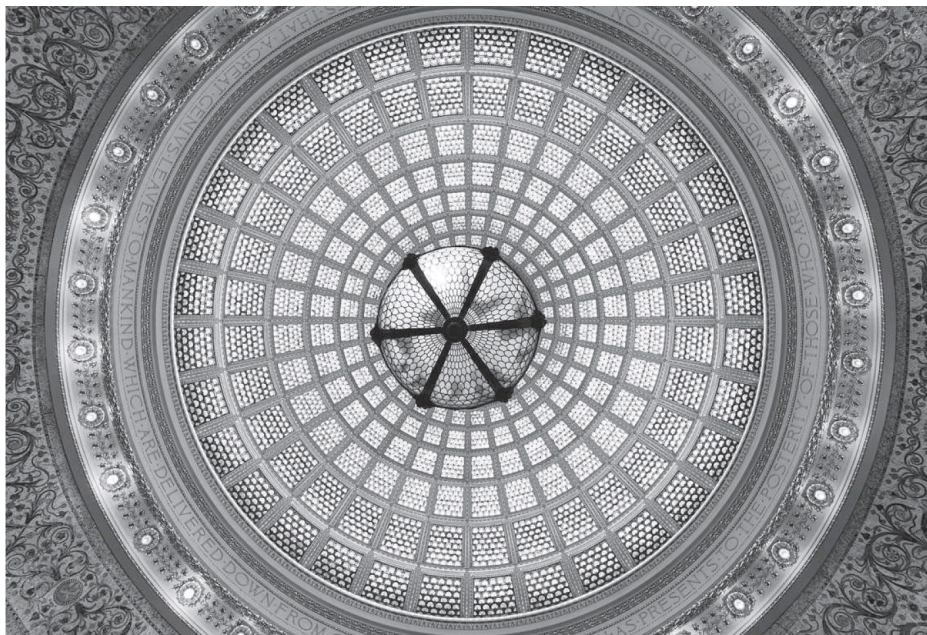


## GO HERE, NOT THERE



ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

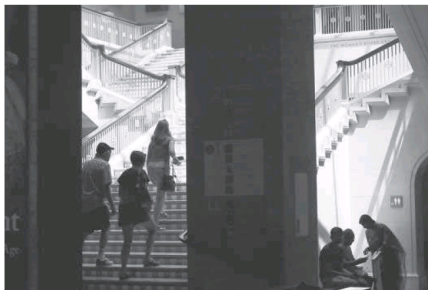
## In Chicago, a place to enjoy art with local color

BY JAY GENTILE

*Offering alternatives to overcrowded destinations.*

The Art Institute of Chicago is an iconic cultural representation of the city. Many tourists conclude that if Ferris Bueller went to the museum on his famous day off, then they should visit, too. Perched in the heart of the tourist-friendly downtown district near the lakefront, the museum (with its main entrance flanked by a famous pair of two-ton bronze lion statues) is one of Chicago's most popular destinations. Its approximately 300,000 works of art attract roughly 1.5 million selfie-snapping visitors a year.

If you're a somewhat claustrophobic art lover, try visiting before noon or during the middle of the week. And keep in mind that while the original 1893 building houses a world-class collection of impressionist paintings, the more recently constructed Modern Wing (opened in 2009) contains a wealth of contemporary works from renowned artists and is typically less heavily trafficked. Or, avoid space-invading tour groups and school field trips by scheduling a visit during one of the excellent live music events at the museum, such as this weekend's Midwin-



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**ABOVE:** Visitors walk up the main staircase of the Art Institute of Chicago. **TOP:** The dome of the Chicago Cultural Center, situated on the same campus as the Art Institute.

ter festival, a collaboration with Pitchfork.

