

Escape

Cosmopolitan culture, world-class shopping, sensational food — Toronto is . . .

by YORK
MEMBER

IT'S one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the Western world, bubbling with life and vitality. So it's no wonder Canadians regard Toronto as their own version of New York.

The city's British roots are still there, but with its gleaming high-rises, lakeside setting and sprawling financial district, it's a destination constantly re-inventing itself.

So even if you've been before, perhaps now is the time to start planning a visit. You may be in for a big surprise.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

THE landmark CN Tower may have dominated the city skyline since the 1970s and it's still the perfect place to start a tour. Standing 1,815ft high — though the super-fast elevator to the top takes just 58 seconds — it has spectacular views of the city and Lake Ontario. Thrill-seekers can do the EdgeWalk — where, in special suits and harnesses, you walk around the exposed top of the tower, 116 storeys above the ground.

STREETCAR COOL

ONE of Toronto's selling points is its system of streetcars (trams to you and me).

While most cities in the Canada and the U.S. ripped up their tram lines after World War II, Toronto invested in its network — and it's made for tourists as you can see a lot more from a streetcar than you can from a subway train.

The streetcars head as far west as funky Queen Street West, and as far east as The Beaches, a pretty neighbourhood with a lakeside boardwalk.

INTERNATIONAL CUISINE

COSMOPOLITAN Toronto — home to one of North America's biggest Chinatowns — has something to suit all tastes.

Try Skylight, the ninth-floor rooftop restaurant-bar at the W Toronto hotel, which has fabulous views. After a Violet Sky cocktail you can order everything from a grilled whole Canadian lobster to a 22oz Cowboy Steak.

Or check out Byblos, in the Entertainment District — a favourite of Hollywood stars during Toronto International Film Festival each September. The Eastern Mediterranean-style restaurant is famous for its *pides*, Lebanese-style pizzas.

But if you want quality pub grub, head for the Queen & Beaver pub

servicing beers from around the world. 'You've come a long way for a London Pride,' laughed the barman when I ordered a pint.

SARNIE TIME

IF YOU'RE a foodie, St Lawrence Market is a must. Its stalls sell a selection of meats, cheeses, bread and savoury snacks that reflect the city's diverse ethnic mix.

A lunch-time favourite is a peameal bacon sandwich (unsmoked back bacon rolled in cornmeal in a roll), created in the 1850s by an English immigrant. With a million Canadians being of Ukrainian descent, the stall with *pirogis* (dumplings) is busy, too.

Visit the Kensington Market area, too — a Chopsticks and Forks walking tour is a good way to try everything from Chilean empanadas to bagels with a Venezuelan-Jewish twist.

HIT THE SHOPS

THE huge Eaton Centre has more than 200 mainstream fashion brands, including Roots, the Canadian leisurewear chain. But

for stylish boutiques, it has to be Yorkville — which is home to high-end women's clothes stores like Kimina Fashion and 119 Corbo.

For something more left-field, try Ossington Avenue, acclaimed as one of the coolest streets in the world — thanks to its eclectic mix of shops such as Bang Bang, selling ice cream sandwiches, and Melanie Auld Jewelry, which welds bracelets around your wrist.

FAMILY FAVOURITES

FUN new attraction Little Canada is gradually recreating the entire country in miniature.

You can see scale models of Niagara's Horseshoe Falls, Ottawa's Parliament buildings and Quebec City.

A highlight of any teenager's visit is likely to be Canada's Wonderland theme park, with its monster rollercoasters, such as Leviathan and Yukon Striker.

LAUGHS APLENTY

A TRIP to one of the city's two Comedy Bar venues (one downtown, the other in east Toronto) is

Canada's bid to rival New York



Bright lights: Toronto's skyline. **Inset: Local lobster**

Pictures: GETTY, ALAMY

sure to put a smile on your face. These stage more than 150 shows of sketch, 'improv' and stand-up every month.

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

A POPULAR destination for Torontonians seeking to escape the city for a few days is Prince Edward County, a couple of hours' drive east, or a Via Rail train ride away (disembark at Belleville where you can hire a car).

'The County' is home to more than 30 wineries, and gives you the chance to experience a gentler, quieter side of Canada.

After visiting Sandbanks Provincial Park, enjoy lunch on the lakeside patio at the hip Drake Devonshire in Wellington. Then do a wine-tasting tour at Closson Chase

Vineyards. And for dinner, head to Flame + Smith, where the food is cooked on an open wood fire.

WHERE TO STAY

I STAYED at the modern King Blue Hotel in Toronto's entertainment district, which has a two-bed room from £183 plus tax (kingbluehotel.com).

A double room at the exclusive Bisha Hotel starts at £299 plus tax (bishahoteltoronto.com). Doubles at The Waring House, Prince Edward County, cost from £108 a night plus tax (waringhouse.com).

TRAVEL FACTS

RETURNS from London Heathrow to Toronto with Air Canada start from £235 (aircanada.com).

Over 50s Travel Insurance with Superior Coronavirus Cover

- ✓ Voted UK's No.1 for Customer Care²
- ✓ Up to £25k 'Superior' rated Covid Cancellation cover³
- ✓ 24/7 English speaking emergency medical helpline - up to £15m medical cover
- ✓ Trusted by millions for 20+ years



20%
OFF BASE
CODE DML20

AllClear™

Call our UK Call Centres FREE
0800 848 8611

AllClearTravel.co.uk

payingtoomuch

Price comparison without the guesswork

Compare Great Value Travel Insurance!

- ✓ Over 1,300 medical conditions covered
- ✓ Compare over 45 trusted cover options
- ✓ Quick & easy price comparison tool
- ✓ Zero Excess on selected policies
- ✓ Over 40,000 5 star Trustpilot reviews



Call FREE **0800 069 6175**

payingtoomuch.com

* Discount applies to base premium of AllClear branded policies only. Discount expires at 23:59 on 06/02/23. ² Based on The British Insurance Awards 2021. ³ COVID cover rated Superior by a leading independent UK Consumer Champion. COVID cancellation and curtailment cover only available on AllClear branded products. Remember to check the policy documents for each product for full details of cover. For more information please refer to T&Cs at allcleartravel.co.uk

Policies vary in benefits, cover limits, excess and price depending on provider chosen. Terms, conditions and exclusions apply.