

## 2011 ABCT Convention: Welcome to Toronto

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ABCT is going international this year! The conference was previously held in Toronto in 1999 and we are excited to welcome you back to our fantastic city again. This article provides insider information about Toronto as well as practical suggestions to help you prepare for your trip, including details about the weather, metric conversion, Canadian currency, taxis and public transportation, customs/immigration matters, and getting to and from the airport.

The old town of “York” was established in 1793 and was incorporated about 40 years later as the city of “Toronto” (a Huron language word for “meeting place”). You may notice during your visit that the “York” name figures prominently in Toronto streets, hotels, and other businesses. Since its founding, Toronto has indeed become a meeting place for many people. It is ranked one of the most livable and multicultural urban centers in the world, and in 2011 Toronto was named by the London-based *Global Financial Centre* as one of the world’s top ten financial centers.

With close to 3 million people in the city proper, and over 5 million in the greater Toronto area, Toronto is the largest city in Canada and the fifth largest city in North America. In fact, one third of Canada’s population is located within 100 miles of Toronto and about half of the population of the United States is within 1 day’s drive of Toronto. Toronto is well known for its ethnic and cultural diversity, great cuisine and shopping, outstanding entertainment, and low crime rate. Close to 150 languages and dialects are spoken here; in fact, fully half of Toronto’s population was born outside Toronto. There are three daily Toronto newspapers (*The Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Toronto Sun*), and a number of free weekly entertainment newspapers (*NOW magazine* is the largest).

For the first time since 1979, the 2011 ABCT meeting will take place at two hotels, the [Sheraton](#) (416-361-1000) and [Hilton](#) (416-869-3456). Activities and sessions will occur across both venues. For example, registration will take place at the Sheraton, and all workshops will occur at the Hilton. Situated in the heart of downtown Toronto, the Sheraton and Hilton hotels are a 2-minute walk across the street from one another. The Hilton and Sheraton are also connected underground (about 5 minutes apart) by *PATH*, North America’s largest continuous underground pedestrian walkway ([www.toronto.ca/path](http://www.toronto.ca/path)). *PATH* connects over 1,000 stores and restaurants, six major hotels, and several entertainment centers. *PATH* is marked throughout by the multicolored *PATH* logo, and *PATH* maps are available at the hotel concierge desks as well as the ABCT hospitality table. (Using *PATH* to travel between the convention hotels means no coat needed!). Both hotels have indoor/outdoor pools and excellent fitness centers available at no cost to guests. They are walking distance from countless cafes, restaurants, performing arts venues, art galleries, and shops.

With over 10,000 restaurants, you'll find an abundance of dining options available to you in Toronto. From the assured sophistication of *Nota Bene* (416-977-6400, [www.notabenerestaurant.com](http://www.notabenerestaurant.com)) and *Le Select Bistro* (416-596-6405, [www.leselect.com](http://www.leselect.com)) to the eclectic eateries found along King and Queen Streets, rest assured that there are ample cuisine choices for every budget. Opportunities for great theater, film, and music are also plentiful. Did you know that Toronto is the third largest English-language theater center in the world, behind New York and London? When it comes to film, Torontonians have a strong reputation in "the industry" as eager film aficionados, which helps to explain the success of the *Toronto International Film Festival* [[www.tiff.net](http://www.tiff.net)] and the recent opening of beautiful *Bell Lightbox* [[www.tiff.net/tiffbelllightbox](http://www.tiff.net/tiffbelllightbox)], a year-round international film complex, within walking distance of the convention. Music is another performance art that is plentiful in Toronto, and venues both large and small are located close to the conference hotels. If comedy is your thing, check out *Second City* ([www.secondcity.com](http://www.secondcity.com)) and *Yuk Yuk's* ([www.yukyuks.com](http://www.yukyuks.com)) comedy clubs. For shopping, the Sheraton and Hilton are about a 5-minute walk from the 300-plus stores *Eaton Centre* [[www.torontoeatoncentre.com](http://www.torontoeatoncentre.com)], located at the corner of Yonge and Queen Streets, just east of the hotels, as well as lots of interesting shops along Queen Street, heading west from the convention. Listed below are some additional areas to check out for food, fashion, and entertainment. More detailed recommendations for restaurants and fun things to do will be available at the Local Arrangements Hospitality Table (described in more detail near the end of this article.)

### Interesting Neighborhoods

***Bloor-Yorkville***, 5-10 minutes by cab: Yorkville is a decidedly high-end shopping/small gallery/dining area that includes carefully restored Victorian residences, galleries, and shops in restored townhouses. Streets worth exploring include Cumberland Street, Bellair Street, Yorkville Avenue, and Scollard Street. Just around the corner on Bloor Street, between Avenue Road and Yonge Street, you'll find luxury designer shops such as Prada, Gucci, and Chanel.

