

A Quick Guide to Toronto

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN HISTORY
YORK UNIVERSITY

By

The Graduate History Students Association (GHSA)

Ed. Ian Milligan, Erin Dolmage and Mark Brownlie

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Introduction

Let us be the first to welcome you to the City of Toronto, This is a guide for professional students - for those obtaining Masters of Arts or Doctor of Philosophy degrees in 'The Big Smoke,' or 'T.O.'

York University's is part of the former city of **North York**, however with amalgamation in 1998 it is now part of the city of Toronto. Making York Toronto's second-largest university. Looming in the shadow of University of Toronto, with its downtown location, 'world-class' name and bird-shaped libraries - York University is carving out a name for itself.

Toronto is a city of two and a half million people on Lake Ontario, in southwestern Ontario. It is the centre of the aptly named **Greater Toronto Area (GTA)**, made up of the major cities of **Mississauga, Oakville, Markham, Vaughan, Brampton, Oshawa, Pickering, and Ajax** as well as minor cities such as **Bradford** (home to a wonderful carrot festival apparently). Connected by a web of trains and highways, Torontonians are proud of the fact that **Highway 401** is truly a world-class highway with congestion making it the **most-heavily traveled highway in North America!**

Toronto can be summed up in one phrase: **Toronto is a city of neighbourhoods**. With strong geographic identities throughout the city, Torontonians are proud inhabitants of areas such as the **Annex, the Junction, Midtown, Roncesvalles, Parkdale, High Park, Leslieville, the Beaches** or **Riverdale**. Each has a distinctive feel, and each has its pros and cons. Many of them hold street festivals throughout the year, and you are strongly encouraged to go check them out. While some are publicized, others are simply stumbled across.

Things You Should Do Immediately (If Not Sooner)

(Well, that is probably a bit of an exaggeration. But you may want to get on some of these in the near future).

Welcome to Grad School. Sure, it's early September now, but by the next time you look it'll be October already. Here are some things to do right away. Don't forget to have fun, because that's presumably at least one of the reasons you're in grad school?

- Get your **YU-Card**, which functions as both your student ID card and library card. You can do this at the beginning of the semester in the Vari Link, the hallway that connects Vari Hall and the Ross building, and at any other time at the William Small Centre during office hours. Like what you're wearing, because this card is valid for the next four years (unless you "lose" it; it costs \$20 to replace). For office hours and additional info about the many uses of the YU-Card, see [Get Your Card](#).
- Look at your **syllabuses**. This seems pretty obvious, but do it. You should have a sense of when all your papers and presentations will be due. Go home and put them on a calendar; if you are TA-ing, write the undergraduate course deadlines on the same calendar in a different color. This will help you plan your time distribution; remember, it is hard to write a paper in the same week that you are grading fifty others.
- Begin acquiring your reading materials, especially for the first few weeks. This is especially important for classes that tend to be larger and so, draw on fewer copies of the same library books. For additional library resources, see your **Guide**.
- Begin your grant applications now. **OGS/SSHRC** deadlines especially will arrive much sooner than you think (especially once you begin reading for classes). Begin writing your project proposals as soon as possible. These can take a lot of time, and if you begin now your putative supervisor (and other faculty and colleagues) can help you revise and edit it. It also will help you think about your project and may serve as part of your paper itself or formal proposal. There are also workshops held in September and October to help you reformat and polish your proposals. These are invaluable.
- Order your transcripts to apply for grants. You need one per competition (**OGS, SSHRC**). Do this now, especially if you're from out of province, as there is time required to process the transcript and mail it to you. At York the transcripts must be ordered by **September 15** to be received in time for the competitions.
- Solicit **references** for grant applications. Give your writers plenty of notice; they will need to write your letter and, if they are distant, mail it to you. Begin asking as soon as possible, but as much as four weeks before you want the letters in hand; remind your references two weeks prior to the deadline. If you want great letters, send your reference writers a copy of your proposal, your CV and (especially if it is a good one) your transcript. A self addressed stamped envelope is never a bad idea. This helps them write a thorough, "I really know this person" letter.
- If you are a PhD student, figure out a way to take notes on books (especially those in your comprehensive fields) and keep them. You want title, author, year of publication, thesis, and important arguments, historiographical contributions and maybe critiques listed for all of your readings. Either take notes on all readings in one book or keep them in one place after you use them for your course. Other ideas include using recipe cards or building a database using a program like Zotero, Bento or Filemaker. Even if you put all your bits of paper with this info on them in a shoebox, you will love yourself for doing it during comps.

