THINGS TO DO IN LESLIEVILLE: A LOCAL'S NEIGHBOURHOOD GUIDE

Leslieville

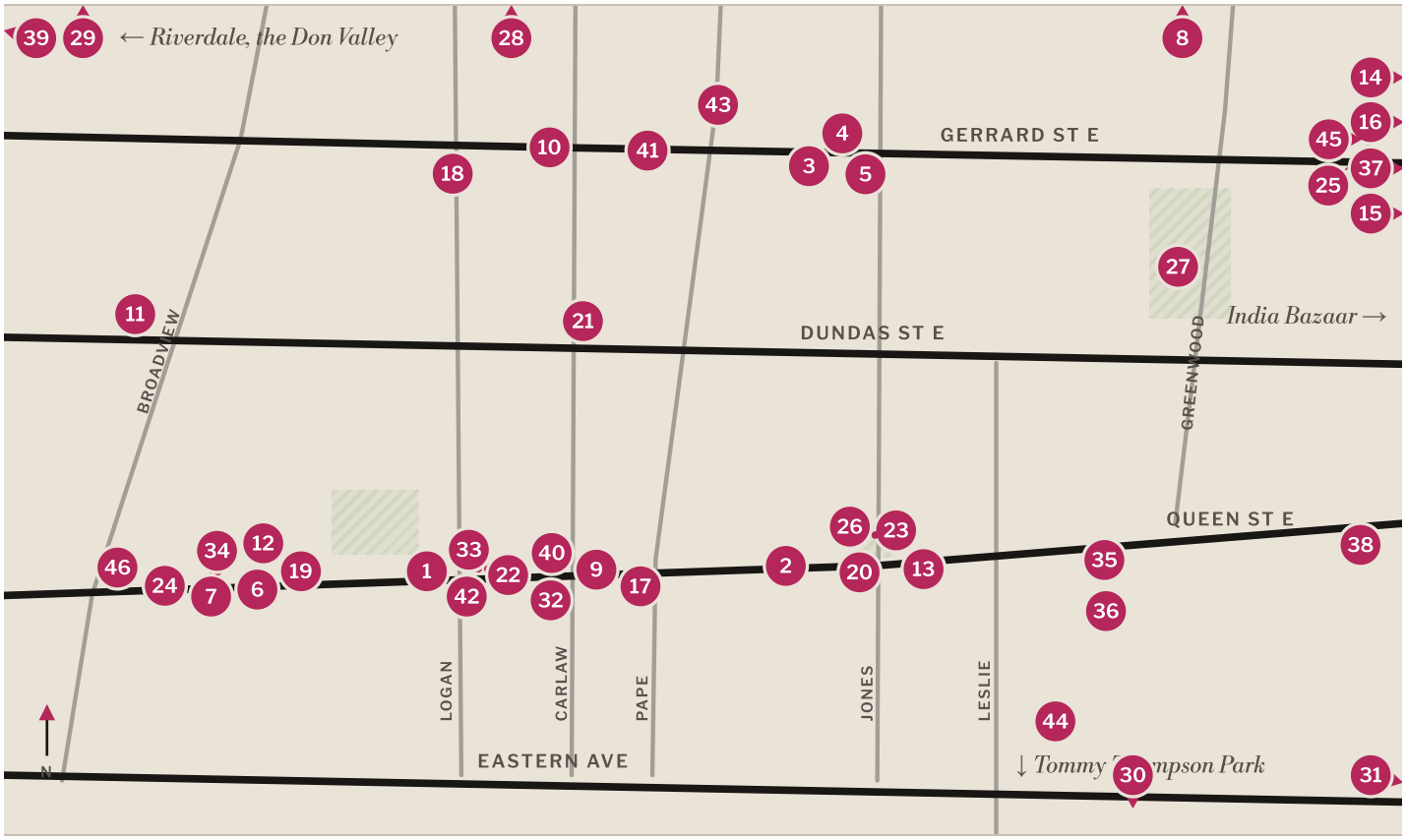
Toronto's East End Soul

By **Andrew**, who hosts **Art Loft** in Leslieville Updated November 19, 2026

Leslieville is where Toronto sheds its corporate skin and shows its heart. Once a gritty industrial pocket, now a haven for creatives, food lovers, and anyone seeking authenticity over artifice. Here, old brick facades house third-wave coffee shops, and former factories pulse with indie music and the hum of tattoo machines. It's a neighbourhood where brunch is a competitive sport, street art tells stories, and every corner offers a new flavour or sound to explore. Leslieville isn't just a place to visit. It's a place to experience.

