

“The Meaning of Places” SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR

VISUAL SCAVENGER HUNT

Each correct answer earns a point. Look closely as you stroll the neighborhood and enter buildings.

Where did you find a hand-painted portrait (not a print) of someone's mother?

In what building did you find regal-looking crests painted on wood?

Look closely at the buildings on the route to find the name of a family that sold suits to Poles for generations.

Ask another guest who you didn't come with: What is a Chicago place that is meaningful for you and why?

Their Name:

The Place:

PRIZES (Each team member gets swag)

- + 5-6 Points: Mug, t-shirt, or your choice from Detours “grab bag”
- + 4 Points: Badass Women Journal
- + 0-3 Points: Tote bag, postcards, and Pedway maps

Start & End Here!

CHOPIN THEATRE | 1543 W Division

Our hosts Lela and Zygmunt are a dynamic duo in the Chicago arts community. Your tour guide for the theatre, Zygmunt, is a passionate storyteller.

NEWSSTAND

Owner Roman Brach immigrated as a boy to Chicago from Poland. He served in the Vietnam War and was left without his sight. He's been working here since the 1990s rather than stay at home “like a cabbage,” as he says. Very few newspaper stands are left in Chicago. Chopin Director Zygmunt says, “That newspaper stand is his island.”

In addition to highlighting architectural relics, we've told the stories of a wide range of architecture from mausoleums to bridgehouses to salt sheds.

CVS

OUTSIDE
Banks historically wanted to look solid and dependable so people could entrust their hard-earned savings there.

INSIDE
Look up to see the incredible details of a 1920s bank.

POLISH TRIANGLE

Division Street was once known as “Polish Broadway” and this triangular plaza, which is the “Polish Triangle,” was essentially the heart of the community.

This fountain was installed here in honor of author Nelson Algren shortly after he passed in 1981. The Polish community had mostly gone to the Avondale and Jefferson Park neighborhoods, but many still felt a sense of ownership over this place. Many opposed the dedication because Algren, who was not Polish, wrote stories of gamblers, bogus doctors, and thieves, with many of Polish descent.

Algren wrote about how places exude moods or varying levels of authenticity:

“Chicago is an October sort of city even in spring.”
“Never eat in a place called 'Mom's'.”

PODHALANKA | 1549 W Division St

OUTSIDE
Its faded sign shows history, and the pitched roof and siding make it look like a home.

INSIDE
Enter to experience this holdout of the Polish neighborhood. Have a seat at the table for your family-style meal. Owner Helena immigrated more than three decades ago and opened up Podhalanka Restaurant. A “podhalanka” is a village girl from the hills of the Podhale region of Southern Poland.

Helena lives upstairs and works six days a week. Another woman helps in the kitchen, hand rolling the pierogi. You'll meet Helena's nephew Greg, too. Peek into the kitchen to see a chrome table from the '50s and a small stove like you'd find at grandma's house.

VISUAL SCAVENGER HUNT

Look closely at the artifacts inside Podhalanka. Check the boxes for all that you can find. Get them all correct to get the point!

- Chicago flag
- Cubs pendant
- Chicago beer label
- Mayor Daley photo
- Big green machine
- Pope John Paul II picture
- Snow globe

At the beginning of the pandemic, we launched a GoFundMe campaign for Podhalanka and raised \$7,000+.



STUDIO GANG | 1520 W Division St

OUTSIDE
In an unusual move for an architectural firm, Studio Gang chose this location for their main office instead of a downtown building they designed, like the famous Aqua Tower. When they had to expand from another building around the corner, they chose to stay in the neighborhood because they felt a connection to it.

The building was built in the '30s for the Polish National Alliance, which was one of two community organizations that most Poles belonged to. To the left of the entrance, you can see their archive of models and gallery space.

LOOK ACROSS THE STREET
The tall yellow building is subsidized co-op housing, meaning residents hold ownership through shares. Its success as an alternative to regular public housing could come from the connection people have with the place as owners vs. renters.

Look just to the left of it, and past a parking lot is a multi-story brick building. This is Holy Trinity High School, and just behind it (out of view) is the Holy Trinity Polish Church (where some party guests parked). Still looking left, see the I-94 viaduct over Division. The construction of the highway tore down a chunk of the neighborhood and accelerated Poles moving out of the area.

VISUAL SCAVENGER HUNT

What are the initials for the Polish National Alliance? Use your eyes.

LA PASADITA | 1140 N Ashland Ave

OUTSIDE
With La Pasadita at your back, look across the street at Lawn Hamburger. “Hamburger” is an original sign from a 1930s fast food joint called “Snappy Service System.” Buildings sometimes reveal to us their layers of history and the different communities they attracted over time.

