



CHICAGO
ARCHITECTURE
CENTER

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**Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady
Returns April 17**

Tickets now on sale for Chicago's official architecture river cruise, proceeds support the work of the CAC

CHICAGO, April 1, 2021 – Now in its 28th year of partnership, [Chicago's First Lady Cruises](#) and the [Chicago Architecture Center \(CAC\)](#) announced the 2021 schedule for the official [Chicago Architecture Foundation Center \(CAFC\) River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady](#), the “#1 Boat Tour in North America” (*USA Today 10 Best*) and best way to experience Chicago's world-famous architecture and the only cruise narrated by Chicago Architecture Center certified-volunteer docents. Ticket sales begin today (April 1) for the 2021 season launching April 17.

The CAFC River Cruise remains committed to ensuring the safety of crew, docents and passengers by continuing COVID-19 safety and cleaning policies in alignment with Chicago's Department of Public Health and Federal CDC mandates.

Ranked the #1 boat tour in Chicago based on [TripAdvisor user reviews](#), the 90-minute CAFC River Cruise is the most in-depth, authentic architecture river cruise available and is lauded as a “must-do” activity when visiting Chicago. Exciting new buildings with cutting edge design elements continue to rise along the river including the recently completed St. Regis (Vista) Tower, the city's third tallest structure, and the refurbished riverfront Old Post Office. Tour guests will leave the cruise inspired by the city's wide variety of architectural styles— which glide by as you travel up and down all three branches of the Chicago River—including art deco, neoclassicism, mid-century modernism, and postmodernism.

Additionally, the CAFC River Cruise is led by certified-volunteer docents, who inspire Chicagoland residents and visitors with their passion for and knowledge of the city's rich architectural history. Each year, 15 Chicagoans undergo nearly 100 hours of rigorous training to become a CAC docent, plus an additional 12 weeks of study about Chicago's “canyon of

architecture” along the river to be certified to lead the CAFRC River Cruise. They join a cohort of 115 CAC certified-volunteer veteran docents to lend their expertise and unique perspectives to guests on the popular River Cruise, sharing stories of the men and women who have designed more than 50 architecturally significant buildings along the Chicago River as well as the Chicago Riverwalk and the 13 bascule bridges on the cruise route.

Tour guests can feel good about choosing the CAFRC River Cruise as a portion of proceeds from tickets purchased support the CAC’s nonprofit educational mission. In pursuit of the CAC’s mission to inspire people to discover why design matters, the CAC produces programs for children, students, teens and families that reach more than 35,000 young people annually in Chicagoland, across the country and around the world; these programs, including *Girls Build!*, are designed to reach underserved communities.

Guests can continue exploring the city’s rich architectural history by adding an additional \$5 to their tour admission to visit the renowned [Chicago Architecture Center](#), a world-class destination sharing secrets behind Chicago and its architectural legacy. The CAC is reopening May 22, with virus mitigation policies in place, to highlight its galleries containing exhibits that reveal how Chicago architects continue to create innovative designs to build taller and smarter. Fully refreshed exhibits in the Skyscraper Gallery include new scale models of skyscrapers from Chicago and around the world. In the Chicago Gallery, visitors will discover all new exhibits on Chicago’s latest architecture projects, Chicago’s diverse neighborhoods and “Housing for a Changing Nation” offering creative, affordable home design concepts that break the mold. The popular Chicago City Model Experience, a scale model of Chicago’s downtown, has been updated with recently completed buildings that bring the total buildings within the model to more than 4,250.

Chicago’s First Lady Cruises also offers regularly scheduled cruises aboard Lady Grebe, a vintage six-passenger yacht, for a private, safe, unique cruise experience. Lady Grebe offers an intimate atmosphere for families, groups, visiting celebrities, and more to explore the Chicago River from the comfort and privacy of their own 1961 vintage yacht. CAC docents are available upon advance request to enhance the private experience and share Chicago’s rich architectural history. [Lady Grebe’s private offerings](#) will be available for groups of 2-6 passengers and depart Friday-Sunday at 11:15a.m., 1:30 p.m., 3:45 p.m. and 6 p.m. Private cruise fees begin at \$495, and beverage service and a private CAC guide may be added with an additional fee.

Boarding Location and Details

All cruises depart from the Chicago's First Lady dock on Chicago's Riverwalk at Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive and offer unparalleled, Instagram-worthy photo opportunities. Guests enjoy the experience with spacious open-air top deck seating, with 360-degree views of Chicago’s glittering skyscrapers, and include climate controlled interior salons with large oblong windows, upscale restrooms, and full-service bars.

