
Travel Guide Toronto

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Quick view

Toronto - a brief overview

Toronto is one of the most multicultural cities in the world, and its swirl of different flavours plays a large part in shaping the destination's rich, welcoming character. Its diversity, however, is by no means restricted to its population – sitting pretty on the shores of Lake Ontario, it's somewhere that balances

space-age architecture with mellow parkland, hipster bars with high-end boutiques and hushed modern art galleries with clattering food markets. More than two and a half million people call Canada's largest city home, and it has strong claim to being the country's cultural heart too.



Canada

General Information

Country overview

Canada is a rich and diverse travel destination. Enjoy outdoor sports such as skiing, canoeing and sailing alongside museums and theater – this enormous country offers a wide range of activities for every taste and interest. The west of Canada is mainly famous for its breathtaking landscapes, while the east is a blend of European charm and North American bustle.

The north is the best place for observing wild animals. If solitude is what you seek, the wide-open spaces are the place for you. Most Canadians live in large cities like Vancouver in the west or Quebec, Montreal or Toronto in the east.

Geography

Canada covers the northern part of the North American continent, with the exception of Alaska in the northwest, which is a US state. Greenland is off the coast of Canada in the northeast; to the west is the Pacific Ocean, and to the east the Atlantic. In the south, the 48th parallel forms the border with the USA. After Russia, Canada is the largest country in the world by land mass, but it only has 37 million residents.

Most of the middle of the country consists of the breadbasket region of the Laurentian Plateau. The Rocky Mountains are to the west, and to the southeast are the Great Lakes, the Saint Lawrence River and Niagara Falls.

General knowledge

Key facts

Population: 37.06 million (2018 estimate)

Capital: Ottawa

Language

English and French are the official languages.

Currency

1 Canadian dollar = 100 cents.

Currency abbreviation: C\$, CAD (ISO code). Bank notes come in values of 100,

50, 20, 10, and 5 C\$, and coins have face values of 2 and 1 C\$, and 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 cent.

Electricity

110 V/120 V, 60 Hz. Two-pronged flat plugs. Adapters are required for European plugs.

Public holidays

National holidays between January 2020 and December 2021 are listed below.

Some provinces of Canada also observe additional holidays.

* not in all provinces

2020

New Year's Day: 1 January 2020
Good Friday: 10 April 2020
Victoria Day: 18 May 2020*
Canada Day (Republic Day): 1 July 2020
Labor Day: 7 September 2020
Thanksgiving Day: 12 October 2020*
Remembrance Day: 11 November 2020*
Christmas Day: 25 December 2020

2021

New Year's Day: 1 January 2021
Good Friday: 2 April 2021
Victoria Day: 24 May 2021*
Canada Day (Republic Day): 1 July 2021
Labor Day: 6 September 2021
Thanksgiving Day: 11 October 2021*
Remembrance Day: 11 November 2021*
Christmas Day: 25 December 2021

All information subject to change.



Travel etiquette

How to fit in

Conduct: Dos and don'ts

Canadians shake hands to greet each other. In the French-speaking areas of the country, they sometimes greet each other with a light kiss on each cheek (bises). Typical rules of politeness apply when visiting someone's home. Formal clothing is expected in elegant clubs, restaurants and at the theater.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in public buildings and restaurants. Some places may have designated smoking areas.

Tipping

Service generally is not included in hotel and restaurant bills. A customary tip is 10 to 15 percent of the total bill (before GST/VAT). Taxi drivers also expect about 15 percent. Baggage porters should be tipped 1 C\$ per piece of luggage, and hotel staff generally expect a tip of 1-2 C\$ per day of your stay when you depart.



Health Health

Main emergency number: 911

Food & Drink

Tap water is safe to drink and food safety standards are high. If camping in the backcountry, you should be aware of the risks of giardia, where water in streams or lakes has been contaminated by animal waste. This can cause diarrhoea, vomiting and headaches. Ensure you boil, filter or purify water first; purification tablets are easy to buy in any outdoor equipment store. You should also be aware of the dangers of eating shellfish directly from the sea, which can cause paralytic shellfish poisoning, resulting in illness or death. Check locally before you travel.

