

Chicago- The Windy City! (Illinois, 17 Nov'07)

Early morning on Saturday, 17 Nov, Dilip and I drove from Milwaukee to Chicago. The drive was nice, with flashes of receding fall colors. I liked Chicago city and we spent a wonderful day there, despite light showers and mild fog!

We parked our car in a garage near the Millennium Park and decided to use Chicago's Free Trolley System. The trolleys covered all the major tourist spots. The only downside was the long queues at trolley stops to board.



First we walked around Millennium Park. I had downloaded the park's audio tour onto my MP3 player and we used that and our map as our guide. I particularly liked the 'Cloud Gate' structure by an Indian designer. Fondly known as 'The Bean', it reflects the Chicago skyline and the floating clouds beautifully. It was amusing to watch people strike funny poses in front of it. The Jay Pritzker Pavilion was a bizarre structure that looked like a lot of bent metallic wires in symmetry. The Crown Fountain which displayed faces of random Chicago residents

on a huge LCD block was interesting too. There were 2 such blocks facing each other. During summer, the faces pucker up and spout a fountain of water.

The next stop Buckingham Fountain was a disappointment because I had missed a small detail- that it operates with light and sound shows, between April-October only.

We then headed for the Navy Pier which had a mall like area with numerous shops, a Stained Glass Museum which was very pretty and an amusement area with the famous Mc Donald's Ferris Wheel, a musical carousel and the like. The pier jutted out into the Michigan Lake, which is one of the Great Lakes. It wasn't surprising at all that it was called a 'Great Lake'! Leaves one wondering whether it is just a lake, a bay or the sea!

We had lunch at the pier and downed an ice-cream despite the cold. Dilip also decided that the Ferris Wheel ride would be quite romantic. Well, it turned out to be a good idea and offered a nice perspective of the Chicago skyline! ☺





Chicago's most famous landmark was our last stop- The Sears Tower. It was once the tallest structure in the world, from about 1973-1998. It even surpassed the World Trade Centers and is still stands proudly tall. However, when completed, New York's new Freedom Tower is expected to surpass Sears. But the under-construction 'Chicago Spire' is going to take the cake. It is a super tall skyscraper and when completed in about 2011, it will be the tallest structure surpassing both the Sears and the Freedom tower! It will also be North America's tallest all residential building with about 150 floors.

The drive back to Milwaukee took longer because of traffic blocks in the city, partly due to a Lights Festival in the 'Magnificent Mile' stretch within the city.

(Snaps are at <http://dilipmary.shutterfly.com>)