



Welcome to the neighbourhood!

OLD TOWN TORONTO EAST

Come and explore Toronto's historic heart.



Legend

-  Bus, Streetcar Route
-  Municipal Parking
-  One-way Street
-  Greenspace
-  Architectural/Historical Interest
-  Outdoor Art, Statues & Structures
- 1** The Daniel Brooke Building
- 2** The Bank of Upper Canada
- 3** Toronto's First Post Office Museum
- 4** St. Paul's Basilica
- 5** Dominion Square
- 6** Little Trinity Church & Parish House
- 7** Enoch Turner School House
- 8** The Distillery Historic District
- 9** First Parliament Buildings Site
- 10** Crombie Park
- 11** The Berkeley Street Theatre
- 12** Canadian Opera Company
- 13** The Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People
- 14** The Toronto Sun Mural



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Points of interest

- 1 The Daniel Brooke Building (King Street East & Jarvis Street)** Built in 1833 for merchant Daniel Brooke, significantly rebuilt in 1848-49 and one of the few buildings that survived the great fire of 1849. It is an important and rare example of Georgian Architecture in Toronto and one of the last remaining buildings from the original Town of York.
- 2 The Bank of Upper Canada (256 Adelaide Street East)** Built in 1825-27, it is one of the oldest remaining bank buildings in Toronto. The bank was the Province's leading financial institution from the time of its incorporation in 1822 until its closing in 1866. The striking portico was added by Toronto architect John G. Howard in 1844. Designated a National Historic site in 1977, it was restored in 1980 by its current owners, the Godfrey family, for use as commercial office space.
- 3 Toronto's First Post Office Museum (260 Adelaide Street East)** In 1833 Postmaster James Scott Howard built this 3-storey Georgian-style "live-work" building to house both the post office and his family. It is the oldest building built as a post office in Canada. It is also owned by the Godfrey family who began its restoration in 1980, and now leases it for a dollar a year to the Town of York Historical Society. It is a working post office and museum with philatelic services, a gift shop and postal memorabilia available seven days a week. www.townofyork.com
- 4 St. Paul's Basilica (83 Power Street)** Dating from 1822, St. Paul's was the Town of York's first Roman Catholic parish. The site was then on the outskirts of town and the only Roman Catholic parish between Kingston and Windsor. Today's Italian Renaissance-Style church is the realization of an 1889 expansion. On August 26, 1999 Pope John Paul II named the church Toronto's first and only Minor Basilica.
- 5 Dominion Square (468 Queen Street East)** The Davies family began a brewery here in 1879 and established the Dominion Hotel on the east end of the property at Sumach. Renovated in 1987, the site boasts stores, condos and office space. The adjacent renovated hotel is a popular local watering hole.
- 6 Little Trinity Church & Parish House (between Parliament & Trinity on King)** The Parish of Trinity East, Toronto's second Anglican parish, was founded in 1842 to serve the newly arrived, poor, Irish immigrants. The parish house was designed in 1853 by noted 19th century Toronto architects Cumberland and Storm.
- 7 Enoch Turner School House (Trinity Street, just south of King)** Opened in 1848 as Toronto's first free or non-denominational school under the patronage of local business and community leader Enoch Turner. It features an authentic recreation of the original school house and presents lectures, walking tours, and concerts throughout the year. www.enochturnerschoolhouse.ca
- 8 The Distillery Historic District (50 Mill Street)** Originally the grounds of the Gooderham and Worts Distillery in 1832, today it features theatres, art, photography, cafés and restaurants in a restored 19th century industrial site (see What to Do). www.thedistillerydistrict.com
- 9 First Parliament Buildings Site, Parliament Square** The block bounded by Parliament Street on the east and Berkeley Street on the west and running south from Front Street to Parliament Square Park, contains the site of Upper Canada's (today's Ontario) original parliament buildings, built in 1793. Parliament Square features a treed walkway leading to The Distillery District and an Ontario Heritage Trust plaque. In 2005 the Province of Ontario acquired the northeast corner of the site which will eventually be redeveloped to commemorate the birth place of Ontario's democracy.
- 10 Crombie Park** Running along The Esplanade from Berkeley Street west to Jarvis Street through the tree-lined heart of St. Lawrence Neighbourhood. The City of Toronto park is named for former Toronto Mayor David Crombie who was instrumental in initiating the redevelopment of the neighbourhood in the 1970s from industrial wasteland to today's successful mixed income community. Countless television productions and commercials have been filmed in the park.
- 11 The Berkeley Street Theatre (26 Berkeley Street)** Known to intimates as the "The Gas Works" after its history of once being a Consumers Gas pumping station. It was converted into a theatre in 1971, first as the home of the Toronto Free Theatre and subsequently as the home of the successor company CanStage. The theatre has two performance spaces presenting Canadian and international theatre. www.canstage.com

