

enjoyillinois.com

Frank Lloyd Wright Itinerary

Early Works and Triumphs in Chicago A YOUNG ARCHITECT BUILDS HIS REPUTATION IN THE WINDY CITY

Spend a day in Chicago exploring some of Frank Lloyd Wright's most famous designs, from his early collaborations to a solo masterpiece.

Charnley-Persky House Museum

Like most in his trade, Frank Lloyd Wright began his career as a draftsman, working in the studio of a more established architect. In Wright's case, it was Louis Sullivan—a titan of Chicago architecture in his own right—who took him on as a protégé. Sullivan grew to trust Wright enough to let him contribute to the design of residential commissions, including the James Charnley House in 1892—a collaboration that some consider the first truly modern American home.

How to Visit: Today, the Charnley-Persky House Museum is also home to the Society of Architectural Historians, which leads guided tours on select days.

The Rookery

Built by Chicago's preeminent architects, Daniel Burnham and John Root, in 1888, this early iron skyscraper is notable enough for its history in Chicago architecture. But the real reason to visit The Rookery is to see the careful orchestrations of sunlight streaming through the glass lobby, which Wright remodeled in 1905—instantly updating Burnham and Root's drab ironwork for the 20th Century.

How to Visit: The Frank Lloyd Wright Trust leads guided tours of the building on select days.

Robie House

Designed in 1910, the Frederick C. Robie House cemented Wright's reputation as a singular architectural talent. Often considered the crown jewel of the Prairie style—an aesthetic that Wright both pioneered and perfected—the home reflects the Midwest's flat plains with its horizontal lines, low-pitched roofs, and clever use of natural materials such as brick and wood.

How to Visit: The Frank Lloyd Wright Trust leads guided tours of the interior throughout the year.



Special Event WRIGHT EXHIBIT AT THE ART INSTITUTE

From April 22 through July 23, the Art Institute of Chicago hosts a special exhibit devoted to one of Frank Lloyd Wright's personal hobbies. Throughout his life, Wright collected Japanese prints, many of which he lent to the museum for a special exhibit in 1908. This summer's exhibit incorporates photos from that 1908 showing, original prints once owned by Wright, and drawings that hint at the Japanese influences in his work.

enjoyillinois.com

Frank Lloyd Wright Itinerary

Oak Park: The Village That Wright Built THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF WRIGHT-DESIGNED HOMES IN THE WORLD

Settle in a village just outside Chicago to see the largest concentration of Wright-designed homes in the U.S.—including his own.

Unity Temple

Late in his career, Wright reflected on Unity Temple, declaring it his “contribution to modern architecture.” Indeed, it was a deeply personal project. When Oak Park’s Unitarian Church burned to the ground in 1905, Wright—a lifelong member—volunteered to design its replacement. Faced with a tight budget, Wright relied on clever design choices and plenty of concrete to build the cubist masterpiece, defying almost every convention of religious architecture along the way.

How to Visit: Unity Temple is currently undergoing restoration, but it is expected to resume public tours in Summer 2017. The latest details can be found on the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust website.

Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio

Of all the Oak Park homes designed by Wright, perhaps the most important is the one he made for himself. The Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio served as Wright’s private residence for the first 20 years of his career (1889–1909), during which he also tinkered with concepts in the sanctity of his studio before unveiling them to his clients (and the world). As such, the home itself offers insights into the subtle experiments and personal habits that informed the evolution of his work.

How to Visit: The Frank Lloyd Wright Trust leads guided tours of the home as well as the surrounding neighborhood, which contains 25 Wright-designed buildings within walking distance.