INSIDE
Order your taco at the register with your ticket (carne asada, chile relleno or vegan). Have a seat at our reserved tables and they will deliver your taco to you.

David Espinoza, Sr. came to Chicago as a boy from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico in the 1960s. He grew up in the neighborhood, playing in its parks. In 1976 he opened his taqueria.

The painting on the wall tells the story of La Pasadita, which means “quick stop.” The men on horses on the left are David with his two brothers. The woman in the foreground is his mother, who often said to her sons: “Remember the good times and the little things.” Ashland may feel like a highway with cars zipping past here, but four generations of regular customers have found a home at La Pasadita.

Food and drink on our tours have not just been for consumption, but as elements in storytelling.

HOLY TRINITY POLISH CHURCH

NOT ON MAP
Not officially a stop on our self-guided tour, this opulent Catholic Church is open to visit before 1pm.

Because the Catholic Church distinctly connects spirituality with geographical places, they rarely sell their churches as communities change. On the other hand, other religions more commonly sell to another religious group or developer.

This church lost so much of its community that it faced closure in the '80s. Today, the congregation has bounced back. Father Andrzej Totzke says, “The building of the highway was a curse, and now we see it as a blessing” because the Polish communities on the northwest side and suburbs easily commute here.



TOUR CONCLUSION

inside Chopin Theatre
The conclusion is the most important part of the tour! Enter the room past the check-in table and scan the QR code.

Chopin Activity Schedule

THEATRE TOURS (Main Stage)

11:10am - 11:35am
11:40pm - 12:05pm
12:10pm - 12:35pm
12:40pm - 1:05pm
1:10pm - 1:35pm
1:45pm - 2:05pm

BLUES PERFORMANCE AND LESSON (Downstairs)

11:40am - 12:10pm
12:20pm - 12:50pm
1:00pm - 1:30pm
1:40pm - 2:10pm
2:20pm - 2:50pm

Food

CHOPIN THEATRE - DESSERT & DRINKS

SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR - LUNCH



Use Your Ticket



Stop at the
Check-in Table!

FOR SWAG AND
GAME PRIZES!

Learn more about the process of
designing this experience!



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2022

11am-3pm
Chopin Theatre

Thank you for being here! Today we welcome our customers, clients, collaborators, suppliers, vendors, partners, employees, friends and family.

Do activities in any order!

IN THE CHOPIN THEATRE

- Coffee, tea, and water bottles (can take to-go)
- Historical theatre tours and neighborhood stories told by Chopin Director Zygmunt
- Detours video and blues harmonica lesson/performance
- Dessert, snacks, mimosas, beer, wine
- Game prizes and swag

SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR

- Consider the ways we embed meaning in places while learning about the area, from past to present
- 0.6 miles total walking
- Includes two food stops
- Optional game with prizes

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ABOUT THE TOUR

The stories of people, places, and things across time can be told in infinite ways. Our approach with Chicago Detours has been to:

- Promote keen observation of the objects around us
- Go beyond dates and names
- Consider buildings as receptacles for human stories
- Connect people with places and each other
- Make meaningful experiences



VISIT STOPS IN ANY ORDER using this program or scan QR code for online directions.



THE DETOURS LOGO shares insight on how we've designed experiences since 2010.



FOOD is complimentary at stops with this icon.

VISUAL SCAVENGER HUNT

Expand your awareness of your surroundings. The more you observe the more you soak up the magic that exudes from being in real places. Isn't this why we travel?

NEIGHBORHOOD

We are at the convergence of several neighborhoods, all within the West Town Community Area. See the map for neighborhood names. Many Chicagoans define themselves by where they are from or where they live. The fixation on defining neighborhoods is relatively new. Even just 20 years ago, people identified less with a neighborhood name and more with nearby cross streets (i.e. Ashland and Division), or possibly their Catholic parish or the high school they graduated from.

The cult of neighborhoods has risen with the value of real estate and the fluidity with which people shop for a home, live there, and then move on to another place. As homes are less permanent for people now, the pace of community change has accelerated.

PEOPLE

Any community is made up of a diverse population, and to simplify, three main groups appear in this exploration:

- **Poles** were the largest immigrant group in Chicago from the 1920s to the early 1980s, and their first settlement was here.
- **Mexicans** are now the largest immigrant group in the city. They've been in this neighborhood since the 1970s.
- **Young professionals** first came to hipster Wicker Park in the '90s. Today they live in the new high-rises you can see around.



For our tours, we have sought to personalize history and diversify perspectives by including personal anecdotes, quotes from writers and historical figures, and stories of people left out of the history books.