



Shop with imagination

Creative Shopping



Imagine a whole neighbourhood devoted to exotic east Indian wares. You can smell the curry in the air, hear the pulsating bangra music while you finger delicate gossamer sari fabrics. Or, picture yourself wandering down a tree-lined street of quaint heritage storefronts. You can practically inhale the pumpkin pie! Take a picture of a slightly dog-eared artist's studio with a rugged wooden counter displaying one-of-a-kind curvaceous glass figurines — or a light-filled gallery with

sleek Bauhaus décor. You never know what's around the next corner — and the joy of discovery, uncovering the unique and unexpected just goes on and on... in Toronto.

UPTOWN CHIC

If your style is swank, start with Bloor Street between Yonge and Avenue Road. Affectionately known as Toronto's "mink mile", it's lined with upscale stores like Holt Renfrew, William Ashley China, and Harry Rosen.

Just one well-heeled skip to the north, Yorkville offers high-end fashion, décor and art, in stylish settings. Keep your camera cellphone handy, you might spot a celebrity shopper. Step into Jeanne Lottie Fashion, a purse-lover's paradise — pink-on-pink walls and shelves stacked with her trademark embellished purses, shoes, and jewellery.

Hop on the Yonge subway down to Queen and explore the Hudson's Bay flagship store — from housewares to fashion, you can outfit your home and wardrobe under one roof. Don't forget the Canadiana, with the Bay's trademark coloured stripes. Then take the Queen streetcar west, where the storefronts are almost as fascinating as the wares inside. (Yes, those smiling



models almost wearing lingerie in the MissBehav'N window are real!) This is the hot spot for trendy fashions, from Goth ensembles to yoga gear, like Hush Boutique and Yoga.

Up on College Street, the shops are an avant-garde mix of designer clothing, artist studios, and even a scooter boutique. Since you're in Little Italy, take a break at the Diplomat Café for an authentic Italian panini or pizza.

STOCK UP AT THE MARKET

Scout out Kensington Market, with a mouth-watering array of fruit, vegetables, cheese, and spices and more from an incredible array of cultures. Dust off your negotiation skills, and maybe score three starfruit for the price of two. There's also a dynamite selection of vintage clothing stores, like Courage My Love, with a secret celebrity following.

Explore historic St. Lawrence market, where butchers ply their trade next to greengrocers. Pick up some elk steaks, lavender honey, and the hottest horseradish in town. Have lunch for under \$10 at Crepe It Up (try the "monster" crepe) or traditional peameal bacon on a bun at Carousel Bakery. If you go just before closing time on a Saturday, you'll be sure to score some tasty deals!

EXOTIC FINDS

Did someone say jewellery? Try the Gerrard India Bazaar for incredible trinkets at great prices. An armful of bangles can be yours for a toonie, chandelier earrings for a song, with fabulous deals on glittery necklaces and rings. Look for discounted housewares, especially pots, pans and tea-kettles. Chinatown yields a bounty of herbs, tea, sponge cake and bamboo home accessories. Keep an eye out

for gorgeous china and woks, linens and slippers.

Live la dolce vita in Corso Italia or Little Italy, where the shops are packed with seductive Italian designs, trendy gelaterias and capuccino houses. What's sexier than Italian stilettos? When in Rome...

Get a taste of Poland on Roncesvalles, where the air is thick with mouth-watering aromas, from smoked ham, spicy kielbassa, freshly baked bread and pastry. Designer and vintage clothing stores have a tempting selection of stylish togs. Also a great place for deals on amber jewellery.

MALL TREK

Kudos to the genius who invented the shopping mall, where you can shop indoors, safe from the elements. The Toronto Eaton Centre has three levels of shopping for everyone plus a fountain that spurts water up 10 metres! Or, take the escalator down at First Canadian Place to an amazing 16-mile network of underground shopping arcades in the elaborate PATH, stretching south to Union Station.

Then, get in the car and head north to Yorkdale Shopping Centre, featuring an upscale urban shopping streetscape with 240 shops plus the Rainforest Café, where you can dine to the sound of the tropics. Further north is Vaughan Mills, with an astounding 200 acres of manufacturers' outlets



and brand-name retailers grouped into seven retail “neighbourhoods” such as fashion, entertainment, etc. Relax with a game of ten-pin at Lucky Strikes bowling alley, or take a kid-size set of wheels around the track at NASCAR Speedpark. The bargains keep coming as you head west to Dixie Outlet Mall with more than 130 outlet and specialty stores. Whew!

HERITAGE HUNT

Step back in time on Unionville’s historic Main Street, lined with beautiful heritage buildings that are alive with shops and restaurants. Tucked into the modern weave of the street, you’ll find unique wares like eco-friendly clothing at I’m For Real, made from reclaimed plant resources. Travelling west to Mississauga’s picturesque Streetsville, perched on the banks of the Credit River, the gracious village is a mixture of the past and the present. Check out the aboriginal arts and crafts at Gallery Streetsville, housed in a Victorian home

Now that you’re in the mood for antiques, head to the Beaches. Quirky shops, artists’ studios and boutiques yield Victoriana, Art Deco, Arts and Crafts era goodies and more. Discover one of Toronto’s best kept secrets, Leslieville, where the neighbourhood is dedicated to 70s Danish teak, pine Canadiana, and rumpled vintage clothing shops

Still not satisfied? A stash of vintage stores in Parkdale offers vintage ensembles and jewellery, housewares, and furniture. Remember to check that bottomless treasure chest, Goodwill

FLEA MARKET BONANZA

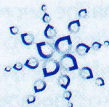
Every flea market has its hidden wonders, and that’s the joy of it. Over at Fantastic Flea Markets, you’ll find

antiques, collectibles, electronics, toys and all kinds of gadgets. North to Dr Flea’s, 400 vendors sell everything from jams and jellies, sports cards, high-tech gizmos, home accessories and a plethora of eclectic wares. Travel east to Scarborough’s Merchants’ Flea Market Inc., where you’ll want to check out the vast jewellery exchange.

THE ULTIMATE FIND

It could be, you’re so taken with the creative city, you’d like a little plot of it to call your own. Check the real estate listings in the neighbourhoods you’ve taken a shine to, and get ready to make the ultimate purchase — a piece of Toronto!

Holiday shopping



‘Tis definitely the season to shop, and in Toronto, it’s a joyful task. Browse through the “One of a Kind” show at the Direct Energy Centre, packed with artisans selling crafts like hand-painted silk scarves, cast iron bird feeders and more, from November 23 to December 3.

Along wreath-laden Main Street in Unionville, it’s an old-fashioned Christmas among the heritage homes, with traditional gifts like home-baked shortbread. Carolers stroll along the sidewalks, and you may spot the jolly old elf himself.

Dazzling Christmas lights cast a cheery glow throughout the Distillery, as you peruse dainty needlecraft, finely crafted pottery and art. Make sure you warm up with a sinfully delicious Mayan Hot Chocolate from Soma Chocolate Maker.

It isn’t Christmas without the Nutcracker — seeing this beloved classic at the spectacular new Four Seasons for the Performing Arts will make this holiday season truly unforgettable.



Toronto Eaton Centre
Photo: Ontario Tourism, 2006