Special Event WRIGHT PLUS HOUSEWALK

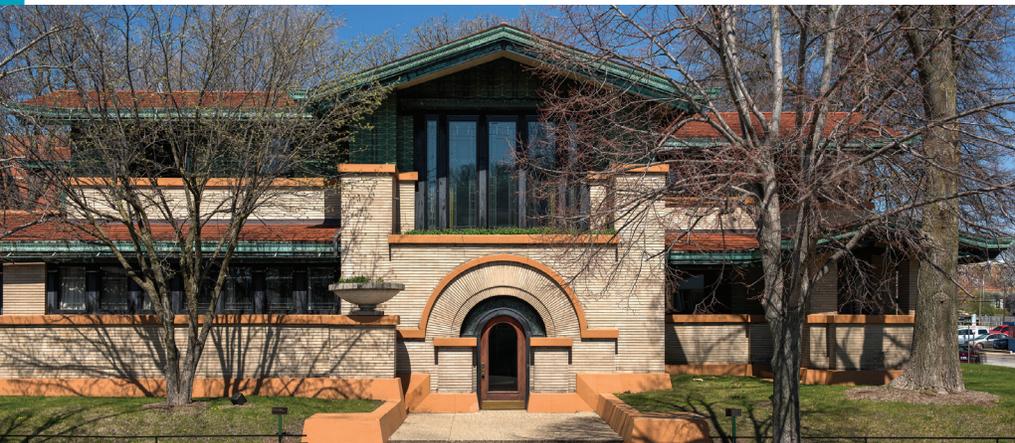
Most of Wright’s designs around Oak Park are private residences that aren’t normally open to the public. However, on May 20, the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust celebrates its namesake’s 150th birthday with the Wright Plus Housewalk, a guided tour of 10 homes and buildings, including rare glimpses inside several private homes. Tickets start at \$100 for non-Trust members.

Frank Lloyd Wright Itinerary

Downstate Designs

A TRIP DOWN THE INTERSTATE TO SEE PRAIRIE-STYLE HOMES

Spread across 200 miles, three of Wright's most impressive homes evoke his signature style.



B. Harley Bradley House, Kankakee

Built 1900–1901, the B. Harley Bradley House was likely the very first home Wright designed in the Prairie style, making it an essential stop on your survey of his career. The house sits on the banks of the Kankakee River, where you can embark on a half-hour cruise in an electric boat to see other homes along the shore—including another Wright-designed house right next door to the Bradley House.

How to Visit: Docents lead guided tours of the home from Thursday–Sunday.

Millikin Place, Decatur

There's more to an architect's legacy than his buildings. In the early 1900s, three Decatur businessmen commissioned Wright to design homes for each of them on a private drive they'd purchased known as Millikin Place. Only one of them would get to move in. After completing the design for Edward Irving's house at 2 Millikin Place, Wright absconded to Europe in 1909 with the wife of another one of his clients.

Yet from one man's transgressions, a woman's career blossomed. After Wright left, Marion Mahony—Wright's associate and one of the first licensed female architects in the country—finished the other two commissions, laying the foundation for her lifelong contributions to the Prairie School.

How to Visit: Public tours of the private residences aren't available, but the exteriors make for a lunchtime treat before you head west to your next destination.

Dana-Thomas House, Springfield

Commissioned in 1902 for a wealthy Springfield socialite, the Dana-Thomas House reveals the extent of Wright's creativity when money and space were no object. Aside from a staggering floorplan—its 35 rooms span 16 varying levels and 12,000 square feet of living quarters—the home contains the world's largest collection of site-specific art and furniture designed by Wright himself, including abstract light fixtures, oak tables, and terra cotta sculptures.

How to Visit: The Dana-Thomas House foundation leads guided tours of the house on select days.

enjoyillinois.com

Frank Lloyd Wright Itinerary

Usonian Gems in the Northern Towns A ROAD TRIP THROUGH WRIGHT'S LATER WORKS

Take a break from the Prairie-style homes by visiting two properties that show how Wright's philosophy changed toward the end of his career.

Muirhead Farmhouse, Hampshire

Less Prairie-style and more Little House on the Prairie, Muirhead Farmhouse is the only known farmhouse that Wright designed and built during his lifetime. Conceived in 1950, the house falls under the Usonians, a term coined by Wright to describe his pastoral vision of a more modest, middle-class style of American architecture. The Muirhead family still owns the residence, which sits on an 800-acre swath of farmland that includes four miles of public trails.

How to Visit: The home is open for tours year-round on select dates; visit the website to make a reservation at least three days in advance.

Laurent House, Rockford

One of the hallmarks of Wright's Usonian homes was a focus on practicality, and nothing embodies this more than the Laurent House—the only home Wright ever built specifically for a person with a disability. Confined to a wheelchair following World War II, Kenneth Laurent wrote to Wright requesting a custom home that could accommodate his needs. In 1949, Wright unveiled his plan: a single-story fusion of form and function that incorporates an open floor plan, unrestricted access throughout the home, and materials sourced locally from Rockford.

How to Visit: Private tours of the house are available year-round by appointment only.

