

DAY ONE

3:00p.m. Arrive at Toronto Pearson International Airport. Strangely, taxis aren't allowed to pick up at the airport, so catch a limo to town. They work on flat rates – be sure you confirm your rate with the driver.

3:45p.m. Check in at **Gloucester Square Inns**, (aka Cawthra Square) in the heart of **Toronto's Gay Village** (rates start at \$125/night). This elegant property comprises three different Victorian houses, well known among Torontonians (www.gloucestersquare.com). Host Ric Tremain has lovingly restored the common areas and filled them with period furnishings. If B&Bs aren't your thing, there are excellent gay-friendly mainstream hotels nearby. Call ahead to **Fire On The East Side** (6 Gloucester St.) for a dinner reservation.

4:30p.m. Take a twirl around the **Gay Village**, centred around **Church and Wellesley streets**. You'll find a solid assortment of bars, shopping, coffee shops and by-the-slice pizza joints. It's a friendly neighbourhood where you'll be comfortable holding hands. If it's a weekday, you'll be just in time to see the locals parade home from work.

6:00p.m. After a quick freshen-up, dinner is just down the street from your inn. The food at **Fire On The East Side** is both upscale and down-home. The quality is excellent at very reasonable prices. Your entrée will be substantial. The meat loaf is delicious.

8:00p.m. Grab a cab, and head to the theatre (you reserved tickets weeks ago, right?). Toronto claims to be the third theatre capital of the Western World, behind New York and London. Generally, there are 2–3 Broadway-scale musicals playing at any given time, and they are excellent. Top rate musicals coming up this summer season include *Evita* and *Les Miserables* (www.mirvish.com), and *Ain't Misbehavin'* (www.canstage.com).



11:00p.m. Continue your evening of refined taste at **Statler's**, Toronto's only gay piano bar, (471 Church). It's more of a sit-and-listen than a sing-along place, and the talent has never wowed me. But it's a pleasant spot to reminisce about the excellent theatre you've just seen. Home early for bed, because tomorrow is a Big Girl Day!



brick barn-like building. Have sit-down breakfast at **Paddington's Pump**, or nibble your way vendor-by-vendor, with fresh baked goods, fruit, cheese, and such. There's also plenty of crafts and local bric-a-brac for sale.

9:30a.m. Outside the market, walk west on Front Street to admire Toronto's "Flatiron" building. It's about half the size of NYC's, but creates a perfect spot for picture-taking with the CN Tower and Toronto's skyline in the background.

Close by is the **Hockey Hall of Fame** (30 Yonge St.), which may get you lesbians excited (if they had locker room films the

DAY TWO

8:00a.m. Off to bustling St. Lawrence Market for breakfast. If you're there on a weekend, there'll be lots of pretty boys and girls to cruise. The market is over 100 years old, and is in a fabulous

48 PERFECTLY GAY HOURS IN TORONTO

Join editor Randall Shirley for a quick visit to Canada's most populous city.



A gay man could hardly have created more camp than you'll find at Honest Ed's – a true Toronto institution.

boys would like it too). The guys might prefer the many antique shops along nearby Queen Street East.

10:30a.m. Walk to Union Station, where you can go underground to the CN Tower, and shell out \$19 for a spine-tingling ride to the top of the world's tallest structure. On a clear day, you can see forever, or at least to America. Don't miss the glass floor where you can look straight down 1,122 feet. You'll see the Toronto islands nearby in Lake Ontario – high-power binoculars will let you see the naked bodies on Hanlon's Point Beach.

Noon Low-carb beer and chicken Caesar salad at one of many Queen's Quay restaurants, at an outdoor café overlooking



Lake Ontario and the marina. There are lots of good food choices along the quay, and it's a great spot to relax.

1:00p.m. Choose an option: sun or shop. For sun, you head to the above-mentioned Hanlon's Point Beach where you can shed your clothes and discreetly ogle and be ogled. It's a mixed nude beach, but the gay quotient is very high.

Shop option: Catch a cab to Queen Street West (at University), for eclectic shopping. Especially fun are Morba (665 Queen St. W.) selling an amazing assortment of 60s and 70s retro



furnishings, Red Tea Box (696) where you'll ogle spectacularly decorated cakes, and Cabaret (672), a glorious consignment shop where you'll find those Rock Hudson silk PJs you've been longing for. Each of these is truly unique and worth exploring. Take a break at Dufflet's dessert shop (787), home of Toronto's finest sweet treats.

3:30p.m. Art Gallery of Ontario (317 Dundas, known locally as the AGO). This stately structure is being doubled in size, with architecture by Frank Gehry. Spectacular.

4:45p.m. Walk to nearby 50 Bloor Street West, one of Toronto's swishy shopping zones. If the weather's nasty, head into the underground level of shopping. Enjoy a cappuccino at Holt Renfrew's swank coffee bar. Zara (the European Gap) might just have a little frock you need.

6:00p.m. Cab to the Village. You're headed OUT tonight, so make sure you've got the wardrobe! Continue your search for the perfect outfit at Out On The Street (551 Church). This is a great clothing store with adult supplies in the basement (amazingly low lube prices!), not to mention cute staff.

7:00p.m. Dinner in the Village at Zelda's (542 Church). This Toronto institution serves up a value-priced meal – not haute, but filling. Fare is burgers, sandwiches, salads, and such. Zelda's hosts a lot of drag shows of varying quality. Sometimes they're hilarious, sometimes you just want to gulp down your burger and run.

8:30p.m. Thirty-minute disco nap, a shower, and a costume change.

10:00p.m. Your bar crawl begins at Woody's. Their distinct black awning is a regular feature on *Queer As Folk*. It's friendly, and if you spot someone you like, that may determine your next bar (or if you need one). Dancing at Fly? Leather at Black Eagle?

Or perhaps Remington's (377 Yonge), Toronto's gay strip bar. Bring lots of cash – there's plenty of hotties here working for your tips. (A private "dance" will cost you \$20+).

Now it's really late. If you're of such a mind, several bathhouses are nearby.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANDALL SHIRLEY EXCEPT PRIDE SHOT TAUB/ONTARIO TOURISM & PIC OF ZELDA BY BRUCE MACNEIL.



Is that the CN Tower... or is Toronto just happy to see you?!

DAY THREE

9:30a.m. Drag your sorry butt out of bed and check out. Have the Inn keep your luggage. Now cure your hangover with a mimosa and eggs benedict at **Hair of the Dog** (425 Church).

10:30a.m. Catch a cab to 581 Bloor where you'll experience the campiest spot ever created by a straight guy: **Honest Ed's**. It's a shopping extravaganza. They sell everything, although most of it won't be up to your standard. It is absolutely hilarious and loads of fun ... for about 15 minutes, after which you walk (or cab) quickly on to a gay man's dream: the nearby **Bata Shoe Museum**.

11:30a.m. Spend an hour in fantasyland as you view Bata's spectacular collection of shoes throughout history, including pairs worn by Marilyn Monroe and Elton John.

12:30p.m. Get a quick lunch at **Five Alarm Diner** (555 Church), a gay nod to the fire station. Fun.

1:30p.m. Grab your bags, and catch a cab to the airport. Check in for your flight, then spend a few minutes absorbing Pearson International's sparkling new masterpiece, **Terminal One**. It ran millions over budget but in the strangely competitive world of airport architecture, it's up there with the best.

3:00p.m. Sleep soundly on the plane home! ☺

You'll never get lost with Columbia Fun Maps' Toronto Edition!