THIS WINTER

- Since November 2, the 501 Queen streetcar runs along Gerrard St E between Broadview and Coxwell while Queen is rebuilt. Take it to Gerrard & Carlaw until the TTC restores Queen.
- Wanderlust, the BIA's holiday street party, turns 20 on Saturday, November 21: noon to 6pm on Queen St E from Jimmie Simpson Park to Vancouver Ave, with Santa's Village and a tree lighting at sunset in Leslie Grove Park.
- The rinks open for leisure skating on November 28: Greenwood Park and Riverdale Park East run daily to 10pm.
- The Leslieville Christmas Pop-up Market runs December 4 to 6 at 388 Carlaw Ave: a ticketed sip-and-shop on the Friday night, then free entry Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 6pm.
- Christmas markets: the Leslieville Farmers' Market holds one every Sunday in December, to the 20th, at the East End Food Hub.



46 numbered places, drawn to "Toronto north": the way the streets run, about 16° off true north.

01

Leslieville bars and patios

Leslieville doesn't do velvet ropes or overpriced cocktails. Here, bars are about good conversation and even better drinks. Whether you're sipping a craft brew at Avling or sharing stories over a pint at The Roy, these spots are where locals unwind and newcomers feel instantly at home.

HOUSE FAVOURITE

Garden Bar & Bodega

If you're the kind of traveller who knows the best bar is the one you can stumble home from, meet your new local. Part bodega, part neighbourhood watering hole, Garden Bar & Bodega pours an honest drink when the day winds down, and a damn good Reuben comes out of the kitchen from lunch on. No frills, no pretense. Just good food, stiff pours, and a patio built for wasting time. It's exactly the kind of place Bourdain would've called home for the night.

Opens 11am daily

1

The Roy Public House

Queen St E between Booth Ave and Logan Ave 9 min walk
894 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1J3

A Belfast-inspired pub that's become a local institution. Known for its hearty fare, it's where stories are shared over pints.

2

Bar Mini

Queen St E at Caroline Ave, west of Jones Ave 11 min walk
New in the guide
1118 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1K9

A tiny cocktail and snack bar styled like a 1970s dinner party. Small room, big personality.

No reservations; closed Tuesdays

3

Pinkerton's Snack Bar

Gerrard St E between Marjory Ave and Galt Ave 11 min walk
1026 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1Z5

A lively spot offering inventive cocktails and Asian-inspired bites. Get the bao and the Taiwanese popcorn chicken; the atmosphere is always buzzing.

Tue–Sun, 5pm–2am

4

Bar Etc.

Gerrard St E at Galt Ave 11 min walk New in the guide
1036 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1Z5

A newer cocktail bar that builds classic cocktails with tropical ingredients. Get the fried chicken.

Closed Mon–Tue

5

Vatican Gift Shop

Gerrard St E between Galt Ave and Jones Ave 11 min walk
1047 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1Z7

Behind a façade of religious trinkets lies a moody bar with eclectic décor. Live performances and handcrafted cocktails make it a hidden gem.

Wed–Sat, 6pm–2am

6

Chez Nous

Queen St E at Boulton Ave 12 min walk
798 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1H4

An intimate wine bar celebrating Ontario's finest. With a rotating selection and a no-reservations policy, it's the perfect spot for spontaneous indulgence.

Every evening from 5pm

7

The Comrade

Queen St E at Saulter St 13 min walk New in the guide
758 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1H4

A dark, cozy cocktail bar and a Queen East fixture. Come for the 5–7 cocktail hour, stay for the prime-rib burger.

