



Legend

- Bus, Streetcar Route
- Greenspace
- Hospital
- Municipal Parking
- One-way Street

- Architectural/ Historical Interest
- Outdoor Art, Statues & Structures

- 1** Sculpture: "To Market, To Market"
- 2** Sculpture: "Home Again, Home Again"
- 3** Sculpture: "Jiggity Jig"
- 4** Sculpture: "Piggity Big"
- 5** Bellevue Square Park
- 6** No. 8 Hose Station
- 7** St. Stephen-in-the-Fields Anglican Church

- 8** The Kiever Synagogue
- 9** Anshei Minsk Synagogue

Welcome to the neighbourhood!

KENSINGTON MARKET

Old World charm, New World vitality

Points of interest

How to get there

By TTC: Take the 506 streetcar west from Queen's Park subway station to Spadina Ave., or the 510 streetcar south from the Spadina subway station to College St.

By Car: The roads are better suited to pedestrians than cars: they're a maze of narrow one-way streets and you'll find yourself going in circles—very slowly—unless you plan your route in advance. If you decide to drive, your best bets for parking are the "Green P" multi-level parking garage on St. Andrew/Baldwin, the lot on Bellevue, or the lot on Dundas at Spadina.



Why you should go

Kensington Market offers a fascinating living-history tour of the immigrant populations who built Toronto. The closest we have to an Old World marketplace, you'll find an Arabian spice store nestled next to a Jewish grocery next to a Caribbean fruit stand beside a Chilean produce store. The broad range of food stores sell an unbelievable variety of meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, and fresh produce. Local wisdom says that you can buy more varieties of fruits and vegetables in Kensington than anywhere else in the world; even if this statement isn't 100% true, it still gives you an idea of the diversity you'll find there. But Kensington is much more than a food market; you'll also find discount and surplus stores, clothing stores selling cheap or used clothing, some of the best vintage clothing stores in Toronto, and quirky record and gadget shops. And let's not forget the restaurants and cafés offering delicacies from every corner of the world.

1 Globe with flying goods. Called "To Market, To Market", this is one of the four aluminum and steel sculptures created by David Hlynsky and Shirley Yanover that mark the main entries to the Market (the others are Points 2 through 4). The orbiting images represent what we need to survive on this planet—all of which can be found in Kensington Market.

2 Cat on a kitchen chair. Generations of cats have been born in Kensington—you see them everywhere. In "Home Again, Home Again", the cat and the kitchen chair evoke the comforts of home.

3 Cat on a globe. The globe in "Jiggity Jig" symbolizes the fact that people come to Kensington from all over the world: immigrants see where they've come from, and where they are now.

4 Globe on a kitchen chair. In "Piggity Big", the globe once again represents the immigrant population, and the chair is symbolic of home. The final message: "I'm an immigrant, and I'm at home here."

5 Bellevue Square Park. In the early 1800s, this area was used as a parade ground for a volunteer cavalry troop. Today, a statue of actor Al Waxman—who was born and raised in the neighbourhood—stands in the park. Waxman starred in a popular Canadian sitcom called "King of Kensington" from 1975 to 1980.

6 No. 8 Hose Station. Built in 1878, No. 8 is still an active fire

station. In 1911, it became the first firehall in Toronto to receive a motorized fire engine. Toronto demolished most of its old fire houses in the 1960s, but the community launched a successful lobby to save No. 8. Ironically, the building was gutted by fire in 1972. Once again, the community stepped in to ensure their beloved firehall would be rebuilt to look almost exactly like the original.

7 St. Stephen-in-the-Fields Anglican Church. A fine example of Gothic Revival architecture, this church once had one of the largest congregations in Toronto. The original church was designed by Thomas Fuller (who also designed Canada's first parliament buildings). Built in 1858, it was gutted by fire only seven years later; most of the design features were preserved during the restoration process. The church was named for its original rural setting.

8 The Kiever Synagogue. Completed in 1927, this building has the capacity to hold up to 400 people. Although most of the congregation moved away from Kensington in the 1950s, the Kiever maintains its social, religious, and historical significance to this day.

9 Anshei Minsk Synagogue. Built between 1922 and 1930, this is the only synagogue in downtown Toronto still offering daily prayer services. Although unequivocally orthodox, Anshei Minsk welcomes all Jews to worship there.

