

Oh, Canada!

From Coast to Coast

Story by Deborah Peniuk



Coal Harbor, Vancouver - Photo Courtesy of Benson Kua



Totems in Vancouver Stanley Park

*Across the miles,
through the valleys,
mountains, lakes, rivers,
and streams, Canada has
so very much to offer
and truly, this collection
of five highlights barely
scratches the surface of
this great country I call
home. Come with me as
we explore Canada
together for all its
beauty and splendor,
tastes and delights she
has to reveal!*



A team races in the Dragon Boat Festival in front of the dome at Telus World of Science on False Creek in Vancouver. Photo Courtesy of Tourism BC/Tom Ryan



Aquabus and boats on False Creek in front of Granville Island Market in Vancouver. Photo Courtesy of Tourism BC/Albert Normandin

Vancouver

My hometown is likely the only place in the world where it is possible to ski, play golf, and go sailing – all in the same day. Vancouver is the 3rd largest city in Canada, after Toronto and Montreal, and home to North America's second largest Port (in tonnage, physical size, and business) and is also one of the world's major cruise ship ports not to mention home to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games!

The city of Vancouver is located on west coast of Canada with a population of about 600,000 but when you consider the city's "Greater Area," it climbs to approximately 2 million people. Surrounded by water on three sides, this beautiful and vibrant city is renowned for its world-class attractions and restaurants, including Granville Island, Robson Street, Stanley Park. Plus, it's the birthplace of the one of the world's largest environmental organizations – Greenpeace.

Vancouver is also home to one of the largest film production centers in North America, a title it shares with Toronto. It is recognized as one of the world's most "liveable" cities and produces one of the smallest carbon footprints of any major city in North America.



Tourism BC/Tom Ryan



Stampede Stadium, Calgary

Calgary

Straddling two mountain rivers, the Bow & the Elbow, Calgary rests in a deep river valley where the Great Plains to the east start to crumple on their way to the Canadian Rockies. Calgary has come a long way in a relatively short period of time. Calgary traces its roots back to Fort Calgary, an outpost of the Northwest Mounted Police in 1876. The city has evolved in just over 130 years to the bustling, dynamic urban center of more than a million people and a center for international commerce. And let's not forget the Calgary Stampede!

With an average age hovering around 30, it certainly has the stamina to work hard and play hard. The workday starts near 6 a.m. for many and ends around 4 p.m. You'll find them pursuing their leisure time just as aggressively, as the city empties out on summer weekends to the nearby mountains and parks to some of the most breathtaking destinations on earth including Banff and Kananaskis. In 2010, the Mercer Quality of Living survey ranked Calgary as the #1 Eco-City in



Dining- Alberta Beef
Photo Courtesy of Tourism Calgary



Calgary Zoo - Photo Courtesy of Tourism Calgary



Calgary Skyliune - Photo Courtesy of Tourism Calgary

the world based on water availability and drinkability, waste removal, quality of sewage systems, air pollution, and traffic congestion.

Interesting fact: Calgary recently elected Naheed Nenshi as mayor – the first Muslim mayor in North America.

Toronto

Canada's cosmopolitan centre, Toronto is a city steeped in history but pulsing with the country's largest multicultural population's contemporary vibe.

A financial capital and central immigration destination marks it on the global map, but its thriving arts and culture scene – a continual cycle of



Rockies Bus Tour - Photo Courtesy of Tourism Calgary



Toronto Skyline - Photo Courtesy of Tourism Toronto - Doug Brown

niche festivals and events, draws patrons from all over the world. Toronto has a unique skyline with its CN Tower – the world's highest free-standing structure with a rotating restaurant that captivates diners with breath-taking views of the city, day or night.

Home to some of Canada's top professional sports teams – Maple Leafs, Raptors, Blue Jays, and Argos plus race car fanatics love the roar of Molson Indy engines come summer.