Cocktail hour 5–7pm, Mon–Sat

8

Left Field Brewery

Wagstaff Dr off Greenwood Ave, north of Gerrard St E 24 min walk
36 Wagstaff Dr, Toronto, ON M4L 3W9

A baseball-themed brewery where the love for the game meets a passion for craft beer. The Leslieville taproom is a grand slam for beer aficionados.

02

Leslieville restaurants and brunch

In Leslieville, culinary boundaries blur. From the rich aromas of Maha's Egyptian brunch on Greenwood Ave (closed Wednesdays) to the inventive plates at Lake Inez, this neighbourhood feeds both body and soul. It's a place where every meal tells a story, and every bite is an invitation to explore.

9

Ricky + Olivia

Queen St E between Carlaw Ave and Heward Ave 6 min walk
996 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1K1

A duo celebrating Ontario's bounty, plate and glass alike: the wine list is all Ontario. A Michelin Bib Gourmand in 2025 and again in 2026.

Tue–Sat from 4pm

10

The Real Jerk

Gerrard St E just west of Carlaw Ave 7 min walk
842 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON

Serving authentic Caribbean cuisine, this spot is famed for its jerk chicken and vibrant ambiance. A taste of the islands in the heart of Toronto.

11

Lady Marmalade

Broadview Ave at Allen Ave, just north of Dundas St E 12 min walk
265 Broadview Ave, Toronto, ON M4M 2G8

A beloved brunch spot known for its creative dishes and a bright, sunny room. Expect a wait, but the eggs Benedict are worth it.

Daily 8:30am–3pm; walk-in only

12

Amber Kitchen & Coffee

Boulton Ave just north of Queen St E 12 min walk
New in the guide
4 Boulton Ave, Toronto, ON M4M 2J3

One of Toronto Life's best new restaurants of 2025, open daily from 7:30am. It takes reservations, which makes it the brunch without the line.

13

Descendant Detroit Style Pizza

Queen St E at Rushbrooke Ave, east of Jones Ave 14 min walk
New in the guide
1168 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1L5

Canada's first Detroit-style pizzeria: square pans, crisp cheese edges, and a shelf of competition wins.

Wed–Sun, 11:30am–10pm

14

Leela Indian Food Bar

Gerrard St E between Highfield Rd and Woodfield Rd 25 min walk
1386 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4L 1Z2

Chaat and falooda, curries and cocktails: a haven for Indian street food that transports you to the bustling streets of Mumbai.

15

Puerto Bravo

Gerrard St E between Hiawatha Rd and Ashdale Ave 27 min walk
New in the guide
1425 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4L 1Z7

Mexican seafood in a small room, and a Michelin Bib Gourmand every year since Toronto got a guide.

Closed Mondays; book by phone

16

Lake Inez

Gerrard St E between Craven Rd and Rhodes Ave, near Coxwell
29 min walk
1471 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4L 2A1

An eclectic restaurant offering a fusion of flavours. Its seasonal menu and a big wine and beer list cater to adventurous palates.

Dinner Wed–Sat

03

Leslieville coffee shops and bakeries

Coffee in Leslieville is more than a caffeine fix; it's a ritual. At Pilot, which began here as Te Aro, and at Mercury Espresso, baristas craft each cup with care. These cafés are the heartbeat of the community, where ideas percolate and friendships brew.

17

Pilot Coffee Roasters

Queen St E just west of Pape Ave 7 min walk
983 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1K2

Where Pilot began, as Te Aro, in 2009. The Queen St E café shows its dedication to quality in every cup.

Opens 7am weekdays

18

Alice Marie

Gerrard St E at Logan Ave 7 min walk New in the guide
807 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1Y5

A tiny bakery-café from a former White Lily Diner pastry chef; the scones are the thing. Few seats, so go early.

Thu–Sun only

19

Bonjour Brioche

Queen St E at De Grassi St 11 min walk New in the guide
812 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1H7

The neighbourhood's French bakery since 1997, and a regular on the city's croissant lists.