Other Risks

Summer can bring extremely high temperatures, so you should guard against the problems of heat and sunstroke. Wear sunscreen to prevent sunburn, particularly on days when the widely publicised UV rating is high. (Remember that sunburn can be a risk in winter too, especially if you're skiing, when the high altitude and reflection from the snow can be a potent combination.) In winter, on the other hand, temperatures can be bitterly cold and frostbite is a real risk; ensure you wear multiple layers and a hat, and cover your face when outdoors.

Rabies is present in animals. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay.

An outbreak of hepatitis A was reported in Vancouver Island in 2011, but most cases have been confined to one cultural group on the island. Vaccination against hepatitis A is not advised unless you're visiting the outbreak area.

If walking in tick-infested woodland and brush areas, you should be aware of the risk of Lyme disease. Ensure you cover bare skin (tucking in all clothes), use insect repellent containing DEET and remove any attached ticks using tweezers. The disease is transmitted from the bites of the western blacklegged tick in British Columbia and the blacklegged or deer tick in other parts of Canada. Since 2010, there has been an increased risk in southern Quebec due to newly discovered populations of ticks carrying the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. The first symptom is usually a circular rash, accompanied by fatigue, chills, fever, headache, muscle and joint pain and swollen lymph nodes. You should seek treatment as soon as possible as symptoms can worsen if left untreated, though fatalities are rare.



Phone calls & Internet Phone calls & Internet

Country code: +1

Telephone

Public telephones are now rare, but a few of them still exist. They are operated with coins, phone cards or credit cards.

Mobile phone

CDMA and GSM (800, 850, and 1900 MHz). Not all European mobile phones will work in Canadian networks. Mobile phone coverage can be spotty outside of densely populated areas. The Canadian mobile phone network is organized regionally. Providers include Bell Canada (bell.ca), Telus (telus.com), and Rogers (rogers.com). Renting mobile phones locally, or doing so online in advance of your

trip, is cheap and easy.

Internet

There are internet cafés in larger cities, but their numbers are dwindling as more and more cafés and restaurants are offering their guests free Wi-Fi access. Wi-Fi is often available at popular tourist attractions. A map of free Wi-Fi hot spots is available for Montreal from Zap (zapwifipublic.ca).



Top 10 sights Top 10 sights in Toronto

CN Tower

The city's most instantly recognisable symbol, it remains a hugely popular visitor attraction. Gaze out at the view from what is still the tallest free-standing structure in the western hemisphere.

301 Front Street W, Ontario M5V 2T6 Toronto Canada Tel: 416 868 6937	Opening times: Daily 0900-2230 www.cntower.ca
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Royal Ontario Museum

A huge, all-encompassing gem of a museum, it focuses mainly on world cultures and natural history, with exhibitions on everything from dinosaurs to Canada's First Peoples.

100 Queens Park, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C6 Toronto Canada Tel: 416 586 8000	Opening times: Sat-Thurs 1000-1730 Fri 1000-1830 www.rom.on.ca
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Casa Loma

Billed as 'North America's only castle', this Gothic Revival-style mansion was built only a century ago by a local financier. The house and gardens remain an enjoyable visitor attraction.

1 Austin Terrace, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1X8 Toronto Canada Tel: 416 923 1171	Opening times: Daily 0930-1700 www.casaloma.org
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Ripley's Aquarium of Canada

Open since late 2013 and occupying a plum downtown location, this is the largest indoor aquarium in Canada with more than 5 million litres of marine and freshwater habitats.

288 Bremner Boulevard, Toronto, Ontario M5V 3L9 Toronto Canada Tel: 647 351 3474	Opening times: Daily 0900-2300 www.ripleysaquarium.com/canada
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Toronto Zoo

A comprehensive zoo with a substantial conservation programme, it has more than 5,000 animals from various corners of the world.