Yonge Street, the longest in the world, adds another attraction to the largest city in Canada and the fifth largest in North America. Home to the Toronto Stock Exchange – Toronto is second only in North America to the New York Stock Exchange.

The third largest center of English-speaking theater productions in the world, Toronto is home to more than 200 professional theater companies with 10,000 performances a year including those by the National Ballet.



Air Canada Centre

Photo Courtesy of Tourism Toronto - Doug Brown



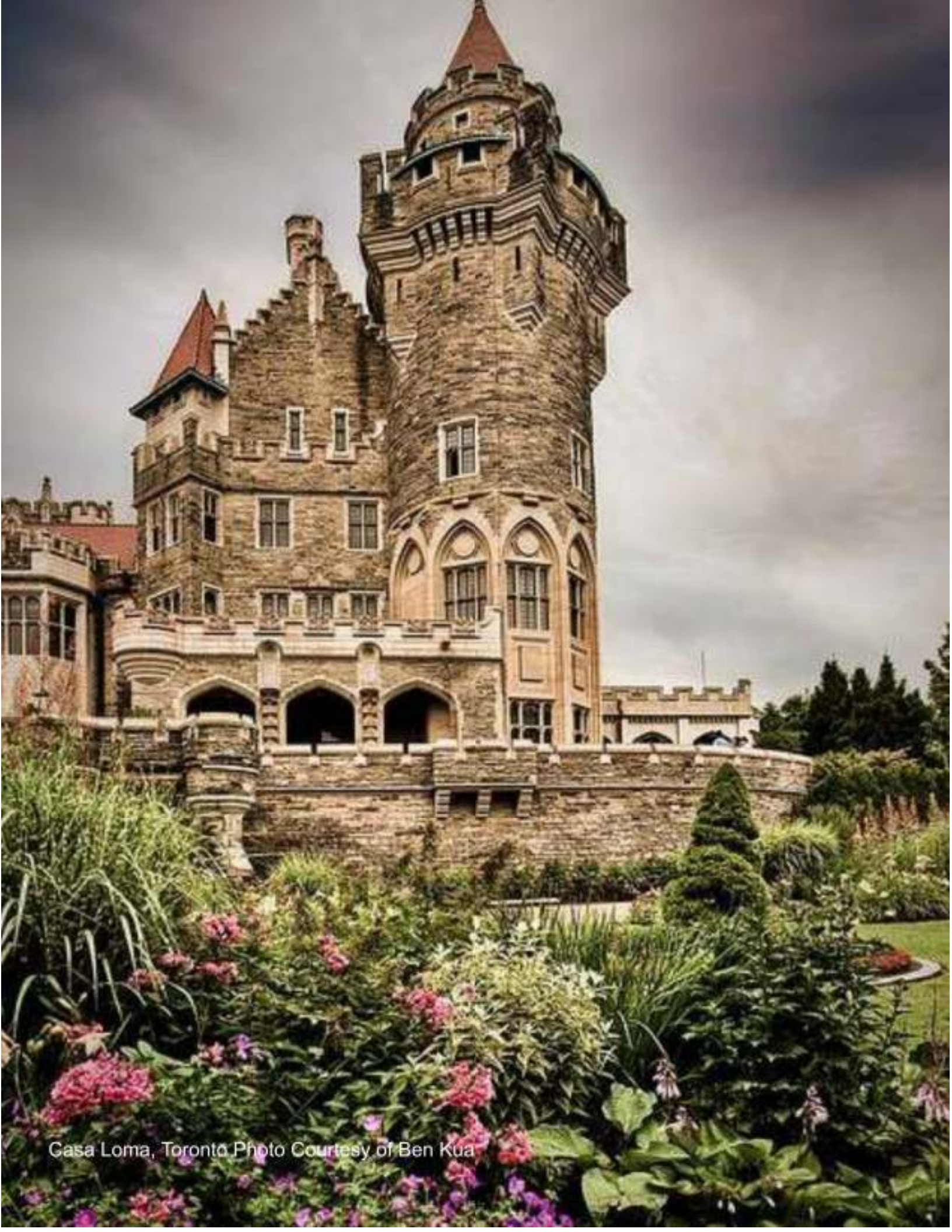
Toronto Skyline - Photo Courtesy of Tourism Toronto

Often called "Hollywood North," this tinsel town is sought for its diversity, locations, excellent production centers, and local talent, and it hosts the annual Toronto International Film Festival attracting huge draws of countless filmgoers and stars.

