Keep your cash and enjoy the beautiful Millennium Park, an absolute must-see when visiting Downtown Chicago. Popular for its variety of visual, performance, and agricultural artwork, Millennium Park is a frequent spot for locals and visitors. And the best part? All seven stops are FREE!

Interested in other free walking tours? Check out our upcoming pay-what-you-like guided tours! or join us for our guided Chicago Loop Tour, which covers Millennium Park. It's a pay-what-you-like tour.

Millennium Park was revealed in 2004 after Mayor Richard M. Daley’s plan to convert the then unsightly industrial wasteland into a 25 acre park filled with architecture, sculpture, and flora. Large public events, many of which are free to the general public, are held each year in Wrigley Square and Jay Pritzker Pavilion.

Click here for a larger interactive map
This self-guided walking tour, which takes about an hour within a one mile stretch, will make sure you hit all the stops. For the best view, enter the park from Washington Avenue. (you’ll see a tease of the Jay Pritzker Pavilion towering over the trees, pictured here).

Follow the paved paths for the entirety of this tour, beginning with the Millennium Park Monument, immediately to your left across from Wrigley Square lawn.

**Stop #1: Millennium Park Monument**

To your left you will see the peristyle and fountain dedicated to the founders of Millennium Park. These 40 foot, doric style columns are a replica of the original peristyle erected in 1917. The original stood until 1953. A close look at the base of the monument reveals the names of the individual corporate donors for the park’s gorgeous renovations.

**Stop #2: Boeing Gallery North**

Following the path east around the peristyle, you’ll find the first of two open-air galleries. Photographer Terry Evans’ *Revealing Chicago: An Aerial Portrait* was the inaugural piece and the Boeing Gallery North has been host to semi-annual installments since the aircraft manufacturing company’s five million dollar donation in 2005. Take in the current exhibition, then continue south along the path.
Stop #3: Jay Pritzker Pavilion

When first viewed, the Jay Pritzker Pavillion might be mistaken as one of the many sculptures in Millennium Park. As you exit the North Boeing Gallery, make a left toward the Pavilion. The closer you get, the more the unique design unveils itself as the state of the art amphitheatre that it is. On days when there are no events, this auditorium is open to the public to explore. If there is an event during your tour, you’ll be able to appreciate the acoustics of the space. Made of stainless steel pipes intersecting beneath sloping plates, the Jay Pritzker Pavillion was designed by Frank Gehry, and holds up to 11,000 audience members. When you’ve gotten your selfie in front of the stage, continue southwest along the pathway until you see the highlight of your walking tour.

Stop #4: Cloud Gate (“The Bean”)

This internationally recognized contemporary sculpture by Anish Kapoor might look like it’s loving nickname, “The Bean”, but completing Cloud Gate was no small task! Assembled with nearly 200 stainless steel plates, Kapoor’s sculpture cost $26 million dollars to complete. But, as it now serves as perhaps the most visited attraction for travelers and tourists of Chicago, we’d say it was well worth the effort! Anish Kapoor is an English sculptor, having studied at Hornsey College of Art and Chelsea School of Art Design. Cloud Gate was his first United States installment, weighing in at 100 tons.
This is an excellent place to take selfies. Cloud Gate is also a favorite spot for pictures of the Chicago Skyline. Pittsfield, Leo Burnett, The Heritage, Smurfit-Stone, and One Prudential Plaza buildings are just a few pictured below.

**Stop #5: Lurie Garden**

Head south and keep your camera out! You can enter the Lurie Garden through any of the pathways, and explore this 5 acre botanical garden. The Lurie Garden opened in the summer of 2004, with designs by Kathryn Gustafson, Piet Oudolf, and Robert Israel. Open all year long, the Lurie captures each season in its own natural beauty. Its motto? “Urbs in Horto”, or City in a Garden. When you are done exploring and taking pictures, exit the garden on the southwest side. You’ll see the Boeing Gallery South in front of you.

**Stop #6: Boeing Gallery South**

The remainder of the tour offers perhaps the most jaw-dropping sculptures that Millennium Park has to offer. Pictured is part of a piece from Jaume Plensa’s exhibition 1004 Portraits. The Boeing Gallery South offers more of the art installments within its nearly 20,000 square feet perimeters.

**Stop #7: Crown Fountain**

Adding to Chicago’s world famous art collection is Spanish artist Jaume Plensa’s Crown Fountain in Millennium Park. The Fountain took five years to complete, from 2000 to 2005, and has remained in Millennium Park for over a decade! Two fifty foot tall LED towers stand facing one another, as roughly 1,000 faces interact across this fountain. The faces are all representational of the diverse citizenship of
Chicago, and water spouts from their mouths in the style of Gothic Gargoyle fountains. Plensa, born in 1955, aims to reach his audience on an intuitive level, often dealing in dualities with his world renowned pieces. The videos are on display throughout the year, while the water aspect of the fountain operates seasonally.

At this time you will finish your self-guided walking tour on Michigan Avenue. We hope you enjoyed your time in Millennium Park! Come back soon!