



Essentials

Location: Canada's largest city spreads along the north shore of Lake Ontario at about the same latitude as the French Riviera. A relatively flat city, Toronto, like most of southern Ontario, sits on a slope of sedimentary rock but is cut by several deep ravines that lead to Lake Ontario. It stretches 43 km east to west, covers 641 sq. km and takes in 138 km of the meandering lakeshore. Its northern border is Steeles Avenue, about 21 km north of the water.

Origin of Name: "Toronto" evolved from the Iroquois word *tkaronto*, or "place where trees stand in water." It was originally applied to the narrow south end of Lake Simcoe, where aboriginal peoples built fishing weirs. In the early 1720s, the French brought the name south along the traditional aboriginal canoe route and gave it to their fort near the mouth of the Humber River. By 1765 Toronto was appearing on English maps. Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe renamed the young settlement York in 1793, but Toronto was officially re-adopted by popular demand in 1834. Torontonians pronounce the name "Tronno" or "Tuhronna," not "Toe-**RON**-toe."

Provincial Capital: Toronto began serving as the capital of Upper Canada in 1793 when the previous capital, Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake), was considered geographically vulnerable to the new Republic to the south. Governor Simcoe ordered the move to York. Toronto (its first name had by then been restored) became Ontario's capital when Canada was formed in 1867.

Toronto Amalgamation: In 1998, amalgamation merged the former Regional Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto with the former suburb cities of Scarborough, East York, York, North York and Etobicoke. The latter are now known as the “inner suburbs,” and the whole “new” city is sometimes referred to as “the megacity.”

The GTA: The Greater Toronto Area includes the megacity plus the Region of Durham (including the communities of Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax, Pickering, Brock, Scugog, Uxbridge and Clarington), the Region of Peel (Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga), Halton Region (Burlington, Halton Hills, Oakville and Milton) and York Region (Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Markham, Newmarket, King, Georgina, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville). Collectively they are known by their nicknames, which include “the 905,” “the Golden Horseshoe” and the “outer suburbs.”

CMA: Toronto CMA (Census Metropolitan Area) refers to the municipalities considered by Statistics Canada “to have a high degree of integration with the City of Toronto, as measured by commuting flows derived from census place of work data.” The CMA is slightly smaller than the GTA and comprises the City of Toronto plus 23 other municipalities: Ajax, Aurora, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Brampton, Caledon, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Georgina Island, Halton Hills, King Township, Markham, Milton, Mississauga, Mono Township, Newmarket, Tecumseth, Oakville, Orangeville, Pickering, Richmond Hill, Uxbridge, Whitchurch-Stouffville and Vaughan.

Nicknames: Muddy York, Hog Town, T.O. (pronounced “tee-oh”), the Big Smoke, Hollywood North, T-dot, the 416, Toronto the Good and the Megacity.

Licence Plate: Torontonians use Ontario licence plates but can buy vanity plates emblazoned with the graphics of the University of Toronto or the Toronto Scottish Regiment, or the logos of the Toronto Blue Jays, Raptors, Maple Leafs and Argonauts.

Motto: “Diversity Our Strength,” adopted in 1998 following the creation of the new City of Toronto.

Coat of Arms: Created for the new City of Toronto in 1998, it features a honeycomb, a columbine flower, green grass and three rivers, plus a beaver, a bear and an eagle.

City Flag: Today’s city flag is a slight modification of one designed in 1974 by Renato De Santis, then a 21-year-old George Brown College student, for the old City of Toronto. It shows white stylized City Hall office towers on a blue background. A red maple leaf, representing the council chambers, sits at the towers’ base.

Incorporation as a City: 1834

Time Zone: Eastern

Area Codes: The Greater Toronto Area is served by seven area codes. The original area code was (416). In 1993 the City of Toronto took over (416) and the GTA was given (905); outer regions such as Durham and York were handed the already in use (705) and Halton and Peel the already in use (519). In 2001 (647) was added to supplement the (416) area code and (289) to supplement the (905) area code. Finally, to supplement the (519) area code, (226) was assigned.