- If you are a member of **CUPE** (you are a GA or TA), fill out your health form and hand it in at the CUPE office, (2050 TEL until December 2012) so that you can go to the dentist as soon as possible! This way you will obtain your insurance card quickly which will save you \$ instantly without a lot of forms. The CUPE coverage is much better than the GSA coverage so make sure you have submitted your paperwork before the end of September.
- If you do not yet have a **supervisor**, do some research on the faculty in the department and meet with prospective faculty members to gauge their interest in you and your project. Your putative supervisor will be of great assistance not only for your paper, but also can help with grant applications and through the graduate process. In addition, many particular supervisors are in demand.
- If you do have a supervisor, or a potential supervisor, introduce yourself.
- Do a library tutorial or a drop-in workshop, now before you don't have enough time to do it. It will help familiarize you with resources available. [Workshops](#)
- [Online tutorials](#)
- Make sure both the history department and human resources (if you are paid as a GA or TA) have your **correct mailing address and contact information**. This is especially important for those receiving cheques and during tax time. You must inform each office separately.
- Sign up for your York U email account (many important messages will come through this account) and your **ACADLABS** account (so that you can use university computers, and wireless internet on your own laptop at the university). Go to [UIT](#). As well, if you haven't already, sign up for Passport York, where you can do all sorts of good stuff: register, enroll, and monitor financial stuff and grades: it is important.

Navigating Toronto

Toronto Transportation Commission

All over Toronto (mostly downtown)

Phone: 416.393.INFO

[TTC Website](#)

Most likely, you'll find yourself using the streetcars, buses and rapid transit of the **Toronto Transportation Commission (TTC)**. Regardless of the distance traveled, cash fare is \$3.00, but tokens can be purchased in groups of 3 tokens for \$7.80 or 7 tokens for \$18.20. Frequent users may find it advisable to purchase a **Metropass (Adult Metro Pass \$126)** or **Day Pass** (\$10.50/day, usable for up to 2 adults and 4 children on weekends/holidays). There is also a **Weekly Pass** \$37.50 (Monday to Sunday). If you are relying on Transit to get around the city there is a Post-Secondary Student Metropass, which is sold for \$104/Month. To use this Pass you are required to get a Post Secondary ID from the TTC. There are usually a couple of days when the TTC will be on Campus to issue cards, otherwise you will need to go to Sherbourne Station on the Bloor-Danforth line with proof that you are a student at York. You must always

have both (ID and Metropass) passes on you to take transit. Failure to show both can result in denial of service.

IMPORTANT GENERAL TIPS: *Always get a transfer at the beginning of your trip, if you'll need one. On the subway map, certain stations (ALL in the downtown core) have a little 'T' in the circle. That means you'll need a transfer even when transferring in the station's bus bay or outside its door. Hopefully this tip will save you embarrassment later on. If you hold a Metropass you will not require a transfer.*

Also, it is necessary to emphasize that the subway map is not to scale. While most stations on the east-west Bloor-Danforth line (between Islington and Main Street), as well as the downtown stations south of Bloor, are within easy walking distance of each other, this is not true in the far reaches and northern parts of the system. When in doubt, check a full-scale TTC map.

York University is located closest to the **Downsview Subway Station on the Spadina Line**, with the York University subway extension currently under construction (Supposedly opening in 2015). Until then you will need to catch a bus from the Subway station to York. To access Downsview (and, by extension, downtown), one can take the **196A York University Rocket** or **106 York University** from the **York Lanes** bus loop at York University. It's about a 10-15 minute bus trip to Downsview from York, with a free transfer onto the subway (no need to get a transfer).

If you are coming via the Yonge Line you get off at Sheppard Station and take the **196B York University Rocket** continues to Sheppard-Yonge Station after its initial stop at Downsview. The **60 Steeles** bus will take you to Finch Station

Regarding Bus lineups – because the busses are so heavily used bus lineups are sacrosanct. Do not try and sneak in line or jump ahead – this will make the people who are waiting extremely upset and may get you kicked off the bus. Also note that it takes a good amount of time to travel to York – always give yourself a generous head start.

FUN HISTORICAL FACT: The current plan to extend the Spadina subway line up to York University is not the first. The 1994 NDP government announced the extension, but this plan was cancelled in 1996 with the victory of (now infamous) conservative Premier Mike Harris.

If your destination is on the western end of the Bloor Line, the **41 Keele** will take you to Keele Station and the **35E Jane** offers an (ostensibly) express service to Jane Station (which will still take about one hour).

If you're taking an intercity **VIA Rail** or inter-city **GO Transit train**, you'll change at Union Station. If you're taking an intercity bus, the **Toronto Bus Terminal** is located at the intersection of Bay and Dundas Streets and accessible from either St. Patrick or Dundas Stations (follow the posted signs). To get to **Pearson International Airport**, take the airport express bus from **Kipling Station**.

SMARTPHONE: TTC does not have an app though you can access the TTC through Google Maps. The best TTC app (at the moment) is Rocket Man available here <http://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/rocket-man-ttc-streetcar-bus/id421781409?mt=8>

York Regional Transit (YRT)

All over York Region (north of Toronto)

Phone: 905.762.2100

[YRT Website](#)

The **VIVA/YRT (York Region Transit)** offers service north of the York campus. If you live near campus, or in York region, this is an important alternative to the TTC.

York region's transit service is significantly different than Toronto's. Instead of paying per trip, the YRT system offers a **two-hour ticket** where you can get on and off as many buses as you want. An individual Adult (no Post Secondary rate) ticket is \$3.50 for one Zone and \$4.50 for Two Zones. You can also buy 10 Tickets for \$28.00 (One Zone) \$38.00 (Two Zones) and a Monthly Pass \$115.00 (One Zone) or \$160.00 (2 Zones). If you are connecting to a GO Bus the fare is \$0.75.