2000 Meadowvale Road, Toronto, Ontario M1B 5K7 Toronto Canada Tel: 416 392 5929	Opening times: Daily 0900-1900 (May-Aug) 0930-1630 (Nov-Dec) Mon-Fri 0930-1630 Sat-Sun 0930-1800 (Sep-Oct)
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www.torontozoo.com

Ontario Science Centre

Open since the 1960s – and originally one of the world's first look-and-touch interactive museums – the centre has modernised to offer plenty to the modern visitor.

770 Don Mills Road, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1T3 Toronto Canada Tel: 416 696 1000	Opening times: Mon-Fri 1000-1600 Sat-Sun 1000-1700
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www.ontariosciencecentre.ca

Art Gallery of Ontario

Standing behind a strikingly modern facade designed by Frank Gehry, this excellent gallery has a collection of 80,000 works spanning various continents, styles and centuries.

317 Dundas Street W, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1G4 Toronto Canada Tel: 416 979 6648	Opening times: Tue and Thurs-Sun 1000-1730 Wed 1000-2030
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www.ago.net

Hockey Hall of Fame

A museum and hall of fame in one, this perennially popular attraction details the history of Canada's favourite sport. It's heaven for fans, and interesting for those curious about the local passion.

30 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1X8 Toronto Canada Tel: 416 360 7765	Opening times: Mon-Sat 0930-1800 Sun 1000-1800 (Jul-Aug) Mon-Fri 1000-1700 Sat 0930-1800 Sun 1030-1700 (Sep-June)
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www.hhof.com

Bata Shoe Museum

One of Toronto's – indeed Canada's – quirkiest attractions, the museum follows the steps of footwear from ancient Egyptian footwear to high-heeled fashion accessories. Its tagline is 'For the Curious'.

327 Bloor Street W, Toronto, Ontario	Opening times:
M5S 1W7 Toronto	Mon-Wed and Fri-Sat 1000-1700
Canada	Thurs 1000-2000
Tel: 416 979 7799	Sun 1200-1700

www.batashoemuseum.com

Canada's Wonderland

A summer magnet for families and g-force lovers, this is a large-scale theme park with rides including Leviathan, Vortex, Shockwave and Behemoth. Planet Snoopy is on hand for younger visitors.

9580 Jane Street, Vaughan, Ontario	Opening times:
L6A 1S6 Toronto	Daily 1000-2200 (late Jun-Aug)
Canada	
Tel: 905 832 8131	www.canadaswonderland.com



Shopping in Toronto

Shopping in Toronto

Key Areas

The city's main shopping drag is Queen Street West, where you'll find everything from comic-book shops to hot new design boutiques, alongside a whole host of more familiar stores. If haute couture's your thing, the stylish Bloor-Yorkville neighbourhood is where to head.

Markets

Kensington Market (Kensington Avenue) is a warren of vintage stalls and retro retailers, making it a great bet for one-off finds,

while a complex of a very different kind – St Lawrence Market (92-95 Front Street East) – is where to come when you've worked up an appetite. It's considered one of the world's best food markets.

Shopping Centres

The inescapable Eaton Centre (220 Yonge Street) is right in the heart of downtown affairs and houses more than 230 retailers. Elsewhere, the vast Yorkdale Shopping Centre (3401 Dufferin Street) is another important mall, playing home to – among others – the famous department store Holt Renfrew.



Restaurants

Restaurants in Toronto

Toronto's multiculturalism translates into some seriously impressive dining options, whether you're eating cheap, going upscale or just in search of some home-cooked comfort food.

Bosk

Set within the Shangri La Hotel, this offers quality fine dining.

188 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario
M5H 0A3 Toronto
Canada Price: Expensive

Scaramouche

Long one of Toronto's best, with elegant French cuisine.

1 Benvenuto Place, Toronto, Ontario Price: Expensive
M4V 1H3 Toronto
Canada

Lisbon by Night

A Portuguese restaurant with an excellent reputation for its seafood.

802 Dundas Street W, Toronto, Ontario Price: Moderate
M6J 1V3 Toronto
Canada

Richmond Station

A much acclaimed neighbourhood restaurant with inventive dishes.

1 Richmond Street W, Toronto, Ontario Price: Moderate
M5H 3W4 Toronto
Canada

Cheesewerks

A cheese-themed menu makes it a winner with families.