Postal Code Span: M1B to M9W

Statutory Holidays: New Year's Day (Jan. 1), Family Day (third Monday in February), Good Friday (Friday before Easter), Victoria Day (Monday before May 25), Canada Day (July 1), Labour Day (first Monday in September), Thanksgiving (second Monday in October), Christmas Day (Dec. 25) and Boxing Day (Dec. 26).

System of Measurement: Metric

Driving Age: 16

Voting Age: 18

TAKE 5 TRACING THE ROOTS OF FIVE TORONTO NICKNAMES

1. **Muddy York:** A description of the weather's effect on the unpaved streets old York.
2. **Hogtown:** This is an 1800s' reference to the large volume of live-stock, particularly pigs, processed by Toronto-area abattoirs. A modern play on words, used especially in summer when air pollution hangs over the hot city, is "Smogtown."
3. **The Big Smoke:** Similar to London, England, "the Big Smoke" is a reference to the smog and pollution created by the industrialization of the city in the 19th century. The name is widely believed to have been brought over by British immigrants.
4. **Hollywood North:** Toronto has the third-largest film industry in North America, behind Los Angeles and New York City.
5. **T.O.:** Short for Toronto, Ontario, but recently losing ground to "T-Dot."

TAKE 5 JANE PYPER'S FIVE

ESSENTIAL TORONTO BOOKS

The Toronto Public Library (TPL) is the world's busiest urban public-library system. More than 16 million people visit its 99 branches each year, borrowing more than 29 million items. Its chief librarian, Jane Pyper, has this to say about it: "Our beautiful branches and experienced staff offer safe, welcoming, accessible spaces and services to residents of Toronto, no matter who they are or where they come from." Pyper was part of the management team that merged the city's public libraries following the creation of the megacity. "Toronto is exciting and dynamic, with so much to offer," she says, "just like its library system."

1. ***uTOpia: Towards a New Toronto*** edited by Alana Wilcox (2005). Featuring passionate visionary essays by 34 journalists, artists, thinkers, architects and activists, uTOpia is a compendium of ideas, opinions and strategies on how to achieve a transformed Toronto.

2. ***Historical Atlas of Toronto*** by Derek Hayes (2008). Renowned historian Hayes brings Toronto's colourful past to life through stunning maps, rare historical documents and rich stories.

3. ***Toronto: No Mean City*** by Eric Arthur (1986). First published in 1964, this book sparked the preservation movement of the 1960s and '70s. As Christopher Hume wrote in the 1986 edition, "Arthur's book has become an essential feature on the intellectual landscape of Toronto."

4. ***In the Skin of a Lion*** by Michael Ondaatje (1987). Ondaatje entwines adventure, romance and history, real and invented, enmeshing us in the lives of the immigrants who built Toronto and those who dreamed it into being.

5. ***Cat's Eye*** by Margaret Atwood (1988). A painter's return to Toronto triggers reminiscences about the complex and cruel friendships of her youth. Atwood's novel, which provides a vivid picture of Toronto in the 1940s and '50s, shows how dramatically the city had changed by the '80s.

You Know You're From

- Finding a great parking spot can move you to tears.
- You can recommend three reputable body-piercing parlours.
- You think northern Ontario starts at Barrie.
- Despite the 1997 amalgamation, you still use "Scarborough," "Etobicoke" and "North York" in your address.
- When the temperature rises to 5°C you yell, "Woohoo! Patio weather!"
- You haven't been to the CN Tower since you were six but still have nightmares about the turbo elevator.
- You've had at least three bicycles stolen in the past 10 years (you got two of them back when Igor Kenk was arrested).
- You never, ever swim in Lake Ontario.
- You know The Beaches are really called The Beach, but you still say The Beaches to annoy anyone who lives there.
- You've had a birthday party at the Organ Grinder, Spaghetti Factory or The Mad Hatter.
- You couldn't say where Fort York is but you have a vague recollection of having been there in a past life.
- You consider eye contact on the street, subway or streetcar a sign of hostility and an invasion of privacy.
- If it takes you half an hour to get to work by TTC, you are the envy of all your friends.
- You laugh if you hear someone refer to "highway four hundred and one."
- You know that Russell Oliver pays cold hard cash for your used gold and diamonds.
- When you got your first cellphone you thought they were giving you a Barrie number because the area code was 647, not 416.
- They will always be the Skydome, Dundas Square, O'Keefe Centre and Pantages Theatre to you, no matter how many times the names get sold.
- You went clubbing downtown and you were pulled over by a cop on a horse.
- You've been on Speakers' Corner.
- Cito Gaston's return to the Jays made you feel warm and fuzzy.
- You know what the PATH is and can find your way around it.