Points of interest

12 Canadian Opera Company, Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre (227 Front Street East)

The COC is housed in two 19th century industrial buildings. The eastern building was the Consumers Gas Company's Purifying House No. 2 built in 1887-1888 and designed by the architects Strickland and Symens after the fashion of an early Christian basilica. The westerly building was originally Standard Woollen Mills built in 1882 and designed by famous Toronto architect E.J. Lennox who also designed Casa Loma and Old City Hall. www.coc.ca

13 The Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People (165 Front Street East)

Originally a late 19th century stable for the horses that pulled the Toronto Street Railway Company Streetcars. When electrification arrived in

1891, the stables went with the times and the building became a generating plant until 1906. It was then used as a warehouse by the TTC. In 1977, it was redesigned to be the home of the Young People's Theatre, now the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People (LKTYP). They are Toronto's premier company producing professional theatre for children. www.lktyp.ca

14 The Toronto Sun Mural (between Princess & Berkeley Streets)

History as Theatre, by Toronto artist John Hood, depicts Toronto's story on a "canvas" the height of a 3-storey building and the length of a city block. It was commissioned by the Toronto Sun newspaper in 1993 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the City's founding.

How to get there

By TTC: There are many TTC routes serving Old Town Toronto.

From Downtown: King or Queen Subway station take the eastbound streetcar past Jarvis.



By Car: From the Don Valley Parkway exit at Richmond Street. From the Gardiner Expressway exit north at Jarvis. From the Lakeshore Boulevard East exit on Cherry, Parliament, Sherbourne or Jarvis. There is a "Green P" parking lot at Sherbourne and Richmond and one at The Esplanade and Jarvis; two large private lots at the Distillery District (entrances off Parliament just north of Lakeshore Boulevard); throughout the neighbourhood Pay and Display street parking is available.

Why you should go

Old Town Toronto (east) is the historic heart of Toronto, and like the city that grew up from the Town of York's original 10 blocks, the area is defined by diverse neighbourhoods containing everything the urban visitor could want: Historic Queen Street East, a revitalized strip of unique shops, leads into the heart of the 19th century urban village atmosphere of Corktown; the Distillery District with theatres, galleries and restaurants in a restored, industrial, heritage site dating from 1832; the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood offers a pleasant promenade through a model of urban redevelopment; and King Street East is the home to the city's largest collection of fine home furnishing shops. Old Town Toronto (east) boasts the largest collection of heritage buildings in Ontario, making it ideal for walking tours and city exploring. Well known as a haven for diners and pub aficionados, a visitor can find anything from a tasty and inexpensive lunch, a

relaxed afternoon pint or fine dining in some of the city's best restaurants. In Old Town the choice is yours.

What to do

Old Town Toronto (east) is a perfect setting for the urban explorer: whether it is strolling the historic main streets of the city and taking note of intriguing historic sites; or something more contemporary like seeking out that perfect home décor item; or sipping a cold craft brewed pint on a secluded patio; each part of the neighbourhood offers unique delights and surprises. Beginning at the corner of King and George Streets you are crossing into the original 10 blocks laid out by Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe in 1793 to form the Town of York. The town stretched east to Berkeley Street south to Front Street and north to today's Adelaide Street. The area features a mix of historic buildings, modern condos and commercial buildings, with cafés, specialty shops, pubs and bistros at street level. King Street from

Jarvis to Parliament has one of the city's premier collections of home furnishing and design shops—a delight for anyone searching for decorating ideas and new, innovative pieces. Drop by Toronto's First Post Office museum on Adelaide Street and walk back in time before there was air mail, e-mail and instant communication.

www.kingstreteaststyle.com

Historic Queen East (Jarvis to Parliament). In 1800, Lot Street (now Queen) was the northern limit of the town. Today this revitalizing strip features Victorian commercial buildings and unique shops. You can stop into a gallery, browse for antique books or grab an inexpensive bite to eat.

Corktown is a 19th century urban village in the heart of the city and King and Queen Streets (East of Parliament) are its two main streets. It was originally settled by working class immigrants in the early 1800's, many of whom came from the County of Cork in Ireland.