56 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario Price: Cheap
M5V 2P7 Toronto
Canada



Nightlife Nightlife in Toronto

If you know where to look, this is a city with a phenomenally eclectic range of nightlife options – and again, the city's international flavours do much to shape the diversity that's on offer.

Black Hoof Cocktail Bar

Does what the name suggests, and in some style, serving up everything from oak-aged gin martinez to guajillo margarita.

923 Dundas Street W
M6J 1W3 Toronto
Canada

Indie Alehouse

A mecca for craft beer fans, this small-batch brewer has an ever-changing list of beers on tap – there's food too.

2876 Dundas Street W, Toronto,
Ontario
M6P 1Y8 Toronto
Canada

EFS

A rooftop patio aimed at a classy, mature crowd – the name stands for 'Everything for Sale'.

647 King Street W, Toronto, Ontario
M5V 1M5 Toronto
Canada

Uniu Nightclub

Where to head for a lively house/techno experience, with regular international and local DJs.

473 Adelaide Street W, Toronto,
Ontario
M5V 1T1 Toronto
Canada

Archive

A laid-back wine bar, perfect for those who enjoy a decent tittle without dressing to the nines.

909 Dundas Street W, Toronto, Ontario
M6J 1V9 Toronto
Canada



Calendar of events Calendar of events

Winter/Summerlicious

For food fanatics everywhere, Toronto is the place to be in early February and July. Summerlicious, the first two weeks of July, and Winterlicious, the first two weeks of February, are held during the two times of the year when restaurant attendance is typically poor. During the festival, a series of major restaurants across the city offer a limited menu of prix fixe dinners at discounted prices. Lunches usually vary from \$15 to \$30 while dinners run from \$25 to \$45 per person.

January 31 – February 13, 2020

Venue: Participating restaurants

Toronto International Dragon Boat Race Festival

Established in 1989, the International Dragon Boat Race Festival is a two-day event that takes place late June in Toronto Centre Island. With over 5,000 athletes on 180 to 200 teams, the race is designed to evoke team spirit and community amongst the players. Teams are not only from Canada, but also come from the US, the Caribbean Islands, Europe, and Asia. During the event, spectators can enjoy booths that display performances by Toronto-based artists of various Caribbean and Latin American cultures.

June 21 - 22, 2020

Venue: Marilyn Bell Park

Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival

Toronto's largest theatre and performance festival, this draws 90,000 people over 12 days every year to see more than 155 productions. Events range from dramas to musical extravaganzas to improv and take place in local theatres as well as in unusual spots: playgrounds, parking lots and more. A FringeKids! venue hosts several plays exclusively for children and families. The festival also has a beer tent, two outdoor patios and a free nightly cabaret.

July 1 - 12, 2020

Venue: Various venues

Beaches International Jazz Festival

Jazz musicians from around the world congregate on Toronto's beaches and lakeside parks for this annual international outdoor festival. Enjoy an eclectic mix of concerts from world-renowned and emerging artists, including swing, dixieland, Latin-inspired tunes and cracking big band performances. A highlight is Streetfest, where Canadian bands entertain the crowds along a 2km (1.2-mile) stretch of Queen Street East.

July 3 - 26, 2020

Venue: Various Toronto beaches

Toronto International Film Festival

The Toronto International Film Festival has become the launching pad for the best of international, Hollywood and Canadian cinema, and is recognised as the most important film festival after Cannes. Celebrities from around the world congregate in the city during September for a sparkling round of premiers, parties and galas. Expect to see the likes of Johnny Depp, Ryan Gosling and Robert De Niro being ushered between film premiers.

September 5 - 15, 2020

Venue: Various Venues



Hotels Hotels in Toronto

A city as big and bold as Toronto is always going to have a ready choice of fantastic places to stay – and so it proves. Big or boutique, funky or no-frills, deluxe or down-at-home, Toronto's hotel stock has it all.

Trump International Hotel & Tower Toronto

This five-star property has more than 250 rooms and is renowned for its service

levels.

