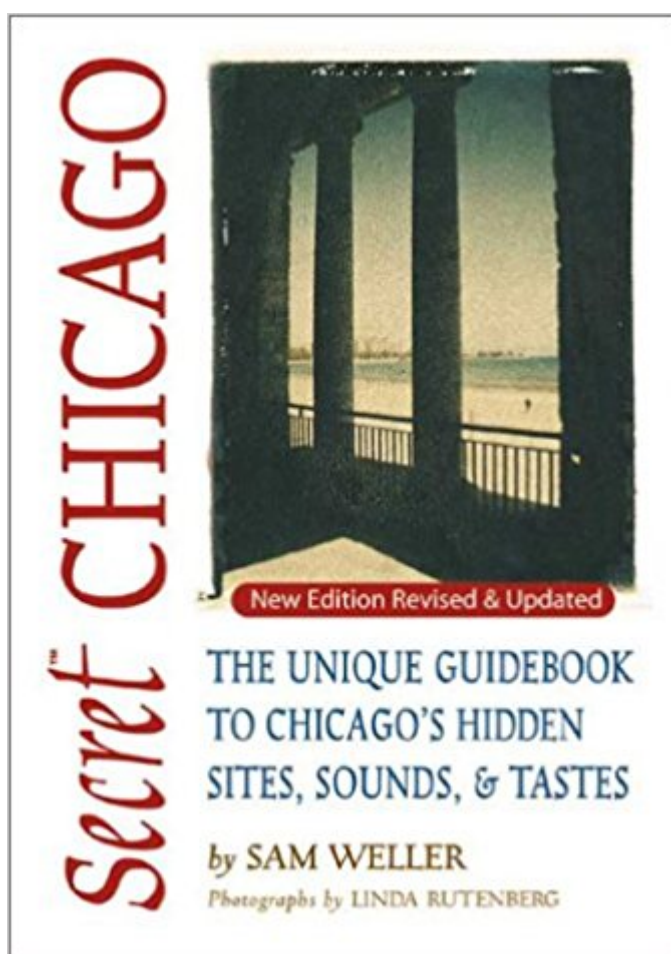




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# Secret Chicago: The Unique Guidebook To Chicago's Hidden Sites, Sounds, & Tastes (Secret Guides)



## Synopsis

16 colour photos

## Book Information

Series: Secret Guides

Paperback: 260 pages

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## Customer Reviews

"Armed with a sharp wit and healthy sense of the absurd, Sam Weller explores the exciting, exotic, and esoteric Chicago that few natives know. Follow him." Mark Lukas, Chicago Tribune Writer

Nelson Algren once said Chicago was like a beautiful woman with a broken nose. Other travel guides don't tell you about that broken nose. This one does. Why? Because in order to truly understand Chicago - to experience it and love it like you've lived in it forever - you have to appreciate all its sides. You can't just visit the Art Institute of Chicago, or shop at the glitzy Water Tower Place mall, and expect to walk away with a feel for the city. Secret Chicago warns you away from the realm of the tourist and directs you instead to the leafy neighbourhoods and the tiny "ma and pa" stores. It leads you to a dark and smoky blues club where the daughter of a blues legend wails well past the witching hour - singing to a small crowd of neighborhood regulars. It invites you to a Polish deli on the far Southwest side to sample garlic kielbasa, and afterward to wander to a nearby all-night bowling alley with 80 lanes. It opens the door to a vegetarian restaurant where you can sit out on a screened-in porch as the nearby elevated train rumbles by overhead. It takes you to the best place for punk rock, and to the place the punk rockers get their tattoos. Secret Chicago will also save you money with a naughty tip on how to cheat the tollbooths on the local expressways, and with clear-cut advice on how the city's train system operates. It will direct you to one of the most expensive hotel suites in town, but also show you how to lodge comfortably for a whole week for

little more than \$100. It takes a local to know these things, and with this book you'll have local Sam Weller as your guide. You can leaf through this book, choose a topic ("Secret Jazz, or Secret Ethnic Bakeries, for example), and explore. Before long, you'll be a local too.

