Make / Design / Shoot in Toronto
Toronto has been dubbed the cultural hub of Canada, and for good reason - approximately one quarter of all the creative-industry jobs currently available in Canada are located in our “big apple” of the North. It comes as no surprise then that thousands of creative professionals flock to Toronto annually, to either get their big break or to simply become a part of the creative process. Fortunately, Toronto has everything a creative professional could ever need.
In This Guide

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Get Inspired

Not sure where to start for your inspiration? Why not at the top. Toronto is privileged enough to house some world-famous art galleries and museums, such as the ROM and the AGO – and the list of acronyms only goes on from there.

It is also worth mentioning that Toronto has dozens of smaller, yet highly esteemed, art galleries beyond the ones shown on this list. The best inspiration often comes from a new discovery, so take a walk in the Art and Design District, the Distillery District or the Fashion District and see what's around.

Places to visit

- The Royal Ontario Museum
- The Art Gallery of Ontario
- #Hashtag Gallery
- LE Gallery
- The Stephen Bulger Gallery

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Get Equipped

Have an idea for your next project but not sure how to materialize it? Drop by any of these downtown vendor’s to pick up or rent equipment, ask questions, or just browse around for inspiration.

Art Supplies Stores

Above Ground Art Supplies
Woolfitt’s
DeSerres
Toose
Curry’s

Photography Supplies Stores

Downtown Camera
Henry’s
Vistek
Film Plus

Film-Developing Stores

Toronto Image Works
Downtown Camera
Annex Photo
Pikto
Elevator Digital

One of a kind - the Toronto Tool Library: Taking a page out of its distant cousin’s book (no books were actually harmed in the making of this sentence), the Tool Library, which members can use to “check out” tools, has become a powerful resource for the artistic community.

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Whether you’re interested in starting or continuing your professional education, Toronto has some world-renowned colleges and universities for the arts available right in the heart of the city.

**OCAD University:** True to its title as Canada’s “university of the imagination”, OCAD U is located within walking distance to the Art Gallery of Ontario. The university offers a range of arts-based program studies, all of which lead to either a BFA, BDes, MA, MFA or MDes.

**Humber College:** Offering a wide variety of programs, including Graphic Design, Photography, and Visual Arts, Humber is one of only five colleges in Ontario named by the Canadian government as an Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.

**Ryerson University:** Known as the leader of innovation, and located centrally downtown, Ryerson University offers over 100 undergraduate programs alone to choose from, including Architecture, Fashion Design, and Photography.

**George Brown College:** With several campus locations within the core of Toronto, George Brown offers a number of programs with field education components – jump right into a number of in-demand arts and tech industry jobs even before graduation.
Where to (Co)Work

Working out of a cowork space is often the best solution for start-ups and freelancers. Memberships allow you use of lounges, wifi, boardrooms, and storage spaces – all the facilities you need to run your business. But, sometimes you just need a good place to get away to for an afternoon – or an evening – for a cup of coffee.

Above all else:

**Wireless Toronto:** a website devoted to providing its users with a comprehensive list of free-wifi hotspots in the area – which is ideal when you need to find a remote work location, or a change of scenery.
Where to Stay

Toronto offers many cost-effective housing solutions for short-term stays in the city. And, if you’ve decided you’re in this for the long haul, deciding where to settle in Toronto is a big decision – this city is comprised of many different neighbourhoods that can sometimes feel worlds apart.

Dorm-housing is also available from The University of Toronto and Ryerson University during the summer months (May – August) and operates very similarly to that of the guest houses. Or, you can go for that “home away from home” feel.
Getting Around

Toronto can seem a confusing place, particularly if you’re unfamiliar with your bearings – or more realistically, if you’re unfamiliar with just how much physical space is actually considered “Toronto”. While walking can be the best choice for your health and for the environment, it’s not always the best choice for long treks. So, here’s a quick guide that will help you make it to where you’re going on time:

**Toronto Transit Commission (TTC):** Our public transit system is comprised of subways, buses, and streetcars that help you get from one place to another. Travel fare is $3, or you can purchase TTC “tokens” ahead of time.