The system also offers two levels of service. The blue **VIVA** buses (much nicer than regular transit vehicles) offer rapid transit along key arteries – primarily Yonge Street and Highway 7. There are two lines that come through the York campus. The **purple line** goes to Richmond Hill and Markham, primarily along Highway 7. The **line** is more important. It runs primarily along Highway 7 from Martin Grove through York to **Downsview station**. This can be a good alternative to the 106 on the weekend as it goes directly from York to the subway (although you have to pay the TTC fare at Downsview). VIVA buses come every fifteen minutes or less and run until midnight. The white **YRT** buses are similar to conventional bus systems. Routes 3, 10, and 20 come into York. Check the YRT website (<http://www.yrt.ca/>) for more precise information on these routes.

GO (Greater Toronto Transit Authority) Transit

All over the GTA

416.869.320

[GO Transit Website](#)

GO buses are a familiar site around the York University campus, although the organization is best known for its network of GO trains which provide a vital transportation link between **Union Station** and the outer suburbs. York, however, is located on a variety of GO bus routes.

To ride a GO bus, purchase a ticket at a ticket agent (any GO transit terminal or an authorized reseller such as **INKBLOTZ** in York Lanes) or on-board a bus. The rate varies depending on the length of your journey, as it is based on a zone system.

To get a student discount, you'll need a **GO Transit Student Card**, obtainable online through the York University transportation site or in-person at the William Small Centre. Significant bulk and student discounts come with **10-Ride Ticket** or a **Monthly Pass**.

Remember that when you take a **GO Train**, you have to punch your own tickets, at little squat green machines with yellow stickers all over them. The **GO Bus** drivers do it for you.

GO transit also offers **service to the Lester B. Pearson International Airport** from York Mills and Yorkdale. The bus you want is the 'Brampton local – Dixon'. Do not get on the 'Brampton local – HWY 27' as it does not stop at the airport. If you have too many bags and worry about bus transfers, a number of our department members use **Aerofleet**. You can order a car at any time of the day for travel to the airport. The one- way cost to and from York is \$34. Their number is 416-449-4990, or you can take a look at their [website](#).

On campus residents should also remember that GO transit offers four **direct train trips to Union Station** in the morning (6:30-8:30) and four trips back in the afternoon (4:30-6:30). These trips take about 20 minutes and cost \$3.70. This is a faster way to the downtown core, and is particularly helpful if you are traveling further by train. There is a YU shuttle that goes to the train station. You can check the [schedule](#).

Smartphone apps for Black Berry Android and Apple: [Webiste](#).

Keele-Glendon Shuttle

Students needing to get to York's Glendon campus can catch a shuttle bus from the Keele campus each hour until 3:30, and then it runs less frequently. The average trip takes just over a half hour. It is much faster than the TTC and it is free. For more information check out [website](#).

Commuting

The commute to York varies, and most users tend to lie about the length of their commute. Generally, York is roughly 45-50 minutes from St. George subway station (near the University of Toronto). The time varies depending on the time of day and weather due to the buses.

HELPFUL TIP:

If you're planning to use a surface route to get to your local subway station, think twice before living on a streetcar or bus route. Outside of a few genuinely frequent and reliable services (510 Spadina, 7 Bathurst, 29 Dufferin), service can be extremely spotty and add a great degree of uncertainty to your commute. Most bus services in the city are not as efficient as the 196 York University Rocket, as you will quickly discover.

Libraries

Scott Library - York University

Keele Campus, 4700 Keele St, Toronto

Phone: 416.736.5150

TTC: 196 York University Rocket via Downsview Stn.

[Website](#)

As a graduate student at York University, you'll likely become intimately familiar with Scott library. Offering graduate students extended-loan privileges of 100 days, Scott library has also set aside a **graduate reading room** (code changed once a week) for silent study. While unfortunate that the university must take such steps to provide a silent study area for graduate students it is an oasis of sorts within the occasionally loud Scott library.

To get the code to graduate reading room, you can bring your YU-Card to the information booth or go to the library's webpage and click for the code under 'graduate students'. For this, you'll need your **Passport York** code. It's best to keep your YU- Card on you while using the room as random checks are conducted (seriously).

There are also computer terminals on the second floor (only some have Microsoft Office, but all run **Facebook**) and the reserve desk is located to the left of the circulation desk near the main entrance of the library.

The Sound and Moving Image Library, located on the first floor of the Scott library, has a great movie and music selection. From latest movie releases to renowned documentary films, chances are you might find what you're looking for at the SMIL. The best part about SMIL is that it is free with your library card!

Toronto Reference Library - City of Toronto

789 Yonge St., Toronto

Phone: 416.395.5577

TTC: Yonge-Bloor Stn (Walk North 1 Block, on East side of Street)

[Website](#)

The Toronto Reference Library offers a university-level collection of books (sadly not journals) accessible to all. The library **does not** circulate its books, which means that the book you're seeking will likely be sitting there. An impressive atrium-style structure with plenty of sunlight, it also offers free wireless internet. Because the library is used by scores of high school and postsecondary students, the noise level occasionally gets excessive. This, however, will not be a surprise to frequent users of York's **Scott Library**.

