

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



TOM HARRIS/CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE CENTER

The Chicago Architecture Center's Skyscraper Gallery contains scale models of a handful of record-smashing high-rises from around the globe.

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Chicago, long known for its muscular and majestic buildings, now has a new home to share its past, present, and future insights into architecture. The Chicago Architecture Center, which opened in late August, replaces what was known as the Chicago Architecture Foundation and was housed in a much smaller space. The new two-level center takes up 20,000 square feet at 111 East Wacker, a 1970 steel-and-glass building designed by famed architect Mies van der Rohe. It's a hub for everything architecture and features interactive exhibits, education programs, and more than 85 docent-led tours, including the popular Chicago River cruise. At this new location, the docks are just a few steps away.

The show starts outside, before visitors even enter the building. From the sidewalk, one can peer through tall windows into the Skyscraper Gallery to see scale models of a handful of record-smashing high-rises from around

the globe. Those include Chicago's Willis Tower (originally Sears Tower), once the world's tallest; the current tallest tower, Petronas Towers in Malaysia; and the future top tower, Saudi Arabia's Jeddah Tower, which, when completed in 2021, will rise to 3,281 feet. The Jeddah model is 36 feet, twice the height of the Willis Tower model. (The Jeddah Tower was designed by Chicago-based Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture, which also designed the new center.) A visual bonus gives viewers something to reflect on — the glass window fronting the models reflects the Wrigley Building and other skyscrapers across the Chicago River, creating a dance of reality and representation.

Inside, the Chicago Gallery tells the story of how the city become the epicenter of modern architecture. The centerpiece is the popular Chicago Model Experience, which has been expanded from 1,300 to a whopping 4,000 buildings. A film and interactive light show illuminates the model to show Chicago's early growth, rebirth

after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871, first-ever skyscrapers, and today's modern masterpieces of steel and glass. The gallery also highlights the city's most notable architects, diverse neighborhoods, unique home design, cutting-edge uses of data, and innovative projects in the works that are changing the city's skyline.

Other new additions include an orientation hall, design center, and enlarged gift shop. While admission to the previous center was free, nonmembers now must pay to enter the center, but signing up for a tour allows a discount or free admission.

Chicago Architecture Center, 111 East Wacker Drive, 312-922-3432, www.architecture.org. Admission \$12 adults, \$8 students, children under 5 are free. Open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. except major holidays.

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HERE

LEAF PEEPING AROUND THE ISLANDS

See Boston's stunning fall colors from the water. Classic Harbor Line holds special fall foliage brunch and lunch cruises this fall, offering guests tasty cuisine and colorful views aboard the 115-foot Northern Lights motor yacht, modeled after a classic 1920s New England steamship. The 2½-hour Fall Foliage Brunch Cruise runs Saturdays and Sundays from Oct. 13 to Nov. 11 and offers panoramic views of the city's skyline and historic landmarks. The three-course brunch includes Belgian waffles, eggs Benedict, bagels, and more. The captain and crew will share facts about the islands, and stories of the pirates and ghosts that haunt the area. The two-hour Fall Foliage Luncheon Cruise runs Oct. 11 to Nov. 9, and features gourmet sandwiches, hot cider, and great views of the coast. \$70 brunch, \$55 lunch. 617-951-2460, www.boston-sailing.com

A TERRIFYING TOUR OF A HAUNTED SHIP

Face sheer terror aboard a battleship in the Quincy Shipyard this Halloween. The Ghost Ship Harbor experience takes place aboard the 716-foot USS Salem from Sept. 28 through Nov. 3. The story line: Visitors must find refuge from a nasty virus that has consumed what's left of civilization. Be brave, climb aboard the ship — rumored to be the only safe zone left — and confront your fears as you battle for survival. The ship features updated haunts (visitors go through a so-called extensive decontamination process) and old favorites (with clowns, spiders, sea creatures, and more). Enjoy an all-new virtual reality experience or an upgraded VIP experience, a 45-minute tour led by a paranormal expert during which you'll hear stories



about "real" hauntings aboard the ship. Visitors must be 12 and older for all tours. Advance tickets \$34.99 regular tour, \$49.99 Fast Pass, \$69.99 VIP experience; add \$5 per ticket at the door. 617-935-0444 ext. 1, www.ghostshipharbor.com

THERE

SEATTLE LANDMARK GETS A 'SPACELIFT'

It took 176 tons of glass to make the Space Needle's new all-glass floors and walls, which are ideal for enjoying unobstructed views of the city and surrounding mountains (weather permitting, of course) and the ground 500 feet below. The \$100 million renovation includes the world's only revolving glass floor, called The Loupe, which completes a full rotation in 30 minutes. Don't worry: Engineers used 10 different layers of glass and argon gas to create a safe, unbreakable floor. Upstairs at the outdoor observation level, 2½-inch-thick glass walls tilt outward, matching the curvature of

the building. With no roof above and several-inch slats between the window panes, you can enjoy Seattle's fresh air and "elements." Sit on one of the slanted glass benches, up against the tilted wall, and look straight down to the pavement and gardens below. A cantilevered grand staircase connects the two floors. Engineers and designers

worked hard to ensure the Space Needle's exterior maintains the same look it had when constructed for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. Tickets \$24.50 (ages 5-12) to \$37.50 (13 and older). 800-937-9582, www.spaceneedle.com

FIND COOL PLACES TO SLEEP AND EXPLORE

Enjoy the foliage while staying at

unique properties across the country this fall. Hipcamp.com lists more than 300,000 private ranches, farms, vineyards, and nature preserves, public parks and campgrounds, and more. Stay in a cabin in Maine that's just half a mile from the ocean, on a Connecticut farm where you can learn about permaculture produce and explore local vineyards, or in a luxury canvas tent on a farm in Minnesota where you can play with baby goats, discover farm life, and enjoy farm-fresh produce. Detailed listings include photos, property descriptions, and reviews. Search based on location, dates, amenities, or type of structure (cabin, RV, or yurt, for instance), or use the site's fall foliage map to find a good leaf-peeping spot. Then book and pay for your accommodations through the website (much like you would with VRBO.com). www.hipcamp.com



EVERYWHERE

HANDS-FREE CHARGING MOUNT

If you have one of the latest Qi-enabled smartphones, consider getting the latest wireless charging mount for your car. Kenu's Airbase Wireless fast-charging suction mount and Airframe Wireless vent mount hang on tight to your dashboard or windshield (thanks to the heavy-duty suction cup with gel adhesive) or to the air vent (using a push-button vent clip) and offer 10 watts of quick-charging power. Plug one of the mounts into your 12V port using the USB-C cable. Then clamp your phone into place using the spring-loaded grips and it automatically charges using wireless induction technology — no need to plug it in. Both mounts easily rotate between portrait and landscape mode, and work with the iPhone X, iPhone 8 plus, iPhone 8, and Samsung Galaxy S9 (they'll also hold any phone up to 4.3 inches wide, but won't charge it unless the phone has wireless charging capability). The mounts have an extra 2.4-amp USB plug for charging another device simultaneously. \$59.95. www.kenu.com

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