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CHICAGO

TOP PICKS

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THE 10 BEST VACATION SPOTS WITHIN DRIVING DISTANCE OF CHICAGO

THRILLIST X

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here's still time for one last spur-of-the-moment road trip



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vacation. No need for security checkpoints or a black belt in [airport ninjutsu](#), just hit the open road to any of these top 10 getaways within driving distance of Chicago.

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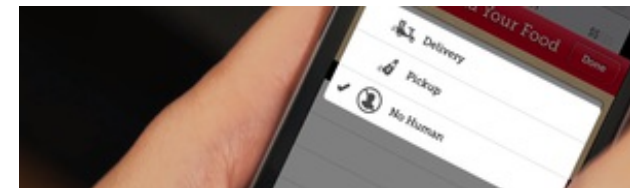
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Distance from Chicago: 44 miles West; 1-hour drive (or train ride)

Why it made our list: An easy 1hr drive or about-the-same Metra ride provides the quickest escape from the city. This cool little town along the Fox River has infinity outdoor restaurants tailor-made for waterfront drinking. We recommend [Fiora's](#) or [Gratto](#), but either way an overnight stay at the [Herrington Inn](#) is a must.

Pro tip: Get out into Island Park for some quality nature time or take a trip to nearby St. Charles, where you can sip vodka lemonades on [Salerno's on the Fox's](#) massive outdoor patio while watching old-timey paddle wheel boats drift past.



[FLICKR/PHCORDNER](#)

Grand Beach, Michigan

Distance from Chicago: 70 miles East; 1.25-hour drive

Why it made our list: This little strip of beach between Michigan City and New Buffalo



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has long attracted Chicagoans looking for a quick escape from the city, including former mayor Richard Daley, who maintains a summer residence here. There's not a ton to do besides bringing a cooler of beer to the shore and beaching yourself like a beer-drinking whale. And that's sort of the point.

Pro tip: Climb a 240ft dune at the nearby Warren Dunes State Park, or head into Sawyer and fill up your growler at [Greenbush Brewing Company](#), which you can also take back to the beach. Are you seeing a pattern here?

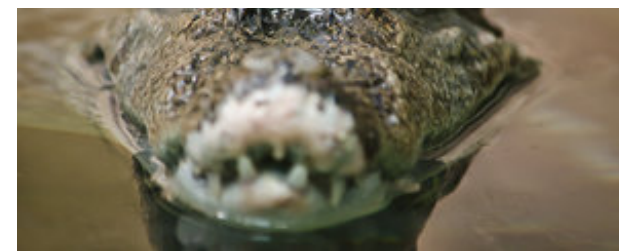


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Lake Geneva/Delavan, Wisconsin

Distance from Chicago: 83 miles Northwest; 1.5-hour drive

Why it made our list: While Lake Geneva may be the best known of Chicago-area retreats, at 90 minutes away you still can't beat it. Sip cocktails at Downtown spots like the 1885

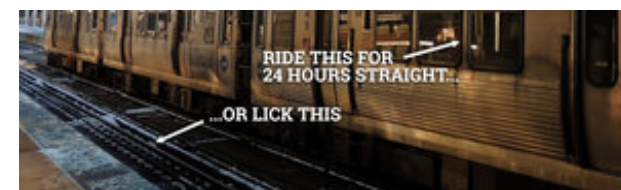


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Victorian mansion [Baker House](#) or the locals dive [Fat Cats](#), before making your way to the relatively undiscovered nearby town of Williams Bay, where you can hike the entire length of the lake shore with hardly anyone getting in your way.

Pro tip: Nearby Lake Delavan offers a quiet lakeside arboretum as well as some of finest dive bars in the state. [Hogan's Goat](#) is a locals-heavy must-visit, as is [The Inn Between](#), where all you need to do to start the party is dock your boat.



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