The Reference Library also has an extensive collection of Toronto-area newspapers as well as many City historical documents in their archival holdings. However, if you are doing a research project involving Reference Library archival collections, plan ahead for possible disruptions caused by their ongoing digitization project.

Toronto City Library - Your Local Branch

All Over!

Phone: 416.393.7131

TTC: See website

[Website](#)

Toronto has a network of neighbourhood and district branch libraries. District branches offer a wide-variety of specialized services and holdings whereas neighbourhood libraries have smaller collections. Using the website at <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca>, one can find a branch, a book and even order a book to be moved to their local branch!

GOOGLE SCHOLAR IMPORTANT TIP:

The York University library is compatible with Google Scholar (scholar.google.com), which allows you to search for journal articles/book excerpts using the google search engine and then 'Find It @ York.' Full text searching is supported, making it great to find something that might have slipped your mind (i.e. a pesky quotation that you forgot to link to a page number in your notes). Many Canadian history books are in the full-text database, which I found surprising, and that is hopefully an indication of depth in other fields as well.

To set it up:

- (1) Navigate with your web browser to scholar.google.com
- (2) Click on 'Scholar Preferences' (to the right of the search box)
- (3) The third item down on the preference menu is entitled 'Library Links.' Search for 'York University', find the entry for 'York University Libraries' on the list.
- (4) Save your preferences, the button is located near the bottom of the page.
- (5) Do your search! It searches many journal databases (JSTOR and Scholars portal are two notable ones that come to mind) as well as books that have been uploaded into the Google Book engine.

Archives

Here are just a few of the Archives that I've come across and found to be of use, or have heard other people laud them. I've included their phone numbers as it's generally best to phone or email ahead if planning to do research.

Archival staff are also generally quite helpful, so visiting them to order files and discuss your research project can be invaluable. In particular, if you're doing City of Toronto-based research, the staff is extremely helpful at locating archival material.

Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library - University of Toronto

120 St. George St., Toronto
Phone: 416.978.5285
TTC: St. George Stn. (Walk South)
[Website](#)

Despite being physically attached to Robarts library, and sharing its imposing façade, the interior of the Rare Books Library is truly awe-inspiring. A dimly - yet tastefully - lit atrium surrounds researchers on the ground floor, encircled by the upper stories of rare books. Students of labour and working class history may find themselves drawing on the **Kenney Collection**.

City of Toronto Archives

255 Spadina Road, Toronto
Phone: 416.397.5000
TTC: Dupont Stn., (Walk North)
[Website](#)

Another architecturally interesting building in the shadow of **Casa Loma**, the City of Toronto archives holds records on the city's history. The helpful staff will help acquaint you with the holdings. Of particular note are the extensive photographic collections, as well as a small library relating to Toronto history.

Archives of Ontario

134 Ian Macdonald Blvd., Toronto
Phone: 416.327.1600
TTC: Not this time – it's right here in the same building as the York research tower!
[Website](#)

Those with research projects involving Ontario-based events or subjects will find the Archives of Ontario a handy starting point. With great staff (and a security guard who will come to know your name) and as nearby a location to York as you could want, the archives also have a fairly complete internet-based search engine, which can help narrow down your request. Note the delay between requesting files and receiving the files, as the majority of holdings are held off-site (near Bolton, ON).

While a blanket Access to now govern some of the collection, **Information and Privacy** restrictions, a five-dollar fee and an application usually generates a response within 15- 30 days.

Multicultural History Society of Ontario

43 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto

Phone: 416.979.2973

TTC: Queen's Park Stn

[Website](#)

While plagued by budget cuts and a restrictive opening hour window, the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO) is an invaluable resource for those studying the immigrant experience. While a nominal fee is required to access the resources (~\$10.00), it's a great asset. Finding aids are available at the Scott Library to see if a trip is worthwhile.

York University Special Collections

Scott Library

Phone: 416.736.5442

TTC: 196 York University Rocket via Downsview Stn.

[Website](#)

Part of the York University catalogue system, special collections is the most accessible archive to an on-campus student. Check the hours before you go as they are limited. However, the collections are fairly extensive and have a great deal of personal papers and City of Toronto-related files. You'll find the collection on the third floor of the Scott Library (just off the top of the escalators, near the computer apex).

They also have a decent collection of finding aids on their webpage.

United Church of Canada Archives

95 Charles Street W., Toronto

Phone: 416.585.4563

TTC: Museum Subway Stn.

[Website](#)

Currently in transition, as of writing, the archives of the United Church are still kept at Victoria University on the University of Toronto campus. The archives contain the records of the UCC, its constituent denominations and also of Victoria University itself.

Royal Ontario Museum Archives

100 Queen's Park, Toronto

Phone: 416.586.5595

TTC: Museum Subway Stn.

[Website](#)

Catalogued through the University of Toronto's online library catalogue, the ROM is an often-forgotten archival site in Toronto. It also has the added benefit of providing free access to the 'crystal' lobby of the museum, which is apparently regarded as a major architectural achievement.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Archives

1001 Queen St W., Toronto

Phone: 416.535.8501 ex. 2157

TTC: 501 Queen Streetcar WEST from Osgoode/Queen Subway Stations, or the 63 Ossington south from Ossington Subway Station.