**Taxi:** Our taxi options are becoming increasingly more varied – instead of just hailing a cab on a street corner, you also can download the smartphone app for such companies as Uber or Hailo that allows you to request, and pay for, a cab all from the touch of a button.

**Zip Cars / Car2Go:** Owning a car might be out of the question - but the convenience of one is definitely not. Services like Zip Car or Car2Go work on a membership-based car “borrowing” system that allows you to reserve a car for a set period of time, with gas and insurance included in the fee.

**BIXI Bikes:** Ideal for short trips, BIXI Bikes run on either one-off fares or subscription fees (worthwhile to look into if you use them frequently) that allow you to pick up a bike at one location and drop it off at another at the end of your trip.
Stop for the Essentials

Whether you’re in it for the short or long haul, everyone needs to eat. And bathe. And brush their teeth (we hope). But, with all the other sights to see in Toronto, who has time to find a supermarket? Refer to our list below for where to go for day-to-day basics and essentials (or shop online).

Grocery Stores

- Whole Foods Market
  87 Avenue Rd
  (416) 944-0500

- Longo’s
  15 York St
  (416) 366-1717

- Yonge Pharmacy
  159 Yonge St
  (416) 603-4888

Pharmacies / Personal Supplies

- Shopper’s Drug Mart
  465 Yonge St
  (416) 408-4000 [24 hrs]

- Metro
  444 Yonge St
  (416) 597-2800 [24 hrs]

- Rexall Pharma Plus
  63 Wellesley Street E
  (416) 924-7760

- Sobeys
  197 Front St E
  (416) 364-7627 [24 hrs]
Get Your Greens

Even if you are a city-guy or gal through and through, there’s still much to appreciate about the country – in moderation of course. So, why not stop by one of Toronto’s farmer’s markets and take in more than just a slice of homemade pie? Here’s a list of some farmer’s markets where you can get your fresh food fix:

- **Dufferin Grove**
  - 875 Dufferin St
  - (416) 392-0913
  - (year round)

- **The Stop Farmer’s Market**
  - 601 Christie St
  - (416) 651-7867 ext. 24.
  - (year round)

- **Liberty Village Farmer’s Market**
  - 34 Hanna Ave
  - (416) 520-0779
  - (opens in June)

- **Withrow Park Farmer’s Market**
  - 725 Logan Ave
  - (416) 461-2825 (opens in May)

- **St. Lawrence Market**
  - 92 - 95 Front St E
  - (416) 392-7120 (year round)
Online Communities

For native- and honorary-Torontonians alike, getting involved online can get rid of the guess-work of familiarizing yourself with the city and its creative communities. Since Toronto is such a tech-oriented city, much of its news first circulates through general word-of-mouth via social media and blogs.

Helpful Sites to Bookmark

BlogTO
The Grid TO
Toronto on Twitter
NOW Magazine
Toronto Standard
Toronto Life
Offline Communities

Toronto also offers many arts-based communities where members can meet up in real life, work on projects, and take advantage of the various resources made available through the organization.

| HacklabTO: Are you a techie? A designer? An artist with a geeky side? All are welcome to join and use the 24-hour facilities, which includes project-space, storage, full WiFi, and the use of their many tools (both electronic and otherwise). |
| Site3: Site3 offers a shop-space for its members, as well as an upstairs space available for rental, for all things art and/or technology. Site3 also hosts weekly and monthly events you might not have even known you’d be interested in, such as Laser Training. |
| Gallery 44: Gallery 44 is a membership-based community for photographers and artists alike, with its facilities prominently boasting their non-commercial darkroom facilities as well as the availability of equipment rentals and exhibition space. |
| Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT): provides various film resources and services at a more affordable rate, including equipment and facilities, workshops and courses, artist-residences and exhibition space. Also unique to LIFT is their yearly international artist residency, which showcases the work of Non-Canadian film artists specifically. |

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Art collectives and rental spaces allow you to devote a space entirely to your creative process, and often help you gain exposure as an artist. Below is a list of some places you might want to consider making your second home while working in Toronto.

