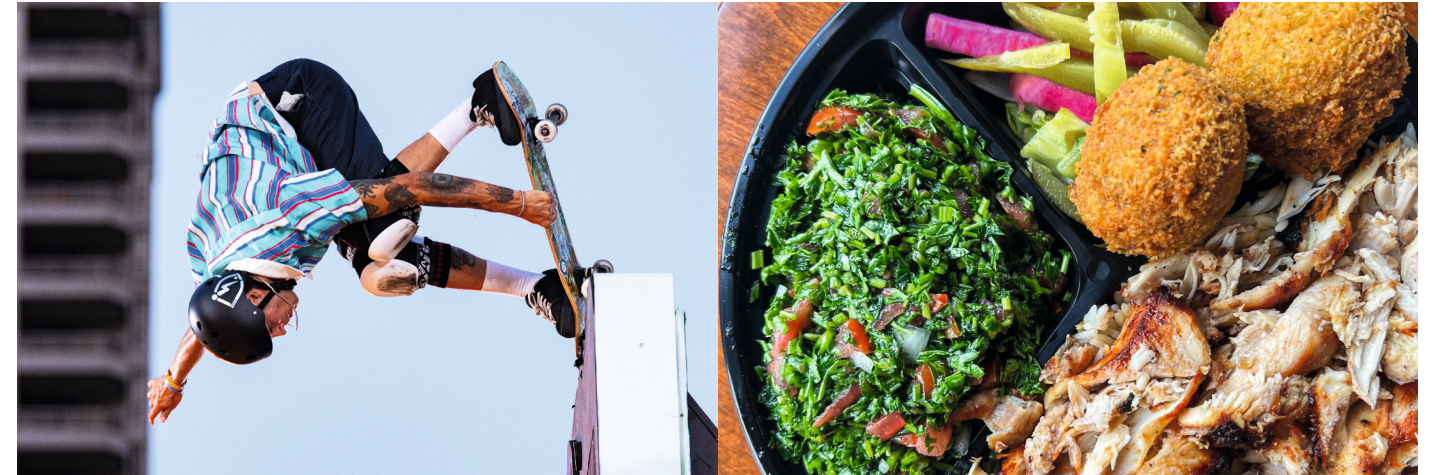


MISSISSAUGA

Canada's spirited city

Ontario's multicultural city of Mississauga weaves green landscapes and farmers' markets with global cuisine and a festival-packed calendar. Words: Ally Wybrew



Sitting pretty on the shores of Lake Ontario, Mississauga's sleek yet modest skyline and expansive waterfront is perhaps lesser known than its limelight-stealing neighbour, Toronto. However, with more than 500 parks filled with wildlife, an international food scene and Niagara Falls just across the water, this waterfront metropolis has its own individual appeal, while a colourful schedule of year-round markets and festivals lend it a perennially dynamic vibe. Acting as the entry point for many travellers visiting Canada — the city is home to the biggest airport in the country — here's what not to miss in Mississauga.

STEP INTO NATURE

In the heart of the city, Riverwood Park's 150 acres features curated gardens blooming with rhododendrons, as well as forests, wetlands and meadows hiding herons, sandpipers, hawks, owls and the country's iconic blue jays. With a revolving activity program, travellers can book an expert-led birding trek, or a nighttime nature tracking walk for all the family, as the park's forests rustle to life.

For more wildlife encounters, tread Rattray Marsh's maze of footpaths towards the city's western shores to spy egrets, white-tailed deer and beavers that inhabit the 90-acre conservation area.

On the easterly edge of Lake Ontario, you can hire a kayak from Port Credit Adventure Rentals to explore picturesque waterways at family-friendly Lakefront Promenade Park, or go for a dip on one of the sandy beaches.

In spring, Kariya Park's cherry blossoms flourish in a sea of pink petals. The trees were gifted by Mississauga's Japanese sister city, Kariya, and flower amidst Japanese-inspired architecture and artworks creating the most tranquil of settings in Downtown.

During the city's balmy summer, pack a picnic and wander some of Erindale Park's

222 acres along the meandering Culham woodland trail. As the season changes, fishing for salmon in the Credit River is a relaxing way to bask in the park's golden autumnal scenery.

DELVE INTO CULTURE AND CUISINE

Mississauga's history as an immigration hub has brought a multitude of peoples and cuisines from around the world — about 50% of the city's 750,000 residents speak English as a second language. As a result, Mississauga's cultural and culinary scenes are just as rich as its natural landscapes.

Start at cobbled-stoned Streetsville, nicknamed 'the village in the city' thanks to its charming 19th-century centre, dotted with independent shops and restaurants. Here, delve into deep-fried burritos at Border MX Mexican Grill, or share a smoky goat karahi at Charsi Karahi BBQ.

In the city centre, Mississauga Chinese Centre hosts an array of unique shops, food stalls and restaurants from across east Asia, like QJD serving authentic Peking Duck or, Sushi Omigoto for sashimi and bento.

For Middle Eastern flavours head to Tarboosh, while Michelin-awarded Guru Lukshmi specialises in vegetarian Indian dishes like spicy chilli-cheese dosa. And for variety, Square One — Ontario's largest shopping centre with over 300 retailers — has more than 100 dining options. Its Food District is loaded with independent stalls dishing-up everything from pulled pork poutine to Japanese cheesecake.

After dinner, catch a show at nearby Mississauga Living Arts Centre, where performances range from stand-up comedy, to classical symphonies and rap.

JOIN IN YEAR-ROUND FESTIVITIES

Like its food offerings, Mississauga's calendar of events showcases the city's diversity. It hosts Carassauga every May — Canada's largest multicultural festival,

packed with global food, music and dance. Celebration Square — the city's central hub — hosts events throughout the year, such as August's Japan Festival, showcasing Japanese food and culture, as well as elite skateboarding competition the Jackalope festival in July and the APIK ski and snowboarding festival in February.

Mississauga's bounty of farmers' markets pop up across the city in summer. Browse local preserves and organic cider at Lakeview Farmers' Market, or peruse by the water's edge at Port Credit. This vibrant waterside neighbourhood, flanked by the city's marina and its emblematic lighthouse, also hosts the Southside Shuffle Blues & Jazz Festival in September.

The Night Market TO summer and autumn events series delivers feasts and festivities — like Harvest Fest at Square One. Embodying all the joys of fall, this event offers pumpkin photo opportunities and food trucks serving maple syrup treats.

From left: Lakefront Promenade Park; Jackalope action sports festival; chicken shwarma platter from Tarboosh restaurant

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Flights depart daily from London to Toronto Pearson International Airport. Downtown Mississauga is a 15-minute drive or a 30-minute direct bus journey from the airport. Getting around the city is easy via an extensive bus network and plentiful taxi options. For more information, go to visitmississauga.ca

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