

Time Out

Chicago

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Huge double issue!
Our biggest ever with 1,559 things to do

New Year's *your way*

*From dive bars to 17-course dinners,
we've got party plans for every budget*

+

Project runway
*31 ways to cool your jets
at O'Hare and Midway*



Cover Price \$2.50



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Way to delay!

Stuck for an hour or six at O'Hare or Midway? Put away your electronic Sudoku and go exploring: We played the fields and found the best spots to drink, dine, destress and more. By Lauren Viera Photographs by Chris Lake

O'Hare

Food

Sit and stay Skip the fast-food joints and settle in at **Wolfgang Puck** (Terminal 3). We love the wood-fired pizzas and entrées (\$13 and up), plus Puck's got the best wine this side of first class.

Healthy options Go to **Salad Works** (Terminal 1, Gate C19) for greens, grab a smoothie at **Juiceworks** (Terminal 1, Gate C15; 2, Gate F1; and 3, Rotunda Building) or pick up fresh fruit and non-mushy yogurt parfaits at **Natural Break** (Rotunda Building).

Go for the grub Resigned to packing it on? Take advantage of the easy access to suburban chains like **Cinnabon** (Terminal 1, Gates C8 and C22; 2, Main Hall; and 3, Gates G5 and K18), **Mrs. Fields** (Terminal 3, Gate H1) and **Mäagen-Daaz** (Terminal 5, Upper Level). Not to mention, rabid devotees of **Dunkin' Donuts'** coffee can get their fix here, too (Terminal 3, Gate H5).

Bars

Layover hangover We recently overheard a holiday passenger relay to her friend, "I've got an hour and 45 minutes, so I guess I'm just going to get drunk." Agreed, libations are a great way to kill time. Our go-to pub is **Chicago Bar & Grill** (Terminal 3, Rotunda Building), where ample seating means you have a sporting chance of getting off your feet for a while.

Romance on the fly If conversation is your objective, belly up to the cozy bar at **Berghoff Café** (Terminal 1, Gate C26). Wood paneling and dim lighting mimic the charm of the Loop original, and it even has three house brews on tap (\$4.70). Hey, if it can happen to *Six Feet Under's* Nate and Brenda...

Chilling out

Take a load off If you've got serious baggage, the folks at **BackRub Hub** (Terminal 3, Gate

H2) will work out your kinks for 15 bucks for ten minutes. Massages are also offered in 15- (\$20) and 20-minute (\$25) increments.

Nap time Getting some shut-eye on a crowded plane is about as likely as getting accidentally upgraded to first class. Unfortunately, so is finding a quiet corner in the world's busiest airport. Venture far enough into international-flight territory (**Terminal 5**) and the crowds will be thinner—or at least speaking a foreign language you can easily tune out.

Running last-minute errands

Getting to the airport on time is half the battle; bringing the errands you didn't get to before jetting off is practically unavoidable. If you're mailing last-minute holiday packages and cards, you're better off skipping the insane lines in the city and heading straight to O'Hare's **full-service post office** (Terminal 2, Main Hall), open weekdays 9am to 5pm. Additional mailboxes and stamp machines are available elsewhere throughout the airport. If you've got ten minutes, that's all the time you need for a **shoe shine**, and outposts are in each terminal. They'll polish up your shoes (\$4) and boots (\$5) from 6am to 7pm. Skipped your flu shot? No problem. UIC's got a **medical clinic** right across from the post office (Terminal 2, Main Hall), where free inoculations will be offered through December 31. Not to mention, the clinic is capable of managing everything from fainting spells to cardiac arrest.

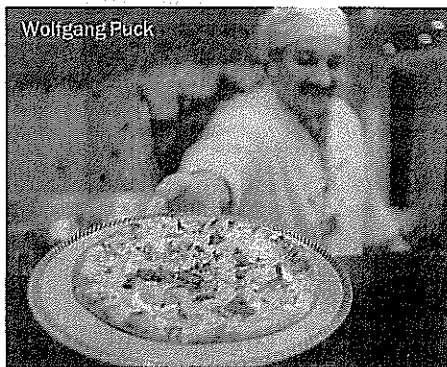
Working for the weekend

Get a room Your cubicle may be miles away (praise Jesus), but if you really need to get shit done, most wireless cards will let you access O'Hare's **wifi** network free of charge (others must pay a \$6.95 daily fee). Or book some time at **Laptop Lane** (Terminal 1, Gate B6 and B/C Connector Tunnel), where you can lock yourself in a private room with "peace, quiet and a T1 line" for 65¢ a minute.

Charge! When delays start to pile up, the hottest property in the entire airport is a free electrical outlet. Plug in at one of six **Power Stations** in Terminals 1 (Gates B6, B14 and C23), 2 (E4) and 3 (K9 and H14).