325 Bay St, Toronto, Ontario
M5H 4G3 Toronto
Canada

Category: Expensive

Drake Hotel Toronto

A self-proclaimed 'hotbed for culture', this is a fun, fresh, stylish choice.

1150 Queen Street W, Toronto, Ontario Category: Moderate
M6J 1J3 Toronto
Canada

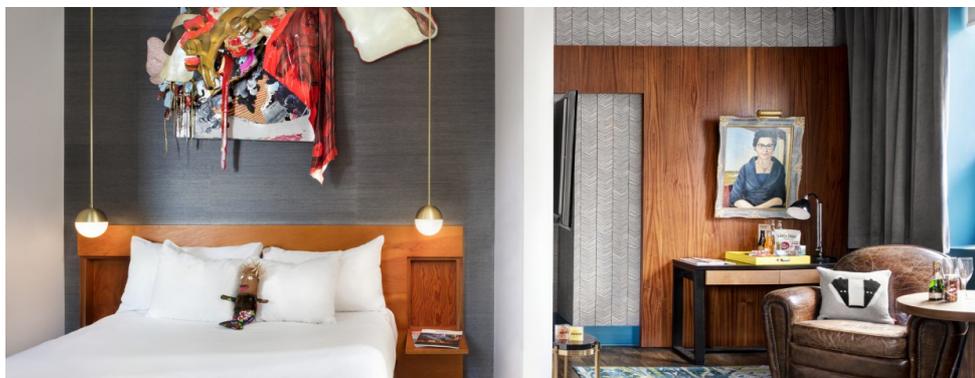
Stay Inn

An affordable option located reasonably close to the downtown area.

560 Evans Avenue, Toronto, Ontario Category: Cheap
M8W 2W1 Toronto
Canada



Best of West Queen West



©Lisa Petrole

Toronto is not like other major cities. It's more tolerant, more cosmopolitan and also more friendly; a city in which cultural and ethnic diversity have long become a naturally accepted part of daily life. You get a sense of this in many places – at Wanda's Pie in the Sky café in the alternative Kensington Market neighborhood, for instance, when your homemade cake is brought to you by a waitress with a full-body tattoo. Or when the – allegedly – famous Peameal Bacon on a Bun is practically forced on you at the Carousel Bakery in the nostalgic St. Lawrence market hall – for free, of course. Or when you're listening to the sold-out concert of a pretty laid-back cover band at The Drake, your hotel in the hip West Queen West neighborhood, and a local you happen to get talking to asks incredulously: "The Drake's a hotel that actually rents out rooms?" It turns out that he regularly comes here, but not to spend the night: The Drake is a kind of cultural center for West Queen West. And the name "West Queen West" for one of the most interesting corners of Toronto is not a mistaken duplication, by the way: Queen Street West is a very long street, but only its western section – the 15 blocks between Bathurst Street and Gladstone Avenue – is considered hip and vibrant. That's where a lively art and culture scene has sprung up, with offbeat boutiques and gastronomic establishments of every flavor. "A vibrant scene has found itself a common roof in

The Drake Hotel,” is how Canadian food blogger Andrew Dobson explains the phenomenon: “You can spend a whole week in West Queen West without feeling you’re wasting your time.”

The Drake

The Drake Hotel has established itself as a lively mix of local trendy hangout and laid-back urban boutique hotel with just 19 attractive rooms, each with a different decor. For locals, it’s the most important meeting place in the neighborhood thanks to its program of live acts, well-frequented rooftop bar and excellent café on the ground floor. Bonus: Next to the reception desk, there’s a retro passport photo machine that’s a huge hit with Toronto’s partygoers.

1150 Queen Street West
Toronto
ON M6J 1J3

www.thedrakehotel.ca/

Nota Bene

Hip new restaurant serving modern Canadian fare with a good range of vegan and vegetarian options. As you sit in the large and elaborately designed dining room, you can’t help noticing that no expense was spared on the interior designer’s fee. If you’re lucky enough to have Martin from Jena in Germany waiting at your table, you can also look forward to some particularly honest and competent views on the wine list.

