

# illinois

Quirky Adventures



## roadside distractions

Opt for the out of the ordinary

Things can get a little weird in Illinois. White squirrels, pink elephants, sasquatches, giants, supermen—they all call our state home. So if you're the type of traveler who thinks normal is boring and the quirkiest the better, you'll fit right in on this trip.



**7-9 days**  
**1077mi**  
(Approx)

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Many attractions have reopened with limited capacity or different operating hours. Inquire with attractions ahead of time for up-to-date travel policies and health and safety information.

### 📍 Day 1 Chicago

Start your time in Chicago with some of the top must-see spots. Head to **Millennium Park** to snap a selfie with the iconic **Cloud Gate** (aka “The Bean”), then head over to Crown Fountain – an interactive video sculpture showing the faces of 1,000 everyday Chicagoans. For a unique lunch experience, head to **Recess Chicago** for a menu with cheeky nods to Chicago politics.

For a quirky place to stay, check out **Hotel EMC2** with rooms “fit for the restlessly curious & the unconventional.”

### 📍 Day 2-3 Chicago

Time to start exploring the unusual. See an actual World War II submarine **MSI-U-505** inside the **Museum of Science and Industry** or head to the **International Museum of Surgical Science** for an up close look at all things medicinal. For lunch, check out the **Purple Pig**. In the afternoon, learn the fascinating history of the Chicago River’s bridges at the **McCormick Bridgehouse Museum**.

### 📍 Day 4 Joliet, Wilmington, Pontiac, Lincoln, Springfield

Time to hit the road for an epic journey through Illinois. Before heading southwest, snap a pic that’ll have everyone thinking you’re in Italy! The **Leaning Tower of Niles** is half the size of the real thing but just as good for a creative photoshoot. Bellissimo! As you head toward Pontiac, pull over for a pic with the **Gemini Giant**, a 30 ft tall statue named after the Gemini space program. Once you get to Pontiac, visit the **Museum of Gilding Arts** to learn about the use of gold and silver leaf in architecture and in decoration throughout history. In Atlanta, another road-side photo op awaits: the **Paul Bunyon Statue**.

As you head towards Springfield, make sure you stop in Lincoln where you can see the **World’s Largest Covered Wagon**, standing 24 feet tall! There’s plenty of Lincoln-related activities

to choose from in Springfield. However, if you’re superstitious, make sure to stop at **Lincoln Tomb** to rub his nose for good luck.

**Route 66 Motorheads Bar & Grill** is a great spot for dinner and doubles as a museum – it also has the world’s largest Route 66 sign. The chic **State House Inn** is a great place to stay the night.

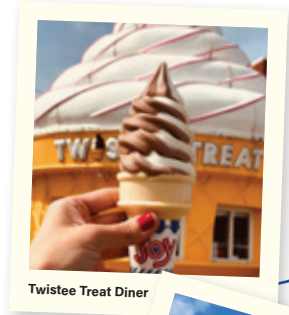
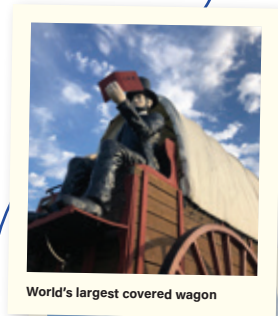
### 📍 Day 5 Staunton, Livingston, Alton, Collinsville

If you’ve enjoyed the giant roadside figures so far, be sure to stop by **Lauterbach Tire and Auto Service** in Springfield to add another “muffler man” giant to your photo collection.

Ready to hop to it? Your next stop is **Henry’s Rabbit Ranch** in Staunton. Henry’s Rabbit Ranch celebrates Route 66 with an emporium of highway and trucking memorabilia. While you’re here, check out the collection of VW Rabbits...and real rabbits too.

If you’re still looking for more unique trinkets and treasures, the **Pink Elephant Antique Mall** in Livingston should be your next stop. Right next door is the **Twistee Treat Diner**, perfect to refuel with a treat - or a more substantial meal - before moving on.

In Alton, the **Robert Wadlow** statue is another great photo op. Finish up your day at the **World’s Largest Catsup Bottle** in Collinsville (yes that’s catsup, not ketchup).



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### 📍 Day 6 Chester, Alto Pass, Belknap, Metropolis, Shawnee

Did you expect to be starting your day amongst Popeye memorabilia? Because that's exactly what you can do at the **Spinach Can Collectible Store & Museum** in Chester. Onwards to Alto Pass and you can pull over to admire the **Bald Knob Cross of Peace** overlooking Shawnee National Forest. If you'd rather experience views from below (below water, that is), you can explore sunken planes, trains, and automobiles at **Mermet Springs** scuba diving site in Belknap.

Now it's "up, up and away" to Metropolis! In this real life namesake of the superhero's city, you can strike a pose next to a two-ton **Superman Statue**. Across the street is the **Super Museum**, showcasing rare Superman memorabilia and selling superhero souvenirs.

Finish your day by snapping a pic with **Sassy the Bigfoot** near Garden of the Gods. **Rim Rock's Dogwood Cabins** are a great cozy option to spend the night.

### 📍 Day 7 Olney, Casey, Effingham, Rantoul

Today the quirk continues in Olney where you can catch a glimpse of the famous **White Squirrels of Olney**, a unique spectacle that the town has come to embrace. Make sure you keep an eye out early in the morning!

Continue on to Casey where you'll find quite the record-breaking collection. Casey is known for holding not one Guinness World Record, but twelve. **The Twelve Largest Things** include the world's largest mailbox, wind chime and rocking chair. Be sure to check off the full collection before you move on. In Effingham you can cross off another giant structure – **America's Largest Cross**.

The North Pole has moved to Rantoul! At **Hardy's Reindeer Ranch**, there's a 6-acre corn maze, the Grand Prix-style race track, a gift shop and, of course, you can't miss the reindeer.

### 📍 Day 8 University Park, Rockford

Go big with a trip to **Manilow Sculpture Park**. Enjoy the fresh air as you stroll amongst 30 large sculptures situated in 100 acres of prairie landscape.

Onward to Rockford. Check out the stony sentinels at the **Rockmen Guardians**, then head to the most unique museum you'll probably ever enter: the **Sock Monkey Museum**. See charming displays and learn the history of the iconic Sock Monkey, then browse through the gift shop for a unique souvenir to remember your trip. **15th & Chris** has got dinner covered with a great selection of burgers sure to leave you satisfied for the evening.

### 📍 Day 9 Freeport

Stop by **Johnny Pancakes** for a delicious breakfast as you leave Rockford. In Freeport, **Little Cubs Field** is a small-scale replica of Wrigley Field, including the scoreboards, dugouts and famed entry marquee.



Casey's rocking chair



Hardy's Reindeer Ranch



Manilow Sculpture Park



Rockmen Guardians