[Website](#)

While this archive has limited operating hours, the archivist is very nice and helpful. It's recommended to call ahead to set up an appointment. A helpful tip passed on by a classmate was that they have a deal on photocopying: \$20 gets you 400 copies, which is 5 cents a copy. A bargain for an archive, if you're planning to do extended copying.

Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives

202-65 Wellesley Street East, Toronto

Phone: 416.777.2755

TTC: Wellesley Station

[Website](#)

Begun in 1973 as a reaction to the "conspiracy of silence that has robbed gay people of their history," this archive has made available over 500 pages ONLINE (as of writing) of preserved history. This is in addition to the thousands and thousands of on-site material. Extensive online finding aids are also online. The archive is open to the public on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights.

Used Book Stores

If you feel like actually owning a book, without paying real book prices, Toronto has many used bookstores. Here are only a few select ones:

BMV Books

471 Bloor St. W., Toronto

Phone: 416.967.5757

TTC: Spadina Station

A newer addition to Toronto, this is the largest BMV bookstore in Toronto and one of the largest used/remainder stores. With extensive holdings in Canadian, American and Aboriginal history and philosophy, this should be a first place to check out for a cheap quality book. It's occasionally depressing to see extremely cheap books that you might have purchased at the York bookstore for three/four times as much. However this is an excellent place to scope out cheap copies of books for your classes/ comps.

Eliot's Bookshop

584 Yonge St., Toronto
Phone: 416.925.0268
TTC: Wellesley Station

An awesome three-story bookshop in a narrow building right at Yonge and Wellesley, this place is worth checking out for the books and atmosphere. Good selection.

Balfour Books

601 College St. (at Clinton St.), Toronto
Phone: 416.531.9911

[Website](#)

TTC: 506 College Streetcar WEST from Queen's Park or College Station

A neat little used bookstore with an eclectic collection, it also has a great bookstore atmosphere. Worth stopping by if you're in Little Italy, or just for an excuse to visit the neighbourhood. You'll probably buy a book (I bought a cool bibliography of Canadian protest movements).

The University of Toronto Book sale

All over the University of Toronto/ Queen's Park
TTC: Museum Station, Queen's Park Station or St. George Station
Trinity College: 18-22 October 2012
St. Michaels College: 23 - 27 October 2012
University College: 12 - 16 October 2012
Victoria University: 20 - 24 September 2012

Information will likely be disseminated over the list-servs about this cornucopia of information in the heart of the University of Toronto. The opening nights can be the most fruitful.

Green Places

Just a few places, as Toronto's quite green. The entire lakeshore isn't as bad as it is made out to be, especially in the east and west ends.

Maloca Community Garden

York University, 4700 Keele Street

Across the road from Stong Pond and behind the baseball diamonds lays the Maloca community garden. This is an organic garden maintained by interested members of the York community. A number of history students have found this a relaxing and tasty activity on the York campus. New members are accepted year round. E-mail maloca@yorku.ca for more information, or visit their [website](#).

Black Creek Pioneer Village

1000 Murray Ross Parkway, Toronto ON

Phone: 416.736.1733

Many history students at York do not realize that our campus sits beside one of Canada's longest running historical reconstructions. Black Creek Pioneer Village interprets life in North Toronto in the 1860s and is open until the winter holidays. Each year they host a number of festivals and special events. Most of these are in the summer, but there are a few during the fall as well. Less known than the village is the conservation area. Black Creek Conservation Area runs from Steeles to Finch behind the village and along Black Creek. There is a nice walking path along the river, which can make for a nice break in your day. This stretch of land also has some cultural significance in that it is the site of a five hundred year old Iroquoian village was studied extensively between the 1950s and 1990s.

The Downtown (Condo Farm) Waterfront

TTC: Take the 509 Harbourfront Streetcar west from Union Station, or the 510 Spadina south from Spadina Station to the Ferry Docks Streetcar station (* make sure the 510 says 'UNION STATION' in the front roll sign *)

Despite the oft-heard refrain that Toronto has no waterfront, at least not one worth visiting, there is a beautiful park between the condos along the water and the waterfront itself. While access to the park - best gained by walking past the ferry terminal to Toronto Island - seems as if you are infringing on the private property of condo dwellers, it is a municipal park paid for out of your tax dollars.¹ Furthermore, the condos do a great job of blocking out the sounds of the city, and it's a great place to study while watching the boats go by.

¹ While you might think that you don't pay tax dollars to the City of Toronto, as a renter you actually pay three times the property tax as compared to property owners. It's in your rent.

High Park

TTC: High Park Station or the 506 College streetcar west from Queen's Park/College Stations

High Park is awesome. Complete with a small animal farm and a trackless train that takes kids around, it's a great place for a picnic, a walk or for a lazy afternoon by the pond. Once you're in the centre of the park, you'll feel like you're outside the city. If the concrete's getting you down, check it out.

