

TORONTO RISES IN NORTH AMERICAN TOURISM RANKINGS

International travellers spur tourism growth

TORONTO (January 27, 2011) – 2010 was a record year for tourism in Toronto as the number of hotel room nights sold reached over 8.93 million. Toronto moved up to sixth place in hotel occupancy among top North American cities from 10th a year ago. Tourism Toronto's newly released tourism estimates for 2010 show a significant rebound from the prior year and important growth in key international markets.

"The momentum from 2010 shows the resilience and growing popularity of our destination," said David Whitaker, President and CEO of Tourism Toronto. "In addition, we've been working to complement our existing core business by increasing our visitors, be they meetings delegates or international travellers."

Hotel occupancy across the Toronto region increased to 68.3 per cent up 9.7 per cent over the prior year, giving Toronto the fifth highest growth rate and the sixth highest total occupancy rate.*

In 2010, Toronto welcomed 10 million overnight visitors. Visitor spending, including same day trips, totalled \$4.5 billion in the Toronto region across a range of businesses and activities.

"More guests checking into hotels translates into more jobs being supported and created – not only in our hotels but also in our taxis, restaurants, shops, attractions and entertainment venues," noted Terry Mundell, President of the Greater Toronto Hotel Association. "This is also a vivid example of the kind of growth a destination can experience while enjoying a dedicated and consistent revenue stream from industry and government partners."

Key markets

The fastest growing visitor markets to Toronto are India (26.5 per cent increase), Brazil (25.5 per cent), China (21.9 per cent) and Japan (18.3 per cent). International travellers now account for 32.8 per cent of all visitors.

The top international visitor markets for Toronto in 2010 were:

1. U.S.	1,970,000
2. U.K.	194,000
3. China	117,000
4. Germany	78,000
5. France	71,000
6. Japan	70,000
7. India	64,000
8. Brazil	42,000

In 2010 the number of U.S. visitors remained steady compared to 2009, but showed a continued shift toward high-value urban travellers. Air arrivals to Toronto from the U.S. have increased for the past nine consecutive months and grew by 7.7 per cent in 2010, while the number of people driving over the border declined by 4.2 per cent for the year.

“The world loves to come to Toronto. It’s a great place – a truly international, cosmopolitan city with world-class cultural attractions, festivals and sporting events,” said Michael Chan, Minister of Tourism and Culture. “With all Toronto has to offer the visitor, we know it will continue to grow and shine as a global tourism destination in 2011 and for years to come.”

An important indicator of a thriving tourism industry is the continuing development by well-respected hotel brands. Adding to the recent openings of the Thompson Toronto and Le Germain Maple Leaf Square are the imminent openings of luxury hotels Trump Toronto, Ritz-Carlton Toronto, Shangri-La and the new Four Seasons.

Major wins in 2010

In early 2010, Toronto’s convention industry got a shot in the arm as meeting planners from across North America rated Toronto tops in several categories. Toronto was ranked number one among 46 cities in North America for "Superior Convention and Visitors Bureau / Destination Marketing Organization" and for "Superior Convention Centre Services" for Tourism Toronto and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre respectively. **

“There is a new buzz about Toronto that is now translating into a renewed and growing awareness and interest in this community as a visitor and meetings destination that can deliver on our guests’ expectations” said Mr. Whitaker. “Being ranked among the top destinations in North America should not only be a real source of pride – it is a testament to the significant accomplishments so many have made in building this city over the past decade.”

2010 was another positive year for booking future meetings and conventions as Tourism Toronto and partners booked 564,000 future hotel room nights. The list below sets out the top meetings, by hotel room nights, booked by Tourism Toronto last year.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
2012	Shoppers Drug Mart	2,200
2012	Assembly of First Nations	3,000
2012	Toronto Sports Council/Ontario Summer Games	8,000
2015	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages	6,500
2015	Canadian Wind Energy Association	3,000
2016	Government Finance Officers Association	7,500
2017	ASAE & The Centre for Association Leadership	6,500
2017	Canadian Union of Public Employees	2,500
2023	American Water Works Association	11,000
2029	American Water Works Association	11,000

About Tourism Toronto

Tourism Toronto, Toronto’s Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,200 members established to sell and market the greater Toronto region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers around the

globe. Tourism Toronto operates in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture as Regional Tourism Organization 5. For more information please visit www.seetorontonow.com.

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Note to editors

*Hotel data from Smith Travel Research – refers to top 25 U.S. cities by hotel room capacity plus three Canadian cities (Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver).

**Watkins Research Group Inc. surveyed over 600 meeting planners from across North America about a range of aspects pertaining to the meetings and conventions industry and this year, Toronto ranked in the top five in North America in six of the eight factors and number one in six of the eight in Canada.