



# Strength in diversity

The Toronto crest of arms reads 'Diversity – Our Strength'. This hub for art and culture certainly holds true to the community's original aspirational message, with an abundance of facilities for the performing arts

**T**oronto's long and colourful history enshrined a rhythm for the modern city today. For more than 10,000 years, man has inhabited and travelled through the land in Canada's southwest, but there has been great change through the millennia. At the epicentre of The Golden Horseshoe as it is known – between Niagara Falls and Oshawa – Toronto is home to more than 200 ethnic origins and a mix of architecture representing its many iterations, periods and styles.

This is the 185th year since York (as it was previously known)

**Above: Toronto is a city of festivity and colour in a very progressive country – for some time now, its art and culture scene has been thriving**

was incorporated as the City of Toronto – its native name, derived from the Iroquoian word *tkaronto*, meaning 'place where trees stand in the water'. And it is thriving.

Twenty-five million tourists visit every year, with temperatures barely above freezing through December to March and regularly hitting 25°C between June and August.

From the Bay-and-Gable housing in Old Toronto to the CN Tower, sightseeing offers a mixed bag. Much of the city's architectural heritage was demolished in the 1960s and 1970s, making room for redevelopment and parking, but a revival has been sparked over the last 20 years.

And with more than 50 ballet companies, six opera companies and two symphony

orchestras, there is a chorus of world-class performing arts on show. Between The Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Roy Thompson Hall, Princess of Wales Theatre, Royal Alexandra Theatre, Massey Hall, and more, Toronto has it all covered.

Its very own Walk of Fame can even be found in the heartland of the arts on King Street West and Simcoe Street. Stars have been added since 1998, including Ontario-raised luminaries Jim Carrey, Margaret Atwood, Mike Myers, Kiefer Sutherland and Keanu Reeves.

With Caribana Festival (North America's largest street festival) and Taste of the Danforth (spawned from the Taste of Chicago) in August, Toronto Film Festival and Canadian National Exhibition in September and

Pride Week in late June, there is no shortage of major international events for those who need an excuse to visit Toronto this year.

Otherwise, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Ontario Science Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Fort York and Gardiner Museum – in addition to copious restaurants and clubs – offer something for everyone the whole year around.

For sports enthusiasts, the Maple Leafs (ice hockey), Blue Jays (baseball) and the Raptors (basketball) are just three of the myriad teams that represent the area on the national stage.

The Hockey Hall of Fame is worth a visit if the Maple Leafs are not playing. [toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture](http://toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture) ■