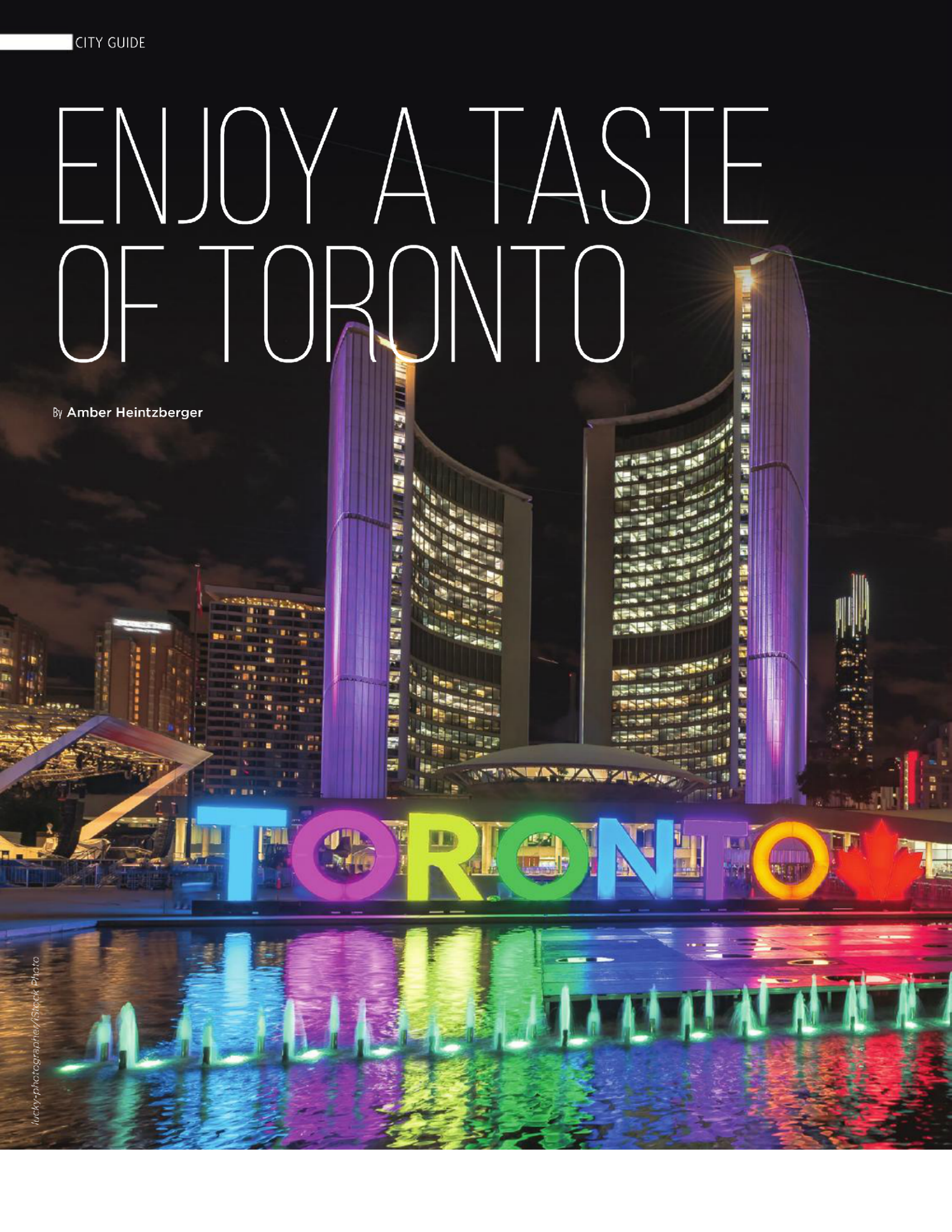


# ENJOY A TASTE OF TORONTO

By Amber Heintzberger



Though it's not known as a year-round horsey locale, Ontario's capital city hosts thousands of equine enthusiasts every November for 10 days. The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, which has been held since 1922, draws packed crowds every night it runs.

While there are plenty of treats to sample on-site, and those treats should not be missed, visitors should also take the opportunity to explore a bit of local flavor beyond the walls of Exhibition Place. If you venture

out into Canada's largest city, you'll find eclectic neighborhoods and a wide range of cultures, food and atmosphere.