180 Queen Street West
Toronto
Tel. +1-416/977 6400

Opening times:
Mon, 1130–1430,
1700–2200
Tue/Wed 1130–1430,
1700–2200
Thu/Fri 1130–1430,
1700–2300
Sat 1700–2300
Closed: Sun

notabenerestaurant.com/

Docs Leather Shop

The neighborhood regards Doc as its philosopher and conscience. His two-story mix of motorcycle leathershop, retro memorabilia and photo museum – he snaps anyone wearing a biker vest and hangs the photos on the wall for posterity – is a popular haunt for locals with a particular fascination for all things biking-related.

726 Queen Street West
Toronto
Tel. +1-416/504 8888

www.doc sleathers.com

Type Books

At this “brilliant little chocolate box for bibliophiles,” there’s a family atmosphere

and a clearly organized, because rigorously curated, selection of books. The store simply wishes not to present its clients with printed trash. So it somehow makes sense that the booksellers themselves also write. Derek McCormack for one has just published a splendid collection of short stories.

883 Queen Street West	Opening times:
Toronto	Mon–Fri 1000–1800
Tel. +1-416/366 8973	Sat 1000-1900
	Sun 1100–1800

www.typebooks.ca

Atomic Design

Since 2008, the young designer Lawrence Blairs has been running the colorful, but style-themed furniture design store Atomic Design, which specializes in Canadian contemporary and mid-century design. Available articles include pieces by Ray & Charles Eames, Ingo Maurer and Victor Vasarely.

965 Queen Street West	Opening times:
Toronto	Tue–Sat 1200–1800
Tel. +1-416/912 2358	Sun and Mon only by appointment

www.atomicdesign.ca

The Paper Place

A temple for paper lovers. This store will even order the favorite material of designers, graphic artists and illustrators is occasionally from Japan, if the customer so wishes. From paper flowers to elegant coffee-table books, this is the place to find the most beautiful paper.

887 Queen Street West	Opening times:
Toronto	Mon-Wed 1000–1800
Tel. +1-416/703 0089	Thu-Fri 1000–2000
	Sat 1000–1800
	Sun 1200–1700

shop.thepaperplace.ca/

Harlem Underground

Soul food at this eatery means Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean cuisine with a modern twist. But we wouldn't be in Toronto if it weren't also about making a stand: "We want to celebrate the city's ethnic and cultural diversity." Our tip: Try the southern fried chicken and waffle ...

745 Queen Street West	Opening times:
Toronto	Mon-Thu 1630–2300
Tel. +1-416/368 1920	Fri 1630–2400
	Sat 1000–2400
	Sun 1000–2300

www.harlemrestaurant.com

The Beaver

Extremely laid-back hangout with a carelessly funky decor that since 2006 has earned itself a loyal clientele with regular DJ events and live gigs – lots of drag and burlesque, but also karaoke. Best come lightly dressed because the place is small, so it's very, very communicative.

1192 Queen Street West
Toronto
Tel. +1-416/537 2768

Opening times:
daily 1000–0200

www.thebeavertoronto.com

Brodawka & Friends

Before Jeff Brodawka opened his extraordinary shoe boutique in Toronto four years ago, the man with a degree in industrial design worked for John Fluevog in Vancouver. No wonder, then, that his product portfolio is very different from those of “normal” shoe stores. Sometimes garish, sometimes classic, often a little provocative, his shoes all have one thing in common: top handcrafted quality. One of his quotes tells us where his creative inspiration comes from: “When I was in London, seeing my first Paul Smith store was a revelation.”

1114 Queen Street West
Toronto
Tel. +1-416/893 0173

Opening times:
Mon-Sat 1100–1900
Sun 1200-1700

Fawn

Aside from designer Angela Phung's The Store in Queen (719 West Queen West), Fawn, Kasha Bilobram's original vintage-style boutique, has since 2007 established itself as a prime address for unusual women's fashion. Fawn is often the first address for Asian and American upcoming labels, such as In God We Trust, Uzi, Markoo, and A Detacher by Polish designer Monika Kowalska.

967 Queen Street West
Toronto
Tel. +1-647/344 4703

Opening times:
Tue–Sat 1200–1900
Sun 1200–1800
Mon closed

www.shopfawn.com