

Canada's financial capital has succeeded in embracing successive waves of settlers from across the world, creating a richly diverse and enthusiastically multiracial society. As a result, every cuisine on the planet is represented, in more than 6,000 restaurants. This variety can be experienced by walking around Kensington Market – the riot of foods includes piles of tamarind pods, fuzzy brown eddoes (starchy tubers), stiff fillets of salt cod, wild rice, and all sorts of spices and unusual vegetables.

Often based on past patterns of immigration, Toronto's rich mosaic of neighbourhoods changes swiftly in character. Within walking distance of Downtown are parks and tree-lined roads, with abundant black squirrels. And although many buildings in the centre were torn down to make way for high-rise office blocks – one of them powdered with nearly £0.5m worth of gold dust – older façades are now valued and incorporated alongside the glass walls of new developments.

The Harbourfront area is being redeveloped over the next 18 months to exploit the under-used lake frontage. Behind the noisy Gardiner Expressway and associated urban wasteland, the CN Tower spears the skyline above the curving retractable roof of the SkyDome, home to the Toronto Blue Jays baseball team.

Everywhere shown on our map is walkable from a Downtown hotel – though you can hop on a streetcar, subway train, or taxi when you're tired. The streets feel safe (except around the Gardiner Expressway), and it's good to experience the city from its sidewalks. English is the main language, and the courteous and often charming inhabitants make visitors very welcome.

Neighbourhood watch

Yonge Street

Yonge (pronounced Young) Street is the living thread running through Toronto from north to south and dividing the city into east and west. The liveliest section is between Bloor Street and Dundas Street. Low-rise and raffish, with tarot readings, fast-food restaurants, the Toronto Hemp store, and a few sex shops, this

prime and under-exploited area of real estate is key to Toronto's survival as a city with life in its centre. If Yonge Street and other low-rise areas are swallowed up by high-rise developments, downtown Toronto risks becoming dead at street level.

Harbourfront

Many Harbourfront activities are open-air and temporary, so check with your hotel. From the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, paths lead westwards around a series of small marinas, where you can buy kayak and canoeing lessons, or go on a trip around the harbour or Toronto islands. Harbourfront Antique Market is shown on many maps, but it is now the Toronto Antique Market and has relocated to King Street West at Duncan Street. Queen's Quay Terminal is an upmarket shopping mall, with the Power Plant Gallery just to the west.

Chinatown

Chinatown's restaurants, health centres, and shops – many of them Vietnamese rather than Chinese – spread out from Spadina Avenue. You can get a taste at Kensington Market, or by walking a few yards west from the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Greektown

Vibrantly Greek, with bouzouki strains wafting from the music and video store, and street signs in Greek as well as English, this is a great place for an evening stroll and a Greek meal. Taxis are plentiful, and it's on the Bloor–Danforth subway line.

Cabbagetown

Only 10 minutes on foot from Downtown, this tranquil residential area stretches east to Riverdale Park – an area of parkland sloping down towards the Don Valley expressway. Riverdale Farm – small, with some rare animal species – is a pleasant 20-minute diversion. There are occasional pretty clapboard houses, and Wellesley Street East has balconies and balustrades. Allan Gardens features a fine early 20th-century Palm House (closed for repair when we inspected, but since reopened).

TORONTO



Toronto's harbour is a hive of activity during the summer

Excellent shopping and a rich cultural life make Toronto appealing for a short break, while Niagara Falls is an unmissable day-trip

Sights

**CN Tower and SkyDome

The tallest free-standing structure in the world, the CN Tower has a lift that raises you 1,136ft in 58 seconds, and a glass floor through which you look vertiginously at the ground (not for the faint-hearted). There's a revolving restaurant, and a second lift that takes you even higher, to 1,465ft. In good weather you can see fantastic views for 75 miles. Next door, the SkyDome lacks atmosphere when empty, so try to visit during a baseball game or concert.

**Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art

A world-class collection includes powerful pieces from little-known civilisations of western Mexico, plus Mayan figures, and fine examples of Meissen and its more *outré* Viennese rival du Paquier. The museum closes from 19 January 2004 until June 2005 for expansion, but exhibitions will be on display nearby – see www.gardinermuseum.on.ca.

**Royal Ontario Museum

This is being remodelled by Daniel Libeskind, and some galleries are closed or in disorder. Even so, the English and French interiors – rooms of different periods with contemporary furnishings – are worth the entrance price on their own. There are also some good European wooden and alabaster figures, fine silver, huge crystals, and an appealing Egyptian funerary boat. Children will like the dinosaur area.

**Spadina House

Owned by the same family from the time it was built in the 19th century until 1984, the charm of this modestly grand house comes from the restored furnishings and contrivances for living: damask hangings, cork flooring around the billiard table to stop leather soles from slipping, and the cold store in the kitchen, where meat was kept cool in summer by 600 pounds of ice, shovelled in every fortnight.

**Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)

A representative collection of European art includes Canaletto, Monet, Pissarro, Reynolds, Tintoretto, and Van Gogh, plus the world's largest collection of Henry Moore figures, mostly in plaster. It's also strong in European ivory, and there's a large and varied gift shop.

**Bata Shoe Museum

This fascinating collection includes historical footwear, plus shoes of the stars – Lennon, Elvis, Monroe, and Elton John – as well as international bridal costumes.



HOLIDAY WHICH? RECOMMENDS

We've graded the sights from one to three stars (the more stars the better) to help you plan your trip, but here are some of our favourite experiences.

- Browsing the superb collections at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art
- Contrasting the homes of Toronto's rich at Spadina House and nearby Casa Loma
- Eating stew with your fingers at Ethiopia House
- Getting up close and soaked at Niagara Falls on the *Maid of the Mist*
- Shopping underground in the Eaton Centre and onwards to BCE Place
- Strolling along Front Street to explore St Lawrence Market
- Upmarket shopping in Yorkville and Hazelton Lanes

MORE INFORMATION

Canadian Tourism Commission, 52–55 Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DY, ☎ 0906 871 5000 (60p a minute) www.travelcanada.ca



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Exchange rate

£1=C\$2.13 (3.11.03)

Excursion to

Niagara Falls C\$70

Transport day

pass C\$7

Museum entrance

C\$10–15

Beer C\$4



Glass of ice wine C\$6

Average number of rainy days per month

London	15	13	11	12	12	11	12	11	13	13	15	15
Toronto	15	13	13	12	12	9	9	10	10	13	14	
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	D

Average daily maximum temp °C

London	6	7	10	13	17	20	22	21	19	14	10	7
Toronto	-1	-1	4	12	18	24	27	26	22	15	7	1



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Vast plumes of spray rise from Niagara's horseshoe-shaped Canadian Falls



GOOD PLACES TO EAT

Prices are for a main course, unless otherwise stated.

- 1 **ANGELINI'S** ☎ 785 9261 Delicious Italian food in romantic setting. £19
- 2 **BANGKOK GARDEN** ☎ 977 6748 Packed Thai restaurant, excellent service, great food. £12
- 3 **BARBERIAN** ☎ 597 0335 Best burger in town at this steakhouse. £9
- 4 **ETHIOPIA HOUSE** ☎ 923 5438 Eat stew with your fingers. £2 lunchtime special
- 5 **FRESSEN HERBACEOUS CUISINE** ☎ 504 5127 Fantastic vegetarian food, with sophisticated nature theme. £8
- 6 **HELLO TOAST** ☎ 778 7299 Popular with locals; known for Sunday brunch. £7
- 7 **KENSINGTON KITCHEN** ☎ 961 3404 Middle-Eastern fusion, with very family-friendly atmosphere. £9
- 8 **LEE GARDEN** ☎ 593 9524 Sumptuous Cantonese menu at reasonable prices. £6
- 9 **LE PAPILLON** ☎ 363 0838 Sweet or savoury Quebecois crêpes. £7
- 10 **PAN ON THE DANFORTH** ☎ 466 8158 Combinations of classic Greek dishes. £14
- 11 **TANGO PALACE COFFEE COMPANY** ☎ 465 8085 Little treasure that serves huge cups of *café au lait*. £5
- 12 **TUNDRA** ☎ 869 3456 Artful décor and Canadian cuisine. £14

★Campbell House

Listening to the slow tick of the grandfather clock in the hall, you are in a different world from the boisterous traffic outside. A guide in Georgian costume will show you over the smallish house, and let you wander in the tiny herb garden outside. Look for the lead-lined wine cooler, the painted tin bath, and the travelling wash-stand.

★Casa Loma

Almost next to Spadina House, this millionaire's charmless folly is more impressive from a distance. But you can scamper through the rafters and up black metal spiral staircases for a fabulous view over the city.

★Ontario Science Centre

You don't need to be a science junkie to enjoy the hundreds of interactive exhibits on offer here. There is something for all ages, and the Science Arcade alone is worth the trip.

