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**FODOR'S EXPERT REVIEW**

# Chicago Athletic Association

12 S. MICHIGAN AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60603, USA

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Carly Fisher (/news/author/Carly-Fisher)

Harkening to the city's Golden Age of architecture, this historic private men's club was converted into a sprawling luxury hotel and boozy adult playground with a distinctively Chicago flavor. Directly across from Millennium Park, the property boasts some of the best views in the city, along with six massive rooms to mingle with young professionals.

**YOU SHOULD KNOW** *A prime location on Michigan Avenue with opulent design means that even the most modest rooms are pricey. Between the five restaurants and bars, the property is perpetually busy with young professionals which means it's never far—or far enough away—from the party. Families might want to seek something more kid-friendly as the property is noticeably geared towards adults.*



## Room

Instagram-worthy in every sense of the word. As an homage to the former athletic club's dorm rooms, no filters are required for design heavy suites with custom-made furnishings like iron bed frames with pillow soft cotton bedding, pommel horse benches, racket netting, and stretching bars shelving. Also, they have nightstands with tennis racket handles as legs--because, sports! Any park-facing room will offer exceptional views. Annoy your friends by posting a lot of pictures of these super cool rooms.

Many rooms share a connecting door, which can be a blessing or a curse depending on who's staying next door. For those who want to shell out some serious cash, ask about the four Founders Suites on the third

floor. Each have Millennium views and unique features like clawfoot bathtubs, Gothic molding, or a fireplace.



## Bathroom

Inspired by locker rooms of the day, most rooms feature luxe white-tiled standing waterfall showers and masculine black pepper C.O. Bigelow products. Keeping in line with the "SPORTS!" theme, jersey robes with terry cloth lining are modeled after vintage boxing robes.

Millennium junior suites and double-double rooms have large soaking bathtubs. Upgraded suites come with full-sized C.O. Bigelow products worth paying a baggage check fee to take home.



## Lobby

Vintage-inspired workspaces and cozy leather couches are usually filled with the laptop crowd in the stunning Drawing Room adjacent to the lobby. Design geeks should take note of the original sports imagery woodwork and flooring still in tact from 1893 and art installations borrowed through a partnership with the Art Institute of Chicago.

**YOU SHOULD KNOW** *During the day, the Milk Room serves as a coffee bar until 2:30 p.m. when it transforms into an intimate 8-seat craft cocktail bar—that's right, it's an 8-seat bar called the "Milk Room." This place is fun.*

## Gym

Remnants of the club's former squash court decorate this converted gym, outfitted with new treadmills, ellipticals, weights, and stretching machines.

Take advantage of free weekly boxing classes on Tuesdays. During the summer, grab dibs on the hotel's complimentary bikes to cruise around the city.

## Dining

No shortage of dining options here. On the ground floor, there's almost always a line at coveted burger chain, Shake Shack. Most of the action is in the lobby restaurants and bars. Passing the packed Game Room, the solidly sound-proofed Cherry Circle Room can feel like a breath of fresh air for those who want a quieter night. Generously sized leather banquettes often feature



suits kicking back innovative craft cocktails and chowing down on a traditional chophouse menu with a contemporary Midwestern twist. If your sights are set on the rooftop terrace restaurant, Cindy's, it's best to make a reservation—this place gets filled up fast. Panoramic views of Millennium Park and elegant farm-to-table cuisine don't come cheap either; the average price of sides and desserts alone is about \$16.

Chicago Athletic Association is the only hotel in the world that lets you skip the line at Shake Shack with in-room dining service. During the summer, stake out a spot early at Cindy's terrace for prime views of the nightly firework show at Navy Pier.

## Drinking

Undoubtedly, you'll hear the Game Room in the lobby before you even enter it. Outfitted with a built-in bocce bay, billiards tables, shuffleboard court, foosball, chess and checkers tables, this massive craft cocktail and beer bar is frequently at maximum decibel. On the way, it's easy to pass by the Milk Room and not notice. Formerly the club's speakeasy during Prohibition, it remains a fittingly intimate craft cocktail bar with an apothecary vibe.

# LOCATION

## Getting Around

The quickest way around the city is by cab or ride-sharing app. You can also take the El train, with nearly every line accessible within a block (though train schedules can be testy at times). Because of its central location, about a dozen buses pick up across the street from the hotel. But it's often faster to walk on foot as the majority of landmarks are within a square-mile of the hotel.

## Restaurants

Good eats exist along **Michigan Avenue**, though expect to drop a few extra bucks at New American restaurants **The Gage** (1-minute walk) and **Seven Lions** (2-minute walk). For a taste of old Chicago, head to local favorite **Miller's Pub** (4-minute walk), **Billy Goat Tavern** (4-minute walk) or **Italian Village** (7-minute walk). And if you can't decide and want a taste of everything, check out food halls like **Latincity** (6-minute walk) or **Revival Food Hall** (9-minute walk).

## Bars

Most of the premier bars are just over the bridge in **River North**, but for something a little closer check out **Tavern on the Park** (2-minute walk) featuring excellent views of Millennium Park or riverside drinking at **City Winery at the Chicago Riverwalk** (13-minute walk).



## WHY WE LIKE IT

There's a reason that the property is consistently packed with locals: it's undeniably cool. Whether it's playing bocce ball and shuffleboard in the Game Room, sipping on cocktails while taking in the glittering skyline at Cindy's rooftop or sneaking off for a quiet meal at the Cherry Circle Room, there's more than enough action and unique details to explore that you'll never want to leave. And if you can tear yourself away, it's in walking distance of the important highlights. While you won't be as pampered with service as other high-end properties, gorgeous rooms are impeccably lush and unforgettable.



## QUICK FACTS

### HOTEL INFO

Phones: 312-940-3552

Website: [www.chicagoathletichotel.com](http://www.chicagoathletichotel.com)  
(<http://www.chicagoathletichotel.com>)

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**#3** The 5 Best Hotel Bars in Chicago (</world/north-america/usa/illinois/chicago/hotels/nightlife-list/the-best-hotel-bars-in-chicago>)

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