Toronto When . . .

- You know who can beat Bad Boy furniture's prices: "Noooooobody!"
- You remember looking all over for the "millennium moose"—a painted "art moose" distributed in several locations across the city.
- You live in Little Italy but have Jamaican neighbours on one side and Iranians on the other.
- You gripe about spending 30 minutes on the DVP to get to work but think nothing of spending two hours on the 400 to go to the cottage.
- You eat different ethnic food every night.
- You know the only people talking in an elevator are on their cell-phones.
- You don't know the difference between North Bay and Thunder Bay, but you're pretty sure they're both north of Barrie.
- Everyone you know comes from somewhere else.
- You still think baseball was better when it was played in the snow at Exhibition Stadium.
- You know that to see more than three million people in one place in Toronto you have to go to the Pride Day parade, Caribana or the Santa Claus parade.
- You've been to one of the Rolling Stones' secret concerts.
- You take your kids to High Park or the Toronto Islands so that they can experience nature.
- You believe the Leafs can win the Stanley Cup (and dream you will live to see it).
- You were publicly embarrassed when Mel Lastman called in the army to help with snow removal but privately ecstatic when your street was cleared.
- You only visit the CN Tower, the ROM, the zoo or Casa Loma when you have out-of-town visitors.
- You know the correct answer to "Where do shopping carts go to die?" is "The Don River."
- You know where you were during the 2003 Northeast Blackout.
- You would rather Take The Car than the TTC.
- You leave Toronto and realize how great it is.

Drinking Age: 19

Partnership Cities: Chongqing, China; Chicago, U.S.; Frankfurt, Germany; Milan, Italy.

Friendship Cities: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Sagamihara, Japan; Quito, Ecuador; Warsaw, Poland; Kiev, Ukraine.

Leafs Nation

The Toronto Maple Leafs are the ongoing soap opera against which all other activities in the city play. Last-place teams, recessions, insane ownership regimes, nine-dollar beer and five-dollar bottles of water have failed to dim demand for tickets that start at \$200—and that's if you can get them at all, which of course you often can't. The team defies economic logic, an insolvable problem on which university students write doctoral theses. The Leafs are one of the worst franchises in the league but at the same time the team with the highest valuation.

For members of the Leafs Nation, the past—for the moment, at least—shines with a much brighter light than the future. There is so much to look back upon; the heartbreak is that it was so long ago, the last golden era of Leafs hockey was from 1962–67, when the team captured four Stanley Cups, three of them consecutively. (If you were 10 years old when you saw the Leafs win Lord Stanley's mug in 1967, you are approaching your mid-fifties now.) In 1967 Montreal had won 14 cups to Toronto's 13; today Montreal has captured 24 Stanley Cups.

To give you a measure of exactly how far the Leafs' bar has been lowered, consider the fact that the team's 1992–93 play-off

POPULATION

Toronto is the fifth largest city by population in North America and the 48th largest urban region in the world. Its population of 2,503,285 makes it the largest city in Canada. Toronto has 21.6 percent of the Ontario's 12,160,282 people. A provincial government study predicts the population of Toronto will increase to 3.06 million by 2031, a 16 percent growth rate.

run was the closest sniff since 1967. That year the Leafs took the Gretzky-led Kings to seven games in the semis. That's right, it was the semis, but Doug Gilmour's play during that series has immortalized him forever in the minds of Leafs fans.

