Orienting Yourself around St. George Campus – A Highly Biased and Informal Guide

By Dmitry Krass

St. George campus is located in the heart of the city and within easy walking distance of some interesting neighborhoods.

- Arriving by subway: the St. George station is served by both (sadly, Toronto has only two) main subway lines. To get to Rotman, follow the signs to St. George Str. exit (NOT the Bedford exit, which is one block East). Once you are on the surface, turn LEFT and walk about 30m to the intersection with Bloor Str.
  - If you happen to exit at Bedford Str. exit, turn right, walk to Bloor, turn right again and walk one block to St. George Str. – you are now in the same place.
- Cross Bloor and walk another 100m to Rotman. Rotman building is quite large and has two parts, the North building (the first one you come to, this is where the main entrance is), and South (where all conference events take place). The buildings are connected on every floor.
  - The very first entrance you come to is the main building entrance. This is the only one that will be open on Sunday (until 7pm only) and the only entrance open after 6pm on weekdays.
  - The conference dinner will take place in the Hart House, which is 5 mins walk from Rotman. Please see the map below:
From Bloor and St. George intersection, facing down St. George (i.e., with your back to St. George station), you are facing South. Here is the basic orientation:

- Bloor Str. is one of the main East-West street in Toronto
- St George runs North-South. It is the major street on campus, but not a large street outside of campus. The historic (and nicest) part of campus is East of St. George – King’s College dr, Trinity College, Philosopher's walk, etc.

The campus is bordered by the following main streets:

- Bloor Str. – on the North
- College Str. – on the South, runs parallel to Bloor
- Avenue rd. / Queens Park / University ave (same street that changes names three times — quite common in Toronto) - on the East
- Spadina rd. – on the West

Street numbering in Toronto: the odd and even numbers are on opposite sides of the street. E.g., on Bloor Str., even numbers are on the North side and odd are on the South; on Spadina, the evens are on the West side and odds are on the East.

Key neighborhoods around St. George station (please see the map below):

- **Annex**: walk West on Bloor st, until you cross Spadina rd
  - Many nice bars, little shops, restaurants, etc. Very lively and interesting area.
  - Runs along Bloor to (roughly) half-way between Bathurst Str. And Christie Str.
  - Closer to Christie it turns into Koreatown – a unique Toronto neighborhood with nice Korean restaurants and shops
  - Personal favorites in and near Annex:
    - Bar Mercurio (270 Bloor) – nice Italian pizza/pasta place; informal for lunch, more formal for dinner.
    - L’Espresso bar Mercurio (321 Bloor) – same owners but more breakfast/lunch place. Excellent coffee and pastries.
    - Famoso Neapolitan Pizzeria (386 Bloor) – memories of last ISOLDE
    - Fresh (326 Bloor) – vegetarian and vegan yet still good enough for non-vegetarians like me
    - Future bakery (S side of Bloor) – an odd mix of a bar/coffee shop/Ukrainian food
    - Real Thailand restaurant (570 Bloor)
    - Crepes a GoGo (just W of Spadina on Bloor, S side) – authentic French creperie
    - Greg’s Ice Cream (just next to Crepes a GoGo) – arguably, one of the best ice cream spots in the city
    - Sushi on Bloor (525 Bloor st W) – nice and inexpensive Sushi place; one of many in Annex, but one of the more dependable ones
    - Kinka Izakaya (559 Bloor st W) – very nice Japanese bar food
    - Rasa (Robert and Harbord st) – Harbord runs parallel to Bloor a few blocks south; it is basically the South border of the Annex neighborhood and has many excellent restaurants; Rasa is one of the best (reservations recommended; not cheap)
- **“Museum district”**: The Bata Shoe Museum is directly across the street from the station. Walking East on Bloor; on the South side of the street you will see Royal Conservatory (excellent concert hall there), then ROM (Royal Ontario Museum). The Gardiner Museum (clay) is directly opposite ROM across Avenue rd (the next large North-South street).
  - ROM and Gardiner both have upscale restaurants on top floors
  - All three museums have nice gift shops
  - The recommended conference hotels (Intercontinental and Hyatt) are both on this stretch of Bloor; both have nice dining options
  - Some of food options:
    - Over Easy (208 Bloor) – nice, traditional North American breakfast place
    - The Host (14 Prince Arthur – it is a little street that runs parallel to Bloor, one block North) – best Indian food in this part of town; if you want better you have to go to India Town, which is an Indian/Pakistani neighborhood and is a little hard to get to (Uber or taxi is the best option)

- **“Shopping District”**: just East of the Museum district along Bloor; runs (roughly) from Avenue rd to Church Str. along Bloor. Toronto’s answer to New York’s 5th avenue; all upscale labels are represented here.

- **Yorkville**: a cute little neighborhood of upscale shops, restaurants and cafes that is just North of the Shopping district. Runs along Cumberland ave (a little street parallel to Bloor just to the North) and Yorkville ave (parallel to Cumberland)
  - Some food options (there are many here)
    - Sassafras (100 Cumberland): French-Canadian; good but expensive
    - Hemingway’s (142 Cumberland): New-Zealand-style pub
    - Dynasty Chinese Cuisine (69 Yorkville): upscale Chinese restaurant; good dim sum

- **Chinatown**: walk down Spadina to College. Chinatown runs South along Spadina (as well as East along Dundas). There are 5 (at least) Chinatowns in Toronto, but this is the oldest and closest to St. George. The restaurants tend to be downscale, but the food is often quite good; also best place in Toronto to find good food at 1 am. The turnover for restaurants is high, so hard to keep track of what’s open at the moment. The three below have been around for a while and are quite dependable:
  - Mothers Dumplings (421 Spadina) – dumplings are particularly nice, but other options also available
  - Swatow (309 Spadina) – classic Chinese food; has been around forever, open till 2am
  - Pho Hung (350 Spadina) – good Vietnamese cuisine
  - Baldwin st, between Beverly (this is the new name of St. George st after it crosses College st) and McCaul (one block East): many excellent and diverse restaurants on this little street, from Spanish and Italian to Chinese and Japanese; most are quite good

- **Kensington Market**: runs along Augusta and Kensington streets just West of Spadina (i.e., parallel to Chinatown) – an interesting and lively area of food shops, odd clothing and art, interesting restaurants (where else would you find a Jamaican/Italian or Thai/Hungarian place?)

- **Little Italy**: runs along College Street from Bathurst to the West. This is stretching the idea of “walking distance from St. George” a bit, but well worth a visit – many excellent shops and restaurants here