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 Tour by **KEN PRICE**
 Tour Hidden Spaces and Untold Stories at the Palmer House

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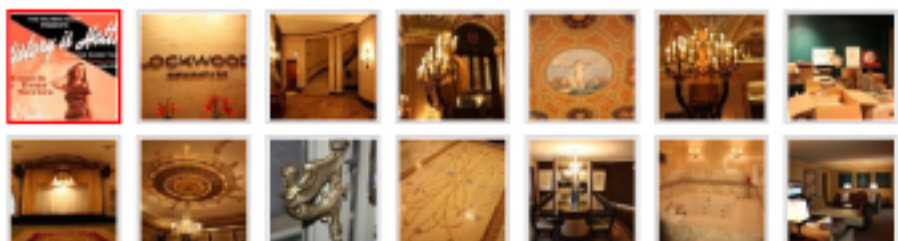
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Tour Hidden Spaces and Untold Stories at the Palmer House



Are you a Chicago history nerd? A food lover? An architecture geek? A fan of the [Palmer House Hotel](#)? If you're any of these things, we have just the event for you. The Palmer House and Lockwood Restaurant are running a series of lunch-time tours of the hotel, hosted by resident "historian extraordinaire" (and PR director) Ken Price.

The afternoon begins with a 3-course lunch at Lockwood - which practically pays for the cost of the tour. Each meal ends with a signature brownie, a dish originally commissioned by Bertha Palmer for ladies attending the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. After lunch, guests gather for the tour. On our tour, we got a chance to peek inside Price's private archive - maybe if you ask nicely, he'll let you peek at some of the treasures. The archive includes hand-written letters from Bertha Palmer, portraits of Bertha and Potter Palmer (the builder of the hotel) and a host of commemorative items ranging from menus to mayoral proclamations. After learning a bit about the history of the hotel and the Palmer family (it's quite a story, and we won't give away the good stuff), get ready to start walking. Wear good shoes, it's a big hotel.

A tour of the Palmer House can't skip the amazing lobby, with its full-ceiling paintings that have been painstakingly restored to their original glory. In addition to the breathtaking ceiling, Price points out many of the details of the lobby that many guests might miss, including two beautiful winged sculptures by Lewis Comfort Tiffany.

After the lobby, guests venture into the famous "Empire Room." A random visitor might think the room is simply a stylish ballroom, but Price spun the full story of the room, including its place as one of the most important nightclubs in America. Back in the day, big bands and jazz starlets lit up the stage, and many of the most important of them left signed portraits in the normally-off-limits backstage areas. As Price narrates, one can almost imagine the space as it looked just after the Second World War - Liberace was the house pianist in 1947, the beautiful chandeliers were sparkling and the cream of Chicago ate and danced the nights away. The Empire Room was also recently restored, and some original Tiffany window hardware was identified and cleaned up.

The tour takes guests through the rest of the hotel's sumptuous ballrooms, and through some backstage kitchen areas. Finally (assuming no one is staying there!), feel like royalty for five minutes in the perthouse. If you like fantasy and luxury, this is the moment you've been waiting for. If it's a big tour and you hide under the bed, maybe Price won't notice that you've taken up residence.

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