"Toronto" comes from a Huron word meaning "Meeting Place." That's exactly what Toronto is – a multicultural meeting place for more its 4.5 million people of 70 different nationalities speaking some 100 languages.



Centre island; Photo Courtesy of Tourism Toronto - Doug Brown



Casa Loma, Toronto Photo Courtesy of Ben Kua



Montreal

Bienvenue à Montréal! Now that's hospitality with a distinctly french flavor – appropriate for this second largest French-speaking metropolis in the world. French is only one of 35 or so languages you will hear on the streets of this international island city of 1.6 million inhabitants.

See the famous joie de vivre in the summertime as coffee sippers cram the sidewalk cafés; stand in the long lines outside Schwartz's (best smoked meat), while lovers hold hands on Mount Royal – the city's parkland mountain rising 264 meters.

Splitting the city in half, both physically and psychologically, is Saint Laurent Boulevard, aka The Main. Historically, waves of immigrants first settled here upon their arrival in the New World – the demarcation line between the English and the French (French to the East - English to the West).





Newfoundland Lighthouse - Photo Courtesy of Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism

At the southern end of St-Laurent Boulevard, lies the historic district of Old Montreal, a major tourist attraction with its cobblestone streets and horse-drawn calèche rides. In 1642, the first European settlers staked claim to this land they thought was theirs by divine right. There are remnants of original fortifications and the oldest buildings in Montreal, like the Sainte-Sulpice Seminary, date from late 17th Century.

On the other end of The Main, you'll find the Plateau Mont-Royal neighborhood – Canada's most densely populated area with its smaller streets, winding staircases and small BYOW (bring your own wine) restaurants – the picture of true Montreal life. No visit to Montreal is complete without a visit to the Underground City. While Montreal above-ground has been described as the tip of the urban iceberg, below lies the world's most extensive system of interconnected pedestrian and Metro (subway) networks linking buildings, boutiques, restaurants, and even residential apartments. It's easy to see why "cosmopolitan" is the most used adjective in describing Montreal.

St.Johns NFLD

St. John's is a world apart from the rest of



St. John's at Night - Photo Courtesy of Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism



Gros Morne Fjords - Photo Courtesy of Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism

Newfoundland. Small fishing villages and long empty roads are infused with solitude, tranquility, and wildness. St. John's though, is surprisingly vibrant, bustling, and cultured, and seems to burst with color and life. Fans of The Republic of Doyle Show will recognize this city from its scenery.

St. John's harbor is just as impressive and protected from the open sea by stony hills accessible only through a pinched gap called The Narrows, which sits at the north end of the harbor, and hidden from view from much of the downtown. First-time visitors may think they've stumbled upon a small lake – although one with tankers and other oceangoing ships sailing its waters.

Still very much a working harbor today, St. John's harbor is the hub of much of the province's commerce, so don't expect this place to be very quaint. Across the way are charmless oil-tank farms and on Harbour Street downtown, you'll often find hulking ships tied up. Come and truly appreciate the city's urban attitude, its diversity of culture, the wide choice of hotels and motels, and of course, the varied cuisine in its restaurants.

From sea to shining sea, Canada offers a diverse range of experiences. Make sure you take the time to explore the splendor and majesty that is Canada!

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Photo Courtesy of Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism



Whale & Kayaker - Photo Courtesy of Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism