

MAJOR EVENTS IN ONTARIO 2011

NIAGARA ICEWINE FESTIVAL (January 14 – 30, 2011)

The Niagara Wine Region comes alive during this celebration of Ontario's famous Icewine. With gala dinners, a full service outdoor ice bar, ornate ice sculptures, winery tours, tastings and carriage rides along Niagara's wine route, the Niagara Icewine Festival offers plenty for every taste. www.grapeandwine.com

BON SOO WINTER CARNIVAL (February 4 – 13, 2011)

Sault Ste. Marie hosts this annual winter carnival, complete with a Winter Playground with snow sculptures, live entertainment, fireworks and even a winter "Polar Bear" swim for the thick skinned bather! www.bonsoo.on.ca

WINTERLUDE (Weekends, February 4 – 21, 2011)

Come to Ottawa, the nation's capital, for Winterlude. This celebration of winter offers a wide variety of special activities, winter parks, concerts and the opportunity to skate along the Rideau Canal – the record holder for the world's largest skating rink! www.winterlude.ca

CANADIAN MUSIC WEEK (March 9 – 13, 2011)

Canadian Music Week combines conferences, award shows, a trade exposition, film festival, and Canada's biggest new music festival - Canadian Music Fest, which spans 5 nights of performances, with more than 800 bands at 60 live music venues in downtown Toronto. Canadian Music Week brings together artists, industry executives from around the world and of course the fans of Canada's incredibly talented and diverse music scene. www.cmw.net

CANADA BLOOMS (March 15 – 20, 2011)

Canada's largest indoor garden and flower show is held in Toronto and features a spectacular display of gardens and flowers along with lectures, demonstrations by gardening experts and competitions to inspire gardening enthusiasts. www.CanadaBlooms.com

THE TORONTO BLUE JAYS (April to October, 2011)

The "Jays" take the field at the Rogers Centre for all the 'home' baseball games. www.bluejays.ca

50th ANNIVERSARY SHAW FESTIVAL (April to November, 2011)

In 2011, the Shaw Festival celebrates 50 years of showcasing the works of George Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries. Located in idyllic and historic Niagara-on-the-Lake, the summer-long festival is the only one of its kind in the world. www.shawfest.com

STRATFORD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL (April to November, 2011)

Christopher Plummer, Alec Guinness, Julie Harris and William Shatner are just some of the famous names that have graced the stage of this renowned theatre festival in Stratford which features the best in classic Shakespearean theatre as well as contemporary favourites. www.stratfordfestival.ca

60th ANNIVERSARY CANADIAN TULIP FESTIVAL (Weekends, May 6 – 23, 2011)

The world's largest tulip festival blossoms in Ottawa, commemorating the beauty of spring and symbolizing international friendship. What began as a Dutch gift of 100,000 tulip bulbs has grown into an annual event featuring some 3 million tulips across the national capital region, with sites along a 15-km Tulip Route, family entertainment and an International Pavilion. www.tulipfestival.ca

NORTH BY NORTH EAST MUSIC FESTIVAL (June 9 – 13, 2011)

Now in its 17th year, North by Northeast Music Festival and Conference (NXNE) has become the Canadian festival destination for new and emerging talent— 625 bands are playing in 50 venues across the city, a wide range from independent to major-label headlining artists alike. Seen as the most anticipated summer music event in Canada, NXNE Music, NXNE Film, and NXNE Interactive are an essential gathering for artists, industry and fans. www.nxne.com

LUMINATO (June 10 – 19, 2011)

Toronto's festival of arts and creativity puts Toronto in a whole new light. Artists working across all disciplines will come together for 10 days of unique collaborations and an incredible showcase of talent, making this festival one of the highlights of the summer events calendar. www.luminato.com

TD OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL (June 22 to July 3, 2011)

From the avant-garde to big band and swing, this annual festival offers musical styles to suit any jazz aficionado. www.ottawajazzfestival.com

PRIDE WEEK (June 24 – July 3, 2011)

Toronto's Pride Week celebrates the city's lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities. Week-long festivities culminate in the glittering Pride Parade, a joyful sensory assault for over 750,000 spectators, making it one of the largest Pride celebrations in the world. www.pridetoronto.com

TD TORONTO JAZZ FESTIVAL (June 24 to July 3, 2011)

Over 2,000 international artists perform every style of jazz from standards to acid jazz in various venues across Toronto. www.torontojazz.com

CHANGING THE GUARD (late June – late August, 2011)

Witness the ceremonial majesty of the changing of the guard on Parliament Hill, in the nation's capital. www.parl.gc.ca/vis

CANADA DAY (July 1, 2011)