They found work in developing industries such as the local breweries and distilleries. Their Irish heritage was reflected in what came to be the area's nickname. Today Corktown is dotted with row houses and renovated commercial buildings housing specialty shops, cozy bistros and cafés. But it is Corktown's laneways and small residential streets that many visitors enjoy the most: Bright Street's fine example of workers housing from the 1800s or the Victorian townhouses on Wascana Avenue. Look for evocative street names like Virgin Place and Gilead Place. Trinity Street features fine heritage houses and Enoch Turner Schoolhouse: revisit schooldays 1850s style. www.corktown.ca

South from Corktown is the Distillery District an ongoing and ambitious renovation of one of the largest remnants of Victorian industrial heritage buildings in North America. Stroll among the restored 19th century warehouses and tankhouses, along the cobblestone laneways of the original Gooderham & Worts Distillery complex, dating from 1832. Discover fine restaurants, artists' studios, a brewery, theatre and dance companies, art and craft galleries and the Young Centre for the Performing Arts, home of Toronto's Soulpepper Theatre Company. Open year 'round, the site really comes alive with numerous festivals and outdoor events on spring and summer weekends. www.thedistillerydistrict.com

West from the Distillery District, across Parliament Square (Point of Interest #9), is Berkeley Street where heritage buildings house new uses: the renovated Berkeley Castle office complex, the Berkeley Street Theatre and the headquarters of the Canadian Opera Company are all located in 19th century industrial buildings adapted for today. Continuing along The Esplanade between Berkeley and Jarvis Street, one strolls through the heart of the original St. Lawrence Neighbourhood, developed by the City of Toronto in the 1970s. Today it is home to well over 10,000 people in one of North America's most successful and most studied mixed income neighbourhoods. Crombie Park (Point of Interest #10) provides one of the City's most pleasant urban walks, marked by gardens, fountains and a natural arcade of trees.

A short history

In 1793, John Graves Simcoe, lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada (today's Ontario), moved the capital of the fledgling colony from Niagara, on the American border, to Toronto because it was considered to be at a safer distance in case of invasion; and it boasted a good harbour, along with access to rivers, the highways of the day. Simcoe oversaw the construction of Fort York to protect the harbour on the west and a town site to the east. Simcoe chose the name York to honour Frederick Augustus, Duke of York, the second son of King George III. The size of the new capital was a modest 10 blocks, though the town grew quickly. During the War of 1812, York was invaded by the American forces in 1813 and the Parliament Buildings (at Front St. and Parliament St.) were burned to the ground. The city grew rapidly after the war and in 1821 York got its first financial institution, The Bank of Upper Canada: the original building remains in use today as renovated office space at the corner George and Adelaide. In 1832 one of Toronto's first major industrial sites, the Gooderham & Worts complex, began operation initially as a

grist mill, then in 1837 as a distillery. Today it is becoming a major arts and shopping destination (Point of Interest #8).

In the 1850s after rail service began, the eastern neighbourhoods of Old Town industrialized. The site of the original Parliament Buildings became a major plant for Consumer's Gas in the late 1800s. The company also built a plant at 51 Parliament Street which has been renovated to house the city's newest police station. The city's commercial centre of gravity moved west in the latter half of the 19th century. King Street East, once the city's premier High Street began to fade in importance, a circumstance that would not change until the late 20th century when new development and renovations of historic buildings revitalized the area.

In the 1990s, much of Old Town Toronto (east) was slated for revitalization and under a new planning regime, the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings and construction of compatible new buildings was encouraged. The population grew rapidly in the old Town Of York area, with new condos, shops and amenities bringing the streets vibrantly alive.

● A little trivia ●

- The Distillery District (Point of Interest #8) is the number one filming location in Canada. Over 800 movies have been filmed there in the past 10 years, perhaps most notably *Chicago* which won the Oscar for Best Picture in 2003.
- In 1919, T.P. Loblaw and Justin Cork opened the doors to their first grocery store on King Street East in the Old Town neighbourhood of Corktown. From this humble beginning Loblaws grew to become one of Canada's major grocery retailers.
- After Ontario's First Parliament Buildings (Point of Interest #9) were burned down in 1813 by invading Americans during the Battle of York, the British forces retaliated by burning down the U.S. President's residence in

Washington. When the residence was repaired and rebuilt it was painted white to cover the evidence of fire damage, and then became known as the White House.

- Toronto's first cab company, "The City", was founded by Lucie & Thornton Blackburn in 1837. The Blackburns were escaped slaves from Kentucky who arrived in Toronto in 1834; where they were defended by the government from two extradition attempts. Once safe and settled, Thornton discovered there was a shortage of public transportation in Toronto. To meet this need he built a red and yellow horse-drawn cab, modeled after vehicles he'd seen in Montréal, and launched the service to great success.