

# Toronto, Canada

**Toronto is the commercial and financial hub** of Canada. With the greatest percentage of the nation's population, Toronto is situated on the northwest shore of Lake Ontario. The central area of downtown Toronto is the predominant centre consisting of major government, financial, medical, and educational services. The population of the urban agglomeration of Toronto grew from 1.1 million in 1950 to 4.5 million in 1995. The population of the City of Toronto appears to be decreasing now, while the outer municipalities are gaining residents.

After the Second World War up to the mid-1970's, the Toronto region experienced rapid population growth which coincided with post-war prosperity and high levels of in-migration from throughout Canada and around the world. It is this in-migration from people outside of Canada and Natives within, that has created a mosaic of cultures, religions, and flavours within the city. Toronto celebrates the heritage of its citizens with frequent festivals and cultural expositions from all parts of the world. One such celebration is the Caribana Parade which unites all the people of Toronto in a downtown street party of over a million, to music, dance, and costume in appreciation and indulgence of the Caribbean culture. The ethnic diversity of the city is also displayed in numerous cultural organizations and educational opportunities.

Due to its diversified economy, Toronto has one of the strongest regional economies in Canada, with a low 1988 unemployment rate of 5.5%.

The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto has been credited with having contributed substantially to shaping Toronto into one of the most effectively planned metropolitan areas in North America. Major achievements have included a strong and diversified industrial base, a successful mass transit system providing 70% of trips to an enlarged central area, concentration of office employment near subway stations, and provision of housing for an additional 1 million residents. In addition, the road system has been upgraded to serve industrial and commercial employment throughout the metropolitan area, and effective water supply and sewage systems exist.

Despite a generally high standard of living, Toronto will be facing a number of problems. Youth unemployment, traffic congestion, rent increases and homelessness, and the desperate need for waste disposal challenge Toronto's future.