The Beaches

TTC: 501 Queen streetcar east from Osgoode to Woodbine Ave., then walk south to the waterfront

The retail strip along Queen Street East known as the Beaches (or Beach)² is an upscale strip with boutiques, coffee shops, bakeries for dogs, and the like. The real gem is south of Queen East, where a genuine beach awaits you, complete with boardwalk. While generally not safe for swimming - although if you wish to the City of Toronto updates their water condition every three days - it is a great place to get a tan or simply stroll the boardwalk. It feels like a small town, but with the skyline of Toronto in the distance.

²The rest of the City of Toronto watched in bemusement in the summer of 2006 when the Beaches Business Improvement Area (BIA) ran a vote about whether the official name of the area would be 'The Beaches' or simply 'The Beach.' The latter won, but it is by no means settled.

The Stong Pond @ York University

It's a pond in the middle of the York University campus. While not terribly special, it is a nice green space and place to relax/study outdoors on the campus. It's also generally quite quiet.

Selected Areas of Interest in Toronto

Just a few of the main neighbourhoods of Toronto, so that when somebody says they're going to 'Corso Italia' or 'The Annex', you know what they're talking about!

This proved to be the most difficult part of this little guide to write, as there are easily dozens of neighbourhoods.

The Annex

From Bathurst Street to Avenue Road, from Bloor Street W to Dupont St.

TTC: Bathurst Stn., Spadina Stn., Dupont Stn., and St. George Stn.

A residential area of Toronto with a bustling retail strip along Bloor Street, this is traditionally regarded as one of the student-friendly parts of Toronto. While heavily gentrified and fairly expensive, it is also a great place to go for sushi, books, coffee and anything else you might need.

Downtown (Financial District) - 'Bay Street'

From Dundas to Front Streets, between University and Church Streets TTC: St. Patrick Stn., Osgoode Stn., St. Andrew Stn., Union Stn., King Stn., Queen Stn., Dundas Stn.

This area, centered at the intersection of King and Bay, is the centre of Canada's financial economy and home to major law firms and investment banks. It is also notable for having the world's largest underground mall - the **PATH** system which connects the lobbies of individual office towers. (See [Website](#) for a downloadable map) While overpopulated during weekday working hours (roughly 8:00am to 6:00pm, although the Toronto workday is lengthening at an alarming rate), it is also notable for being barren during evenings and weekends. It's worth walking around to get a taste of the architecture (especially **BCE Place**³), and to put a human face to the abstract idea of neo-liberal capitalism.

³It's now apparently been renamed Brookfield Place. Brookfield Asset Management is, incidentally, one of those companies that owns/manages half the city but you've probably never heard of them. Cool, eh?

The Beaches

From Woodbine Ave. to Beech Ave., from the Lake to Queen St. East.
TTC: 501 Queen Streetcar east from Osgoode/Queen stations

A bustling upscale shopping area with the feel of a small town, the area is also notable for its beautiful sandy beach and boardwalk. Getting a milkshake or ice cream on a hot day and walking the boardwalk helps clear the mind. An added bonus is the length of the trip on public transit to this district, so you'll really feel like you're out of the city.

Roncesvalles

Roncesvalles Avenue between Dundas St W/Bloor St W and the Queensway
TTC: 504 King Streetcar south from Dundas West Station

Rapidly gentrifying, Roncesvalles still maintains some of its original Polish community alongside an eclectic community. It's also close enough to High Park that you can combine the two in a trip. A great place for a coffee or dinner, and provides a nice taste of west end Toronto.

Bloor West Village

Bloor Street West between Jane St and High Park Ave.

TTC: Jane Stn., Runnymede Stn., High Park Stn.

An awesome stretch of bakeries, bookstores, coffee shops and other retailers is found out in this stretch of Bloor St. A great place for a leisurely stroll, it's also got a bunch of some of the nicest bakeries around.

Baldwin Street Village

Baldwin Street between McCaul St and Beverly St (St. George becomes Beverly south of College)

A bunch of restaurants tucked into an otherwise residential area. Upscale diners can check out **Bodgea**, a great French restaurant, while most others can check out a cheap Asian bakery or **Margaritas** for Mexican food.

Leslieville

South of Gerrard (CNR tracks), east of the Don River, west of Carlaw and north of Eastern Ave.

TTC: 501 Queen Streetcar east from Osgoode/Queen Stations.

If one wants to see the process of gentrification underway, Leslieville is an excellent study. Having just received their first dreaded **Starbucks** restaurant, the neighbourhood is becoming a draw for creative types. It is also just north of the new **Filmport** development, where many of your television and big screen productions are made.

The Danforth (Greektown)

Along Danforth Avenue between Broadview and Dewherst Blvd.

TTC: Broadview Station, Chester Station, Pape Station, Donlands Station

While gentrified and full of higher-end shopping, this part of Toronto holds claim to being North America's largest Greektown. The Taste of the Danforth is held every August, and is definitely Toronto's best-known and best-attended street festival.

Entertainment District

Between Queen St W in the north and King St W in the south, and Simcoe St to the east and Bathurst St to the west TTC: St. Andrew Stn. or Osgoode Stn.

A high-density area of nightclubs, the area is plagued by social problems that erupt after Toronto's last call on weekends. However, if you're into clubs, it's the place to go. A great place to see horses (cops are riding them).