What to do

Bargain hunting, food shopping, and eating are the major reasons to visit Kensington. Although the higgledy-piggledy nature of the streets makes it a little difficult to say exactly how many blocks make up the area, it's about the size of 10 "regular" city blocks. It's a compact area, but you'd be hard-pressed to spend less than four hours there—more if you love poking around in vintage or bargain shops or want to sample some of the ethnic cuisine on offer. During prime time—weekends, summer evenings, and festivals—Kensington is a bustling, vibrant place reminiscent of a European street market. Even though you won't find live poultry wandering around the streets these days (a city bylaw banned the keeping of livestock in the area in 1986), the Market's Old World roots are still clearly visible.

Old World marketplace. Start your visit at the corner of Baldwin and Spadina. You'll know you're in the right place because of the funky sculpture of a globe, orbited by some of the products you'll find in the Market, set high on a pole (#1 on the map). This is a great spot to snap a photo or two; face south, and you can even sneak the CN Tower (the world's tallest free-standing structure) into the frame. As you walk west on Baldwin, you'll start to feel the energy of a busy European market: fishmongers, cheese-shops, and produce stands nestle next to a tailor, a baker, and a spice shop.

Vintage clothing. If you love retro, walk south on Kensington Ave.; as you approach Dundas, you'll find several vintage and second-hand clothing stores. Some cheap, some funky, some exquisite—you never know what you might find there.

Café life. Baldwin and Augusta is the heart of the market. Stop for a coffee and contemplate how Kensington Market has provided hope for generations of immigrants fleeing poverty, despair, and danger in their turbulent homelands.

Colourful houses. As you walk down Augusta towards Dundas, you'll start to notice some very colourful Victorian houses. The tradition of painting the housefronts in bright, warm colours dates back to the 1950s, when Portuguese immigrants brought their Mediterranean culture and style to the Market.

A short history

Kensington Market has been the stage where the hopes, dreams, and struggles of wave after wave of immigrants have been played out since the 1880s.

After serving in the War of 1812, George Taylor Denison purchased a parcel of land roughly bounded by Queen St. to the south, Bloor St. to the north, Lippincott to the west, and Augusta to the east. This estate was subdivided in the 1850s; in the 1880s, small houses were built to accommodate immigrant labourers (mostly Scottish and Irish at this time). You can still see many of these houses, which have been inhabited by generations of immigrants over the last 125 years.

Starting around 1910, Jewish immigrants from eastern European and Russia and some Italians moved into the area, which became known as "The Jewish Market". More and more small houses were built on tiny lots, and an open air market began to

cover the streets of the area. Peddlers began to bolt their pushcarts in front of their houses; then extensions at the front of the houses replaced the pushcarts; then the makeshift shops pushed backwards into the owners' front porches and first floors. This gave the area a unique architectural feature—still visible today—of extensions built right out to the sidewalks. From the beginning, the market sold a great range of items imported from the homelands of the various immigrant communities.

After World War II, much of the Jewish population moved uptown; they were replaced by immigrants from the Azores, the Caribbean, Hungary, the Ukraine, and East Asia. During the Vietnam War, a number of young Americans fleeing the Draft settled in the neighbourhood. During the last quarter of the 20th century, the Market became home to immigrants escaping troubled homelands: some of these include Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Vietnam, Iran, and Latin America. Each wave of immigrants brought more diversity and a new "flavour" to the area. The writers, artists, and college students who make their homes in the Market have added a Bohemian element to the predominantly working-class, immigrant neighbourhood.

● A little trivia ●

- The names of Kensington Market's streets reflect the British influence of the Denison family: Oxford, St. Andrew, Wales, and Kensington itself to name a few.
- Former Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman was born and raised in the Kensington Market neighbourhood.
- Every December 21, Kensington Market stages the "Festival of Lights"—a colourful candlelit parade to celebrate the solstice. It begins at sunset and features stilt walkers, fire breathers, musicians, and masked performers; hundreds of people with homemade

lanterns add to the fun. Since the market is always crowded with holiday shoppers at this time, the Festival is a lively pageant.

- Aside from the 1970s sitcom "King of Kensington", the Market has served as a location for several other TV series, movies, and music videos, including "Four Brothers" (2005) and "Due South" (1997).
- At murmurtoronto.ca/kensington, you can listen to stories about the area told by people who live/lived there themselves. You can also use your cell phone to hear the stories while visiting the Market; signs with phone numbers and location codes mark where stories are available.