**Location:** 111 S. Michigan Ave., 312-443-3600; [artc.edu](http://artc.edu).

If you have less time to spare but still want to immerse yourself in a local cultural experience, head just a few blocks north to the Chicago Cultural Center, located in the same Millennium Park campus as the Art Institute but often overlooked by visitors. The opulent 1897 building, designed by the same firm as "The People's Palace." Once the

central building for the Chicago Public Library, the palatial five-floor landmark is decked out in lush ornamentation and brimming with the arts. It hosts a number of rotating art exhibits, many highlighting Chicago-based artists, in addition to a wide variety of free performances. Along with the world's largest Tiffany stained-glass dome, the cultural center includes a 300-seat theater, a dance studio and a family-friendly learning lab.

Check out current exhibitions including "African American De-

signers in Chicago: Art, Commerce and the Politics of Race" as you meander through its intricately designed spaces with fewer tourists and plenty of elbow room, especially in the upper floor galleries. Admire views overlooking Michigan Avenue from large windows as you stroll the spacious galleries of the Chicago Rooms. Marvel at the ornate detail of Preston Bradley Hall, where you can catch live performances, including chamber music and children's concerts, beneath its iconic 38-foot-diameter Tiffany dome (one of the building's two glass domes).

In addition to music, the center hosts hundreds of events throughout the year including film screenings and panel discussions. Art extends to the building's exterior as well, with a large mural on its western wall titled "Rushmore" depicting prominent women in the Chicago arts. Admission and events hosted by the cultural center are free, with public tours available Wednesday through Saturday at 1:15 p.m.

**Location:** 78 E. Washington St., 312-744-3316; [wcpo.st/ChicagoCulturalCenter](http://wcpo.st/ChicagoCulturalCenter)

[travel@washpost.com](mailto:travel@washpost.com)

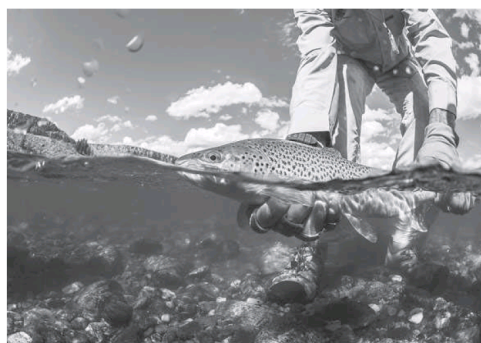
Gentile is a writer based in Chicago. His website is [jaygentile.com](http://jaygentile.com). Find him on Twitter: @thejaygentile.

### WHAT'S THE DEAL?

*This week's best travel bargains around the globe.*

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• With Frontiers International Travel, save 20 percent on a fly-fishing vacation at the Madison Valley Ranch in Montana. The five-night package costs \$3,088 per person double, a savings of \$772, and includes accommodations; all meals, including a four-course dinner with beer and wine; and guided drift- and/or wade-fishing outings with gear. Travel April 19-25 and April 27-May 10. A fishing license (\$53 or \$78, depending on length of time) and \$13 lodeine



specially restaurant at no additional charge on one night. Add \$114 in taxes and port fees per person. Book the "All Aboard! Sale" by Feb. 28. Info: 800-774-6237, [princess.com](http://princess.com).

#### Air

• Southwest has a sale on nonstop domestic flights for travel through May 22. For example, round-trip air from Reagan National to Providence, R.I., starts at \$118, with taxes; fare on other airlines starts at \$279. Fly Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Twenty-one-day advance purchase required. Book by Feb. 21 at [southwest.com](http://southwest.com).

## Is fast, friendly airport screening on the way?



### The Navigator

CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

From impossibly long lines to intrusive searches by humorless agents, today's airport screening process is a hassle for many fliers. But the screenings of tomorrow could be unlike anything you can imagine — fast, easy, and maybe even friendly. At least that's the assessment of experts.

"Look for more automated screening lines at airports," says Mark Dombroff, an aviation lawyer with the Alexandria, Va., office of LeClairRyan. "Look for new technology, which compiles more information faster and involves smaller machines."

In the coming months, observers say, new biometric and other technology could fundamentally change the way the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) handles screenings. But privacy advocates say technology might create more problems than it solves.

