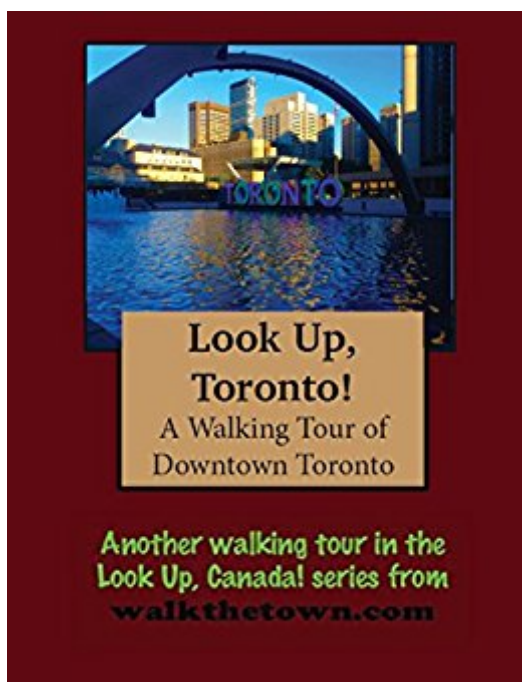


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# A Walking Tour Of Toronto - Downtown



## Synopsis

There is no better way to see Canada than on foot. And there is no better way to appreciate what you are looking at than with a walking tour. Whether you are preparing for a road trip or just out to look at your own town in a new way, a downloadable walking tour from [walkthetown.com](http://walkthetown.com) is ready to explore when you are. Each walking tour describes historical and architectural landmarks and provides pictures to help out when those pesky street addresses are missing. Every tour also includes a quick primer on identifying architectural styles seen on North American streets. Today Toronto is the fourth-largest city in North America but when the town was officially incorporated in 1834 it was scarcely the fourth most important Canadian city with Montreal, Quebec and Halifax all chugging ahead of it through the Industrial Revolution. The settlement had been founded on the shores of Lake Ontario as an important stop in a water link to western Canada and south to the Gulf of Mexico. It was called York but by the 1830s it was so undeveloped as to be widely known as "Muddy York." The first thing that had to be done was to jettison the name which could have referred to any of a dozen other Yorks on the provincial map, let alone New York City. First mayor William Lyon Mackenzie then set about paving and building. Land along the waterfront was filled in and the railroads arrived in the 1850s as Toronto grew into the hub of the Golden Horseshoe on the western shore of Lake Ontario. Immigration played a significant role in Toronto's growth from the beginning. Half of the population lays claim to a minority group and while English prevailed as the dominant language there evolved over 200 distinct ethnic origins speaking more than 160 different languages. In 1904 most of the downtown area burned after a fire broke out on Wellington Street West in the elevator shaft of E & S Currie Limited's neck wear factory. Before the wind-whipped conflagration could be contained more than 100 buildings were destroyed. Toronto, then a city of 200,000 residents, barely flinched. The buildings came back quickly, bigger and better than ever. The lust for building has led to controversy over the years. Toronto has never been shy with the wrecking ball, causing consternation to lovers of heritage buildings. And the proliferation of Canada's tallest buildings has led to head-shaking among some in the depths of the urban canyons. To explore this civic tug-of-war of old and new, lost and saved we will begin our walking tour at one of Toronto's prime battlegrounds in the preservation wars...

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