



CHICAGO

DIVE BAR CALENDAR

2026

"WHERE CASH IS KING, THE JUKEBOX RULES, AND THE
CHICAGO HANDSHAKE FLOWS FREELY"



DID YOU KNOW?

Serial killers Jeffrey Dahmer & John Wayne Gacy were both regulars here. A hand-scratched sign declares it "The Creepiest Bar in the USA."

JANUARY 2026

L + L TAVERN

3207 N Clark St, Lakeview

EST. 1934

Featured on Anthony Bourdain's "The Layover" and HBO's "Lovecraft Country." One of Chicago's best jukeboxes. Named after former owners "Lefty" and Lauretta.

Hours: 5PM-2AM (4AM Sat) **Must Try:** Chicago Handshake

Vibe: Gloriously Grim

"THE QUINTESSENTIAL CHICAGO DIVE!"



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DID YOU KNOW?

Owner Bruce Elliott paints nude portraits of politicians. His naked Sarah Palin on a polar bear rug went viral and brought death threats.

FEBRUARY 2026

OLD TOWN ALE HOUSE

219 W North Ave, Old Town

EST. 1958

Roger Ebert called it "the best bar I know exists." Across from Second City, it hosted Belushi, Murray, and Bourdain. Cash only, open until 4AM.

Hours: 3PM-4AM Daily | Payment: Cash Only

Famous For: Political Nude Art

"A PORTRAIT GALLERY THAT SERVES BOOZE!"



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DID YOU KNOW?

During Prohibition, owner Simon Lundberg ran a secret speakeasy here, likely getting whiskey from Al Capone. The drunk Viking fish sign = "pickled herring."

MARCH 2026

SIMON'S TAVERN

5210 N Clark St, Andersonville

EST. 1934

"The Anchor of Andersonville." Mahogany bar modeled after a steamship, Viking ship decor, and famous secret-recipe glogg. Cozy fireplace in back.

Payment: Cash Only Must Try: Glogg

Vibe: Swedish Time Capsule

"FEEL LIKE THE RICHEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD!"



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DID YOU KNOW?

In the 70s, Carol's averaged 5-6 bar fights per night. The house band Diamondback has 100+ years collective experience. Chicago's LAST honky-tonk.

APRIL 2026

CAROL'S PUB

4659 N Clark St, Uptown

EST. 1972

Chicago's only true honky-tonk, born during "Hillbilly Heaven" when 3.2 million Appalachian migrants moved here.
Motto: "Drink More, Sing Better!"

Hours: Open until 4AM | Live Music: Thu-Sun

Famous For: Two-Stepping

"THE LAST SURVIVOR OF CHICAGO'S COUNTRY MUSIC HISTORY!"



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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DID YOU KNOW?

Nelson Algren modeled "Tug and Maul" tavern after this bar. Liz Phair's "Exile in Guyville" cover was shot in the photo booth. Bartender Ken Ellis made 600+ quilts.

MAY 2026

RAINBO CLUB

1150 N Damen Ave, Ukrainian Village

EST. ~1933

Started as burlesque and jazz hall, possibly a speakeasy. Featured in "High Fidelity." Red half-circle booths, iconic neon sign, and legendary photo booth.

Must Try: \$2 PBR Drafts

Famous For: Photo Booth

Vibe: Indie/Alt-Rock History

"BEST PHOTO BOOTH IN THE CITY!"



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DID YOU KNOW?

Goes through 31 gallons of Malort per week. Invented candy cane Malort in 2016. "Malortsgiving" and "Malortsmas" are annual traditions here.

JUNE 2026

NISEI LOUNGE

3439 N Sheffield Ave, Wrigleyville

EST. 1951

"Nisei" = second-generation Japanese immigrant. After WWII internment camps closed, displaced Japanese-Americans opened this bar. Last true dive in Wrigleyville.