Closed Tue–Wed

20

Tango Palace Coffee Company

Queen St E at Coady Ave, a block west of Jones Ave 13 min walk
New in the guide
1156 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1L2

A neighbourhood coffee house since 1993, with plenty of room to linger.

Daily, to 7pm

04

Leslieville arts and culture: theatre, galleries, live music

Art thrives in the east end's nooks and crannies. From the raw performances at Crow's Theatre to the eclectic exhibits at local galleries, creativity pulses through the streets. It's a neighbourhood that doesn't just appreciate art. It lives it.

21

Crow's Theatre

Carlaw Ave at Dundas St E 1 min walk
345 Carlaw Ave, Toronto, ON M4M 2T1

A contemporary theatre showcasing innovative performances, new Canadian work and reimagined classics. It's the cultural hub for the arts in Leslieville.

23

Leslie Grove Gallery

Queen St E at Jones Ave, inside Leslie Grove Park 13 min walk
New in the guide
1158 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1L2

A member-run gallery in the park, with shows that change every few weeks.

Wed–Sun, 12–5pm

25

Blue Crow Gallery

Gerrard St E just east of Greenwood Ave, in the India Bazaar
24 min walk
1330 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4L 1Z1

Features works from local artists, with rotating exhibitions and workshops.

22

Red Sandcastle Theatre

Queen St E between Logan Ave and Carlaw Ave 7 min walk
New in the guide
922 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 2J5

Leslieville's own small stage: horror nights from Eldritch Theatre, and a neighbourhood Christmas Carol now in its 35th season.

24

The Opera House

Queen St E just east of Broadview Ave 14 min walk
735 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1H1

A 1909 vaudeville house that now hosts a variety of live music acts. Its ornate architecture and 35-foot proscenium arch add to every show.

05

Leslieville parks, rinks and outdoor spaces

Green spaces in Leslieville offer a breath of fresh air amidst urban life. Whether you're skating at Greenwood Park or strolling through Jimmie Simpson Park, nature here is accessible and inviting, a perfect counterbalance to the city's hustle.

26 Leslie Grove Park

Queen St E between Berkshire Ave and Jones Ave 13 min walk
1158 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1L2

The little park at Queen & Jones, with a gallery inside, a playground, and a plaque to George Leslie, who gave the neighbourhood its name.

27 Greenwood Park

Greenwood Ave, north of Dundas St E 18 min walk
150 Greenwood Ave, Toronto, ON M4L 1Y5

Sports facilities, a covered rink and skate trail open to 10pm in winter, a toboggan hill, a dog off-leash area, and ample space for picnics.

28 Withrow Park

Logan Ave just south of Danforth Ave 18 min walk
New in the guide
725 Logan Ave, Toronto, ON

A rink (mostly mornings), a toboggan hill and an off-leash area in one park.

29 Riverdale Park East

Broadview Ave between Gerrard St E and Danforth Ave
26 min walk New in the guide
550 Broadview Ave, Toronto, ON

The best view of the downtown skyline in the east end, a toboggan hill, and a rink and skate trail open daily to 10pm in winter.

30 Tommy Thompson Park

Leslie St & Unwin Ave, south of Lake Shore Blvd E 35 min walk
1 Leslie St, Toronto, ON M4M 3M2

Urban wilderness ideal for bird watching (300-plus species), cycling, and enjoying lake views.

Weekends and holidays; weekdays from 4pm; no dogs

31 Woodbine Beach

Lake Shore Blvd E at the foot of Woodbine Ave 44 min walk
New in the guide
1675 Lake Shore Blvd E, Toronto, ON

Beyond the neighbourhood, but worth the trip in late winter for Winter Stations: free art installations along the frozen shore, usually from mid-February. About 15 minutes by bike.

06

Leslieville shops: vintage, books and boutiques

Forget big-box stores; Leslieville's shopping scene is all about character. From resale finds at Common Sort to handcrafted goods at Arts Market Riverside, each shop offers a unique slice of the neighbourhood's personality. It's retail therapy with a soul.