For the Leafs Nation, however, there is always a new day, a new owner or general manager that becomes the latest fix. The latest general manager, Brian Burke, has rightly mused publicly that should he be able to hand Leafs fans a Stanley Cup, schools will be named for him. He's right, of course.

It would be a stretch to say there is something mythical about the Leafs, but it would not be out of place to say there is something special. There are large tracts of devout Leafs fans everywhere, from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island. Parents across the country have bequeathed their teams to their children and so on down the line. And the great Leafs diaspora is such that a Leafs game guarantees sell-outs in every rink in the country.

Leafs fans are nothing if not optimistic. They know, like Chicago Cubs fans do, that there will be a day of reckoning. The sun will shine, the Cup will return home and be welcomed like a prodigal son, no questions asked.

TAKE 5 GEOFFREY JAMES' FIVE TORONTO SPECIAL PLACES

Celebrated photographer Geoffrey James, a Welshman by birth, has been interpreting the city through the camera lens since the 1970s. His book *Toronto* (published 2006 in collaboration with writer Mark Kingwell) celebrates his adopted city in 100 images. "Utopia/Dystopia," a retrospective of his work, was held at the National Gallery of Canada in 2008.

Although I travel frequently, I am not a dutiful tourist. I prefer to stay in one place for some time, and enjoy the daily rhythms of a new world, but not necessarily try to take in all the official sights. Before I moved to Toronto thirteen years ago, I confess to having seen it as less a tourist destination than as a place to do journalistic tasks, including a couple of commissions to photograph the city. When I settled here, I decided to photograph Toronto for myself, in an effort to learn about it, and to come to terms with its sometimes elusive civic personality.

Three years of photographing resulted in a book that I like to think of as a portrait of a friend who is not perfect. My list of what to photograph avoids the usual Chamber of Commerce things – the easily-branded engines of tourism, such as our recently refurbished museums, or the CN Tower, which exists in a space that perfectly reflects the sociopathic tendencies of large corporations. What follows are peculiarly, and wonderfully, Toronto places.

1. **Ward's Island** is a short ferry ride from Toronto's strangely bland waterfront, a funky collection of cottages – homesteads really – nestled among the trees. Being there is like going back to the Sixties, and on a summer evening the city across the water glows magically and emits an electrifying basso profundo hum.
2. **The University of Toronto St. George Campus** has many virtues – including doing no harm on its fringes the way many campuses do with fast-food outlets and ratty frat houses. It has a great variety of spaces and buildings, and in recent years has become an exemplary

anthology of contemporary architecture. My favourite is Diamond & Schmitt's Bahen Centre for Information Technology on St. George Street, which artfully hides its considerable bulk behind a façade that wraps around one of the city's handsome yellow-brick houses. It is one of those rare modern buildings that successfully uses decoration, and its southern façade, when viewed from College Street, is as satisfying as something by Borromini.

3. **The Bain Housing Co-Op**, which stretches out on both sides of a Sycamore-lined street of the same name in the east end, was built in 1914 and is Toronto's first experiment with social housing. The houses open onto courtyards, and in the summer the back lanes are a riot of vegetation. In a city that often welcomes you with folded arms, the mood here is always friendly. It is the closest thing to Utopia that I have found in Toronto.

4. Further east, the **R.C. Harris Water Purification Plant**, between Queen Street and Lake Ontario, is Toronto's greatest public work, a fabulous '30s Art Deco palace that was built to last. Michael Ondaatje mythologized both it and its maker in *The Skin of the Lion*. It is currently being modified, but remains a reminder of the pleasures of anything done very well. Canadians, as the poet and lawyer Frank Scott once said, tend never to do anything by halves that they can do by quarters.

5. I must confess to never having gone inside the **Spadina Museum**, the home that William Warren Baldwin built in early 19th century outside and above the Town of York. Nowadays the house is next to the absurd millionaire pile known as Casa Loma, and on the edge of prosperous Forest Hill. I go for the grounds – wonderful chestnut and maple trees, a fabulous kitchen garden and orchard. It is good in every season, and whenever I feel the need to photograph a tree, I head up the hill to Mr. Baldwin's mansion.

