

heroine training

LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA / FIT FOR A HEROINE



A HEROINE'S TRAVEL GUIDE TO LONDON, ONTARIO BY KERRY HIGSON

Welcome to London! No, not that London...

I'm writing about the "other" London, here in lovely southwestern Ontario, Canada. I've lived in London for over a decade, and although I wasn't born here, I'm happy to call London my home.

London has a small-town feel in a big city (it's the 11th most populated city in Canada).



On its surface, London may seem like a stereotypical Canadian city. On Friday nights, the downtown area is a sea of green as we cheer on the London Knights hockey team, but it's not all Jack tapes andoutine.

Yes, we love our winter sports – London is home to Olympic ice skating champion Tara Visevic, and where Olympic champion speed skater Christine Nesbitt grew up – but we are more than just sports! London has a bustling arts scene and a great sense of local pride.

Reading enthusiasts can look to Sarah Madans (Mean Girls, The Notebook) and Amber Marshall (TV's Heartland).

All these women are proof that with hard work and perseverance, you can achieve anything you set your mind to, and that's definitely a mark of a heroine to be.

If you are an artsy soul, embrace all things geek-chic or are obsessed with food (as I like me, and all three apply), you'll fit in just fine here.

Shall we begin our tour? Meet me at the corner of King and Talbot Streets, and we'll get going!

Everything on this is within walking distance, so be sure to wear comfy shoes (or good, thick boots if you're visiting in the winter!) and bring a bag to carry any treasures you pick up along the way!



Start with a hefty breakfast at The Early Bird

Every heroine needs a hearty breakfast to begin her day of adventures (and to keep her from getting hungry). I love *The Early Bird*, a cozy setting with its tiki bar and kitschy decor, featuring an awesome art of bowls decorated like the numbers of KISS.

I recommend the Fat Elvis, a mouthwatering sandwich encased in bacon, peanut butter, honey, pickles, maple syrup, and powdered sugar. Bring a bag; you'll need it to carry your influencers with you.



Peruse the shelves at City Lights Bookshop

What's a heroine without a good book? A bored heroine, what's the word?

Enter *City Lights*, which describes itself as "a living collage, covered with a circus that was frightened by a Dadaist" and I couldn't agree more.

The two floors are packed with books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, vinyl, sheet music, play scripts, postcards, and more. Everything is reasonably priced, and a heroine could while away hours exploring the depths.



Explore Covent Garden Market

I spend a lot of time at *Covent Garden Market* for my work with *Original Kids Theatre Company* (we present over twenty productions a year!), and there's just so much to do!

In the winter, you'll find a free skating rink outside; and in the summer, there's an outdoor farmer's market on Thursdays and Saturdays.

Inside the market is a ton of local vendors – if you're not still stuffed from breakfast, I recommend visiting Denis Paris and sipping their massive array of sweets and goodies, and the salad bowl for amazing and healthy wraps and soups (Andrew somehow remembers everyone's specialty order and it's awesome).



Take a walk through Victoria Park

London is known as the Forest City and it's not hard to see why. During the winter holidays, Victoria Park's trees are lit up with thousands of beautiful lights.

It's a lovely place to take a walk with a cup of hot chocolate, or go skating (again, it's FREE!). In the summer, it's host to tons of festivals (such as the Home County Folk Festival, Sunfest, and London Kid-Fest) where there are live bands to listen to, local vendors to peruse, and of course, fabulous food and drinks to be enjoyed.



Take in a show

London has a thriving theatre scene, and the downtown area is the heart of it. The *Grand Theatre* has tons of amazing shows and even its own ghost (look up *Midnight Small* for more details!), while *The Arts Project* hosts local theatrical projects, as well as a free, ever-changing gallery, and various art classes.

In the summer, London is host to the *London Village Festival*, where theatre artists from all over Canada and abroad bring together an amazing selection of theatrical delights. Take a chance and see something that sounds intriguing – you never know what you'll get at the Village!

Substance Garden is right across the street from the Covent Garden Market, and offers tons of concerts and touring theatre shows. This year alone I've been able to catch *Matilda* and *Our Lady Peace*, and I'll be seeing *Green Day* there soon too!



Kerry Higson is a director, actor, writer and stage comedian. She blogs at both kerryhigson.com and theatrefolk.com. When she's not immersed in theatre, Kerry enjoys reading, knitting, and travelling.

Heroine Recommends = *Why Being in the Numbers is Awesome*

Is your hometown the perfect fit for a heroine? I'm always looking for fabulous locals to contribute to this *Fit for a Heroine* travel guide series. If you're interested in writing for *Heroine Training*, read the guidelines and get in touch.

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Here at Heroine Training you will find lessons about embodying fictional heroines in the everyday. I'm Xandria, your headmistress, a daydreamer and self-proclaimed binge princess. I live in the storybook city of Edinburgh, Scotland.

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