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LOCAL'S GUIDE



AROUND THE BEND

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This Fancy Chicago Day Trip to Lake Geneva Is Totally Doable

BY LIZ BEHLER // PHOTOS BY TIM KLEIN

Once a summertime retreat for only the wealthiest Chicagoans, these days Lake Geneva is a popular day-trip destination for Midwesterners of all stripes. Just 80 miles from downtown [Chicago](#), this is where names like Schwinn, Wrigley and Maytag went for relaxation. Luckily, you don't need to be a chewing gum tycoon to enjoy the area now, which also includes the towns of Williams Bay and Fontana. Head here for glimpses of this glittering past, sure, but also for the hiking, shopping, and relaxing with some quiet time on the lake.

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE:



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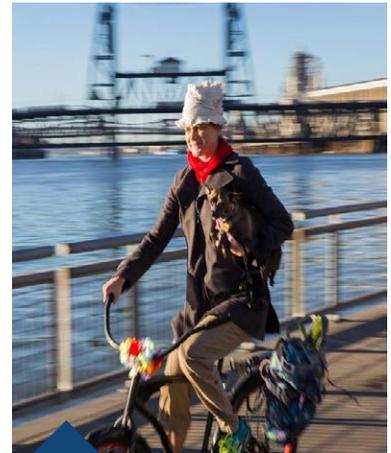
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With boat rides, boutiques, and great eats, you'll be at Lake Geneva 'til the sun goes down.

EAT LOCAL

Start your day by fueling up at local favorite **Simple Cafe** (525 Broad St., Lake Geneva, WI; 262-248-3556; simplecafelakegeneva.com). This breakfast spot uses locally grown, seasonal ingredients to serve up morning staples with a twist. Try the mashed potato omelet (eggs stuffed with creamy mashed potatoes and topped with hollandaise sauce), or order the apple crumble French toast, which comes with cider-infused syrup and tastes like a big plate of apple pie. No matter what you try, pair it with a mug of locally roasted Colectivo coffee.



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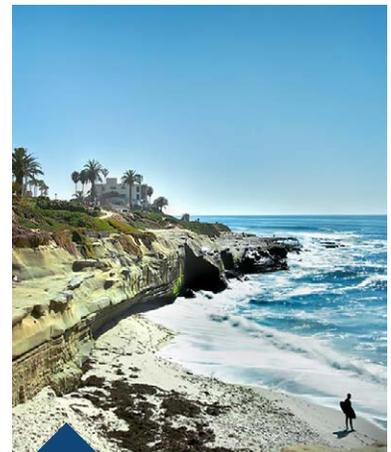
Portland, Oregon's



Chicago's wealthiest families may have been chauffeured around the lake, but for the rest of us, our two feet will do just fine.

TAKE A HIKE

Get an up-close view of Gilded Age opulence by hiking the **Geneva Lake Shore Path**. Thanks to an edict made by early settlers, the footpath surrounding the lake is open to the public, meaning that hikers can literally



Bye Bye Gloves: 8 Wonderfully Warm Winter Getaways

Following news that Boston is experiencing its snowiest



walk through the backyards of historic mansions that encircle the water. For the ambitious, the 21-mile path can be covered in its entirety in a long day. For everyone else, it's best to pick a section of the path to tackle. School yourself on the history of the houses and choose your trail with a "Walk, Talk and Gawk" map from one of the shops in town.

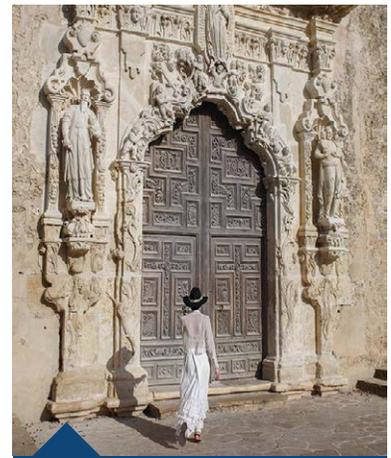


If a 21-mile walk doesn't sound like your idea of a vacation, hop onboard the Lake Geneva Cruise Line for a tour of historic mansions and natural beauty.

If you're looking to cover more ground in less time, opt for a two-hour lake tour with **Lake Geneva Cruise Line** (812 Wrigley Dr., Lake Geneva, WI; 262-248-6206; cruiselakegeneva.com). The cruise spans the length of the lake and provides historical tidbits on the area's estates. Did you know that Stone Manor, Geneva Lake's largest property, contained 14kt gold-plated doorknobs, plumbing, and electrical fixtures when it was built in 1901?

LAKESIDE SHOPPING

Lake Geneva's downtown has enough quaint boutiques to easily fill an afternoon. Stop at **Refined Rustic Studio and Gallery** (755 W. Main St., Lake Geneva, WI; 262-249-0940; refinedrustic.com) for refurbished and reimagined antiques. Then browse reclaimed tiles and architectural salvage, or just pop in to see owner and artist Philip Sassano create unique pieces in the studio shop.