POPULATION IN PERSPECTIVE

Toronto	2,503,285
Montreal	1,620,693
Vancouver	1,986,965
Calgary	988,193
Ottawa	812,129

Source: Statistics Canada

TAKE 5 JOHN ROBERT COLOMBO'S TOP FIVE QUIPS AND QUOTES ABOUT TORONTO

John Robert Colombo is known as “the master gatherer” for his compilations of *Canadiana*. A long-time resident of North York in Toronto, he has written, compiled or translated 200 books, including *The Toronto Puzzle Book* and *Haunted Toronto*.

1. *“Toronto is a clean idea between two dirty rivers.”*
— Harold Town, artist (1960)
2. *“If you’re born in a city like London or Paris, you know you were born to one of the oldest cultures in the world. If you’re born in a city like New York, you know you were born to be one of the kings of the world. But if you’re born in Toronto—that’s destiny.”*
— Moses Znaimer, media personality (1984)
3. *“Toronto is a kind of New York operated by the Swiss.”*
— Peter Ustinov, theatre personality (1987)
4. *“Cheer up! You have drawn a second prize, I would say, in the Lottario of Life.”*
— Jan Morris, travel writer (1990)
5. *“Even though it’s lost its raison d’être, it’s still incredibly comfortable.”*
— Tyler Brûlé, editor and socialite (2008)

TAKE 5 TOP FIVE VISIBLE MINORITY GROUPS IN TORONTO

1. **South Asian:** 12 percent
2. **Chinese:** 11.4 percent
3. **Black:** 8.4 percent
4. **Filipino:** 4.1 percent
5. **Latin American:** 2.6 percent

Source: Statistics Canada and City of Toronto

POPULATION DENSITY (PEOPLE/SQ. KM)

Montreal	4,438.7
Toronto	3,972.4
Edmonton	1,067.2
New York City	10,194.2
Ontario	22.3
Canada	3.3

IMMIGRATION/DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Between 2001 and 2006, more than a quarter of a million (267,855) new immigrants moved to Toronto. In 2005 alone, 58,255 new immigrants arrived and the city grew a further 11,020, as people moved to Toronto from another Canadian province or territory.

BOYS AND GIRLS

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-14	210,505	199,115	409,620
15-64	845,305	894,900	1,740,205
65+	149,560	203,885	353,445

Did you know . . .

that almost half of the people living in Toronto were not yet born when the Maple Leafs last won the Stanley Cup?

TAKE 5 TORONTO'S TOP FIVE MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

1. Chinese
2. Italian
3. Punjabi
4. Spanish
5. Portuguese

Source: Statistics Canada

POPULATION BY AGE

In 2006, 83.6 percent of Torontonians were older than 15, slightly higher than the average for the province (81.8 percent). The median age in the city was 38.4, just under Ontario's median age of 39.

MEDIAN AGE

- Men: 37.4
- Women: 39.3

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Men	Ontario: 75	Canada: 77.7
Women	Ontario: 81	Canada: 82.5
Fertility rate	Ontario: 1.5	Canada: 1.5

Did you know. . .

that Henrietta Lane near Church and Front streets was the hub of prostitution in the early 1800s? The brothels were close to the harbour, convenient for anyone travelling to or from York.

They said it

"It may be a cliché to say that Toronto is a city of neighbourhoods, but it is one of very few great world cities that really does still have neighbourhoods, where people of different classes and ethnicities can mix and mingle, and where neighbourhood shopping districts are not overwhelmed by chains."

– Richard Florida, in *Toronto: A City Becoming*

CRADLE TO GRAVE

Births (yearly 2007-08)	Ontario: 136,217	Canada: 364,085
Birth rate Toronto: 11.5	Ontario: 10.6	Canada: 10.5
Deaths (yearly 2007-08)	Ontario: 88,680	Canada: 237,202
Death rate Toronto: 5.5	Ontario: 7.1	Canada: 7.3

ON A TYPICAL DAY IN TORONTO . . .