Passengers, meanwhile, have their own ideas about how to fix the TSA — ideas that involve bringing common sense and politeness back to the screening process.

Even so, it's difficult to write off the new technology and its promises. Late last year, for example, Delta Air Lines introduced its first "biometric" terminal at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Technology developed with the TSA and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) scans passengers' faces and verifies their identities. With the biometric ID system, as with TSA PreCheck, passengers don't have to remove computers from their bags during screening.

In Los Angeles, the TSA and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority began deploying advanced passenger-screening technology last year. The portable terahertz millimeter-wave screening devices can detect weapons and other security threats by identifying objects that block the heat that radiates from the body.

If these technologies catch on, it's not difficult to imagine a near future without long security lines, invasive searches or full body scans. The new security checkpoint may not be a checkpoint at all but a secure area passengers walk through without breaking stride.

"With a facial-recognition system, there would be no need for a TSA agent to check your ID," says Marios Savvides, director of the CyLab Biometrics Center at Carnegie Mellon University. "The system captures an individual's iris and full face as they walk by."

That's an exciting future, and it could happen soon. Outside the United States, biometric technology is common. Andrew Coggins, a professor at Pace University's Lubin School of Business, just returned from China, and he reports widespread use of biometric technology there to track visitors.

"When I landed in Shanghai, I had to go to a kiosk where fingerprints of both hands, passport, and my photo were all collected," Coggins says. "From there, I went to immigration control. When I got to my hotel, my picture was taken and matched to the data collected at the airport."

But is that what passengers want? Some critics are concerned about the privacy implications of biometric technology. They say federal law offers few protections from or restrictions on the use of biometrics such as facial recognition.

Freedom to Travel USA, a group that advocates for travelers, is concerned about this fast-emerging future. It's pushing for better data security and for new rules governing the implementation of biometric screening to protect travelers from false positive alerts for security threats. It also wants a study on terahertz millimeter-wave devices before they're installed in airports.

"Travelers should be very concerned with being photographed and scanned at airports — or anywhere else, for that matter, when it is done indiscriminately to the masses as proposed," says Wendy Thomson, a spokeswoman for the group.

Passengers are also concerned about the practicalities of screening. Customer satisfaction with airports was up last year, according to J.D. Power, a market research company. Overall satisfaction rose to 761 on a 1,000-point scale, 12 points higher than the previous year's results. That included a jump in passenger satisfaction with security screening, mainly attributable to improved communication and cooperation between airport and TSA staff, according to J.D. Power. But passengers say they're still far from happy with the screening process and see plenty of room for improvement.

For example, some air travelers take issue with the way TSA screeners treat passengers. They complain that screeners are impolite and enforce the rules unevenly. "Maybe the TSA should hire screeners with maturity, who know how to interact with people, and who are not so arrogant," says Shirley Kroot, a retired real estate appraiser from Huntley, Ill.

Durant Imboden, a Minneapolis-based frequent flier who edits a website about travel to Europe, says the TSA should reexamine its rules before overhauling screening practices.

He points to exceptions made for passengers over 75, who don't have to remove their shoes or laptops during screening, and for members of the military, who may use the expedited TSA PreCheck line. "Obviously, the TSA can't really believe that nobody over 75 is capable of wearing explosive shoe soles, or that no member of the military is a potential security threat," he says. "So why the take-off-your-shoes, take-out-your-laptop, and show-your-liquids rules for ordinary folks?"

Apparently, the bottom line for passengers is that the TSA should answer a few fundamental questions before it starts to improve its screening systems with new technology. Are the rules effective? Do TSA agents need customer service training? Could the agency benefit from a little more consistency with its screening procedures?

If the agency answered those questions before investing in the latest biometric technology or scanners, maybe tomorrow's airport screenings would be markedly better than today's.

Elliott is a consumer advocate, journalist and co-founder of the advocacy group Travelers United. Email him at [chris@elliott.org](mailto:chris@elliott.org).