***Queen Street West*** (begins about a 5-minute walk West from the hotels): The Queen Street West area is a stylish, shopping district with a kinetic energy located along Queen Street between University and Spadina Avenues. If you are so inclined, travel a bit further West along Queen to the more trendy and alternative "West Queen West" area, which begins just west of Spadina Avenue and continues past Bathurst Street for a mile or so. If you prefer, you can hop on the streetcar for this short ride along Queen Street. Purveyors of food, furniture, and fashion have opened storefronts at a rapid pace, and this area is becoming more interesting by the week. Many excellent galleries have relocated to the West Queen West area, between Shaw and Gladstone Streets. *Ossington Avenue* (in "West Queen West") is the newest "hip" dining area – reservations essential! Also, a 5-minute cab ride north from Queen Street (along Ossington Avenue) brings you to the *Little Italy* part of College Street, another good dining area.

***Chinatown***, 5 minutes by cab, located in the Dundas St. and Spadina Ave. area, is one

of the biggest in North America. Right next to Chinatown, between College and Dundas, is **Kensington Market** [[www.kensington-market.ca/Default.asp?id=1&l=1](http://www.kensington-market.ca/Default.asp?id=1&l=1)], one of Toronto's oldest and best-known outdoor markets, with its open-air stalls, hip restaurants, and cafés.

**Church-Wellesley**, also about 5 minutes by cab is a large and bustling LGBT community situated around Church and Wellesley Streets. Also, check out: [www.seetorontonow.com/Visitor/Gay-Community/The-Gay-Village.aspx](http://www.seetorontonow.com/Visitor/Gay-Community/The-Gay-Village.aspx) for information on dining, nightlife, and shopping that extends beyond the village. A few blocks South, you'll find **The Esplanade**. Also known as "Old Toronto," this area contains an interesting mix of old and new architecture as well as graciously restored old buildings (e.g., the *Flatiron Building* located at Church and Front Streets). Try the French Canadian cuisine at *Le Papillon* (416-367-0303, [www.lepapillonfront.com](http://www.lepapillonfront.com)). The vibrant and historic *St. Lawrence Market* (Saturday morning), and the *Hockey Hall of Fame* [[www.hhof.com/](http://www.hhof.com/)] are located in the Esplanade district. Just east of the Esplanade is the **Distillery District** (about 10 minutes by cab from the convention; [www.thedistillerydistrict.com](http://www.thedistillerydistrict.com)), which is both a destination and a growing vibrant community neighborhood located at Mill Street between Parliament and Cherry Streets. Established in 1832, the brick-and-cobblestone building was once the largest distillery in the British Empire. It now houses a complex of unpretentious galleries, boutiques and restaurants with hardly a chain store in sight.

A bit farther afield is **Greektown** (also known as *The Danforth*), about 15 minutes by cab from the Sheraton and Hilton hotels. Located on Danforth Avenue between Chester and Jones Avenues, this is the place to go for authentic Greek cuisine.

**Toronto Islands**, a very different neighborhood, offers over 600 acres of parkland and are accessible by ferry only. Adult fare is \$6.50 (Canadian) for a return trip. For ferry Schedule information, call 416-392-8193 or ask the hotel concierge. The ferry docks are located at the foot of Bay Street. If you do get to the islands, check out the lovely *Rectory Café* (416-203-2152, [www.therectorycafe.com](http://www.therectorycafe.com)) near the Ward's island dock.

## Downtown Toronto Attractions

### **Museums and Galleries**

Several of the city's art institutions have undergone substantial renovations. Close to the hotel you'll find the *Art Gallery of Ontario or AGO* ([www.ago.net](http://www.ago.net)), 317 Dundas Street West, a couple of blocks north of Queen Street West (416-969-6600). A recent new design by Toronto born architect Frank Gehry includes extensive use of Canadian Douglas Fir throughout. The AGO contains a new contemporary floor and an outstanding collection by sculptor Thomas Moore, as well as a Canadian Wing.

Before or after visiting the AGO, walk a minute or two South (toward the lake) on McCaul Street to see the new *Ontario College of Art and Design University* ([www.ocad.ca](http://www.ocad.ca)) building. This is one of the most interesting buildings in the city – much

of it is suspended in the air on giant sticks. A bit further uptown is the *Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)*, located at 100 Queen's Park, just south of Bloor Street, 416-586-8000 ([www.rom.on.ca](http://www.rom.on.ca)). Here you'll find valuable collections of Chinese and Nubian art as well as archeological and scientific treasures. A few blocks west from ROM is the *Bata Shoe Museum*, 416-979-7799, a beautiful small building containing approximately 13,000 shoes dating back thousands of years ([www.batashoemuseum.ca](http://www.batashoemuseum.ca)). If you are a hockey fan, the *Hockey Hall of Fame and Museum* located at Yonge and Front Streets, 416-360-7765, is not to be missed ([www.hhof.com](http://www.hhof.com)).