Shopping

Eaton Centre and PATH

The Eaton Centre – anchored by Sears department store – has more than 250 shops on four levels. It's also the northernmost access to

PATH – Toronto's extraordinary arrangement of linked underground malls and walkways (handy in the freezing winters). PATH takes you south to Union Station and west to the CN Tower, with links to the coach station, subways, and hotels. On the way, you can stop off for shopping, food, or an American back-rub.

Beneath First Canadian Place, on King Street West, shops are smarter. PATH also links to nearby BCE Place, designed by Spanish bridge-builder Calatrava, where you feel as if you are in the rib-cage of a giant dinosaur, and where the entire façade of the former Canadian Chamber of Commerce has been retained inside the mall.

Yorkville

Yorkville Avenue is the place for relaxed shopping. Atelier Grigorian at 70 Yorkville is a fine classical CD store; Muti (88 Yorkville) sells colourful Italian ceramics; while 125 Yorkville offers galleries, boutiques, and Inuit art. There's also the Cookbook Store at 850 Yonge Street.

Hazelton Lanes mall is on a small scale, arranged around a series of atria. Downstairs is the wholefood market, where you can buy organic cheese, three sorts of organic turkey, balsamic vinegar flavoured with figs, maple, or spices, organic bread, and olives. You can also fill hot or cold lunchboxes for a picnic.

Cumberland Street (just south of Yorkville Avenue) has a Japanese print shop and the Guild Shop selling Canadian crafts. The Village of Yorkville Park – a collection of rock and sculpture – is intended to show the variety of Ontario, but, unless carefully explained, its beauty tends to stay in the eye of the designer.

◀ Toronto's ethnic mix is evident in its diverse neighbourhoods

Bloor Street, immediately south of Yorkville, is home to several smart designer shops and the music shop Remyeni (210 Bloor West).



Queen Street West

West of University Avenue, Queen Street West is principally made up of low-rise shops and restaurants, lively in the evening. West of Bathurst Street Queen West supposedly becomes more chic and hip, but it is not noticeably different. On the north side is McBurnie and Cutler (second-hand books), Fluid Living (design shop), and the Red Indian Art Deco Shop.

Front Street East

A handsome parade of shops on the south side of Front Street includes Expressions (furniture, linen, and china), J Platt's rug shop, and the beautifully laid-out Hoare's bookshop. Across Jarvis Street, past the cool, modern Italinteriors, you reach St Lawrence Market, where you can buy 30 types of rice, durian jam, purple basil jelly, caviar, dolmades, and many types of pasta. To the north, up Leader Lane and right into Colborne Street, is the warehouse-like Baxter Building, housing an old-fashioned tailor and a useful daytime café. King Street East – east of Jarvis Street – has a collection of interior design stores.

Niagara

The impact of the Falls – tons of water falling precipitously within feet of you at street level, or seen from the spray-drenched deck of the *Maid of the Mist* – is unforgettable. Easy excursions from Toronto for around C\$70 are readily available; buffet lunch at a hotel with a Falls view can add another C\$50 but is not worth the extra.

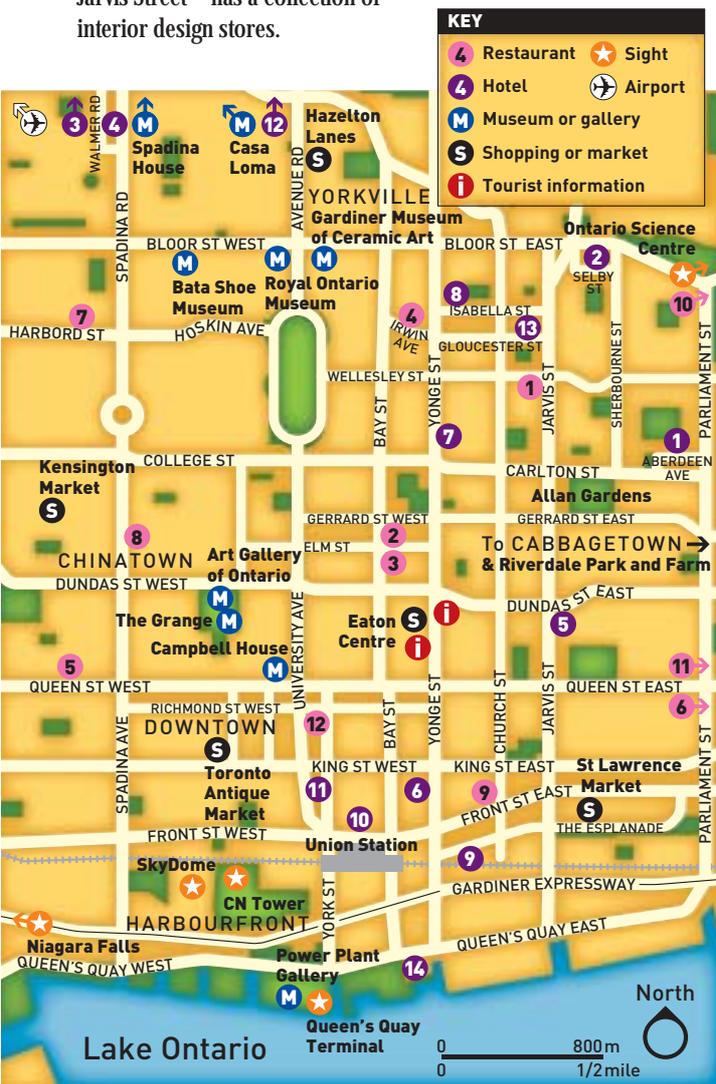
- If you prefer to go independently, Niagara Falls Town – one of the tackiest places on earth – is directly opposite the American Falls, and 90 minutes by Expressway from Toronto.