From the laid-back Toronto Beaches, to Greek food in The Danforth, to the funky, hip hangouts on Queen Street West, or a variety of options in the reclaimed brick factories of The Distillery District, you are bound to find something that appeals to your taste buds, budget and sensibilities. Here are a few suggestions.



## The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair

Exhibition Place | 100 Princes' Boulevard | Toronto | [royalfair.org](http://royalfair.org)

Every November the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, located at Exhibition Place on the Toronto waterfront, brings together equestrians, farmers and city dwellers to showcase world-class horses, livestock and agriculture. Ontario boasts a thriving agricultural industry, producing grains and oils, meats and dairy, and poultry and eggs, as well as horticulture, and The Royal brings an opportunity for farmers to present their livestock and products to a wide, appreciative audience.

The indoor horse show, held Nov. 2-11 this year, hosts international show jumping classes, indoor eventing and dressage, as well as driving, Saddlebreds and Hackneys, Western and a variety of breeds classes. The competition attracts top-caliber riders, and for evening classes some spectators dress in black tie, giving the whole affair a classy, celebratory feel.

Taking up several acres of space, the Royal also boasts many culinary options, with on-site restaurants ranging from the casual Bit & Bridle Pub to the exclusive Tanbark Club. Numerous food vendors offer fair-type foods, and everyone has their favorites, from rösti potatoes smothered with sour cream and applesauce to fried Mars Bars to locally sourced produce, cheese and jams.



Casly Tetley Photo

Captain Canada himself, Ian Millar, often takes a turn around the ring at the Royal Winter Fair.

## Momofuku Noodle Bar

190 University Avenue | Toronto | (647) 253-6225 | [noodlebar-toronto.momofuku.com](http://noodlebar-toronto.momofuku.com)

For an easy, but still delicious, lunch option, professional event rider Kendal Lehari—who lives north of Toronto in Uxbridge, Ontario, and often competes in the indoor eventing at The Royal—likes to head to the heart of downtown for ramen and fried chicken at Momofuku Noodle Bar. A sister restaurant to the trendy New York City establishment of the same name, the Toronto location is housed in a glass cube, and the vibe is hip and energetic. (If you're looking for something sweet,

Momofuku Milk Bar is located on the second floor.)

At the noodle bar you can take your order to go, or you may be seated at a communal table or countertop. There are vegetarian options, like Ginger Scallion Noodles with pickled mushroom, cucumber and cabbage, shiitake mushroom steamed buns, or beer-battered cauliflower, as well as many items with meat and seafood. If you have a big group, call ahead for the "Large Format" fried chicken serving four to 12 people.



Photo Courtesy Momofuku Toronto

# The Fairmont Royal York Hotel And Library Bar

100 Front Street West | Toronto | (416) 368-2511

[fairmont.com/royal-york-toronto](https://www.fairmont.com/royal-york-toronto) | [fairmont.com/royal-york-toronto/dining/librarybar](https://www.fairmont.com/royal-york-toronto/dining/librarybar)

The Fairmont Royal York Hotel is an official hotel partner of the Royal Winter Fair and offers several dining options.

The elegant hotel is in the heart of downtown, and at the end of a long day the dark paneled walls and plush leather chairs of the Library Bar are an inviting refuge from the city streets.

Toronto native and professional dressage rider Lindsay Kellock, who works for Olympic dressage rider Ashley Holzer in New York City, says when she used to groom for fellow Canadian rider Jacqueline Brooks, they would finish taking care of the horses late at night,

and since they were staying at the Royal York Hotel, they'd always grab a bite there.

"One year we ordered the burger, and it was so good both Jac and I decided it was the best burger we ever had, so now it's tradition after the Grand Prix on Wednesday night to go there to have the hamburger," says Kellock. "We always joke a few months before the Royal that we're going there to have it. It's always such a luxury to be able to stay at that hotel during the Royal!"

The Library Bar serves breakfast, lunch, dinner, late-night snacks and

drinks. If you need a quiet respite from the horse show, a traditional afternoon tea is also served, featuring finger sandwiches and a selection of pastries with your tea—or Champagne if you're celebrating a win or really need a break!