### ***Entertainment District***

The premier theater district in Toronto, located primarily on King Street starting west of Simcoe Street, also includes *TIFF Bell Lightbox*, 350 King Street West, 416-599-8433 ([www.tiffbelllightbox.com](http://www.tiffbelllightbox.com)), a new year-round home for Toronto International Film Festival that includes a three-story public atrium, five public cinemas, and two galleries, three learning studios, and both casual and high-end dining.

Broadway-style shows play in venues located both in the "official" Entertainment District and on Yonge Street: check out [www.Toronto-theatre.com](http://www.Toronto-theatre.com) for information on shows and venues playing during your stay. Venues include the *Princess of Wales, Canon, Royal Alexandra, and Elgin Theatres*, and for major concert venues, *Roy Thomson Hall and Massey Hall*. A bit further South is the *CN Tower*, 301 Front Street West, 416-868-6937 ([www.cntower.ca](http://www.cntower.ca)). The views from its observation decks are breathtaking (but beware, wait times to enter the Tower can be significant).

### ***Professional Sports***

Toronto is home to five professional sports teams, including the NHL's *Toronto Maple Leafs* and the NBA's *Toronto Raptors*, both of whom play at the Air Canada Centre ([www.theaircanadacentre.com](http://www.theaircanadacentre.com)); the Canadian Football League's Toronto Argonauts and baseball's American League East Toronto Blue Jays, both playing out of the Rogers Centre, ([www.rogerscentre.com](http://www.rogerscentre.com)), and the Toronto FC soccer team ([www.torontofc.ca](http://www.torontofc.ca)).

## **Getting to Toronto and Your Hotel**

### ***How to Get To and From the Airport***

The major airport is *Pearson International Airport (YYZ)*, located about 25 miles, or 40 kilometers, from the conference hotels, or 30 to 40 minutes by car.

*Airline Limousine Service*: Offers flat rates to and from the airport. Tel: 416-678-7077. Cost (at time of printing) is \$53.00 including taxes, about the same price as a taxi ride from Pearson International Airport to the Downtown Sheraton/Hilton hotels.

In addition to taxis, you may also get to the hotel with *Airport Express* (905-564-3232 or 1-800-387-6787), which offers regularly scheduled service from Pearson airport to the conference hotels. You can purchase tickets online: [www.torontoairportexpress.com](http://www.torontoairportexpress.com).

For those interested in renting a car, you'll find the car rental counters on Level 1 of the parking garages adjacent to both Terminals 1 and 3 (there is no Terminal 2).

1. Avis (1-800-879-2847): Terminal 1, 905-676-1032/33; Terminal 3, 905-676-1034/35
2. Budget (1-800-268-8900): Terminal 1, 905-676-1500; Terminal 3, 905-676-0522
3. Dollar/Thrifty (1-800-THRIFTY): Terminal 1, 905-673-8811 ext. 6256; Terminal 3, 905-673-8811, ext. 6251
4. National/Alamo (1-800-CAR-RENT or 1-800-GO-ALAMO); Terminal 1 and 3, 905-676-2647

If you fly *Porter Airlines* to Toronto ([www.flyporter.com](http://www.flyporter.com)) you'll arrive at the *Toronto City Centre (island) Airport*, also known as *Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport* (Code YTZ), located minutes from the heart of downtown. There is usually a good supply of taxis, and it will cost about \$10.00 to travel to the convention hotels. Porter Airlines flies between Toronto and a small number of US cities, including New York, Chicago, and Boston. Air Canada ([www.aircanada.com](http://www.aircanada.com)) also has limited flights between Toronto and Montreal via the island airport.

### ***Entering Canada***

The ABCT website includes important information on entering Canada so please check: [www.abct.org/Conv2011](http://www.abct.org/Conv2011). Everyone from every country arriving in Canada by air, land, and sea must have a passport or equivalent travel document (e.g., a NEXUS card, a US Passport card, etc.). *A standard driver's license or birth certificate will not be sufficient.* You may be asked for proof that you are attending a meeting or convention and it may be useful to have a copy of your meeting agenda or proof of registration on hand. Every 30 days, returning U.S. citizens are allowed to bring back \$800 (retail value) in merchandise duty-free, provided they have been out of the U.S. for 48 hours. See [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) for further information. Children 15 years of age and under are now required to show proof of citizenship.

