

Toronto - The New Beer Capitol of Canada!

Any visitor to Toronto will easily stumble upon the world-class tourist attractions - the CN Tower, The Royal Ontario Museum, The Art Gallery of Ontario. But few travelers realize that Toronto is fast emerging as the beer capitol of Canada. Home to over 7 breweries, Toronto offers the beer voyageur a wide selection of independent 'craft-breweries' to explore. Producing an impressive range of beer styles, these breweries all promote a tourist-friendly 'open-door' policy which affords a wonderful tasting opportunity for the beer-loving visitor to Toronto. Enter the Beer Lovers' Tour Company.

Founded in 1998, The Beer Lovers' Tour Company specializes in unique cultural beer adventures for the discriminating traveler. Originally hosting tours of Europe, England Ireland and Wales, founder Oliver Dawson soon directed attention to his home town, Toronto. By 2000 Toronto was showing signs of becoming a new 'Beer Mecca'. And so, The Old Toronto Beer Tour package was created, designed to capture the exciting renaissance of local brewing.

What makes the Old Toronto Beer Tour so unique however is the blending of modern small brewery visits with stories and architectural evidence that bring to life Toronto brewing history from the 19th century - a time when Toronto was a major North American brewing powerhouse rivaling famous American beer cities like Milwaukee and St. Louis.

The Old Toronto Beer Tour starts with a light lunch at the **Steam Whistle Brewery**, famous for its' premium European-style Pilsner. Located in the historic John Street Roundhouse - next to the CN Tower - Steam Whistle shares the heritage building with an outstanding new railway museum. An entertaining VIP brewery tour takes guests through the entire facility educating them on the process of brewing and the history of the pilsner style. Purists will be impressed with Steam Whistle's adherence to ancient European brewing laws and the remarkable similarity of Steam Whistle Pilsner to the delicious lagers from the Czech Republic. No wonder, as their Master Brewer is in fact originally from the city of Pilsen.

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Boarding the bus, guests are driven to the **Amsterdam Brewery**, on the way exploring the old Canada Malting ruins and the recently inaugurated Ireland Park. This dramatic lakeside sculpture park honors the thousands of Irish immigrants who perished on their way to Canada to start a new life. Irish contribution to 19th century brewing in Toronto and their defining influence on early Canadian culture cannot be underestimated.

Amsterdam Brewery presents guests with the chance to try a wide variety of beer styles and deepen their understanding of the wonderful world of beer. Brewing all-natural lagers and ales, Amsterdam prides itself on the diversity of fresh beers on offer - from an English-style Nut Brown Ale to an Irish Two-Fisted Stout to the spectacular Framboise, made with real raspberries from British Columbia.

Then it is across town for a brief stop at the recently opened **Duggan's Brewery**. Founded by one of Canada's most talented craft brewers, Duggan's Brewery is as close to a genuine 'Hausbrauerei' as you are likely to find outside of Germany. After a brief visit, it is off to the historic neighborhood, Corktown. Once home to over six breweries in the 19th century, it is one of the oldest residential-industrial districts in Toronto. Between a short stop at a historic tavern and a walking tour of the neighborhood, visitors are discovering secret corners of historic Toronto they would otherwise never know to visit.



The jewel in the crown of Corktown is the recently restored Gooderham and Worts Distillery District. Home to the **Mill Street Brewery**, the Distillery District is Toronto's newest tourist destination. Once the largest distillery in the British Empire, this veritable 'city within a city' represents the finest example of Victorian industrial architecture in North America. A tasting at the Mill Street Brewery demonstrates their commitment to quality and a wide range of taste experiences. Mill Street's Coffee Porter and the robust Tankhouse Ale will delight the senses of the most jaded beer connoisseur.

After exploring the galleries and specialty shops, guests board the bus again heading to the final destination, the **Granite Brewery**, where a 'beer dinner' is served. Operating one of Canada's smallest breweries, the Granite brewers pride themselves on their authentically British brewing philosophy. Naturally carbonated 'real ales' distinguish the Granite as the premier destination for the die-hard ale drinker. A satisfying dinner, each course accompanied by the appropriate beer style rounds out the day.

There are many things to experience and enjoy in Toronto, museums, theatre, restaurants, sports events. But for the beer lover, whether visiting Toronto for the first time or living here already, a beer adventure in Canada's new beer capitol is on tap and ready to be served.

Celebrate the renaissance! Cheers!

By Oliver Dawson

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