- **Rental & Exhibition Space**
  - **401 Richmond:** With its tenants ranging from galleries to studios to businesses each with their own exhibitions, festivals and workshops, if you can imagine it there’s a good chance that you can find it at 401. The stunning roof-top garden and year-round greenhouse is just an added bonus to this ultimate art destination.
  - **The White House Studio:** Found within the heart of Kensington market, the WHS offers both solo and community workspaces for members, but looks to showcase all works of contemporary art by hosting members as well as outside artists in their exhibition space.
  - **Loop Gallery:** Located at Dundas and Dovercourt, Loop Gallery serves to “increase profiles in the Toronto art scene” – through membership and usual volunteer obligations (a collective can’t run itself after all), all artists are guaranteed one two-person exhibition within each term.
  - **AKIN Collective:** With two separate studios located off of both Dufferin and Lansdowne, AKIN offers artists both a space and spotlight in the artistic community. Members get to participate in art critiques and open workshops, and a space in the online AKIN gallery.
  - **Interaccess:** Interaccess is an arts collective that actively seeks to support and showcase “interdisciplinary methods” of creation, exclusively within electronic media. Members have access to studio and storage space, as well as equipment and event space rentals.
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Mix’n’Mingle

Spending time with like-minded individuals can sometimes be all the creative inspiration (or motivation) that you need to get started on what you love. Check out some of these artsy hangouts while you’re in Toronto, then arrange your own meet-up on [http://www.speakeasyto.com/](http://www.speakeasyto.com/) or [http://www.meetup.com/](http://www.meetup.com/), or make some new friends just by being a part of the same crowd.

**Kensington Market:** An area in Toronto where the culture is distinctly “counter-culture”, the neighbourhood and surroundings are as interesting as the shops and art galleries that make it up.

**Drake Hotel:** Part hotel, part art project, the Drake has become somewhat of an underground hangout for the city’s artistically-inclined. The combination of a bar/lounge with art exhibits helps to get all sorts of creative juices flowing.

**Trinity Bellwoods Park:** When summer hits, cool off at beautiful Trinity Bellwoods Park and take in some of its live music, theatre, or the tons of other cultural/arts-based events. Come visit Trinity Bellwoods again in the fall, when it becomes home to the annual Queen West Art Crawl.

**Gladstone Hotel:** A renovated hotel that currently acts as a “live-in art exhibit” with all the rooms having been designed and decorated according to a unique artist’s vision. Often, social events geared towards the artistic community are hosted here, such as drawing classes or concerts.

**The Power Plant:** Specializing in contemporary art, the Power Plant showcases exhibits, welcomes guest lecturers, and hosts film screenings - all moments away from Toronto’s spectacular waterfront.

**99 Sudbury:** Despite undergoing many name-changes and face-lifts, 99 Sudbury has now become a steadfast fixture in the Arts community. With 99 Sudbury comes 99 MRKT - their weekly summer take on the traditional farmer’s market, but with live music and a liquor license.
Wet Your Whistle

Whether you'll be hanging out with friends or just need a new source of creative inspiration - who are we to judge? Either way, here’s the lowdown on where to go to get your alcoholic-beverage fix. Don’t care where you’re headed as long as the drinks are cheap? Bookmark this site (or download the app) and see where the night takes you.