### **Getting Around Toronto**

#### ***City Taxi Service***

Taxis within the city operate on a meter system. You can usually hail a taxi from any street corner. Some good local taxi companies include Beck Taxi (416-751-5555), CO-OP Taxi (416-504-2667), and Diamond Taxi (416-366-6868). The base rate is \$4.25 and the following website will provide a cost estimate for your trip.

<http://www.worldtaximeter.com/toronto>

#### ***Toronto Transit Commission or TTC (Buses, Streetcars, and Subways)***

The TTC adult fare is \$3.00 cash (use exact change when using bus or streetcar - drivers do not make change) or you may buy tokens at any subway station in quantities of 5 or 10 for \$12.50 or \$25.00, respectively (discounted tickets are available for seniors and children). A 1-day pass can be purchased for \$10.00. It is important to obtain a transfer wherever you first get on the TTC as this transfer will allow you to move from one vehicle (e.g., bus, subway, and streetcar) to another. If you do not have a transfer ticket you will likely need to pay again when you transfer from, for example, bus to subway.

### ***Sightseeing Tours***

*Toronto Tours.* Call toll free, 1-888-811-9247, check out the website, <http://www.torontotours.net>, or check with the hotel concierge.

### **Practical Information to Help Plan Your Trip**

The Toronto telephone area codes are 416 and 647. Some telephone numbers in the Greater Toronto Area (including the airport) have a 905 area code.

### ***Canadian Money***

All prices quoted in this article are in Canadian Dollars. The best places in Toronto to obtain Canadian money are at any bank or ATM in the city. At the time this article was written, the U.S. dollar was trading at close to par to the Canadian dollar. You may check the exchange rate closer to the time of your trip at: [www.xe.com/ucc](http://www.xe.com/ucc). Most stores will accept U.S. currency, but generally, the exchange rate is not as favorable as the banks. Note that the denominations and names for Canadian currency are more or less the same as for American currency (e.g., pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, dollars), with two exceptions. Our 1-dollar coin has come to be known as a **Loonie** (it has a picture of a loon on it) and our 2-dollar coin is often called a **Toonie**. When making purchases in Ontario, you may see a 13 per cent Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) on your receipts. While books are partially exempt, the HST applies to almost every purchase and service. Tipping in restaurants is typically 15 to 20 percent of the total bill before tax.

### ***Toronto Climate***

Although there are no guarantees (!) the mean November temperature in Toronto is a high of approximately 46 degrees Fahrenheit (7.8° Celsius) and a low of about 35° Fahrenheit (1.8° Celsius).

Speaking of temperature measurement, Canada has been using the metric system for over 35 years. Here are a few conversions that will help you.

30 miles = 50 kilometers  
50 ° Fahrenheit = 10° Celsius  
39 ° Fahrenheit = 4° Celsius  
32° Fahrenheit = 0° Celsius

### ***Jogging in Toronto***

Jogging is a popular activity in Toronto and among ABCT attendees. Runs are planned for Friday and Saturday mornings, both guided by local runners. The runs will convene early morning on both days. Information on the routes, landmarks, and tips for jogging in the city will be available at our Hospitality Table near the main ABCT registration area at the Sheraton Centre.

### ***Dine with a Local***

The Local Arrangements Committee is organizing opportunities for groups of ABCT attendees to have dinner with a Torontonians at a favorite local restaurant. More details and sign up sheets for this event will be available at our Hospitality Table.

### **Your 2011 Local Arrangements Committee**

Looking for a good restaurant? Wondering about photocopying or shoe repair options? The 2011 Local Arrangements Committee is looking forward to making your stay in Toronto as enjoyable as possible. To this end, we will be setting up a Hospitality Table near the ABCT registration area at the Sheraton Hotel, where we will assist you with any questions you may have – from helping you to find a certain meeting room in the hotel to recommending a favorite French restaurant. The committee is in the midst of preparing a restaurant list, an all-important list of options for breakfast/coffee and lunch nearby the hotels, and a service guide, all of which will all be available to you at the Hospitality Table. We aim to complement the first-rate service offered by the hotels' concierge desks. We will have maps of the city, free weekly newspapers, tourist guides and other helpful information. Local events being organized include runs and opportunities to dine with "locals" at their favorite restaurants. The Hospitality Table will be open on Thursday, November 10, Friday November 11, and Saturday November 12th. Please drop by and say hello!

### **Additional Relevant Internet Resources**

<http://www.seetorontonow.com>

<http://www.fodors.com/world/north-america/canada/ontario/toronto>

<http://www.nowtoronto.com>(Toronto's largest alternative arts and entertainment newspaper)

[www.north.ca](http://www.north.ca)

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Our thanks to the many Torontonians who helped put this article together and/or who will be available to make your stay even nicer, if that's possible.

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