Chinatown

Along Spadina Avenue between College and Queen Streets, and along Dundas St from Bay St to Bathurst St. TTC: 510 Spadina Streetcar south from Spadina Stn., or the 505 Dundas Streetcar west from St. Patrick/Dundas Stn.

While not the original Chinatown, which was located along Dundas Street near the site of **Nathan Phillips Square** (and destroyed for new city hall), this area is a bustling, vibrant community of many different Asian cultures. While gentrifying, like seemingly everywhere else in Toronto, the area is a great place for cheap food, shopping and tourism.

Other Chinatowns exist in the City, such as a second smaller colony located on Gerrard Street East between Broadview and Carlaw (take the **505 King** or **505 Dundas** streetcar east from the subway). There are more yet in the suburbs, such as in Scarborough, Mississauga, Richmond Hill and Markham.

Kensington Market

South of College Street and north of Dundas Street West, between Bathurst Street and Spadina Ave.

TTC: 510 Spadina south from Spadina Stn., or 511 Bathurst south from Bathurst Stn.

An eclectic community, declared a National Historic Site by the federal government, Kensington is well known for its cheap food shopping, bakeries, butchers, vintage clothing shops, cafes and restaurants. A working-class neighbourhood in the process of gentrification, it has become the favourite of downtown creative workers who organize the car-free **Pedestrian Sundays** (last Sunday of the month from May to August). If you live downtown, it's worth checking out for groceries (esp. cheese and veggies).

Parkdale

Between Queen Street West in the North and King Street West in the south, between Roncesvalles and Dufferin

TTC: 501 Queen Streetcar and 504 King Streetcar

Formerly one of the wealthier neighbourhoods in Toronto, the Gardiner expressway arguably destroyed its prosperity in the late 1950s and Parkdale became synonymous with poverty and social housing. This was exacerbated by the closure of nearby mental health facilities in the

1980s and 1990s. One of the most multicultural neighbourhoods, Parkdale has been plagued with slumlords.

However, a process of gentrification is slowly appearing in the neighbourhood, sparked by two renovated boutique hotels (and bars) **The Drake** and **The Gladstone**.

Little Italy

Along College Street between Bathurst St and Ossington Ave.

TTC: 506 College Streetcar west from Queen's Park/College Stations.

An ethnically diverse area, filled with Portuguese, Italians and others, this area is a trendy shopping and café district. Similar to the Entertainment district in terms of traffic and obnoxiousness on Friday and Saturday nights, the area has great coffee shops and little bakeries. It is also a hot spot for gelato.

St Lawrence Market

East of Church Street and West of Jarvis Street, between the Esplanade and King Street East.

TTC: King Station

The St Lawrence Market area is a hopping place, filled with cafes, bars, restaurants and prime examples of Victorian architecture. The centerpiece of the area is the actual St Lawrence Market (closed Sundays and Mondays), which is filled with a variety of food vendors. If you want kangaroo meat, it's a good place to go.

Shopping and Services on and Near Campus

Restaurants

York offers a wide variety of fast food outlets. For those who want finer fare, the following are some of our places for food and drink. The **Absinthe** (Ab for short) is the local watering hole. It is located in the basement of Winters College and has an adequate selection of beer on tap. In many ways the **Underground** is the Ab's alter ego. This is a great place for lunch. It has a wide variety of food; sadly it has a very poor selection of beer.

The **Orange Snail**, located in Stong College, specializes in Caribbean cuisine and offers varieties of hot sandwiches, wraps, and stir-fries. **Michelangelo's**, in the basement of Atkinson College, serves fairly good food and is a great place to escape the crowd. It is also one of the few places on campus, along with the **Osgoode Cafeteria** in Osgoode Hall Law School, which serves a cooked breakfast.

Schulich School of Business also has a nice dining room with wait-staff. If you are looking for a high-end meal that weighs heavy on the pocket book, this is the place to go.

Finally, stay plugged into special events on campus. Many receptions, lectures, and openings offer free food and drink for participants. This is a good way to get some free grub and learn something new along the way. Some students – who will remain nameless – were able to eat most of their meals for free during the 2006 Social Sciences and Humanities Congress.

York Lanes is newly renovated and has a number of (moderately) cheap choices including sandwiches, burgers, coffee, burritos Italian and Indian, (beware the rules in the Indian Restaurant – they are hard to miss as they are posted everywhere and seem to be at best arbitrary and random) There are also a number of other places scattered in other buildings including Freshii (Lassonde Building), Starbucks (in Accolade), and Booster Juice, Tim Hortons and Pizza Pizza (in Curtus Lecture Halls/ Ross). For more information check out [Food Service](#).

