

Welcome to the Neighborhood: An introduction to Bridgeport and Bronzeville

Ryan Kamphuis
TECHNEWS WRITER

To many, Chicago is the City of Big Shoulders. A dazzling metropolis on Lake Michigan typified by tall skyscrapers, roaring L trains, and the bustle of the Loop and the Magnificent Mile. While this view of Chicago is an impressive one, it provides only a small glimpse of what makes Chicago so unique and amazing. Chicago isn't just the City of Big Shoulders - it's the city of neighborhoods. Chicago is home to over 200 neighborhoods that house the city's 2.5 million residents. Each of these neighborhoods has a unique culture and history that makes each one like none other. One doesn't truly know Chicago until they take the time to explore the city's neighborhoods and find the hidden gems in each. Luckily, Illinois Tech's location allows it to call two neighborhoods home: Bridgeport and Bronzeville, each with plenty of things to check out. Here's a primer of the must-visit places in each neighborhood!

Bridgeport

Located directly to the West of campus, across the Dan Ryan Expressway, Bridgeport is a sleepy, working-class neighborhood that is home to the Chicago White Sox and multiple former Chicago mayors. Many IIT students call Bridgeport home due to its many restaurants, parks, and affordable apartments. These factors combined have led to Bridgeport growing a lot over the past few years, leading many locals to call Bridgeport 'the neighborhood of the future,' saying that it could be the next big, hip neighborhood in the city.

Bridgeport Coffee Company

Located at 3101 S Morgan Street, Bridgeport Coffee has been roasting beans and serving coffee for ten years. Bridgeport Coffee is consistently rated as one of the top coffee shops in the city, and offers many different drinks and sandwiches that are reasonably priced. The shop is located in a quiet, old storefront that makes a great place for studying and socializing. Bridgeport Coffee has recently opened new shops on

Roosevelt road and in Hyde Park, and while the drinks are just as good at these shops, the environment at these new shops is nothing like the one provided by the original. Website: <http://www.bridgeportcoffee.com/>

Jackalope Coffee and Tea House

Located at 755 W 32nd Street, Jackalope is the new kid on the block in the Bridgeport coffee scene. Jackalope has a large menu with both food and drink options. While their traditional espresso drinks, soups, and sandwiches are delicious, the best part of Jackalope's menu are their seasonal drinks. They contain everything from traditional seasonal drinks like peppermint mochas to unique drinks like maple bacon lattes. Jackalope's shop has a delightfully hip vibe due to its local art, ironic posters, and old-style vinyl seating. Plenty of seating, both indoor and outdoor, ensure that there will always be a place to sit whenever one visits. Website: <http://jackalopecoffee.com/>

Pleasant House Bakery

Located at 964 W 31st Street, Pleasant House Bakery is a small English-pie shop right in the heart of Bridgeport. Opened a few years ago by husband-and-wife team Art and Chelsea Jackson, Pleasant House has received constant fanfare since then. Pleasant House has a small menu of English pies, pub fare, and homemade desserts and pastries. This small menu is supplemented by daily specials that include everything from burgers to noon high tea. All of Pleasant House's dishes feature produce grown in urban farms throughout the city of Chicago. Rated as one of the best restaurants in Chicago, and actually affordable on a college student budget, Pleasant House can't be missed! Website: <http://pleasanthousebakery.com/>

Nana

Located at 3267 S Halsted Avenue, Nana is a family-owned organic restaurant that has quickly become one of Bridgeport's go-to restaurants. Nana's dining room has a cool vibe that makes it a great date spot. While Nana is most known for their brunch, all of their meal services are top notch and offer many dishes that are made from high

quality, local produce, seafood, and meat. Nana also takes its devotion to supporting the local community further than just its produce; Nana has partnered with Benton House, a community center in Bridgeport, to support its food shelf and youth programs. Finally, when you go, make sure to order the avocado fries - they are to die for! Website: <http://nanaorganic.com/>

Bridgeport Pasty Company

Located at 3142 S Morgan Street, Bridgeport Pasty Company serves up fresh-baked pasties to the people of Chicago through its restaurant and food truck. Pasties are handheld savory pies that originated in England and became popular in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Bridgeport Pasty has pies for every taste, all at the affordable price of just \$5. The restaurant also has a selection of home-baked cookies, locally-made craft sodas, and cupcakes. While the pasties are great, Bridgeport Pasty really shines due to their owners. The restaurant's owners usually are staffing the counter in the restaurant whenever one visits, and they are the friendliest people one could possibly meet. The owners have also created what is probably the best outdoor eating area in the city at the restaurant, where you can enjoy your food while relaxing in a hammock or playing lawn games. During the summer they often will have Friday night movies in their outdoor area, to boot! Website: <http://bridgeportpasty.com/>

Zaytune Mediterranean Grill

Located at 3129 S Morgan Street, Zaytune is a Mediterranean restaurant that focuses on authenticity to great effect. Considered one of the best Mediterranean restaurants in the city, Zaytune has a wide menu that is as delicious as it is affordable. Featuring homemade falafel and hummus that could put dishes prepared in the Middle East to shame, Zaytune is a great option for students looking for a great, affordable, healthy meal. The restaurant also has plenty of vegetarian and vegan options, making it a great choice for large groups with many different dietary choices. Website: <http://www.zaytunegrill.com/index.html>

Bronzeville

Bronzeville is the neighborhood surrounding IIT to the South and East. Bronzeville has a rich history as a center of African-American culture in Chicago, being referred to as the "Black Metropolis" in the 1920s due to it being one of the nation's most significant landmarks of African-American urban history. While Bronzeville fell on hard times in the second half of the 20th century, it is currently enjoying the beginning of a period of revitalization due to many new businesses moving into the neighborhood.

Chicago's Home of Chicken and Waffles

Located at 3947 S King Drive, Chicago's Home of Chicken and Waffles serves up some of the best chicken and waffles in the city. Why chicken and waffles go so well together is unknown to most, but the chefs here have figured it out and used the knowledge to craft a menu of many different, delicious chicken and waffle pairings. This restaurant also has several soul food dishes that are fantastic. If you go, make sure to check their website and go when they have live jazz being played at the restaurant. Website: <http://www.chicagohomeofchickenandwaffles.com/index.html>

31st Street Beach

Located at 3100 S Lake Shore Drive, 31st Street Beach is Bronzeville's very own beach! One of the best things about Summer in Chicago is the many beaches that line the coast of Lake Michigan. One of the city's best beaches is 31st Street Beach due to it being completely remade when the city built a harbor next to the beach. This leaves the Beach with more than just a great swimming area. 31st Street Beach also has community grills, access to the Lakefront Trail, a snack shop, bathroom and shower facilities, a full harbor to explore, a playground, and a skate park. The beach also has a great view of the Chicago skyline, making it a great place to visit regardless of the season! Website: <http://www.cpdbeaches.com/beaches/31st-street-beach/>