**LCBO** is a province-wide retail store that deals exclusively with selling wine, beer, and liquor.

**The Beer Store:** Privately owned chain of retail stores that sells, as it suggests, only beer.

**The Wine Rack:** No need to wine – there’s over 160 locations throughout Ontario for your convenience.
Live Music

There’s nothing quite like live music and dim lighting that really brings together creatively-inclined or “artsy” individuals – fortunately for you, Toronto has a well-known penchant for the cultivation, conservation, and celebration of the music scene. From internationally-acclaimed artists to that up-and-coming band of your cousin’s, chances are you’ll have heard them play here in Toronto first, and maybe even at some of these popular downtown venues:

Wrongbar
1279 Queen St W
(416) 618-3049
Cover is ~$10, upwards of $20+ depending on who’s playing.

Sneaky Dee’s
431 College St
(416) 603-3090
Varies between $5-$10 cover, depending on the event being hosted.

Drake Underground
1150 Queen St W
(416) 531-5042
Cover varies, but often is $5-$10 on nights with no live acts.

Lee’s Place
529 Bloor Street W
(416) 532-1598
$4 - $30 cover depending on the artist playing, $7 cover for Dance Bar (located on the second floor Lee’s) that is often waived for students with university/college ID.

Horseshoe Tavern
370 Queen St W
(416) 598-4753
Free on Mondays & Tuesdays, cover is usually $5 during the week and $10 on weekends - with exceptions for concerts (up to $25).
Where to Brunch

Because the Toronto night-out so frequently runs well into the Toronto morning, a good brunch spot is essential. Still not sure if you’re starting your day or ending your night? That’s okay, brunch still isn’t sure if it’s more breakfast or more lunch, but here are some of our favourite spots in the city nonetheless.

But, to each his or her own – especially when brunch is involved. Take a look at some of the “top places” lists compiled on behalf of this city’s favourite meal:

Yelp: ranked in terms of user rating
NOW Toronto: divided by neighbourhood
Grid TO: pick what kind of meal you’re in the mood for
Blog TO: ranked in terms of user reviews

Because creativity can strike at any moment, here’s are some places to dine at in the wee hours of the night... or is it morning?
North by North East

Kicking off the start of each summer is NXNE - a week long festival devoted to celebrating music and the arts. The best part? Most of the artists play outdoor venues along Queen St W, College, and the Annex on Bloor, so you can usually catch some crowd-favourite bands for free.

Get Involved

Because Toronto is home to so many diverse individuals, there’s something always going on just a block or two over. Here are some of the “must attend” arts events of the year – and if all else fails, there’s always axe-throwing to look forward to.

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CONTACT Toronto Photography Festival

Taking place throughout May, CONTACT is currently the largest photography festival in the world, which hosts varying levels of exhibitions to both take part in or view, as well as workshops and contests. Even for non-photo buffs, CONTACT is worth checking out for the impressive planning that goes into it.

Toronto Fringe Festival

Held every summer in July, this annual theatre festival boasts its inclusivity by its “lottery method” of selecting which shows will get to be featured – every show is an entirely new and separate experience for the audience. Pop-up shops and “tent talks” are also a main component of the festival, and attract people from all arts-based communities.
Luminato Festival

Throughout the peak days of June, Toronto celebrates the work of creative individuals from a wide array of disciplines, including theatre, music, visual arts, and dance, by hosting the Luminato festival. This yearly event seeks to create and provide a culture that is accessible to everyone (which is another way to say you get the most bang for your buck).

Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)

September in Toronto means the return of TIFF - one of the world’s largest and most reputable film festivals. Premiering both Hollywood- and independent-films alike, TIFF is most definitely a star-studded experience for everyone involved and is one that shouldn’t be missed.
Queen West Art Crawl

Taking place in Trinity Bellwoods park every September, the QWAC is a weekend art exhibition that then takes on a life of its own at night when visitors are encouraged to take part in the “Parkdale Nightcrawl”.

Nuit Blanche

A one-night-only festival with the emphasis quite literally on “night”, Nuit Blanche is a huge celebration of the arts community that takes place from sunset to sunrise. From performance art to exhibits to public installations and beyond, Nuit Blanche is a completely unique experience that lets attendees see Toronto in a whole new way.
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