

Students Embrace Vibrant Learning in Toronto

One of the world's most ethnically diverse cities and home to some of the most inspired attractions, a trip to Toronto, Ontario, provides endless learning possibilities in student group travel.

Leading with a very clear mission, the Ontario Science Center was created to open the minds of visitors to science, and to produce excitement and curiosity in science and technology. Opened in 1969, the museum was one of the first interactive science museums in the world. Rather than presenting exhibits with static displays, the center created exhibits from various elements of science that allow visitors to experience those scientific fundamentals. Here, you become a part of the science process. For instance, visitors can discover an urban wetland, create a personalized light show, or play a watery musical instrument that's part water, part piano. More than 800 exhibits are showcased in 13 exhibit halls covering topics such as technology, the environment, space, the human body, and sports. Daily demonstrations illustrate scientific principles of nature, and student groups can also take in a film at the Omnimax Theater.

Another student favorite, Canada's National Tower, commonly referred to as the CN Tower, is one of the city's most recognized landmarks. Construction on the CN Tower began in 1973 and it stands at a total height of more than 1,815 feet. Visitors to the tower begin their tour with a ride up a high-speed elevator to the indoor/outdoor observation decks. Here, they can take in views of Toronto and the surrounding area, as well as gain a unique perspective of how high they actually are by looking down through the glass floor to the ground hundreds of feet below. A 20-minute "The Height of Excellence" documentary provides a look at the engineering marvel that is the CN Tower. The attraction is located on the north shore of the Lake Ontario in the heart of the Entertainment District.

Overlooking downtown Toronto, Casa Loma is a majestic castle, built in the style of European medieval castles. Here, visitors step back in time as they tour the 98-room castle. In addition to the home, Casa Loma includes stables, connected to the castle by an 800-foot underground tunnel, and six acres of gardens. Constructed by a prominent Toronto businessman and industrialist, more than 300 men worked on the home at cost of \$3.5 million. On guided tours, visitors explore elegantly decorated rooms, climb the towers, and enjoy a walk through the extensive gardens. Other highlights include a full-body shower and the grandiose Great Hall.

Opened in 1914, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) features various galleries which include the Canadian Heritage Floor Galleries, the East-Asia Gallery, Hands-on Biodiversity, Inco Limited Gallery of Earth Sciences, Life Sciences, and Paleontology Galleries, and more. Some of the most popular exhibits include a bat cave, Egyptian mummy, and the newly opened "Age of Dinosaurs," presenting one of Canada's largest permanent collections of dinosaurs. On-site educational programs are available at the ROM to provide a more theme-focused visit for student groups.

For those student groups with an interest in sports, SkyDome is home to the Toronto Blue Jay and one of Toronto's proudest architectural achievements. As the world's largest stadium with a retractable roof, the SkyDome serves as symbol of the city. During tours of SkyDome, student tours can marvel at the structure's innovative roof design. Operated by a computer, the roof panels move to stack up on top of each other along one end of the stadium, leaving all playing surfaces and nearly all of the seats under open sky when the roof is retracted. In addition to Blue Jays baseball games, SkyDome also hosts football games, tennis matches, basketball games, and concerts.

Eaton Centre is one of Toronto's most popular tourist attractions. Located along Yonge Street, the longest street in the world, Eaton Centre features more than 285 shops, restaurants, and services. The three-level mall encompasses a four-block area, providing plenty of diversions for student tours. Two trademarks of the Eaton Centre are "Flight Stop," a sculpture by Michael Snow, and rendition of Canadian geese in their migratory patterns, suspended from Eaton's vaulted glass ceiling. The other is the famous "shooting" fountain located in the Centre Court. On average, the water shoots 85 feet into the air but can reach heights of 120 feet.

Known as one of the most ethnically diverse cities, Toronto is made up of a variety of ethnic neighborhoods, each with their own unique sights and sounds. Two of the city's most distinctive areas are Chinatown and Kensington Market.

Chinatown is one of the largest Asian communities in North America, made up of people from areas such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, and more. Chinatown offers student group travelers a number of authentic indoor and outdoor food markets, clothing stores, herb and medicinal shops, and restaurants. A few blocks from Chinatown, Kensington Market showcases Portuguese, West Indian, and Caribbean culture. Students enjoy the eclectic mix of outdoor food stands and produce shops, unique restaurants and café, and vintage clothing boutiques.

About the Author

[Travel Adventures](#) Travel Adventures is a student tour provider staffed by educators who understand the needs of teachers. It has served over one half million students since 1987 and its mission is to "empower teachers to create change by expanding the classroom to the world."

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