The CAFC River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady departs from the Michigan Avenue Bridge at Wacker Drive on Chicago's Riverwalk just three blocks north of Millennium Park. A blue awning marks the entrance to the stairway leading to the Chicago Riverwalk docking area. Discounted self-park is located at 111 East Wacker Drive. Guests with limited mobility may find an ADA ramp located at Chicago's Riverwalk at State Street and Wacker Drive, and limited mobility drop-off directions can be found at CruiseChicago.com.

As a fourth-generation family-owned and operated company, Chicago's First Lady Cruises celebrates local businesses by offering locally based food and beverages aboard its tours, such as [Revolution Brewing](#) craft beverages and the brand new Chicago's First Lady Bascule Blend, a coffee roasted and blended by Chicago family-owned [Metropolis Coffee Co.](#)

Ticketing and 2021 schedule

Tickets start at \$51 for the daytime river cruise. Tickets for the Evening River Cruises start at \$56.

Tickets can be obtained the following ways:

- Bypassing the box office with e-ticket purchases at ticketmaster.com/rivercruise (highly recommended option due to tour popularity)
- In-person at Chicago's First Lady Cruises' dockside box office (opening at 10am), 112 E. Wacker Dr., Riverwalk level
- In-person at Chicago Architecture Center Box Office (Friday – Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.), 111 East Wacker Dr.
- Starting April 1: by phone at 1-800-982-2787

Groups of 10 or more may reserve in advance by contacting the Group Sales Department at grouptours@architecture.org or by calling 312-322-1130. Chicago's First Lady Cruises' fleet of yachts may be chartered on a private basis complete with custom food, beverage and a docent-led tour. More information can be found at CruiseChicago.com or by calling 847-358-1330.

CAFC River Cruise times vary throughout the season:

- The first two opening weekends will include Friday-Sunday departures April 17th - April 25th, running each weekend with cruises departing at 11a, 12p, 1p, 2p, 3p, 4p, 5p and 6p
- The **initial summer season** will include Friday-Sunday departures beginning on April 30th, running each weekend with cruises departing at 11a, 12p, 1p, 2p, 3p, and 4p
- As health-metrics improve with the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago, additional cruise days and departure times will be added. Please continue to monitor CruiseChicago.com and Architecture.org for additional cruise dates and departure times. Tickets may be purchased at ticketmaster.com/rivercruise.

Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) exhibit galleries located across from the boat dock at 111 E. Wacker Drive will reopen, with virus mitigation policies in place, on May 22 (Friday - Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.). Additional days and hours will be introduced as the season progresses.

For more information on Chicago's First Lady Cruises or the Chicago Architecture Center please visit CruiseChicago.com or Architecture.org/cruise.

Visuals

High-resolution photos and videos of the CAFC River Cruise, private charters and the Chicago Architecture Center can be found here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/53u3g4fdsdni5gt/AABda5U2_NIN1ZYBJTXGtNvFa?dl=0

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About Chicago's First Lady Cruises

Docked on Chicago's vibrant Riverwalk, Chicago's First Lady Cruises is a critically-acclaimed Chicago experience that connects Chicago locals and visitors alike to the city's rich architectural history and breathtaking beauty through the official Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise and as a first-class venue for private events. This year marks the 28th anniversary of the Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise. The tour was recently named the "#1 Boat Tour in North America" by USA Today's 10 Best. For more than 86 years, Chicago's First Lady Cruises and its sister company, Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline, have been a cornerstone of Chicago's vibrant Riverwalk. Both cruise lines are fourth-generation family-owned and operated, and committed to enviro-friendly practices for continued sustainability. Six of Chicago's First Lady Cruises luxury yachts are available for private charter cruising and special events, complete with food and beverage for groups of two to 250 people. All vessels are operated by a U.S. Coast Guard-licensed captain and crew. For more information and for cruise schedules, visit CruiseChicago.com or call 847-358-1330.

About the Chicago Architecture Center

The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), formerly the Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF), is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring people to discover why design matters. As an education leader in architecture and design, the CAC is a hub for everything architecture in Chicago, offering tours, programs, exhibitions, field trips, curricula, and online tools that are part of a dynamic learning journey for all ages. Proceeds from the CAC's tours and retail store, as well as from grants, sponsorships and donations, support this educational mission. Visit architecture.org to learn more and follow @chiarchitecture and #chiarchitecture on social media.