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**Toronto**

Toronto, Ontario, has become Canada's best-known city. Once saddled with a reputation stodginess, it has been reborn and revitalized and now stands as one of North America's leaders at the arts, entertainment, and business.

Toronto boats a vast multicultural mix, with large groups of Italians, Germans, Portuguese, Ukrainians, Asians, and West Indians, each contributing to the city's mosaic. The cosmopolitan blend offers visitors fine dining from a seemingly endless range of the cultures. Shoppers can browse through funky boutiques on Queen Street West, admire the best of designer fashions in the renovated district of Yorkville, or visit Eaton Centre, a four-level $25-million retail complex. For people watching and plenty of culinary delights, there's Kensington Market, which features fresh produce, fish, and plenty of friendly conversation. The city was designed and, since, renovated to make the most of its settings on the store of Lake Ontario. The best view is from the CN Tower, a 553-metre spire that is considered the world's tallest free-standing structure. Nearby is Harbourfron, alake side shopping, dinning and entertainment area whose restored warehouse is a centre for flea markets, art studios, and crafts shops. Much of the appeal of Toronto lies in its sense of history, which dates back to 1749 when French fur traders from Quebec established a ford on the site. The residents have worked to ensure the survival and revitalisation of such areas as St. Lawrence Market (the place to be on a Saturday when the farmers bring in their wares) and a booming Chinatown, chock-full of restaurants and grocery stores.

Toronto is a cultural bastion, with the ultra-modern O'Keefe Centre, which is home to the Canadian Opera Company and the National Ballet of Canada; the Art Gallry of Ontario, with more than 15,000 works - from Old Masters to contemporary art - in its permanent collection; and the Royal Ontario Museum with its vast array of art and artefacts from cultures the world over. business and finance from another important element of the city, and Toronto's skyline is dominated by the high-rise towers of financial institutions. Among the most notable is the Royal Bank Tower, with its distinctive gold-embedded windowpanels.

**CN Tower**

At 553.33 meters the CN Tower is considered the world's tallest free-standing structure. Construction took 40 months, cost $57 million, employed 1,573 workers, and was completed in June 1976. A slender column resembling a giant needle, it weight 132,080 metric tons - the equivalent of roughly 23,214 large elephants.

Visitors can step inside one of four glass-faced elevators and be whisked to the Skypod Observation level in under a minute. In all, there are three observation decks, at 342, 346, and447 meters aboveground, the world's highest public observation gallery. Each of these offers panoramic views of greater Toronto, Toronto Islands, and, on a clear day, Niagara Falls and Buffalo, New York. Spectacular views are also to be had from Top Of Toronto, a restaurant at the 350-metre level that makes a full revolution once every 72 minutes, and Sparkles, a nightclub at the 346-metre level. Those who prefer to dine on the ground level can enjoy a snack in the family-style restaurant. The tower is a stroll away from the lakefront and a walking tour of Harbourfront parks and marinas.

As any famous structure might, the CN Tower has inspired legions of would-be record setters. It has the longest metal staircase in the world (2,570 steps), which is made available to the public each year for a charity stair climb. Stuntman Dar Robinson has jumped from the top of the tower twice - once with a parachute for the filming of the movie HIGHPOINT (1979) and once using a wire cable for the TV show "That's Incredible." On the tower's tenth anniversary, "Spider Man" Goodwin completed two free-style climbs outside the glass elevator-shaft window.

**SkyDome**

SkyDome is the world's greatest entertainment center. It's a home to the Toronto Blue Jays and Toronto Argonauts as well as host to wide variety of other sporting spectaculars, concerts, family shows and consumeers shows.

Just how big is Toronto,s SkyDome? Well, you could put eight Boeing 747s on the playing field. Or all of Eaton Centre. Or a 32-home subdivision. Or the Roman Colosseum. Even with the retractable roof closed, a 31-stoerey buildings could fit inside the structure.

The $500-million buildings opened on June 3, 1989, after 32 months of construction. On that day, inclement weather forced the developers to prove that the multi-panelled roof could be closed in just 20 minutes. The roof runs on a series of steel track and bogies, weighs 11,000 tons - the equivalent, roughly, of 3,734 automobiles - and is made up of steel tresses covered by corrugated steel cladding.

The eight-acre stadium offers sports fans five levels of seating and the world's largest video replay screen. More than 50,000 people at a time can watch a football or a baseball game, and there's also a 350-room hotel built into the north end of facility, with 70 rooms offering a view of the playing field.

But the building is much more than a place to watch sporting events under an open roof. There are 23 fast-food stands, 48 beverage outlets, a 430-seat restaurant for quick-service dining, a 300-foot-long bar overlooking the field, the largest McDonald's in North America, the Hard Rock Cafe, and a 120-seat movie theatre where tours of the building begin. The CN Tower is a stroll away from the stadium.

**Royal Ontario Museum**

Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, knows affectionately as the ROM, is Canada's Largest Public Museum, made even grander by a recent $55 million renovation and expansion project, covering the permanent galleries. Founded in 1912 and opened two years later, the ROM today attracts more than one million visitors a year. Among its impressive holdings, which number more than six million objects and speciments, are a Roman gallery, housing the country's most extensive collection of antiquities; the famous Dinosaur gallery, with a mastodon, stegosaurus, and other prehistoric creatures "at home" in jungle settings; a world class textile collection, with colourful walhangings, peiod costumes, and richly patterned fabrics on display though out the museum; and the renowned Chinese collection, with 800 pieces displayed in traditional room settings and special gallery areas. Of particular note are the giant stone camels and guardian figures of the Ming Tomb, the only Chinese tomb in the Western world. There are also galleries devoted to artefacts of Ontario and Canadiana.

Next door is the McLaughlin Planetarium where the Theatre of the Stars uses 85 slide and video projectors to create planets, exploding stars, and other galactic phenomena. The Sigmund Samuel Building, a few blocks south of the main ROM building, focuses on Canada's rich cultural heritage with displays of antique toys, cocking utensils, oil paintings, pottery and sculpture. The George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramc Art, directly across from the main ROM building, is the only museum specializing in ceramic in North America.

**Niagara Falls**

Every year more than 12 million people flock to Ontario to see the breath tacking natural phenomenon knows as Niagara Falls. Many are honeymooners, although no one is quite sure how that tradition got started. They come to see the combined cascading power of the 54-metre Canadian Falls - knows as Horseshoe Falls - and the American Falls, which soars to 56 metres. Together, these thundering cataracts rush over the brink at the rate of 39.1 million Imperial gallons of water per minute.

Statistic don't do justice to the majesty, the danger, or the romance of the Falls. They have to be seen in person, and there are a variety of ways to view the spectacle once your get there: four Maid-of-Mist boats enter the Horseshoe Basin and pass directly in front of cataracts; the Niagara Spanish Aerocar spans mightly whirlpool where the river takes a 90-degree turn; the Great Gorge Adventure provides a close view of the waters from half a continent plunging through the gorge at the river's narrowest point; and three Table Rock Scenic Tunnels allow visitors to walk behind the Falls. To view the sights from above, opt for a 10-minute helicopter ride, rise to the top of the Skylon Tower observation deck via the external glass-fronted elevators, or visit the viewing platform at the Minolta Tower and Marine Aquarium.

If the real thing isn't enough, there's always IMAX Theatre's Niagara: Miracles, Myths and Magic, shown on a six storey screen in the village of Niagara Falls. While you're in town, you might consider stopping in at any of a number of places designed to entertain, including the Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum, the Elvis Presley Museum, Louis Tusaud's Museum, or the Daredevils Exhibit.