Sam Weller is the Midwest Correspondent for Publishers Weekly. He is also a longtime contributor to New City, Chicago's alternative news and entertainment weekly. He has written for the Chicago Tribune and Playboy Magazine Online

This is a great idea, and I wish it had been expanded just a bit, to get more of a flavor of the places Weller writes about. There are places in this book which, even as a Chicagoan born and bred, I never knew about. He even has a short chapter about prostitution in the city! You don't get much more secret than that, methinks. But the information amounts to little more than a few lines about each site, and leaves you wanting a bit more. I also have to wonder how some of the places in the book were chosen. How secret is the Chicago El (elevated) system after all? And why, for example, with literally thousands of little fast food joints in the city, were there only three listed? And how were they chosen? I recognize that there was a space limit on this book, and that Weller covers a great deal of ground here, but as I read I'm occasionally bemused by both inclusions and exclusions. Still, it doesn't pretend to be comprehensive and Weller does do a good job of giving the reader an overview of some of the roads less traveled in a city this size. This is a fun book. Keep one in your glove compartment for impromptu road trips, or give a copy to your Chicago-loving friends. They'll get a kick out of finding new reasons to love this city.

I found this to be an informative guide for adventurous tourists or new residents of the city. However, I would not necessarily recommend to adventurous residents of the city. If you already live in Chicago and you are, for instance, a blues fan it is no secret that Buddy Guy's Legends and the Checkerboard Lounge are premier venues. In other words while I wholeheartedly endorse this book for the aforementioned groups I would not recommend it to adventurous residents on the lookout for new experiences. You may certainly find a few but most of it will be old hat.

It's about time a book like this was written. Chicago is America's often-forgotten crown jewel of cities, and Sam Weller does an amazing job of reminding even native Chicagoans of the endless wealth of possibilities this town holds. Written in flawless and exciting prose, Secret Chicago is a must-buy for Chicago natives as well as anyone traveling through.

This was a very helpful book for our one-week vacation in the Windy City. Weller has a witty style of writing and isn't afraid to share his opinion. My husband and I found him to be right on the mark, especially for the food. The book is a quick read, organized into categories as chapters so you can skip past topics that don't interest you. Weller gave helpful information you won't find in most tourist books like where to use the restroom when shopping on Michigan Avenue (not many public potties!). My husband would have liked to see Secret Automotive (for car shows and unique dealerships) as a category but outside of that we felt the book was pretty complete. It mentioned all the major attractions but it is more focused on the secret sites. I could see this book being helpful to a newer resident of Chicago as well.

Mr. Weller is a former reporter and must have done a very good job in reporting. This book is not for the typical tourist but for the individual interested in an in-depth look at the city of Chicago. He digs to get the best out of every subject he covers and in very descriptive text and references, gives even the most experienced Chicago visitor and even resident a taste for almost 100 subjects. Listed alphabetically, are a myriad of aspects of the city from architecture and astrology, to almost any subject you can imagine. This is not a typical tour book but one which will entice you to investigate areas of interest and the city that you may not have imagined exist. The author is opinionated and frank, which makes the book even more useful.

I bought this guidebook on a whim and was not disappointed! "Secret Chicago" goes where few travel guides go. . . it's informative while highly entertaining. It's also really funny! As a new transplant to the Windy City, this book has been a great help. Weller's recommendations for restaurants are superb. I have visited several spots named in the book and they were all great. And since moving here (from Kansas City), I have seen Weller's name in the Chicago Tribune and New City often. Most guides are written by some unknown. . . not this one! I'd love to meet this writer! He's really funny and knows Chicago like nobody's business. I highly recommend this book.

This book is an excellent way to see Chicago. I recommend it to a new comer that has just moved to the city. It is the best way to find your own little favorite places.

a bit of a disappointment- nothing really too secret here. relatively good descriptions but don't expect a book of any great beauty or insight. i'd save my money for another.

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