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# The Chicago Auto Show: One of the can't-miss 'stars' of the city's events



The Chicago Auto Show draws residents from all over the city as one of the area's major events. (Chicago Auto Show)



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You can't call yourself a true-blue Chicagoan if you skip out on these four amazing draws

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**W**hen Lollapalooza had its pick of suitor cities in 2005, the international music festival decided to make Chicago its home. The festival joined three long-standing events as one of the "4 can't-miss stars" on the Windy City's busy events calendar.

Like the stars on the famous flag, the Chicago Auto Show, Lollapalooza, Air & Water Show and the Chicago Marathon rise high as the city's most anticipated annual gatherings. Here's a closer look at how the nation's largest auto show stacks up:

## The Chicago Auto Show

Turning 108 hasn't kept the Chicago Auto Show from being an ultramodern affair encompassing much more than auto enthusiasm. The consumer show, with its festival-like atmosphere permeating the cavernous McCormick Place, features not only new cars from every major manufacturer, but also engrossing displays of new technology, spontaneous concerts and other live events, food, shopping and enough variety to make venturing out on a winter day completely worth it.

With over a million square feet of display space and manufacturers creatively vying for your attention, you'll find something interesting even if the only car you ever set foot in is a rideshare.

Even down to the infrastructure, the show is immense and rivals the size and scope of many of summer's outdoor draws. For example, the amount of carpet used in the show could create a plush racecourse for the Chicago Marathon, and the specialty lighting and sound equipment is on par with the tech that brings sound and color to Lollapalooza. Concept cars share design cues with the futuristic jets you'll see flying at the Air & Water Show.

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The 'four stars' of the Chicago events flag

The Chicago Auto Show is dedicated to good causes as well. The annual First Look for Charity raises millions for Chicago nonprofits while giving guests early access to the show floor.

## Lollapalooza

Since putting down roots in Chicago's Grant Park in 2005, Lollapalooza has become a yearly event, attracting music fans from all over the country.

Stretching through the park, the event features multiple stages for all-day concerts, food stands and even a farmers market and barber shop. The infrastructure to support the event is immense and includes 125,000 square feet of shade tenting, hundreds of tables and chairs, and fans to keep music listeners cool.

The festival's tendency to showcase both legendary acts and cutting-edge artists is akin to manufacturers at the Chicago Auto Show bringing together of the best in classic and concept vehicles and showcasing their latest and greatest technologies.

## The Chicago Air & Water Show

Pull up a chair anywhere near the lake, look up, and you won't miss the Air & Water Show. Since 1959, the event has drawn hundreds of thousands of spectators to see military and vintage aircraft including the Blue Angels, as well as boat jumping, skydivers and more. Like the Chicago Auto Show, the Air & Water Show is the largest of its kind in the U.S., right in your backyard.

Similarly, the Chicago Auto show brings concept vehicles right to the city's front door, where you can get up close and personal with eye-popping design, classic vehicles and the people who build and care for them.

## The Chicago Marathon

The Chicago Marathon marks the start of fall in the city, drawing crowds out to the course route to watch one of the most prestigious 26.2-mile competitions in the world. The race weaves its way through historic neighborhoods like North Shore and Pilsen and brings together Chicagoans of all walks of life.

The race, one of six World Marathon Majors, is also known as one of the fastest given its generally flat topography. Many elite runners have set personal bests at the race, and enthusiasts come from all over the country to participate in their first major event.

Crowds from all of Chicago's neighborhoods also descend on McCormick place in February for the Chicago Auto Show, where the attractions offer something for everyone. Auto manufacturers bring their best to appeal to the crowd's great diversity.

-Alan LaGuardia, Tribune Content Solutions

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