Reservations can be made online for breakfast and lunch only. The dress code is casual.

The Royal York features several other restaurants, including a Benihana Japanese Steakhouse, located at basement level, and Piper's Pub, where you can find an array of craft beers on tap.



## Weslodge

480 King Street West | Toronto  
(647) 660-0999 | [weslodge.com](http://weslodge.com)

Liberty Village is a 43-acre community in the heart of Toronto, combining residential, commercial and retail space. It's also conveniently located adjacent to the Exhibition Place venue and offers a variety of culinary options just a stone's throw from the Royal.

Equine photographer Michelle Dunn, who lives in nearby Hamilton, Ontario, said that while the Royal York Hotel is a given during the horse show, she also likes to head to Weslodge, a bar and grill in Liberty Village, where she says horse folk will feel right at home amidst the Western-themed décor.

Visitors can't miss the massive, electric-yellow doors at the entrance, and the interior is at once modern and traditional, with dark wood paneling, stag antlers on the walls and hand-written drink menus.

"I'm a sucker for foie gras and a spectacular craft cocktail," says Dunn. "They do also have the best fried chicken I've ever eaten! The interior decor is very horsey, classic yet funky. It's beautiful. You can also get a huge rib steak to share, and they have great service."

Weslodge is open for lunch on weekdays, dinner seven days a week, and brunch on Sundays.

Photo: Courtesy Weslodge



## The One Eighty

55 Bloor Street West | Toronto | (416) 967-0000 | [the51stfloor.com](http://the51stfloor.com)

For the best views in Toronto and a sleek, sophisticated environment, head to The One Eighty—formerly The Panorama Room—located on the 51st floor of the Manulife Centre. Located on an upscale stretch of Bloor Avenue, the bar and restaurant, with both indoor and outdoor spaces, boasts sweeping views

of downtown Toronto with Lake Ontario beyond.

The dress code is "smart casual," and minors are only admitted before 9 p.m. and when accompanied by an adult. It's a perfect place to dress up for a meal or drinks and to see and be seen. The cocktail menu is extensive, and there are

a number of plates suitable for sharing. The space is also available for private functions.

In addition to dinner and drinks, The One Eighty is open for lunch and Sunday brunch, which includes stations for made-to-order omelets, waffles, charcuterie and seafood, and make-your-own granola.

## Moonbean Coffee Company

30 St. Andrew Street | Toronto | 1 (866) 595-0327 | [moonbeancoffee.com](http://moonbeancoffee.com)

Like most major cities, Toronto boasts a Starbucks on nearly every block. But if you want a truly exceptional cup of coffee, head over to Moonbean Coffee Company in the Kensington Market neighborhood. After you browse the open vegetable stalls, vintage clothing shops and maybe a head shop or two—yes, recreational marijuana is now legal in Toronto, but don't bring any back over the border if you're visiting from the United States—settle down in the cozy café or enjoy the patio out back if the weather is fair.

The atmosphere is relaxed; the coffee is great, and you can enjoy one of their many varieties of espresso drinks with a slice of cake from talented local bakers. The coffee shop also offers a vast selection of teas and fresh juices.



## OTHER MUST-VISIT SPOTS NEAR EXHIBITION PLACE

Toronto's public transit system is vast and efficient, utilizing subways, buses and streetcars to help you navigate its streets even when it's cold or rainy. But should you want to hang closer to the venue or prefer a cheaper taxi ride, here are a few highly rated options, all less than a 20-minute stroll from Exhibition Place.

**'ONO Poké Bar:**  
Sushi and poke bowls  
[onopokebar.com](http://onopokebar.com)

**Maizal:**  
Mexican  
[maizal.ca](http://maizal.ca)

**King Rustic  
Kitchen & Bar:**  
Comfort food and  
craft cocktails  
[kingrustic.ca](http://kingrustic.ca)

**Beast Restaurant:**  
Breakfast and brunch  
[thebeastrestaurant.com](http://thebeastrestaurant.com)

**Levelto:**  
Italian  
[levelto.com](http://levelto.com)

**Smoque N' Bones:**  
Barbeque  
[smoquenbones.com](http://smoquenbones.com)

**LOCAL Public Eatery:**  
Tapas and beer  
[locallibertyvillage.com](http://locallibertyvillage.com)