City on a Mission: A Guide to San Antonio

With mild winters, some-like-it-hot summers, a romantic River Walk, big-name theme



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Discover trinkets and décor you never knew you needed, all handpicked from around the world and sold at Delaney Street Mercantile.

Further down Main, **Delaney Street Mercantile** (905 W. Main St., Lake Geneva, WI; 262-248-8008; delaneystreet.com) is filled with a wide range of gifts, from ornate floor lamps to Venetian glass pens and handcrafted soap from France. The eclectic inventory is handpicked by owners Beverly and Jeffrey Leonard, who travel the world searching for one-of-a-kind finds.

DINNER ON THE LAKE

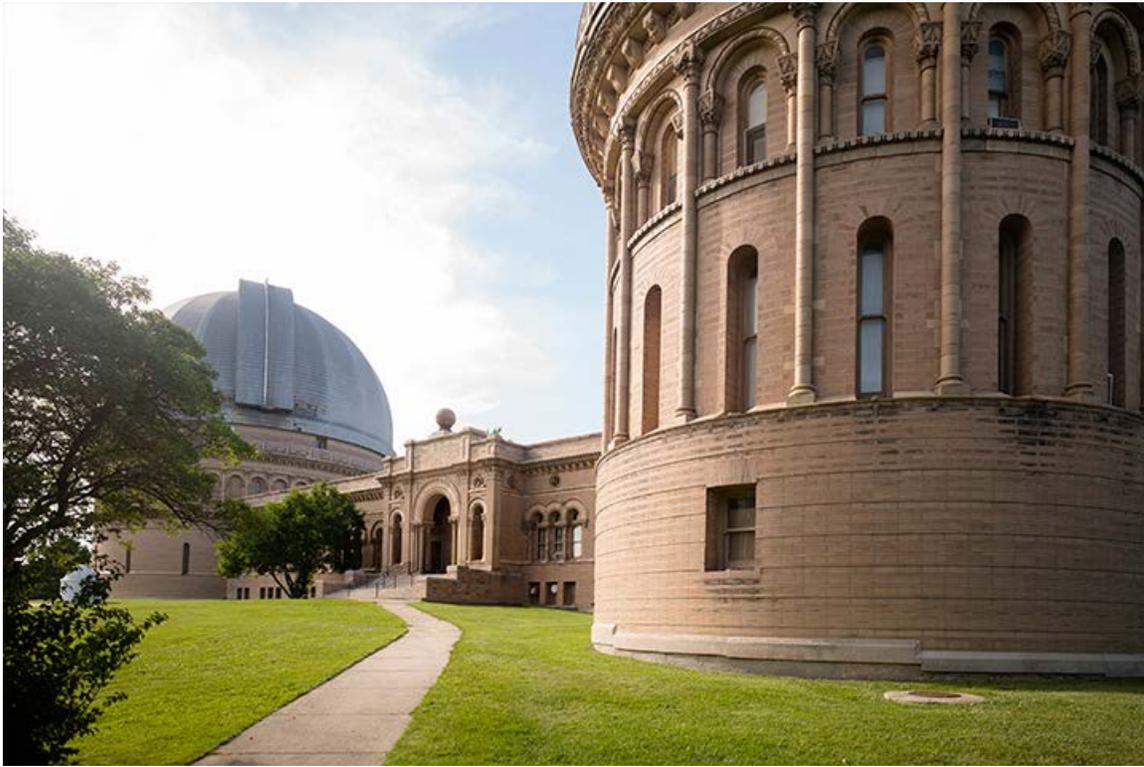


Put on your pearls and raise a glass at the ornate Baker House.

Channel your inner Gatsby and head to the **Baker House** (327 Wrigley Dr., Lake Geneva, WI; 262-248-4700; bakerhouse1885.com) for dinner. The 1885 lakefront mansion has been lovingly preserved, with many of its original details intact, including inlaid wood floors and more than a dozen fireplaces with hand-carved mantels. The menu here is a mix of small and shareable plates. Try the she-crab soup, a customer favorite, and order a

Wisconsin artisanal cheese plate for a taste of the local fromage scene. If you time your visit right, take part in the free Champagne toast held on the lawn at sunset.

SEE THE STARS



Channel the likes of Hubble and Einstein to have your own starry night at the Yerkes Observatory.

Across the lake, set your sights on the stars, literally, at **Yerkes Observatory** (373 W. Geneva St., Williams Bay, WI; 262-245-5555; astro.uchicago.edu/yerkes), home of the world's largest refracting telescope. Edwin Hubble, Carl Sagan and Albert Einstein have all done research here. Follow in their footsteps on Saturdays, when the observatory opens its doors to the public. Yerkes also hosts a number of nighttime events each month, so plan ahead to take advantage of the group stargazing sessions.

SWEET ENDING