

# Travel

## Springfield, IL

Celebrates Honest Abe's 200th birthday in the ultimate land of Lincoln. By **Gretchen Kalwinski**

**DID YOU KNOW?** It's become a tradition for visitors of the Oak Ridge Cemetery to rub Abe Lincoln's nose for good luck.



Let's be honest: The reason to visit Springfield, Illinois, is Abe Lincoln—he lived, worked and raised a family there from 1837 until 1861, when he moved to Washington, D.C., to be inaugurated as our 16th President. The town is chock-full of Lincoln memorabilia and sites (especially with his 200th birthday coming up next week) but not much else in the way of sightseeing—even more so now that the Blago show is over. So, we strongly recommend hitting the town with a Lincoln buff—the excitement will be infectious.

Most crucial Lincoln spots are within five blocks of the **State Capitol** (*Second St and Capitol Ave, 217-782-2099, ilstatehouse.com, free tours*), so stay downtown. The **Hilton** (*700 E Adams St, 217-789-1530, rates start at \$105 per night*) has a heated pool, but the main attraction is its two-block proximity to the Old State Capitol and the Presidential Library and Museum. If you're a B&B-type, the charming **Inn at 835** (*835 S Second St, 217-523-4466, innat835.com, \$110–\$216 per night*) is on the National Register of Historic places and offers turn-of-the-century rooms with cable TV.

On February 12, Lincoln's birthday, Springfielders will celebrate with all sorts of festivities—including a birthday party at the Crowne Plaza hotel and Bicentennial period ball (*lincolnbicentennial.gov*). However, the tried-and-true tourist spots are also worth a visit. Start off at **Lincoln's tomb** (*500 Monument Ave, 217-782-2717, free*) at the Oak Ridge Cemetery. Inside the awe-worthy 117-foot-tall burial monument are engraved placards and state flags, which inspire a sober moment of silence.

Lincoln's house and law office are less impressive. **His home** (*413 S Eighth St, 217-492-4241, nps.gov/lyho*)—where he lived for 17 years with Mary Lincoln and his children—has been restored to its 1860 appearance, but the **Lincoln Herndon Law Office** (*Sixth St at Adams St, 217-785-7289*) is undergoing renovation (and research) by the Illinois Historic Preservation Society, so the guide does a fair amount of guesswork during her tour. Still, it's free. Another free spot is the **Old State Capitol** (*Old State Capitol Plaza, 217-785-7960, illinoishistory.gov/hs/old\_capitol.htm*), where Obama announced both his candidacy and his choice for VP. Our tour guide choked up when he



talked about Lincoln's famous 1858 "A House Divided" speech, delivered on this Senate floor.

As for that other less-esteemed Illinois politician, the nearby Blago-free rarely inhabited **Governor's mansion** (*410 E Jackson St, 217-782-2525*) opens for tours on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. Across from the capitol, **Prairie Archives Antiquarian Booksellers** (*522 E Adams St, 217-522-9742, prairiearchives.com*) sells used/rare books, where the helpful owner showed us a Route 66 map and how to find a nearby brick section of the famous road, which intersects with the old Lincoln Highway in Joliet and Plainfield.

For the Disney World of Lincoln experiences, hit the fantastic **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum** (*212 N Sixth St, 800-610-2094, alpm.org, \$10 admission includes all presentations*) for its memorabilia and high-end exhibits. Check out "Lincoln's Eyes"—smoke machines and 3-D projection are used, and the seats actually shake (to mimic a cannon's boom) during a Civil War retelling. The shop sells Lincoln mugs for your favorite history buff.

If history leaves you cold, keep your energy up with some of the tasty food options around town. **Incredibly Delicious Bakery** (*925 S Seventh St, 217-528-8548, incrediblydelicious.com*) serves from-scratch olive bread and chocolate buttercream cakes. For classic dining, **Maldeners** (*222 S Sixth St, 217-522-4313*) offers standbys, like beef Wellington, pistachio-encrusted salmon and sidecars. **Sebastians** (*221 S 5th St, 217-789-8988 sebastianshideout.com*)

has more contemporary fare, such as decadent blue-cheese soup and mahi-mahi with couscous. **Charlie Parkers** (*700 North St, 217-241-2104*) is the go-to spot for a diner-style breakfast (try the fluffy pancakes) complete with '50s memorabilia. **Cafe Moxo** has the most urban brunch in town (*411 E Adams St, 217-788-8084, cafemoxo.com*) with espresso, French toast, smoothies and the creative Huck Fin sandwich (albacore tuna with walnuts, apricots and celery on multigrain bread).

For watering holes, Obama supposedly frequented **Floyd's Thirst Parlor** (*212 S Fifth St, 217-522-2020*), which has a dozen beers on tap and a shuffleboard table. Inside the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center, you'll find tasty martinis at the **Globe Tavern** (*701 E Adams St, 217-544-8800*).

Springfielders will insist you partake of a "horseshoe" sandwich, a bizarre local tradition involving an open-faced sandwich on toasted sourdough bread with a hamburger patty or ham, topped with french fries and cheese sauce. The superior version is at **D'arcys Pint** (*661 W Stanford Ave, 217-492-8800*)—buy it alongside some Pepto-Bismol. As one Springfield local put it, "Ideally, one would go straight from the horseshoe to the [Presidential] museum. The moment you're looking for is when you're feeling nauseous from a horseshoe and find yourself contemplating Lincoln's childhood—that's truly Springfield."

THE TAB

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One night, two people

Train/gasoline	\$72*
Hotel	\$120
+ Meals	\$145
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$337</b>

Travel time 3 hrs 35 min

\*Amtrak (amtrak.com, \$18 each way) gets you there in just over three hours on its Lincoln Service line.

The Get

## O'Hare versus Midway

Which airport offers more pampering for travelers?

Few things in life cause more stress than lost luggage or a delayed flight. And on the flip side, nothing relieves tension quite like a massage. So, it seems like a no-brainer for **O'Hare** (a.k.a. the Chicago 'port with the most delays) to set aside a space where passengers can get quick rubdowns before boarding planes. Located on the gates-side of the security checkpoint area in Terminal Three (where American, American Eagle, Delta and other airlines take off and land) is BackRub Hub (*pictured, 773-601-0630*). The kiosk features licensed massage therapists



giving fully clothed travelers neck, shoulder and back massages in 10- to 30-minute increments (\$15–\$35). If your delay goes into the double digits, head over to the Hilton O'Hare (*across from Terminal Two, 773-686-8000*), which is located on airport grounds. Not only does the hotel offer an on-site gym, with a lap pool and sauna (day pass, \$15), but it also features treatment rooms where massage therapists can work on your knotty back (60-minute Swedish massage, \$100). Midway lacks spa amenities, but that could change soon: Last October, the city aviation commissioner, Richard Rodriguez, told the *Chicago Tribune* he hopes to see manicure stations at both airports in the not-so-distant future.—Kevin Aeh

PHOTOS: TOP: GRETCHEN KALWINSKI; BOTTOM: CHRIS JAKE