32 Good Neighbour

Queen St E between Verral Ave and Carlaw Ave 6 min walk
935 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1J6

A curated selection of clothing, accessories, gifts and home goods. The Leslieville original of what is now four stores.

33 Queen Books

Queen St E between Logan Ave and Morse St 8 min walk
New in the guide
914 Queen St E, Toronto, ON

The neighbourhood's independent bookshop since 2017, and still the place for author launches.

34 Common Sort

Queen St E just west of Saulter St 13 min walk
760 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1H4

A buy-sell-trade resale shop with a range of current-season and contemporary fashion. Bring a bag to sell.

35 Gadabout

Queen St E between Hastings Ave and Alton Ave, west of Greenwood Ave
19 min walk New in the guide
1300 Queen St E, Toronto, ON

The east end's best-known true-vintage and curiosity shop: clothes and oddities from the 1800s to the 1970s.

Closed Sundays

07

Unique attractions in and around Leslieville

Leslieville wears its history lightly, but it's everywhere once you look. A little park on Laing St honours the man who wrote "The Maple Leaf Forever." On Queen, the Ashbridge Estate has stood since 1854, built by the family that settled this shoreline in 1793. And a few blocks north, the Gerrard India Bazaar fills the air with chaat and cardamom from Greenwood to Coxwell. Give it an afternoon; it'll give you stories to take home.

36 Maple Leaf Forever Park

Laing St at Memory Lane, south of Queen St E 20 min walk
62 Laing St, Toronto, ON M4L 2N3

A small park laid out in 1933 to honour Alexander Muir, who wrote "The Maple Leaf Forever." By local legend the song began under a silver maple here; its stump stands outside 1870s Maple Cottage, and a seedling grows mid-park.

37 Gerrard India Bazaar

Gerrard St E from Greenwood Ave to Coxwell Ave 24 min walk
1426 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON

A vibrant stretch of more than 125 businesses offering South Asian cuisine, textiles, and cultural experiences. This winter the 501 streetcar runs right along it.

38

Ashbridge Estate

Queen St E at Woodfield Rd, east of Greenwood Ave 25 min walk
New in the guide
1444 Queen St E, Toronto, ON

The 1854 house of the family who gave Ashbridge's Bay its name. The grounds are open; the house opens only for Doors Open and the odd event. Pair it with Maple Leaf Forever Park, five minutes away.

39

Riverdale Farm

Winchester St at Sumach St, Cabbagetown 27 min walk
New in the guide
201 Winchester St, Toronto, ON M4X 1B8

A free working farm run by the City, across the Don Valley from Riverdale Park East. Cows, pigs and goats in the middle of Toronto.

Daily, 9am–5pm

08

Groceries and essentials

Staying a month means real groceries, not just restaurant nights. The nearest supermarket is a nine-minute walk, the best specialty shops cluster at Queen & Logan, and the pharmacy stays open till midnight.

40

Shoppers Drug Mart

Queen St E at Carlaw Ave 6 min walk
970 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1J8

The late-night stop for medicine, toiletries and milk.

Daily, 8am–midnight

41

LCBO

Gerrard St E between Carlaw Ave and Pape Ave 7 min walk
932 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1Z2

Wine and spirits. Grocery stores sell beer and wine too now, so skip the Beer Store.

Mon–Sat 10am–9pm, Sun 11am–6pm

42

Leslieville Cheese Market

Queen St E at Logan Ave 8 min walk
891 Queen St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1J4

A fixture since 2006: cheese, charcuterie, bread and ready meals. Rowe Farms' Ontario meat is next door.

43

Food Basics

Gerrard St E at Pape Ave, in Gerrard Square 9 min walk
1000 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4M 1Z4

The nearest supermarket, and the cheapest. It shares Gerrard Square with a Walmart.

Weekdays 8am–9pm, weekends to 8pm

44

Loblaws Leslie Street

Leslie St between Lake Shore Blvd E and Eastern Ave 21 min walk
17 Leslie St, Toronto, ON M4M 3H9

For the big weekly shop: a pharmacy, a wine department, and PC Express pickup, which saves carrying bags through the snow.