- 82 babies are born
- 49 people die

FAMILY STRUCTURE

- Percentage of families that are married couples: 69
- Common-law families: 9
- Female lone-parent families: 19
- Male lone-parent families: 3
- Average number of people per family: 3

Source: *Statistics Canada*

Did you know. . .

that Toronto is ranked No. 1 in North America for Best Quality of Life and Top City Region of the Future by *FDI Magazine*, and ranked second in North America and 15th worldwide in the 2008 Mercer Human Resources Quality of Living survey?

They said it

"But we [as Torontonians] don't always think of the city in global terms. I think we have a combination of pride and a sort of Canadian humility. I'm proud to say it and I don't feel that I have to apologize for some little burb I came from: I'm from Toronto."

– Scarborough-born actor Eric McCormack,
star of the hit show *Will and Grace*

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (PERCENTAGE)

Catholic: 31.4

Protestant: 21.2

Other Christian: 3.9

Christian Orthodox: 4.9

Buddhist: 2.7

Muslim: 6.7

Hindu: 4.9

Jewish: 4.2

Eastern religions: 0.2

Sikh: 0.9

Other religions: 0.1

None: 18.9

Source: Statistics Canada.

LANGUAGE (PERCENTAGE)

- English only: 64.4
- French only: 0.5
- Non-official language: 31.1

Source: Statistics Canada

STUDENTS ENROLLED

Universities: 147,676

Colleges (provincial): 218,753

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Toronto District School Board: 284,000 (includes adults)
- Toronto Catholic District School Board: 91,675
- Conseil scolaire de district du Centre-Sud-Ouest (French Public Board): 2,524
- Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud (French Catholic): 1,800

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Physicians – 7,325

Pharmacists – 3,565 **

Dentists – 2,296

Nurses – 18,254 ***

** includes Mississauga

*** includes 15,612 registered nurses, 2,562 registered practical nurses and 80 nurse practitioners. These statistics are for Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) only.

CANADIAN COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY

(Percentage of respondents who...)

	Toronto	Ontario	Canada
Are overweight	29.5	33.3	33.3
Are physically active	44.1	50	50.4
See a doctor regularly	82	81.1	80
Smoke regularly	19.7	22.1	22.9

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey

Did you know. . .

that you can find seven cities called Toronto in the U.S. and one in Australia?

They said it

"These scenes have afforded me so much delight that I class this day with those in which I remember to have felt the greatest pleasure from fine objects, whether of Art or Nature."

– Elizabeth Simcoe on her new home in Upper Canada (April 23, 1793)

COMMUNICATIONS

Daily: *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Sun*, *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Metro*, 24

Weekly: *Now*, *Eye*, *The Epoch Times*, and nine weekly neighbourhood-based Metroland papers; *Xtra* and *FAB* magazines (for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gendered community)

Ethnic: 79 ethnic newspapers/magazines, including *Share* (Canada's largest ethnic newspaper) and *Sing Tao* (a Chinese-language daily newspaper)

Business: Approximately 400 business periodicals

TV/cable broadcasting source stations: Close to a dozen TV stations

AM/FM radio stations: Just under 30

They said it

"The City is prosperous and there is a strong community feeling which has manifested itself in the municipal ownership of transportation, light and power systems, water works and other public services. The citizens take pride in the splendid condition of their city, its clean well-lighted streets and boulevards and its fine parks and recreation centres."

– 1927 report from then Commissioner of Finance George Ross

Weblinks

City of Toronto

www.toronto.ca

This website has lots of useful information for both residents and visitors, including history, news, local services, cultural and other events and political happenings.

Toronto.com Be in the Know

www.toronto.com

Owned by the *Toronto Star*, this website provides information about entertainment, dining, events, movies and more. It also has great contests.

blogTO

www.blogto.com

A comprehensive blog, part of the Fresh Daily Network, that updates readers on happenings in the city's political, cultural and community arenas.