



ILLINOIS OASIS

By Jay Gentile

» The city of Geneva, Illinois, is technically a suburb of Chicago, but it feels like its own world. Located about 40 miles west of downtown Chicago and easily accessible via car or Metra commuter rail, the riverside city of 22,000 residents makes for an ideal day trip from Chicago for travelers looking to balance their experience of Windy City bustle with small-town charm.

Geneva's downtown district is packed with more than 100 specialty shops, bars and restaurants (many of them housed in historical structures). This means that the city is perfect for strolling on foot. Admire the Victorian architecture of homes while also perusing restaurants and bars on Third Street. Stop along the way to enjoy a drink or a bite to eat at local favorites such as Fiora's (elegant fare in a converted historical home, with a large outdoor patio), The Patten House Restaurant and Bar (Cajun food in a historical red-brick structure, again with outdoor seating) and the restaurant Wildwood (known for its steak and live music, and featuring a courtyard overlooking a water garden).

Nature enthusiasts will find opportunities for exploration in Geneva's wealth of parks and



» Geneva, Illinois, has, clockwise from top left, trails for riverside biking; accommodations at Herrington Inn & Spa; and places to shop and dine amid the historical buildings downtown.

bike trails, including idyllic Island Park, located on the shores of the Fox River within easy walking distance of downtown (and connected to the town via bridge and trail). Bikers can ride through leafy sections of the 61-mile Illinois Prairie Path or the 40-mile Fox River Bike Trail that passes through Geneva. Golfers can enjoy a round at the Public Course of Pheasant Run, with its maple-lined fairways located at Pheasant Run Resort, in the neighboring community of St. Charles.

Following roads or sections of riverside pathway, you can venture the 2.5 miles north to St. Charles, which offers additional historical scenery on a bit more urban scale.

You might also head to Geneva's Northwestern Medicine Field to catch a game with the minor league Kane County Cougars in a fun, family-friendly ballpark. Also, don't forget to

spend some of your time in Geneva at one of the Chicago area's top breweries, Penrose Brewing Company.

An ideal base of operations during your stay in Geneva is the Herrington Inn & Spa, a romantic retreat along the Fox River, offering plush four-poster beds and river-facing balconies perfect for looking out over the water as you listen to the sounds of the river and the birds chirping above. ✈

MORE TRIPS NEAR CHICAGO

- **Evanston:** Sandy lakefront beaches and a thriving food scene in the hometown of Northwestern University.
- **Oak Park:** Community known for Frank Lloyd Wright–designed homes; Ernest Hemingway's birthplace. —J.G.