Daily, 7am–10pm

45

Leslieville Farmers' Market

East End Food Hub, Gerrard St E near Coxwell Ave (winter)
29 min walk
1470 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M4L 2A3

Sundays, 9am to 2pm. Indoors at the East End Food Hub from November to early May, with a winter break from late December to the end of February, and outdoors at Greenwood Park from May to October.

09

Where to stay in Leslieville

Leslieville has one hotel nearby and a lot of houses. Here's how I'd choose, depending on how long you're here.

46

The Broadview Hotel

Queen St E at Broadview Ave 15 min walk
106 Broadview Ave, Toronto, ON

A boutique hotel in a restored 1891 landmark, with a rooftop bar that's worth the trip even if you sleep elsewhere. Strictly speaking it's in Riverside, just west of Leslieville.

Short-term rentals

Most places to stay here are private homes on Airbnb and similar sites. In Toronto, a rental of under 28 nights must be in the host's own home and registered with the City, and the listing should show its registration number. Look for it before you book.

A MONTH OR MORE

Don't visit Leslieville. *Live here.*

That's what I host: a furnished two-bedroom loft for stays of a month or more. A month here means a regular café, a regular bar and your own kitchen, with one all-in monthly price instead of a nightly rate.

From $5,000	2 beds	4.95
a month Dec 1 – Apr 30	sleeps up to 4	from 66 reviews

Downtown hotels

For a night or two, downtown has far more choice, and the 501 streetcar brings you east to Leslieville without a change (this winter it runs along Gerrard).

Working at the Eastern Avenue studios?

Revival 629 and Six5 Studios on Eastern Ave are a 13-minute walk or a 2-minute drive from the loft, and Pinewood Toronto Studios in the Port Lands is about 5 minutes by car. A shoot usually needs a home for its whole length, not a hotel room. Parking is available, and I can invoice the production.

?

Leslieville questions, answered

Where is Leslieville in Toronto?

In Toronto's east end, east of the Don River. Roughly, it runs from Riverside in the west to Coxwell Ave in the east, between Gerrard St E and the rail line to the north and Eastern Ave to the south. Queen St E is its main street.

Is Leslieville safe?

It's a residential, family-friendly neighbourhood with busy main streets well into the evening. Use the same city sense you would anywhere. The supervised consumption site at the South Riverdale Community Health Centre, which older posts mention, closed in March 2025.

Why is it called Leslieville?

It grew up around George Leslie's Toronto Nurseries, founded in the 1840s, and took his name in 1862, when the local post office became the Leslie Post Office. There's a plaque to him in Leslie Grove Park, at Queen & Jones.

When is the Leslieville Farmers' Market?

Sundays, 9am to 2pm. From May to October it's outdoors at Greenwood Park; from November it moves indoors to the East End Food Hub at 1470 Gerrard St E, with a break from late December until the end of February.

Is Leslieville downtown?

No, but it's close. The 501 Queen streetcar runs straight downtown every 10 minutes or better. This winter it runs along Gerrard St E between Broadview and Coxwell while Queen is rebuilt.

What is Leslieville known for?

Brunch, cafés, vintage shops and red-brick Victorian houses, with a family-friendly but creative feel. Its old industrial lots hold film studios, so you may see a crew on the street.

Is there a subway station in Leslieville?

Not yet. The Ontario Line's Leslieville Station is being built over Queen St E at De Grassi St and is expected to open in the early 2030s. Until then, the streetcars on Queen and Gerrard are the way downtown.

Is Leslieville a good place to stay for a month?

I think so, and not only because I host here. A month is long enough to have a regular café and a regular bar, and to learn which bakery sells out first. Everything in this guide is within walking distance or a short streetcar ride.

FROM THE GUIDE'S AUTHOR

Live here for a month.

Andrew hosts Art Loft, a furnished monthly rental in Leslieville: two bedrooms, everything in this guide within walking distance or a short streetcar ride.

artloft.ca · The guide online: artloft.ca/guide

Every place was checked on November 13, 2026. Spot something that has changed? Tell Andrew at **andrew@artloft.ca**.