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CHICAGO LOCAL LIFE

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# What do Chicago neighborhoods smell like?

If you're in downtown Chicago <https://www.neighborhoods.com/il/chicago>—say the Loop <https://www.neighborhoods.com/loop-chicago-il> or West

Loop <https://www.neighborhoods.com/west-loop-chicago-il>—chances are you'll catch a whiff of chocolate on the air. If you're new to the area, it isn't just your mind playing tricks on you. The Blommer Chocolate Company <http://www.blommer.com/>, located on the edge of the West Loop right by the Chicago River, sends the scintillating scent into the air daily. Alas (or perhaps thankfully for those who hate chocolate) not all neighborhoods can smell like cocoa.

You've probably caught a strong odor on your block, particularly in the heat of summer. Scientists with Nokia Bell Labs decided to find out what cities—down to the street—smell like, according to the Chicago Tribune <http://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-life-smell-chicago-summer-20180724-story.html>.

Chicago has its very own “Smelly Map” <http://www.neighborhoods.com/http://goodcitylife.org/smellymaps/index.php>,” which breaks down the city's smells into the five major categories of nature, animals, food, waste, and emissions. Let's delve into some of the fragrances of popular Chicago neighborhoods.

## River North <https://www.neighborhoods.com/river-north-chicago-il>



Lou Malnati's Pizzeria in River North

Epicures will find themselves right at home in this Chicago neighborhood. River North is all about the food. The smell pretty much dominates the stretch of West Ontario Street that runs through the neighborhood. Smelly Maps reports that the scents on the stretch of the street between North New Orleans Street and North Wells are 80.8 percent food. Even if you stray past that little strip, you're still likely to catch the smell of food wafting on the air.

River North is arguably the epicenter of eating out in Chicago. If you smell something oh-so-greasy and tempting as you walk down Ontario Street, your olfactory sense is probably doing you the favor of recognizing Al's Beef (<https://www.alsbeef.com/menu-order-online.html>) or Portillo's Hot Dogs (<https://www.portillos.com/locations/chicago/>), both Chicago classics. The neighborhood is also home to Lou Malnati's Pizzeria (<https://www.loumalnatis.com/chicago-river-north>) and Giordano's (<https://giordanos.com/locations/gold-coast-magnificent-mile>) (two of the city's top deep dish rivals (<https://www.neighborhoods.com/blog/7-of-the-biggest-chicago-rivalries-you-need-to-know>)). You'll also find no shortage of steakhouses—Chicago Cut Steakhouse (<http://www.chicagocutsteakhouse.com/>), Kinzie Chophouse (<http://www.kinziechophouse.com/>), and Bavette's Bar & Boeuf (<http://bavettessteakhouse.com/>) to name just a few.

## Humboldt Park (<https://www.neighborhoods.com/humboldt-park-chicago-il>)



Humboldt Park

For the smell of greenery, it's hard to top the Humboldt Park neighborhood due to the presence of its sprawling park of the same name. Humboldt Park (<http://www.neighborhoods.comhttps://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/humboldt-park>) is a 219-acre greenspace on the West Side of the city. The stretches of California Avenue and Diversey Avenue bordering the park rate high for the smell of nature, 61.5 percent and 66 percent respectively, according to Smelly Maps. Once you actually enter the park, the scent of nature skyrockets as high as 99 percent. As you stroll the parks' paths, your nose will detect the smell of plant life and the large lagoons. In addition to the fresh smell, Humboldt Park itself is a significant neighborhood amenity. The park has sports fields and hosts annual events, like the Latin Jazz Festival (<http://www.neighborhoods.comhttp://jazzinchicago.org/jazzcity-12latinjazzfestival/>).

While the smell of nature can take you away from the city, Humboldt Park still has a steady urban vibe (<http://www.neighborhoods.comhttps://www.neighborhoods.com/blog/discover-the-neighborhood-vibe-of-chicagos-humboldt-park>). The park's other bordering streets, West North Avenue and North Kedzie Avenue are dominated by the smell of food thanks to spots like Roeser's Bakery (<http://www.neighborhoods.comhttp://www.roeserscakes.com/>).

## **Lincoln Park** (<http://www.neighborhoods.comhttps://www.neighborhoods.com/lincoln-park-chicago-il>)



Lincoln Park Zoo

The highest concentration of the animal smells on the Chicago Smelly Map is Lincoln Park, which comes as no surprise considering the neighborhood contains Lincoln Park Zoo (<http://www.neighborhoods.comhttps://www.lpzoo.org/>). North Cannon Drive borders the zoo to the east, and Smelly Maps reports an animal smell of 82.5 percent. The zoo is home to thousands of different animals including mammals, reptiles, birds, and amphibians. In addition to allowing people to see species from around the globe for free, the zoo actively participates in scientific endeavors and conservation.

While the zoo might mean the earthy smell of animals, that isn't the only scent that defines Lincoln Park. Given the neighborhood's proximity to the lake, you can also expect to catch a whiff of nature. The stretch of the Lakefront Trail smells predominantly of nature (53.5 percent), according to Smelly Maps. Plus, the paths around the Lincoln Park Conservatory (<http://www.neighborhoods.comhttps://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/lincoln-park-conservatory/>) also offer a refreshing green scent. If you're looking for a quiet spot to treat your senses—sight and smell—you can't go wrong with Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool (<http://www.neighborhoods.comhttp://lincolnparkconservancy.org/projects/alfred-caldwell-lily-pool/>), one of Chicago's peaceful retreats.

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