



Photo: Destination Toronto



Photo: J.F. Bergeron & NWT

# WINTER WONDERLAND IN TORONTO & YELLOWKNIFE

9 Days

Discover the endless possibilities of the Canadian metropolis Toronto in winter. Apart from the city's first-class sights, some extraordinary winter highlights are waiting for you! Glide past the "Toronto" sign at Nathan Philips Square ice rink, join the "Winterlicious" foodie event or stroll through the Christmas Market with all its sparkling lights. Embrace the chill and discover Niagara Falls' diverse offerings once the snow hits. The great natural wonder transforms into a winter wonderland: ice buildups create the illusion of frozen falls with icicles framing the bordering edges and a frozen mist blanketing the surrounding trees. For an exceptional experience wait until the falls and town light up during the annual Winter Festival of Lights.

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Continue your journey to the world's best region for Aurora-Viewing: Yellowknife is only one flight away! Here in the spectacular Northwest Territories the anticipation for true Canadian winter activities is within reach. Get ready for snowshoeing, fat biking adventures, watching some lake hockey, snowmobiling, ice fishing and most importantly: watching the fascinating Northern Lights.

Your itinerary through the different winter wonderlands could look like this:

## Day 1

Welcome to Toronto! To get a first overview of the metropolis, a **hop-on hop-off tour** is particularly convenient. You can either lean back and do the entire route in just over two hours or hop on and off at any of the 20 most important attractions along the bus route.

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Photo: Niagara Falls Tourism

One of the sights on the bus tour is the **Royal Ontario Museum**. In 2007, the futuristic-looking building was reopened after a spectacular renovation by star architect Daniel Libeskind. The Museum of Art, Culture and Natural History is one of the largest in North America and holds one of the world's most important ethnological collections. Both inside and out, it's anything but a dusty museum!

For travelers interested in history, **Casa Loma** is a stop worth experiencing. Sir Henry Pellatt had the dream castle built for his family at the beginning of the 20th century. Today, the stately home with its manicured gardens is a frequently booked movie set and a beautiful museum that can be visited individually on a self-guided audio tour.

Afterwards, visit one of the most famous **Christmas markets** in Canada. It takes place at Distillery District which is decorated with a giant Christmas tree, merry lights, Santa, elves and a lot more. The giant light tunnel is the market's highlight!



Photo: Destination Toronto

At night choose from many menu options including an appetizer, entrée and dessert in Toronto's trendiest restaurants and take part in the city's hugely popular foodie event "**Winterlicious**".

## Day 2

Today it's time for an excursion! You can either rent a car, book a train or public bus or join an organized daytrip to see the world-famous **Niagara Falls**, located only about 130 kilometers from Toronto. The mighty masses of water cast a spell over visitors. From countless vantage points you have an impressive view of this unique spectacle.

While the city is known for its vibrancy in the warmer months, the great natural wonder and region transform into a frozen landscape unlike any other in winter.

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Photo: Destination Toronto

Winter essentials include taking in the frosty panoramic view from the **Skylon Tower Observation Deck**, scoping out the beautiful vistas from the comfort of the climate-controlled **Niagara SkyWheel** on Clifton Hill, and enjoying classic winter activities such as skating and snowshoeing.

Make sure to stay until it's dark to experience the nightly **illumination** of the falls. The different colours dancing off the ice formations are mesmerizing! But not only the falls are illuminated at night: stroll through the streets and enjoy the annual **Winter Festival of Lights** from November to February.

## Day 3

A visit to Toronto is not complete without a trip to the impressive 553-meter-high **CN Tower**. High up on the city's landmark, spectacular views of the skyline, the Toronto islands lying in Lake Ontario and the impressive abyss beneath the glass floor await. Perhaps you can even watch the fireboat breaking the ice for the Toronto-islands ferry from up here. Adrenaline junkies can look forward to the EdgeWalk – 360° walk on the roof of the tower.

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Make your way to the **Nathan Philips Square** and experience the magic of ice skating when gliding past the color lit "Toronto" sign. Skate rentals as well as snack bars and washrooms are available here.

Enjoy Toronto's **world class shopping**, for example in the heart of the city at Eaton Centre offering over 200 retailers. Bargain hunters will get their money's worth at the Toronto Premium Outlets. If you don't mind travelling a little further for a good deal, you can also head to Dixie Outlet Mall in Mississauga. The largest indoor outlet mall in Canada is about 30 minutes from Downtown Toronto.

