



The Bloomingdale Trail in Chicago.

CHICAGO, ELEVATED

By Jay Gentile

» Connecting four hip neighborhoods with a 2.7-mile pathway built on a former elevated rail line, The 606 is an urban greenway that provides tastes of Chicago's culture and accesses graceful city parks.

Named for the shared digits of adjacent ZIP codes, The 606 features at its core the biking/running/walking Bloomingdale Trail. This route links the communities of Bucktown, Humboldt Park, Logan Square and Wicker Park. Dedicated explorers can hike the entire trail between Walsh Park in the east and the Ridgeway Trailhead in the west, though I find that tackling a shorter segment—with detours—is also worthwhile.

Before a walk on the trail, I like to fuel up on tacos at the taqueria/honky-tonk Big Star, an iconic local hangout. In the evening, cross the street to The Violet Hour, an upscale speakeasy known for craft cocktails. To enter, find a door handle in the mural outside.

Head north a few blocks on North Damen Avenue to find the Damen Access Point west of Churchill Field Park. It's one of 12 access points from street level to the trail's perch of, on average, 17 feet above street level. Up top, a 10-foot-wide concrete path has an additional two feet of rubber track along each side,

lined with trees and plants that are in full bloom in warmer months.

Follow the trail west to Milwaukee Avenue and stop at the trendy cafe Ipsento 606, just off the trail, overlooking a small park where bands sometimes play. If you're still hungry, detour farther northwest on Milwaukee Avenue to Irazu, a romantic Costa Rican restaurant with an enclosed four-season patio. Beer lovers may want to backtrack northeast to the travel-themed Map Room to sample from 200-plus globally inspired brews.

Return to the trail and head about a mile west of Ipsento 606, enjoying your raised perspective for views between buildings of the city beyond. A ramp near North Humboldt Boulevard lets you detour to Humboldt Park, a massive green space with peaceful lagoons, ballfields and a boathouse cafe open in the summer. North of the park is Parson's Chicken & Fish. I like to kick back here with a cold drink and a plate of fried chicken. You can also head to Rosa's Lounge, a few blocks west, to enjoy some classic Chicago blues.

Then get back on the trail to make new discoveries. You'll find something different every time. ✈



» THE FEED
OUT & ABOUT CHICAGO

Ipsento 606.



Tacos at Big Star.

AN ICONIC CHICAGO STROLL

■ While you're in town, also visit the popular downtown **Chicago Riverwalk**, a scenic 1.25-mile pathway along the Chicago River that features close-up perspectives on the city's world-famous architecture, and offers refreshments from seasonal food-and-drink vendors. —J.G.

■ Fly Alaska Airlines to Chicago (ORD) from Anchorage (ANC), Seattle (SEA), Portland (PDX), San Francisco (SFO) and Los Angeles (LAX).