Must Try: Infused Malort Flight

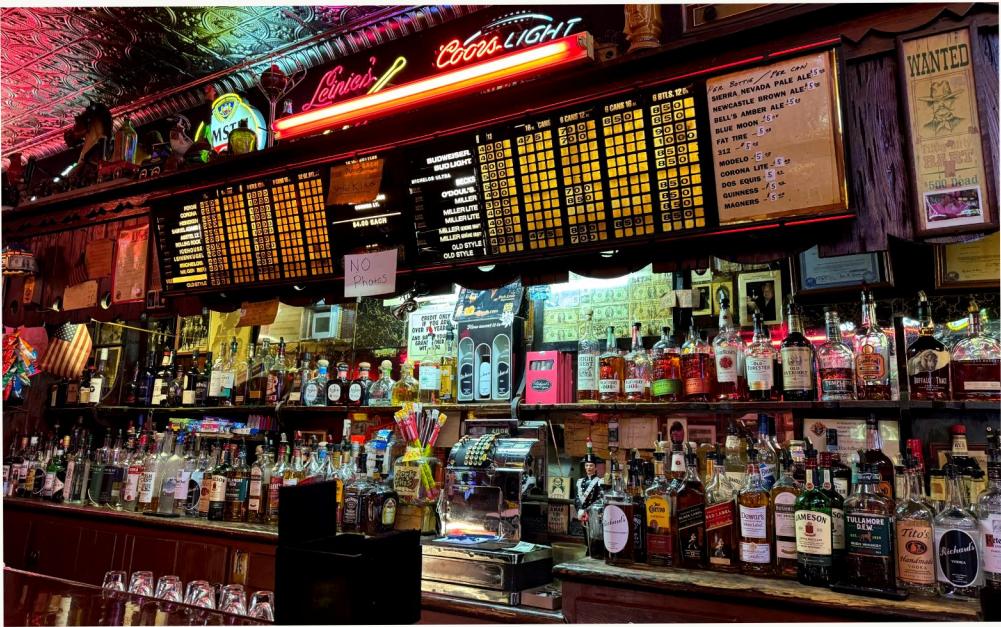
Games: Pool, Darts, 25+ Board Games

Food: BYOF Policy

"FINE PURVEYORS OF MALORT SINCE 1951"



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DID YOU KNOW?

Openly defies Chicago's 2008 smoking ban. Paid thousands in fines, keeps a donation box for more. Strict "No Photos" policy. Victor Skrebneski published a whole book of photos here.

JULY 2026

RICHARD'S BAR

491 N Milwaukee Ave, West Town

EST. 1925

At the legendary six-corner intersection that once divided North and South Side mobs. Tin ceiling, Rat Pack jukebox, hard-boiled eggs. Chicago's last smoker's bar.

Unique: Indoor Smoking

Snacks: Hard-Boiled Eggs (75c)

Deal: \$2 Tecate Cans

"THE SMOKING-FRIENDLY REBEL WITH MOB HISTORY!"



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DID YOU KNOW?

Grandfathered into zoning code - if it closes, no bar can legally replace it. Don't miss the "must-see bathroom ceiling" and fabulous stained glass windows.

AUGUST 2026

INNER TOWN PUB

1935 W Thomas St, West Town

BLDG. 1890

"Home of the Arts" since the late 80s. Renaissance Revival brick building with old steam heaters, ancestral-looking photos, and an Elvis obsession. Free pool and darts.

Games: Free Pool & Darts | Era: 1890 Building

Vibe: Bohemian Artist Haven

"STAINED GLASS, ELVIS, AND MYSTERY!"



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DID YOU KNOW?

"Slashie" = hybrid bar/liquor store with rare license allowing both. Sits on Kinzie Street – historic divide between North and South Side mobs.

SEPTEMBER 2026

ROSSI'S LIQUORS

412 N State St, River North

EST. 1974

Chicago's quintessential "slashie" – sit down for a shot, grab a six-pack for the road. Devoid of sunlight with permanent Christmas lights. Working-class oasis.

Type: Slashie (Bar + Store) Payment: Cash Only

Location: Old Mob Dividing Line

"GRAB A SHOT, GRAB A SIX-PACK!"



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DID YOU KNOW?

Free jukebox - all money goes to AIDS charities. For 30+ years, they've served free Sunday BBQ to anyone who shows up. Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame inductee (2016).

OCTOBER 2026

BIG CHICKS

5024 N Sheridan Rd, Uptown

EST. 1986

Owner Michelle Fire bought it during the AIDS epidemic and transformed it into an LGBTQ+ haven. "A place for everybody." One of world's largest private art photo collections.

Special: \$1 Burgers (Mon)

Tradition: Free Sunday BBQ

Jukebox: Free (AIDS Charity)

"WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS"



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DID YOU KNOW?

Replaced "Lost and Found" – one of Chicago's longest-running lesbian bars. Dogs get treats!
Members of The Ides of March and Koko Taylor's band have played here.

NOVEMBER 2026

LIZARD'S LIQUID LOUNGE

3058 W Irving Park Rd, Albany Park

EST. 2008

Friendliest dog-friendly bar in Chicago – your four-legged friend gets treats! Free live music Thu-Sat, plus trivia, karaoke, bingo, and monthly Scrabble tournaments.

Dogs: Welcome (Treats!)

Music: Free Live (Thu-Sat)

Events: Trivia, Karaoke, Bingo

"ALBANY PARK'S LIVING ROOM"



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DID YOU KNOW?

Die-hard Sox bar that showed Cubs winning 2016 World Series. Corner renamed "Double Bubble Way" after owner Larry Swoboda's death in 2020. Secret back patio with charcoal grill.

DECEMBER 2026

DOUBLE BUBBLE

6036 N Broadway, Edgewater

EST. 1977

"The Bubble." Family-owned Far North Side institution with turquoise-and-white tile facade. Melting pot of Loyola students, young professionals, and blue-collar regulars.

Team: White Sox **Payment:** Cash Only (ATM)

Secret: Back Patio w/ Grill

"WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME"



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