

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTES

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Lincoln Park

Famous for its zoo, [Lincoln Park](#) has much more to offer: the lakefront and park, museums, landmark architecture, nice residential streets, interesting shopping streets, and views of the city skyline.

Let's start with the Lincoln Park Zoo. Its free, but you pay to park, and the parking fee is not nominal. However, there is free street parking along Stockton Drive, which is great if you are an early bird or very lucky, and can find a space. The zoo has everything you would expect: big cats and primates, seals and flamingos, reptiles and pachyderms. Of the architecture, I like the [lion house](#) which dates from 1912 and has a nice brick facade with interesting detailing. Of the inhabitants, it's hard to pick a favorite, but if I had to, the Gorillas are real characters. Right next door to the zoo is the [Lincoln Park Conservatory](#), a traditional Victorian palace of glass that houses some spectacular [vegetation](#). If the zoo and conservatory are not enough to fill your day, and you want to see more, a short walk to the north will bring you to the modern angular architecture of the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum. When I visited it was summer, and inside there was a great butterfly house. If the nature museum does not appeal to you, then from the zoo and conservatory, walk south. You will come to the [Cafe Brauer](#), an impressive Prairie School building built in 1908. The cafe, which overlooks the [South Pond](#), is open in the summer season. If you want to potter around on the water, swan boats can be rented from just in front of the cafe. A little to the west of the cafe is the [Lincoln Park Zoological Society building](#). Beyond the Cafe Brauer to the south, the park opens out to yield a great view of the [city skyline](#). There is plenty of space here to play ball, or lie down and worship the sun. If you decide to just keep walking, a little to the south of Cafe Brauer are the white buildings of the [Lincoln Park Farm](#), a fun place for the kids. The farm is on the banks of South Pond. If you head east, at the southern end of the pond you arrive at the [Grant Memorial](#). According to the American Institute of Architects Guide to Chicago: "The aesthetic quality of the ponderous monument has been the subject of debate since its unveiling". Massive stone blocks certainly give it a very solid Victorian look. A little further to the east, across Lakeshore Drive, is the [lakeshore](#). You can traverse Lakeshore Drive using the [footbridge](#) at the southern end of the park. Finally, whilst in Lincoln Park, if you are interested in Chicago's history, at the southwest corner of the park is the [Chicago History Museum](#), which boasts having 22 million artifacts and documents. To house all this stuff, the older neoclassical part of the museum, which dates from 1932, has been complemented with a [modern addition](#).

Not far from the park there are some other architectural treats. If you are at the southern end, opposite to the history museum, on North Clark Street, is the magnificent Byzantine style [Moody Memorial Church](#). Built in 1925, the church is a red brick masterpiece. To the north, North Clark Street offers a pleasant mixture of shops housed within vintage buildings, some of which are noteworthy. A fine example, at the intersection with Belden Avenue, is "[The Beldon](#)", a pleasing 1892 "shops below and flats above" affair. At this intersection there is also a nice [Queen Anne style shop](#), and a little [park](#) in which you can sit, rest your shopping feet, and take it all in. Further to the north, Clark Street intersects with Fullerton Parkway which, if you head eastward, takes you back to the park. There is one more architectural treat near the park, to the north, which is not to be missed: The [Elks Memorial Building](#), at the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and Diversey Parkway. This 1920's rotunda is a memorial to fallen Elks in the first world war. Impressive on the outside, it is stunning on the [inside](#) with [decorative opulence](#) that is reminiscent of a European palace.

The park area occupies only the eastern fringe of the community of Lincoln Park, three-quarters of which is inland to the west. Much of this is residential, and it is pleasant to wander around. One curious feature of the local architecture is that many of the [houses](#) have front doors a full story above street level. Although much of residential Lincoln Park is middle class, in the northwest corner there is an interesting exception: The [Lathrop Homes](#), a low income housing development built in the 1930's as part of FDR's New Deal. It provided affordable housing during the Great Depression. The future of this little piece of history is uncertain as plans call for either rehabilitation or redevelopment. Located next to the modern, very red, and pleasing [Damen Avenue Bridge](#), Lathrop Homes is on the banks of the river, and has its own period [power plant](#) with smokestack. You might not want to walk around the development, but driving around is interesting. Finally, there is [DePaul University](#), which has a modest sized campus around Belden Avenue. Although founded in 1898, most of the buildings have been constructed in the last 30 years. Still, it is worth a peek.

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