## Day 4

The spectacular Northwest Territories are only one flight away: Air Canada departs on Wednesdays and Friday mornings and takes you directly to **Yellowknife** – with its mostly crystal-clear skies and a perfect geographic location under the Aurora Oval, the world's best region for **Aurora Viewing**.

Yellowknife welcomes you and offers a little orientation at the **Northern Frontier Visitor Center**. Nearby are the **NWT Legislative Assembly Building** and the **Prince of Wales Northern**

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**Heritage Museum.** The latter is the mother of all northern museums and offers an excellent overview of the Northwest Territories' art, culture, industry and history. Exhibits range from Dene moose skin boats to gold rush era memorabilia and old bush planes. If you're there at the right time, you can also enjoy exciting live presentations.

Next up is a truly sparkling experience! Yellowknife lies in the middle of an area rich in gold and diamonds. The latter were first discovered in the early 1990s, giving the region a renewed boom after its brief gold rush of the 1930s. While the diamond mines are located slightly outside, the **NWT Diamond Centre** in town awaits with the secrets of Arctic diamonds.



Photo: Northwest Territories Tourism

Here, chunky rough diamonds are transformed into polished jewelry by expert cutters in front of the eyes of curious spectators.

A delicious dinner at **The Woodyard** tops off your first day in the Northwest Territories. The cool brew pub in Yellowknife's Old Town offers not only delicious food, but also home-brewed beer made from local ingredients.

After dinner, make your way back to your hotel and, if you're lucky, you'll already see the first Northern Lights flickering in the sky.

## Day 5-7

The next few days – or rather nights – are all about the fascinating Northern Lights! Your wilderness adventure begins today as your travel to the recently reopened luxury resort **Bachford Lake Lodge**. You will arrive by seaplane and on the

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30-minute flight to Blachford Lake, located about 100 kilometres southeast of Yellowknife, the view of the Northwest Territories' winter wonderland underneath will take your breath away. Landing on skies on the frozen lake is a real highlight!



The lodge is located far away from roads or national electricity and water supplies, yet offers many of the benefits of luxury accommodation - in the middle of an untouched wilderness that is not affected by artificial light or noise. This makes it the perfect setting for observing the heavenly **Aurora Borealis!**

The lodge's exclusive main building is situated in a unique location on a rocky hill on the lake shore and offers a magnificent view of the picturesque landscape and Northern Lights. You can stay overnight either in one of the cozy guest rooms in the main building or in one of the exclusive guest cabins, which are even more secluded.

When night falls in the Northwest Territories and millions upon millions of stars twinkle in the darkness, the celestial dance floor opens. High overhead, nature's breathtaking fireworks ignite as the starry sky fills as if by magic with buzzing lights of bright colors. Green-yellow, blue, white and red ribbons of light begin to glow in the sky, dancing and whirling around their own axis, slowly at first, then faster and faster.

You can't miss the celestial spectacle thanks to the lodge's excellent **aurora wake-up service!**



Photo: Martina Gebrovská & NWT

During the days, exciting outdoor adventures await, such as **snowshoeing, fat biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling or ice fishing**. If you want, you can even try constructing a traditional **igloo** with the help of a guide!

If you prefer to relax or warm up after your outdoor activities, you can lean back in the **whirlpool** or enjoy an infusion in the cozy **sauna**.

## Day 8

After three wonderful nights full of Northern Lights, you will leave the luxurious Blachford Lake Lodge and fly back to civilization in the capital city of Yellowknife by seaplane.

Enjoy the unique panoramic view from the Bush's Pilot Monument. This popular vantage point rises above Old Ton and offers breathtaking views of Great Slave Lake, Back Bay and the northern edge of the city. The monument is located high atop "The Rock" and can be reached by a spiral staircase. It is dedicated to the bush pilots and engineers who lost their lives flying in the wilderness of the Northwest Territories. The memorial also serves a practical purpose: when the light on top of the tower flashes, residents and

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visitors are warned that seaplanes or ski planes are flying in nearby Yellowknife Bay.

In the evening, stop by Yellowknife's legendary seafood restaurant **Bullock's Bistro** in Old Town. Here you can enjoy a cold beer and freshly caught fish from Great Slave Lake. Your last evening in the Northwest Territories couldn't end any more authentically...!

## Day 9

After these magical days it's time for the journey home. With you are countless impressions of Canada's diversity, ranging from exciting metropolises over historic old towns, authentic Canadian winter activities to the unique Aurora Borealis.