed with the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal that connects to the Illinois River, which flows into the Mississippi River.[44][45][46]

In 1871, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed an area about 4 miles (6.4 km) long and 1-mile (1.6 km) wide, a large section of the city at the time.[47][48][49] Much of the city, including railroads and stockyards, survived intact,[50] and from the ruins of the previous wooden structures arose more modern constructions of steel and stone. These set a precedent for worldwide

Elevation[1] _(mean)_	597.18 ft (182.02 m)
Highest elevation – _near Blue Island_	672 ft (205 m)
Lowest elevation – _at Lake Michigan_	578 ft (176 m)
Population (2020)[3]	
• **City**	2,746,388
• **Estimate** (2023)[3]	2,664,452
• **Rank**	5th in North America 3rd in the United States 1st in Illinois
• **Density**	12,059.84/sq mi (4,656.33/km^2)
• **Urban**[4]	8,671,746 (US: 3rd)
• **Urban density**	3,709.2/sq mi (1,432.1/km^2)
• **Metro**[5]	9,618,502 (US: 3rd)
Demonym	Chicagoan
GDP[6]	
• **Metro**	$894.862 billion (2023)
Time zone	UTC−06:00 (CST)
• **Summer (DST)**	UTC−05:00 (CDT)
ZIP Code prefixes	606xx, 607xx, 608xx
Area codes	312, 773, 872
FIPS code	17-14000 (https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=1600000US1714000)
GNIS feature ID	0428803 (https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/search/names/0428803)
Website	chicago.gov (http://chicago.gov)