- From Niagara Falls Town take the superb river trip on the *Maid of the Mist* (no boat trips run from November to March). It heads towards the American Falls, and then turns right for the short journey upstream to the Canadian Falls, which carry 90% of the water. These have been eroded into a horseshoe shape, and the boat takes you just into the horseshoe (you are given blue plastic coveralls to avoid being drenched!).

- A short distance upriver from Niagara Falls Town is Table Rock, on a level with the Canadian Falls, where you can see the tons of water going over the precipice – a million gallons every five seconds. When the sun shines, you see rainbows through the water.
- Organised excursions usually include a ride on the *Maid of the Mist* and a visit to Table Rock, plus a stop at the not very interesting right-angled bend in the river, described as the world's biggest whirlpool. From near here you can, weather permitting, take a short helicopter flight over the Falls (C\$90).

- Many excursions head through opulent suburban countryside to the small, pretty town of Niagara on the Lake. The principal street has an old apothecary's shop – still as it was in 1863 – and a shop where you can taste the local ice wine, for a small charge.

- You can base yourself in Niagara on the Lake for a few days – there's plenty to explore in the huge area of parkland on the peninsula. Each summer the town holds a Shaw Theatre Festival.



GOOD PLACES TO STAY

Hotels tend to be large, serviceable, and bland. B&Bs in Cabbagetown are more individual. Prices are for the cheapest double room (single in brackets) in May 2004, including tax and breakfast. The dialling code from the UK is 00 1 416.

- 1 **ABERDEEN GUEST HOUSE** ☎ 922 5011 Traditional B&B located on quiet street in Cabbagetown. £61 (£42)
- 2 **AU PETIT PARIS** ☎ 928 1348 Newly renovated Victorian home with sunny, modern rooms. £52 (£38)
- 3 **CASA LOMA INN** ☎ 924 4540 Huge Victorian house with simple, traditional rooms. £61 (£38)
- 4 **COACH HOUSE** ☎ 899 0306 Imaginatively furnished rooms in calm, leafy haven. £70
- 5 **GRAND SUITES** ☎ 863 9000 Friendly staff, stylish rooms, central location. £93 (£68)
- 6 **HOTEL VICTORIA** ☎ 363 1666 Charming boutique hotel with immaculate rooms. £61 (£49)
- 7 **MARRIOTT COURTYARD** ☎ 924 0611 Large rooms, excellent facilities, contemporary décor. £70 (£52)
- 8 **MULBERRY TREE** ☎ 960 5249 Beautifully decorated B&B, with extremely friendly hosts. £46 (£37)
- 9 **NOVOTEL TORONTO CENTRE** ☎ 367 8900 Attractive hotel with modern rooms, close to harbour. £54 (£45)
- 10 **ROYAL YORK** ☎ 368 9040 Landmark hotel since 1929, luxurious and elegant. £145
- 11 **STRATHCONA** ☎ 363 3321 Recently renovated, with many original features retained. £51
- 12 **TORONTO DOWNTOWN** ☎ 921 3533 Sumptuous rooms, superb hospitality, and a choice of gourmet breakfasts. £46
- 13 **VICTORIA'S MANSION** ☎ 921 4625 Charming historic Victorian mansion with tastefully decorated rooms. £45 (£31)
- 14 **WESTIN HARBOUR CASTLE** ☎ 869 1600 Large, spacious rooms that overlook scenic waterfront. £112 (£71)