



GreekTown on the Danforth Business Improvement Area

452A Danforth Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M4K 1P4
T: 416-469-5634 F: 416-469-8200
bia@greektowntoronto.com

GREEKTOWN'S TASTE OF THE DANFORTH

Come for the Food... Stay for the Fun!

FESTIVAL PROGRAM FOR 26th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

TORONTO'S FAVOURITE (AND CANADA'S LARGEST) STREET FESTIVAL OFFERS FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Friday, August 9th, 2019 to Sunday, August 11th, 2019

FOR RELEASE: Tuesday, August 6th, 2019 - TORONTO

Road Closures

Date: Friday, August 9th, 10:00 AM to Monday, August 12th, 4:00 AM
Location: Danforth Avenue -- from Broadview Avenue to Jones Avenue

Section 1: A "Taste" of What to Expect

Canada's favourite Festival is back! Come join us as we celebrate the 26th anniversary of Canada's largest Street Festival, welcoming approximately 1.6 million attendees. The Festival runs Friday, August 9th to Sunday, August 11th this year.

The GTA lays claim to more than 200,000 residents of Greek ancestry, the second largest Hellenic community outside of Greece. At the Festival, visitors have the opportunity to experience being 'Greek for the Day', but the Festival is much more than the celebration of the Danforth's Greek heritage -- it is also a celebration of Canada's multiculturalism. Restauranters along the Danforth will be offering "Tasting Menus" for no more than \$6 so that attendees can enjoy a multitude of tasty multi-ethnic treats.

Yes, there is Food, Food, and *more* Food – but the Taste of the Danforth is so much more! There will be loads of free, family-friendly entertainment on our Celebrity Stage presented by OLG, Showcase Stage presented by Casino Woodbine, and the Greek Stage presented by the GreekTown on the Danforth BIA. The Celebrity Stage will feature everything from Caribbean Jazz to Aboriginal Folk, from Country to Pop, from Funk to Reggae, as well as the Miss Asia Canada Pageant and 40 Bollywood Dancers. We are also glad to bring back by popular demand – Sheer Heart Attack, the spectacular Queen tribute band. The Celebrity Stage features 26 free performances.

Our Showcase Stage presented by Casino Woodbine also features 26 free performances. Our Greek Stage presented by the GreekTown on the Danforth BIA features 39 different performances as well. Accordingly, our

Festival attendees have over 90 different performances to choose from.

We also offer a “Let’s Dance” program, where participants can learn different cultural dances from Chinese, South Asian, Filipino, Egyptian, Greek, Mexican, Japanese, Spanish, Cuban, Persian, and Jamaican dance groups.

Don’t forget to check out the Sports Zone featuring activities and guest appearances from Toronto professional sports teams, and the “It’s All Greek To Me” plate-breaking experience. Bring the kids to the Kids’ Fun Zone presented by Cirque Du Soleil.

Here is a “Taste” of what to expect for TOTD2019:

1. Free Entertainment Stages

i. Celebrity Stage presented by OLG

Featuring a wide range of music and performances from around the world.

Last year not only was the film Bohemian Rhapsody a blockbuster hit, so was our Queen tribute band Sheer Heart Attack. Back by popular demand, Sheer Heart Attack will be performing after the opening ceremonies on Friday night at 8:30p.m.

For schedule: www.tasteofthedanforth.com

ii. Showcase Stage presented by Casino Woodbine

Showcase Stage features top new Toronto bands, dancers, and more. For schedule: www.tasteofthedanforth.com

iii. Greek Stage presented by GreekTown on the Danforth BIA

Our Greek Stage features the finest Greek singers, dancers, and musicians. For schedule: www.tasteofthedanforth.com

2. Sports Zone

Featuring activities and challenges from the Leafs, Raptors, Argos, Toronto FC and Toronto Rock. Don’t be surprised if you bump into one of your heroes at the Festival!

3. Kids’ Fun Zone

This year kids can enjoy a Cirque Du Soleil hula-hoop experience. Yes, adult kids can try too. Fun not to be missed!