BackRub Hub



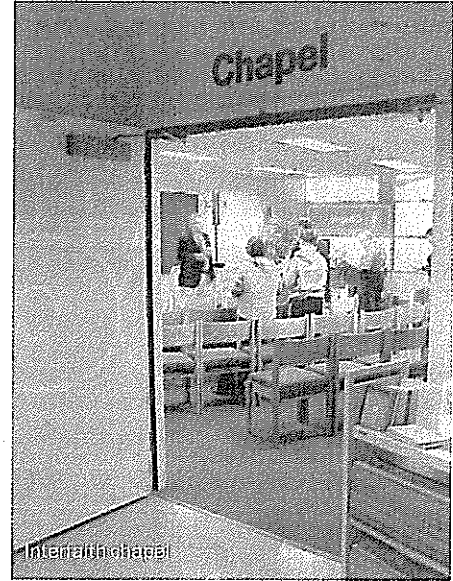
Wolfgang Puck



Berghoff Café



Harry Caray's



Interfaith chapel

Midway

Food

Sit and stay **Harry Caray's** (Concessions Triangle food court) is the airport's largest restaurant, and definitely its most civilized. Wait for a table in the convincingly restaurantlike outpost of the local chophouse. **Healthy options** Grab a salad (\$6.99 and up) at **Taylor Street Market** (Gate B16), where options go beyond carrot sticks and iceberg lettuce. Pegasus on the Fly (Concessions Triangle) is another option—just avoid the oily falafel and opt for a Greek salad instead. **Go for the grub** Bulk up **Ben & Jerry's**-style (Concessions Triangle) with 34 offerings from the duo's original flavors. Taylor Street Market is good for more than salads, too: It's got a sweet spot for sundaes. Still screaming for ice cream? Head to **Superdawg** (Gate B14) for shakes and malts (\$4.25–\$4.50).

Bars

Layover hangover Avoid the overcrowded sports bars in the chaotic food court: The farther you wander from the Triangle, the less crowded the places get. We recommend traipsing all the way to the end of Concourse A to **Dot-Com Café** (Gate A11), which serves the same beers as the other places—but with way more legroom. **Romance on the fly** You know what they say: Whatever happens at Midway stays at Midway. Your best opportunity for a pre-flight checkout is to pull up a stool at quiet, conversation-friendly **Let Them Eat Cake** (between Gates B5 and B7), where there's a tiny five-seater corner bar—perfect for sidling up to that hottie with the TUMI carry-on.

Chilling out

Nap time Ditch the cranky suckers at your

gate and head to the ghost town that is **Concourse C**, home of seldom-taken Continental flights, where a weary passenger has plenty of peace and quiet to pass out. Plus, just down the hall is Midway's hidden gem—the **interfaith chapel** (Mezzanine Level C), which boasts the most comfortable seats in the terminal. Praying may not be on your itinerary, but bow your head, close your eyes and you just might get away with catching some Z's.

Running last-minute errands

Grab **stamps** at one of two dispensers—one in Concourse C next to the USO office, and one in Concourse A just outside the huge Hudson News. The former is flanked by a mailbox with 2pm and 5pm pickup times and a **FedEx drop**

box, while the latter just has a mailbox. Get a shine-up at one of the **shoe-shine stations** (Gates A4 and B10; Concourse C, adjacent to the USO office). Services on shoes (\$4) and boots (\$5) are offered Mon–Sat 5am–9pm.

Working for the weekend

Charge! Grab some voltage at the **Power Station** (Gate A3) or at one of five **Travel Centers** (Gates A4, A10, B10 and B20; Concourse C, adjacent to the USO office), where you can chat it up in a phone booth or hit the Web (free terminal-wide **wifi** for most wireless cards) in private. If those are taken—and you're desperate—head to the restroom, where the outlets are rarely used. Trust us: When your battery light starts blinking, you'll thank us. ■



Books worth a look

Looking for a good read at an airport bookstore? We've got you covered. By **Jonathan Messinger**

If your stay at the airport is looking more and more like a Tom Hanks movie, and you forgot to bring a book from your bedside-to-read pile, we have bad news: Your selection at the airport is pretty slim. If you don't mind shelling out more cash, there are some good books to be found in the high-profile front-of-the-store displays. On shelves now are **Thunderstruck** from Erik Larson (author of *Devil in the White City*) as well as the paperback version of *The Daily Show's America: The Book*. But if holiday shopping has left you unable to drop \$30 on the latest fad best-seller, you're looking at a lot of \$5 books, and the coolest thing about them is they have raised, embossed covers.

The first rule is to avoid any of the cheapos with just one word for a title. Books like *Attacked!* or *Confrontation* are not going to lift your spirits. The second rule is to not read James Patterson, the author of such dreck as *Kiss the Girls* (which was made into a crap slasher flick starring Morgan Freeman) and *Along Came a Spider* (also made into a crap slasher flick starring Freeman). In fact, you'd be better off walking right past the whole display nearest the entrance to the store—it's going to be filled by other writers desperately trying to be Patterson, and we need to put an end to this sometime.

If you look deeper into the store, you'll find some cheap books that are worth reading: Many of these are genre classics, like Robert Ludlum's *Bourne* series, or old Stephen King (yes, we said Stephen King). At a recent stop in Midway, we were pleasantly surprised to find Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy* on display. Robinson is a classic science-fiction writer, the kind whose work is ignored by mainstream snobs but will likely be taught in English classes down the road.