**Archive yourself at the Royal Ontario Museum**

Patterns, textiles, jewellery, and everything as vintage as last millennium: the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) has it all! In the minerals exhibit you can appreciate the trendy colours and cuts of precious stones which took millions of years to form. The ROM even shows you how you could don these as wicked accessories!

Sometimes even your trip between galleries can become intoxicating with the mix of old and new architecture splashed on every wall. Whether you dig the old early-20th century remnants of the ROM, or the sleek and modern additions of Frank Gehry, you'll get tons of new ideas for remodelling your gentrified loft. Each triangle, diamond, and square in the museum's new design will make you want to take up art class.

Due to the variation in size between the galleries, we recommend you bring ALL of your lenses here. Anything in a glass can be beautifully captured with a prime 50mm lens or macro feature. If you are looking for candid crowd photos, bring the telephoto and zoom to your heart's content from the 4th floor looking onward to the massive atrium filled with guests and the skeletons of dinosaurs. In fact, most levels look onto the one immediately below, so revel in Toronto's creative terraces similar to that of Machu Pichu.

**Get Inspired!**

Taking a page from the ROM, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) expanded on its original stone square structure with levels and wings of galleries done in contemporary waves of wood. Depending on how thoroughly you want to inhale and capture the works on display, you can spend all day through the galleries spread across five floors, or stick to just one room for the whole day. The gallery always offers a rotating speciality exhibit for a premium rate, but it is worth it if you want see the work of artists revered as Kahlo, Diego, and Picasso. Unfortunately these premium shows do not allow photography, but they always offer prints and photobooks that you can bring home to show your friends just how cultured you are.

For the remaining vanilla exhibits, photography is allowed as long as you do not use a flash.

Just outside you can see the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCADU): an excellent source of unique, talented people you can connect with for prestigious socialisation and diverse inspiration.

**Get an Eyeful of Balzac's**

This place offers organic, trade-fair ingredients and options, with a selection that will empty your platinum card faster than Etsy. Balzac's Coffee is a fairly new chain, with a few locations in Toronto, and a couple more elsewhere in Canada. This location opened in the distillery district sometime in the last decade, along with the new avenue of shoppes, boutiques, and condos. That's the fast-paced urban lifestyle we love! Balzac's houses itself in one of the rejuvenated factory buildings which still adorns it's late 19th century aesthetics on the outside. Despite Balzac's fairly recent introduction to the neighbourhood, it too tries to evoke the simpler and more elegant times through vintage wall art, prints, paintings, and a mounted chandelier that doesn't quit! The coffee shop mixes old and new with their up-to-date counters, seating, and tables, alongside original piping and utilities scattered throughout the maze of rooms.

This location provides an optimal view throughout year, especially at Christmas where the spinning carousel is just outside the store front - here's your opportunity for beautiful bokeh pictures! This location is often busy, as it is always temperature controlled to tea across the seasons, and its proximity to Mill Street's own brewery makes this a fun pit-stop to sober up or pre-drink (if you need coffee/tea before beer). There isn't a liquor license, but there is no need with the assortment of baked goods available to treat on. Feel free to take stock photos of the pastries in beautiful lines. Capture those majestic patterns or highlight your favourite dessert by selectively using a macro-focus lens.

**High Sights, High Exposure at High Park**

Green space, gardens, a zoo, a restaurant, dog walking, and a castle playground: What doesn't this place have?! Depending on where you enter from, you will be run into one of these many places first, and will need to adjust your route accordingly. The park, which is one third the size of New York's Central Park, can easily take up a whole day or more. If you love to draw, you will always have rolling hills free to sit on watch passersby or have view of beautiful nature scenes ranging from wetlands to forest.

A heritage site exists in the park for free tours during The Doors Open event, and other remnants of the century-old park are scattered across the property as well. We strongly recommend you bring a portrait or telephoto lens to capitalise on the candid people and diverse aviary photo ops. If botanical photography is more up your alley, we recommend you bring your macro or telephoto lens to the gardens on the top-most hill, overlooking a giant maple-leaf installation embedded in the ground below.

The Zoo may only take a few minutes to pass through, but the range of exotic animals makes the visit worthwhile. With your telephoto, you can zoom through the bars of the fence and it will look like you are somewhere distant and alluring. This zoo is housed nearby a pond which often has geese, swans, mallards, and wood ducks - the only place I have ever seen wood ducks in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). At the end of the road, live up some childhood nostalgia in a park that probably beats the best experiences you've ever had as a kid. Oh well - live it up now! The castle playground was rebuilt by Mike Holmes after an unfortunate arsonist destroyed it a few years ago. That means that the whole set up is bigger, brighter, and better than before. If you have children with you, this is the best place to get their photos having the time of their life. Little details like the turrets, the mounted shields and crests made by kids, and gridded windows make this playground a unique backdrop for photos.

**A Tunnel Under-Exposed**

Unlike the other places we have discussed, this spot is more of a hidden gem that's only a few meters long, and is totally free and open to enter in the public. This bridge at Queen and Dufferin acts as a busy thoroughfare for cars, streetcars, and buses, but the mosaic art on the walls are certainly a photo op that can't be missed. The easiest way to reach here is taking the Queen St. streetcar route, or walking from the Exhibition GO station if you are a little further out of town. As much as we love bike riding, this triple intersection is not an ideal place for cycles!

Both sides of the inside of this tunnel, underneath a railway, has a least a dozen circles with mosaic art. These pieces range from whole patterns to renditions of individual eyes. Some of the circles act as independent works while others accompany the circles next to them, forming larger patterns of (a/)symmetry. A fisheye lens would neatly capture for the full length of the wall, showing the road and lights as curves to the backdrop of your photo. A macro lens would also give you the opportunity to capture great textures in magnified shots of the mosaic tiles up-close. Also, due to the higher elevation of the sidewalks to the roads, this an ideal place to practice long exposure shots on a tripod. You want to master those long car-light streak shots!

**Article about St. George**