



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CHOOSE CHICAGO RELEASE 2018 ANNUAL TOURISM REPORT**

*Report Highlights Record-Breaking Tourism Year for Chicago*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Choose Chicago today released the 2018 Annual Tourism Report, highlighting another record-breaking year for tourism. Key highlights on Chicago's booming tourism industry from the 2018 report, include: welcoming over 57.7 million visitors to the City; *Condé Nast Traveler* naming Chicago the "Best Big City in the United States" for the second year in a row; generating over \$16 million in overall tourism expenditures; and supporting 150,616 tourism-related jobs here in Chicago.

"Tourism in Chicago creates jobs throughout our city," Mayor Emanuel said. "By continuing to set new tourism records and bring millions more people to Chicago every year, we are generating economic opportunities that reach every Chicago neighborhood."

The Mayor and Choose Chicago made the announcement at Choose Chicago's Annual Meeting held at McCormick Place this year.

Tourism is a crucial component of the city's economic growth and job development strategy. Year-over-year the City continues to see growth in its tourism sector, helping to generate good-paying jobs and providing critical local business and tax revenues. The 2018 Annual Tourism Report details growth in travelers, increase in tax revenues and hotel room stays, and special events hosted in 2018.

In 2018, Chicago set a new tourism record with 57.7 million visitors, 2.4 million more than the previous year. These increases are the result of a continued focus on growing the City's overnight and leisure visitors to Chicago, who tend to spend more and stay longer. This increase in travelers has also translated into increased hotel room occupancy. In 2018, the City increased the number of rooms occupied by 4.4 percent to a total of 11.8 million rooms.

Special events and programming, such as the James Beard Awards, the Laver Cup, Chicago Theater Week and hundreds of other events contribute to Chicago's booming tourism industry. In 2018, the City announced it will be the proud host of the James Beard Awards through 2027. The 2018 Chicago Theater Week also had a record-breaking year, selling

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over 12,500 tickets which was an over six percent increase from the previous year. This was the sixth year of Chicago Theater Week.

“The impact of our tourism, meetings and hospitality industry is increasingly noticeable,” said David Whitaker, President & CEO of Choose Chicago. “We all know when the city is hopping and full of tourist and convention delegates - and sadly when they are not here. It reaches far beyond the jobs supported and the taxes generated. A great city to visit or meet in first has to be a great city in which to live, work or play in. And the visitor economy helps fuel the ability for Chicago’s tourism and entertainment assets to thrive.”

In total it is estimated that the tourism industry generated over \$16 million in overall tourism expenditures in 2018.

To view the full 2018 Annual Tourism Report, visit:

<http://www.choosechicago.com/annualreport>

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### **About Choose Chicago**

Choose Chicago is the official sales and marketing organization responsible for promoting Chicago as a global visitor and meetings destination leveraging the city's unmatched assets to ensure the economic vitality of the city and its member business community. For more information, visit [choosechicago.com](http://www.choosechicago.com).