

Completed in 1973, the Willis Tower (formerly, the Sears Tower) was the tallest building in the world for 25 years until the Petronas Towers were built in Kuala Lumpur in 1998. Standing 1,450 feet and 110 stories high, the tower is currently #21 on the list of the world's tallest buildings and the second tallest building in the western hemisphere. From the Skydeck, you can see four states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin.



CROWN FOUNTAIN

Designed by Catalan artist Jaume Plensa, Crown Fountain is an interactive work of public art and video sculpture which opened in July 2004. The fountain is composed of a black granite reflecting pool placed between a pair of glass brick towers. The towers are 50 feet tall, and they use LEDs to display digital videos on their inward faces.



Nicknamed The Bean because of its shape, Cloud Gate is the centerpiece of AT&T Plaza at Millennium Park in Chicago. Artist Sir Anish Kapoor was inspired by liquid mercury when he set out to design the Bean. The official title, Cloud Gate, was designated because of how the sculpture reflects and distorts the city's skyline. The Bean was created using computer technology to precisely cut 168 giant stainless steel plates that were welded together. Cloud Gate measures 33 x 66 x 42 feet and weighs 110 tons.





THE WINDY CITY

Established in 1837, Chicago has emerged as a global hub for art, telecommunications, culture, and cuisine. The United States' third largest city, Chicago is the birthplace of spray paint, Twinkies, and Beanie Babies, as well as Walt Disney, Ernest Hemingway, and Shonda Rhimes.

QUICK FACTS

Population (metro) = 9.5 million Demonym = Chicagoan Founder = Jean Baptiste Point du Sable Nicknames = The Windy City, Chi-Town, City of Big Shoulders, Second City, My Kind of Town



THE PALMER HOUSE HOTEL

The Palmer House Hilton is the longest continuously operating hotel in North America. The Palmer originally opened on September 26, 1871, then burned down just 13 days later in the Great Chicago Fire. The second rendition of Palmer House Hotel is believed to be the birthplace of the brownie. To this day, the hotel still serves the Palmer House Brownie made from the same recipe created in 1893.



The Lyric Opera House was the vision of utility magnate Samuel Insull, a populist billionaire known as "the Prince of Electricity." Shaped like a gigantic throne facing the Chicago River, the Civic Opera Building is a majestic limestone skyscraper with a 45-story office tower and two 22-story wings. It was completed after just 22 months of planning and construction.