Grocery and liquor stores

The closest grocery store to campus is **Food Cents**. It is located just off of Sentinel Road, south of Murray Ross Parkway. Although the location is ideal, the selection is rather limited. There are two large grocery stores within a ten-minute bus ride. There is a **Fortinos** at Highway 7 and Weston Road. It is conveniently located near a liquor and beer store, and it is on the **VIVA orange** line. A wise shopper should be able to do their shopping here without purchasing a second bus ticket (VIVA tickets are timed rather than trip based). There is also a **Superstore** at Steeles and Dufferin that has a considerable selection of kosher foods. This is about a 45 minute walk, but you can also take TTC route 60 on those cold and windy winter days. Also on Steeles Avenue is **International Discount Foods**. This store, which is only a block east of Keele, sells a wide array of Russian, German, and Polish foods that are difficult to find at the average grocery store. It is worthwhile stopping. There is also a **Farmers Market** on Keele just north of Steeles (behind the TD building). It sells a variety of fruit and veggies; however its selection can be limited pending on the season.

A better choice for fresh fruit and veggies is joining **Maloca** community garden. By joining and helping to tend the garden, participants often take home bags full of fresh fruit and veggies at harvest time. The garden is located in the southwest corner of campus. West of campus, at the corners of Jane Street and Finch Avenue, one can find a **No Frills** and a **Price Chopper**. South of campus, at the corners of Keele Street and Wilson Avenue you will find a **Dominion**. Take TTC route 41 (Keele) from York Lanes. If you wish to support local farmers, consider looking into **Food Share's Good Food Box**. Boxes of fresh produced are delivered on a weekly or bi-weekly basis somewhere in your vicinity.

For those who either dislike grocery shopping or simply can't find the time to step outside, **Grocery Gateway** delivers food right at your home. Finally, and perhaps most importantly,

there is a liquor store at the corner of Steeles and Keele, just opposite the northeast corner of campus.

Health Issues

You do not need to go far to receive medical and dental care if you are living on campus. York Lanes offers both services. The medical clinic takes both appointments and walk-ins. It is worth your while to make an appointment, as the walk-in line-up is often quite long. If you call right at opening you can often get an appointment on the same day. The dentist is a full service dentist, offering both cosmetic and health-related services. Dental care can be costly. For students not covered through employment at York, the [Toronto College of Dental Hygiene and Auxiliaries](#) offers cheaper prices.

Computers and printing

As Karen Dancy explained at the orientation, you have access to the computers in the department's computer lab. You also have access to the computers in the library and computer labs. Unfortunately you will need to set-up two separate accounts for these two different computers. The most important computer lab at York is in the **William Small Centre**⁴. As a graduate student, you can print up to 3,000 copies a year. When you select Print from the File menu, it is important that you select 'oak' from the printer selection; otherwise your print job will automatically be sent to the pay-as-you-go printers servicing undergraduates.

⁴ Also bear in mind that when you have something you urgently need to print here in November (the busy essay season on campus), there'll inevitably be a line-up to find a computer as people are busy checking their **Facebook** accounts. Not that anybody at York is bitter about this.

Physical activity

No matter how busy you get in grad school, DO NOT sacrifice your health. There are a number of ways to stay healthy on campus. For \$10, you can obtain a shoe tag, which will give you access to the fitness centre at the Tait Mackenzie complex; however you can use some of the other facilities, such as the pool, for free. There are also a number of instructional exercise classes offered here as well, stop by the gym for more information. If you like to run, you should also check out the **Toronto Track and Field Centre** located north of Tait Mackenzie on Ian Macdonald Blvd.

Entertainment

First and foremost check out **CHRY 105.5** a community radio station based at York. It is impressive and offers a wide variety of music and spoken-word programming and can boast

one of our own as the host of a francophone punk-rock show. It will also keep you posted on what's going on in the area.

Next up: keep your eyes peeled for **York's live theatre and music**. Shows are usually advertised on the billboard facing the commons (bus loop) and in the fine arts buildings – also on the south side of the commons. Tickets go really quickly, so don't hesitate if you want to go.

Finally, York's **Art Gallery** is worth checking out. Occasionally, the Art Gallery will offer a free shuttle on opening nights from the Ontario College of Art and Design. There are **movie theatres** nearby as well. **AMC** and **Famous Players** both have megaplexes within a twenty-minute bus ride on the VIVA orange. There is a **Rainbow Theatre** (smaller screens but slightly cheaper) at Promenade Mall in Thornhill along the VIVA purple route. Famous Players has a **Silver City** at Yorkdale on the University subway line (two stops from Downsview). Finally, for upcoming special events on campus subscribe to **Y-file**. This is an e-mail that outlines major events within the York Community. It often posts visiting speakers, conferences, and other important campus information (like construction).

Security on campus

Blue Light Security Phones, scattered around campus, offer a direct line of communication to **Security Services** in the case of an emergency. Security Services can also be reached free of charge from any pay phone on campus.

Should you wish to have someone accompany you to another on-campus destination between 6:00 p.m. and 2 a.m., **goSAFE** offers transportation and escort services. The north route shuttle travels to Vari Hall, Winters College, Tait McKenzie, Calumet and the Petro Canada Station at Jane and Shoreham. The south route shuttle travels to Vari Hall, the Pond Residence/TEL Building, Assiniboine bus stop, The Village (Delabo Road), 500 Murray Ross, Finch and Sentinel and The Village East (Leitch). To reach a destination neither on the north or south shuttle routes, students/faculty/staff can ask that someone accompany them to their destination. goSAFE can be reached at (416) 736-5454.