



## If Toronto and Vancouver Were Sisters

A colorful picture of Canada's two charming cities. By **SUZANNE MORPHET**

**ONE IS DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS,** the other plain, but hard working. One gets away with wearing yoga pants to work, and on weekends doesn't get out of bed until it's almost lunch—so let's skip breakfast and do brunch! The other runs errands on her days off, so her weekdays are productive.

Clichés exaggerate, of course, but when it comes to the two largest cities in English-

speaking Canada, Vancouver and Toronto have distinctly different personalities.

Vancouver was still a gleam in gold prospectors' eyes when Toronto was named and crawling in 1834. Toronto's head start is understandable, given that Canada was explored, then settled, from east to west. Today, Toronto has almost 3 million people (6.1 million in Greater Toronto) and is the country's financial

hub, as well as its most multicultural city—half its residents were born outside Canada. It's a place where you can lose yourself in sport, culture, entertainment, and shopping.

Toronto is home to the Canadian Opera Company, the National Ballet of Canada, Royal Ontario Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, ten major theaters, seven professional sports teams, 57 outdoor swimming pools and—in winter—50 outdoor skating/hockey rinks.

The first museum in North America solely devoted to Islamic art—the Aga Khan Museum—opened here in 2014—and the year before that Ripley's Aquarium of Canada

moved in beside the CN Tower and Rogers Centre (where the Toronto Blue Jays play), creating a triple entertainment threat by the lake shore.

Feel like a festival? Toronto's ten-day PRIDE in June is the largest in North America, and its Toronto International Film Festival is considered second only to Cannes in the world. Little wonder non-stop, fashion-forward Toronto is Canada's biggest tourist draw.



Canada, a land to find maple syrup, snow-filled streets, and the kindest strangers. Photo courtesy of Destination Canada.

**From left:** Explore the outdoors both winter and summer. Photos courtesy of Destination Canada. One of the multicultural streets of Toronto. Photo by Luis Vieira.





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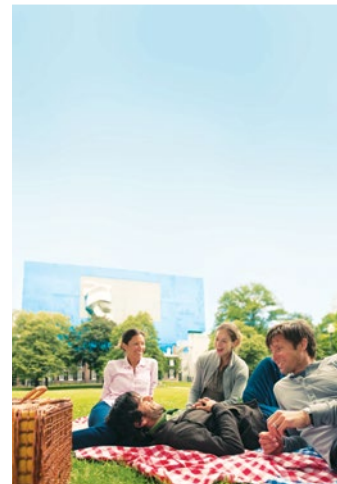


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**Clockwise from top:** Great public transit even in the wildest of the weather. *Photo courtesy of Destination Canada.* Outfits in every color of the rainbow at Toronto PRIDE. *Photo by John Maynard.* Eat while enjoying the warmth of indoors during the winter, or the sun-kissed grass of the summer. *Photos courtesy of Destination Canada.*



Just know that this city has two seasons—summer and winter—and one can be as brutally hot as the other is cold. Maybe this is why Toronto is known for its friendliness. It helps to gripe about the weather to others.

Instead of trying to emulate Big Sis, smaller laid-back Vancouver has always found her own way. Cut off from the rest of Canada by the prairies and Rocky Mountains, she had no choice. Vancouver doesn't have Toronto's economic clout, old money or political power. She's been struggling for years just to build a new public art gallery.

But one thing she has in spades is her looks. Flanked by mountains, with the sea lapping at her feet, Vancouver is extravagantly blessed by nature. Wild black bears routinely wander into Metro Vancouver and this winter a pair of beavers set up house in False Creek, a neighborhood near downtown.

Want to ski in the morning and sail in the afternoon? You can. Public transit is so good you can catch a city bus to the base of Grouse Mountain

## Despite their many differences, Toronto and Vancouver share a taste for food.

every half hour (Bus 232 or 236.) Enjoy walking? Vancouver is Canada's most walkable city, scoring 78/100 by Walk Score (Toronto is 71.4).