Canadians show their national pride on July 1st – Canada Day. Canada's "birthday" celebrates the anniversary of the enactment of the British North American Act (today called

the Constitution Act) on July 1st, 1867. Events take place nationwide, but all eyes are on the nation's capital, Ottawa, where large crowds gather for concerts, fireworks and more. www.canadascapital.gc.ca

CISCO OTTAWA BLUESFEST (July 5 – 17, 2011)

Canada's largest blues festival, second only to Chicago's in the world, celebrates world class blues performers. Past guests have included Van Morrison, Bob Dylan, KC and the Sunshine Band, Blue Rodeo as well as BB King, John Lee Hooker, the Blues Brothers and more. www.ottawabluesfest.ca

MOSAICA – SOUND & LIGHT SHOW (July 6 to September 11, 2011)

The accomplishments and experiences of Canadians are presented in a dramatic sound and light show using the Parliament Buildings as a backdrop. www.mosaika-sl.ca

THE GREAT RENDEZVOUS FESTIVAL (July 7 – 10, 2011)

This annual event at Fort William, the world's largest recreated fur trade post, celebrates the anniversary of the first Great Rendezvous, depicting the days of the voyageurs and the fur trade with costumed historic interpreters. www.fwhp.ca

SCOTIABANK CARIBANA (July 14 to August 1, 2011)

North America's largest Caribbean festival is held right in the heart of downtown Toronto. Lakeshore Boulevard shines with sequined splendour as costumed revellers dance to calypso, soca, steel pan and the sounds of the Caribbean! www.caribanafestival.com

WIKWEMIKONG ANNUAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL (July 30 to August 1, 2011)

Witness the beauty of Native Canadian song, dance, hand-made art, and cultural philosophies on Manitoulin Island. www.wikwemikongheritage.ca

CANADIAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION (August 19 to September 5, 2011)

Held in Toronto, the "CNE" is one of Canada's longest running annual exhibitions. It is a carnival and cultural celebration rolled into one. Experience the thrill of the midway, taste international food and delight in a variety of performers and entertainers. www.TheEx.com

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (September 8 – 18, 2011)

One of the world's largest and most important film festivals, the Toronto International Film Festival features over 300 films from over 60 countries. For ten days, Toronto buzzes with public screenings, parties and celebrities, making the festival a favourite among fans, filmmakers and critics alike. www.tiff.net

NIAGARA WINE FESTIVAL (September 16 – 25, 2011)

Ontario's wine region is in for a delicious feast offering an array of wine tastings, vineyard tours, concerts and a street parade. A tribute to Niagara's 16,000 acres of vineyards, the festival takes place during the annual Niagara grape harvest. www.grapeandwine.com

TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS (October 2011 to April 2012)

The Leafs take to the ice for some exciting National Hockey League games, with home games played at the Air Canada Centre. www.mapleleafs.com

TORONTO RAPTORS (October 2011 to April 2012)

The Raptors NBA basketball team take centre court at the Air Canada Centre. www.nba.com/raptors

SCOTIABANK NUIT BLANCHE (October 1, 2011)

Toronto's arts community and its culture craving citizens take to the streets for an art-filled all-nighter. From sunset to sunrise, Torontonians will encounter the city in a unique way and rediscover Toronto through public art commissions, all-night exhibitions, live performances and creative programs featured throughout the city. This cultural rendezvous also opens the doors to some of the cities best museums and galleries, usually closed after dark. www.scotiabanknuitblanche.com

OKTOBERFEST (October 7 – 15, 2011)

This is the second largest Oktoberfest outside of Munich, featuring events and activities throughout the twin cities of Kitchener-Waterloo. www.oktoberfest.ca

BALA CRANBERRY FESTIVAL (October 14 – 16, 2011)

Celebrate the cranberry harvest in Bala, the Cranberry Capital of Ontario, in the province's beautiful cottage country. Taking place the weekend after Thanksgiving, the festival is one the whole family will enjoy and includes visits to the cranberry bogs, entertainment, arts and crafts, and lots of cranberry related products. www.balacranberryfestival.on.ca

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR (November 4 – 13, 2011)

Held on the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair has "brought the country to the city" since 1922 and has grown into the world's largest indoor agricultural fair. www.RoyalFair.org

CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL (November 25 – 27, 2011)

First Nation communities from across North America gather during this annual festival presenting a variety of traditional and contemporary arts and culture programs. Don't miss the Pow Wow ceremonies where nearly 1000 Native dancers and drum singing groups from across the continent join together in a celebration of First Nation culture. www.CanAb.com

CALVALCADE OF LIGHTS (November 25, 2011)

This annual celebration kicks off the holiday season at Nathan Phillips Square with the lighting of Toronto's official Christmas tree. Concerts by musical guests are followed by a spectacular fireworks display and a skating party to get you in the festive spirit. www.toronto.ca/special_events/cavalcade_lights