

American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago

We arrived slightly later than scheduled (2 hours- apparently normal!) at Union Station, Chicago, where we were greeted by a very lively local tour guide who was to take us on a coach tour around Chicago. On it, he shared amusing stories and fed us local recommendations on where to eat, as well as showing us some places linked to Al Capone, The Blues Brothers, and much much more. His enthusiasm was wonderful, he really brought the stories to life- although our whole group, us included, were all shattered

American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago

and hungry so probably didn't appreciate it as much as we could have.



American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago

After our tour we were dropped at the hotel, conveniently located on the Magnificent Mile, a stretch of posh shops, restaurants and tourist attractions. We had chance for a wander so headed off towards Portillos, recommended by our guide as the best place to eat Italian beef sandwiches, a Chicago delicacy. The sandwich was great, but sadly we were unable to wash it down with a cold beer as we'd left our passports in the hotel safe and we got id'd!

American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago



Later that afternoon we were booked onto an architectural river tour, which was brilliant. We learnt about the 4 different types of architecture in the area and all commentary was delivered by an excellent young lad, presumably an architectural student.

American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago



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After our cruise we headed to the John Hancock centre for a drink in the 96th floor bar. We'd been recommended this by our guide as an alternative to going up the very popular Willis tower, saving lots of time, money but most importantly the view was as good if not better. Having watched the sunset fro

American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago

the 96th floor with a cocktail in our hand, I'd be hard stretched to imagine a better view. It certainly rivalled the One Freedom tower in NY.

American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago



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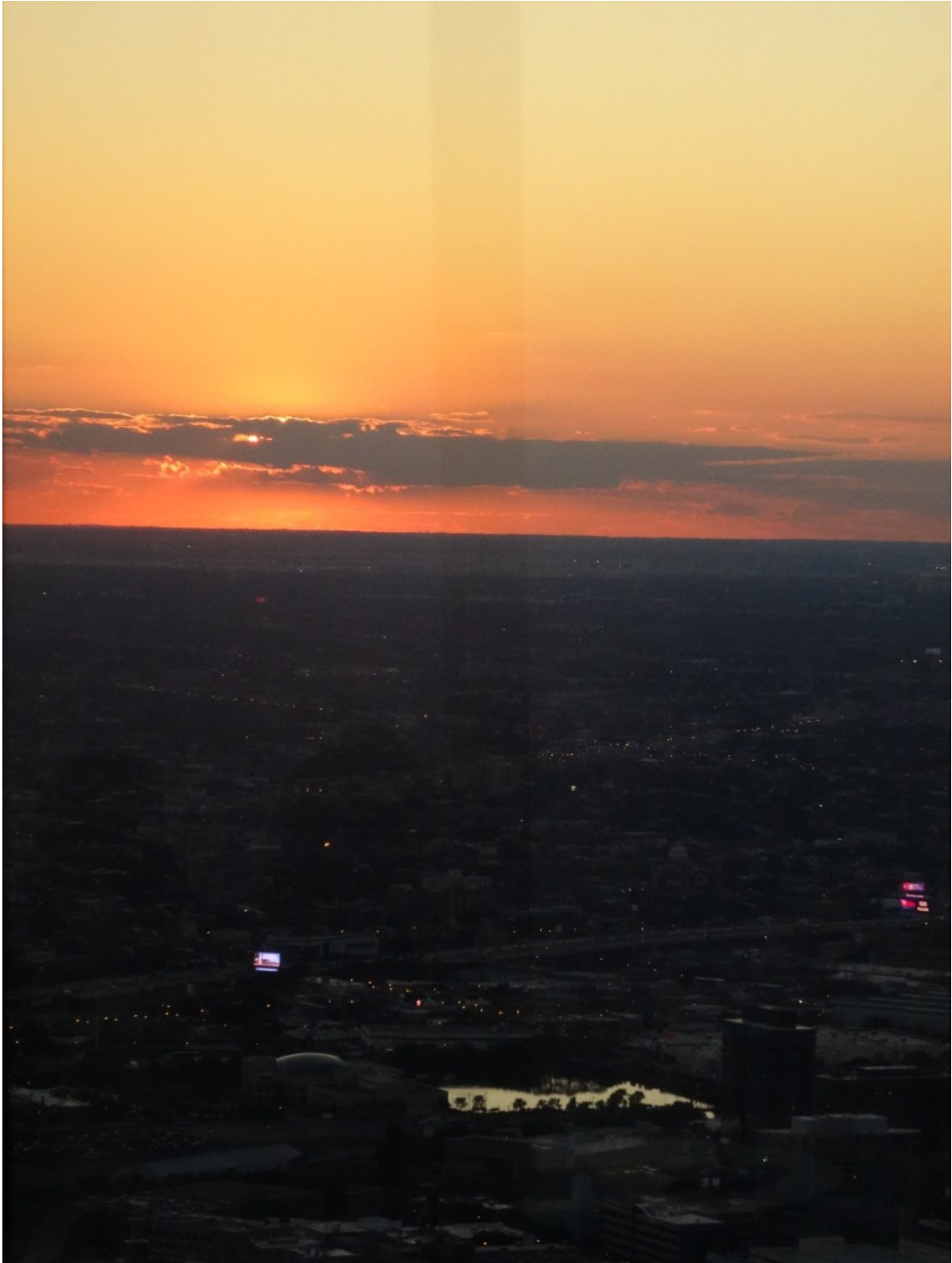
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Dinner time came and we headed to the home of Deep Pan Pizza- PizzeriaUno. To us Brits, the pizza more resembled a quiche using shortcrust pastry rather than dough, but still it made a tasty and local dinner. We wasted it down with a nightcap on our hotel roof. Don't panic mum, it was in the hotel bar on

American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago

the 29th floor. Not as high as nearby “Big John” but still very cool.



American adventures on Amtrak- Part
5 Chicago



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After a good nights kip, we were up early and into town for a quick ride on the El loop- an overheard metro system unique to Chicago. We got off at Millenium Park for a visit to “The Bean” a large glass sculpture designed to show off the cities skyline via reflections in the bean before heading back to the hotel in time for our coach to take us to the station for our Amtrak train to Denver. 

American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago



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American adventures on Amtrak- Part 5 Chicago



We may have only had 24 hours in Chicago but it's been a fab place to explore, we've loved it here.

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