But don't think for a minute that Vancouver doesn't have a head on her pretty shoulders. Last year the city hired a brand valuation company to assess its worth should an oil spill ever damage the city's pristine environment. (It's a major shipping port, with pipeline terminus nearby). The value of Vancouver's clean, Green 'brand'? \$31 billion, thank you.

If you visit in winter, especially in November and December, you'll experience clean for yourself, bathed in rain. On the other hand, summer is bliss—warm enough to sunbathe without baking.

Despite their many differences, Toronto and Vancouver share a taste for food. Wedged between farmlands

and ocean, Vancouver is well nourished. In fact, the 100-mile diet was born here. Choose from pricey Chinese restaurants (one of the city's nicknames is Hongcouver) to inexpensive street food, and everything in-between.

Over the decades, Toronto has opened her arms to immigrants from all over the world and now boasts dozens of cuisines and tasty fusions. Where else but Toronto—and India—could a restaurant named Dindigul Thalappakattu Biryani not only survive, but thrive?

Oh, and one more thing: it takes exactly 25 minutes to travel by public transit from either Toronto Pearson International Airport or Vancouver International Airport to each city's respective downtowns. How's that for sisterhood? ■



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# *Your home in the middle of a tropical haven*

**F**ound between the South China Sea and the Sulu Sea, Coron is home to *Club Paradise* – a vibrantly acclaimed island resort known for its exquisite rustic surrounds and amenities, as well as indulgent, personalized service. Upon stepping onto the island, you will be greeted by a trio of tropical shirt-clad musicians strumming out island tunes, the staff offer you a welcome drink to compliment the warmth of the sun bouncing off your shoulders and the soft sand cradling your feet, all of which exclaim one thing to its guests: Behold - your paradise.



## **A city dweller's escape**

Situated comfortably away from the hustle and bustle of the town proper, Club Paradise in Dimakya Island is the perfect refuge for urban dwellers. Unwinding comes easy with the immersion in picturesque tropical sceneries and pampering by dedicated service. Rich marine life and a wide array of flora replace traffic and the concrete jungle in the resort's private island.

You can choose from the five room types of the resort namely the Garden View Cottages, Garden Suites, Sea View Cottages, Hillside Rooms and Beachfront Cottages, all of which were designed for maximum comfort and relaxation.

## *Behold – your paradise.*

For lunches, dinners, and anything in between, the island's aptly named Ocean Restaurant can serve you a fresh medley of the sea's finest catches, from mackerels, crabs, snappers, and lobsters seasoned and paired with the organically grown herbs and vegetables. For those who would like something a little more out of the ordinary, you can ask for beach picnics to be arranged for special gatherings.

To absolutely indulge in holistic rejuvenation, you can head over to the resort's Glow Spa and choose among divine treatments that promise to stimulate the harmony of the mind, body, and spirit. The choreographed techniques, healing touches, and luscious oils and fragrances are unique to the island, assuring you of pure pampering exclusive to the Club Paradise experience.

## **The adventure seeker's utopia**

For the venturesome, Club Paradise has a handful of treasured land and aquatic exploration trails that are especially unique to the island.

Start your day with a breathtaking view of the sunrise at Eagle's Point, the island's highest peak, which also gives you a panoramic view of Dimakya Island and its neighboring islets.

Should you seek further adventure, the resort can arrange a trip to Calauit Safari Park, a sprawling wildlife sanctuary located in Calauit Island with a substantial population of African animals including giraffes, zebras, and antelopes.

After seeking the adventures of land, strap on a tank and immerse yourself in the stories of World War II through exploring the wreck diving sites littered in Coron bay. The sunken ships, now encrusted with corals of multitude shades, is known to divers across the globe and have been identified in Forbes Traveler Magazine as one of the top 10 best in the world.

Truly, the only problem you can have in this island resort, is deciding what to experience first.

Whether you are looking to treat yourself to a thorough relaxation trip, craving for your next breathtaking adventure, or simply looking for the perfect summer Instagram picture to upload, it will be hard to find another destination more perfect than Club Paradise.

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