

IARPT in Hyde Park

Conference Host Guide

University of Chicago · 57th & Woodlawn and surrounding neighborhood

Lunch

Valois Restaurant

1518 E 53rd St | 6am–3pm daily | Cash only | \$

The place to go if you want to understand Hyde Park in 20 minutes. Cafeteria-style tray line, no frills, astonishing portions, dirt cheap. Obama grew up eating here and still does when he's in town. Order at the line, grab a seat wherever. Closes at 3pm sharp.

Medici on 57th

1327 E 57th St | 8am–8:30pm daily | \$\$

One block from the Sem Coop. The walls are carved up with decades of student graffiti. Pizza, burgers, sandwiches, soup. Good chili. A Hyde Park institution. The attached bakery has amazing biscuits, pretzels, and croissants.

Salonica Restaurant

1440 E 57th St | 7am–3pm Mon–Thu | Until 8pm Fri–Sun | \$

Greek diner one block east on 57th. Quiet, unhurried, reliably good. Omelets, wraps, waffles, strong coffee. Very affordable.

Cedars Palestine Kitchen

1206 E 53rd St | 11am–9pm | Until 10pm Fri–Sat | \$\$

Palestinian-owned. Shawarma, falafel, lamb, and Arab Swag Tacos. Generous portions, fresh flavors. The falafel specifically gets serious love from regulars.

The Nile of Hyde Park

1162 E 55th St | Noon–9pm | Until 10pm Fri–Sat | Closed Mondays | \$\$

Middle Eastern on 55th, half a block from Jimmy's. Lamb chops, shawarma platters, hummus, lentil soup. Portion sizes are generous for the price. Longstanding neighborhood spot.

Dinner

The Promontory

5311 S Lake Park Ave | Reservations strongly recommended | \$\$

The dining anchor for the neighborhood right now. Live music most nights. The patio is good in summer.

Chant

1509 E 53rd St | Until 10pm most nights | \$\$

Asian-fusion on 53rd. Live bands on weekends. Lively atmosphere.

Truth Be Told

1227 E 60th St | Until 10pm daily | \$\$

A few blocks south, at 60th. More of a neighborhood tavern with an elevated menu. Cozy interior, good burger, solid crab pasta. Works well for a smaller dinner or pre/post dinner drinks.

Snail Thai Cuisine

1649 E 55th St | 11am–8pm | Closed Mondays | \$

The clear Thai pick in Hyde Park. Accommodating dietary restrictions, attentive service, quick turnaround. Closes at 8pm.

Siam Thai

1639 E 55th St | 11am–10pm daily | \$

Right next door to Snail. Runs later (until 10pm), offers a dinner special that includes soup, entrée, egg roll, and cucumber salad for around \$16. Good backup if Snail is closed or full. Solid marks for curries and drunken noodles.

Bars

Woodlawn Tap (Jimmy's)

1172 E 55th St | Until 2am daily | Cash only | \$

The essential Hyde Park bar. Academics have been drinking here for decades. Cash only. Best Chicago dog in the area, good fries, Miller High Life on tap. Goes until 2am. The back room is a whole other situation. There's an ATM inside with a \$3.50 charge.

The Pub at Ida Noyes Hall

1212 E 59th St | Ida Noyes Hall basement | Opens 4pm | Closed Sundays | \$

Technically a university club in the basement of the gorgeous Ida Noyes building on campus. \$3 guest entry or \$10 yearly membership. Craft beers on tap, reasonable prices, dark wood, good music. Trivia on Tuesdays.

The Promontory

5311 S Lake Park Ave | Bar side — no dinner reservation needed | \$\$

The bar side is separate from the dining room, and you don't need dinner reservations to sit there. Good happy hour, strong cocktails, solid bar food.

Activities & Iconic Spots

Right at 57th & Woodlawn

Frederick C. Robie House

5757 S Woodlawn Ave | Closed Tue–Wed | Tours 9:30am–4pm | Book in advance

Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Style masterpiece, right at 57th and Woodlawn. One of the most significant pieces of American architecture in the country.

Seminary Co-op Bookstores

5751 S Woodlawn Ave | Mon–Fri 11am–6pm | Sat 10am–5pm | Closed Sundays

Directly across from Robie House. One of the great academic bookstores in the country, full stop. A must for any academic conference group.

57th Street Books

1301 E 57th St | Closed Mondays | Tue–Fri 11am–6pm | Sat–Sun 10am–5pm

Two blocks west on 57th. A semi-underground general bookstore with a loyal neighborhood following. More literary fiction, children's section, local small press titles.

Campus & Neighborhood

Smart Museum of Art

5550 S Greenwood Ave | Tue–Sun 10am–4:30pm | Free | Closed Mondays

The university art museum, on campus. Small but serious. Permanent collection runs from ancient objects through contemporary work, with rotating exhibitions. Free.

ISAC Museum (formerly the Oriental Institute)

1155 E 58th St | Tue–Thu & Sat 10am–4pm | Fri until 8pm | Closed Mon | Free (suggested donation)

One of the genuinely great museums in the country for the ancient Near East, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia. The artifacts were collected during UChicago's excavations starting in the 1920s. Three blocks from the Sem Coop. Free.

Rockefeller Memorial Chapel

5850 S Woodlawn Ave | Open to visitors | Check schedule for events

The tallest building on campus at 200 feet, and one of the last great examples of American neo-Gothic architecture. Completed in 1928.

DuSable Black History Museum

740 E 56th Pl | Tue–Sun 10am–5pm | Closed Mondays

A 10-minute walk west from campus, and the oldest Black history museum in the United States. Artifacts, art, and documents tracing African American history from slavery through the Great Migration to the contemporary moment.

A Bit Farther

Griffin Museum of Science and Industry

5700 S DuSable Lake Shore Dr | Daily 9:30am–5:30pm | \$\$\$

A 10–15-minute walk east through Jackson Park along the lake. World-class interactive science museum in a stunning Beaux-Arts building. Best for attendees who want a half-day excursion, or those arriving a day early. Not a quick stop. Plan a full morning or afternoon.

Promontory Point · No entrance fee

An easy walk east to the lake. A small park jutting into Lake Michigan, beloved by locals. Beautiful lake, the skyline to the north, and grass. Good for a morning run, an evening walk, or a quiet hour between sessions.

A few practical notes

Valois closes at 3pm sharp. Jimmy's and The Pub at Ida Noyes are cash only; both have ATMs on site. The Promontory (restaurant) and Chant take reservations and are worth making them. The Smart Museum, ISAC, and Rockefeller Chapel are all free and within easy walking distance of each other on campus.