4. Be Greek for a Day; Breaking Plates and Archery Dodgeball

Live the ancient Greek tradition of breaking plates! Breaking plates was used as a sign of one’s wealth as plates were thrown into a fireplace, following a banquet, rather than being washed and reused. In 1969, the custom was banned in Greece. Let out some steam and experience the pleasure of smashing plates in partnership with Battle Sports Rage Room.

Learn from Artemis the Greek Goddess of the Hunt how to play archery dodgeball.

- 5. Celebrating Toronto's Cultural Mosaic: "Let's Dance" – presented by the City of Toronto**
Take a trip around the world right on the Danforth. Our friendly instructors will teach you a traditional dance from their home country. See a short performance and then take a quick 15-minute dance lesson from our Chinese, South Asian, Filipino, Egyptian, Greek, Mexican, Japanese, Cuban, Persian, Spanish and Jamaican dance groups.
- 6. Lots of Prizes, Challenges and Samples from our Sponsors**
Lots of activations, prizes and samples from Pure Leaf Tea, Casino Woodbine Entertainment, OLG, Rotary Club of Wasaga Beach, Food Basics, I Love New York, MorningStar Farms Veggie Burgers, Freedom Mobile, Ford Ontario Dealers, Labatt (Bud Light Orange and Budweiser Copper Lager), Costco, Cranberry Resort, Bell Canada, BMO, SodaStream, Canada Blood Service, RBC, LeafFilter North Canada, Kleenex Wet Wipes, Canada Custom Shutters, The Beer Store, Options Development, and Infiniti and Nissan Downtown.
- 7. Bud Light Orange Beer Garden**
Join us at the Bud Light Orange Beer Garden for a refreshing drink. There are also free samples as part of our exhibition spaces.
- 8. Win A Vacation to Jamaica!**
Festival-goers will have a chance to win an all-inclusive vacation for two to Jamaica, courtesy of Visit Jamaica, Air Canada Vacations and Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Jamaica Resort & Spa valued at approximately \$6,990. For a chance to enter and win, all attendees need to do is go to TasteSurvey.com and enter the secret passcode – which will be announced by the MC at our Celebrity Stage presented by OLG, as well as on the Festival brochures and banners.

Section 2: About the Festival

I. History of the Festival and the Organization that Runs it

The Festival is organized by the GreekTown on the Danforth BIA, a not-for-profit organization, run by a volunteer Board and chaired by Constantine Voidoncolas. Taste of the Danforth is an excellent example of how a BIA can contribute to local economic development.

The Festival began as a celebration of Hellenic cuisine and culture. It has grown to become a celebration of both its Greek heritage and the multicultural nature of the City of Toronto. While a number of the events and programs are reflective of the area's Greek roots, the Festival programming, and its audience, have grown to encompass a much broader spectrum of the Toronto community. In fact, in a previous survey, 54% of respondents self-identified as being ethnic.

The Festival began in 1994 when the GreekTown BIA wanted to find new ways to entice people to come to the Danforth, and enjoy the amazing Greek cuisine. More effective than individual restaurants advertising, they decided to create an event. The idea was to set up "Tasting Tables" so that attendees could try food from a number of restaurants, and thus, the "Taste" of the Danforth began. In order to encourage people to try various dishes, the prices were kept very low, and even today, no tasting item costs more than \$6.

In the first year, approximately 5,000 people attended the Festival. 23 restaurateurs participated, selling an eclectic mix of "tastes" from tasting tables. The following year, attendance grew to 100,000. By 1996, the Festival was so large that Danforth Avenue had to be officially closed to vehicular traffic in order to accommodate over 500,000 visitors. Today, the Festival has grown to approximately 1.6 million visitors during the course of three nights and two days. They come to enjoy food, free entertainment and culture. The Taste of the Danforth is one of Toronto's signature events, showcasing the best of what our multicultural city has to offer: music, the arts, sports and -- of course -- food.

II. GreekTown Gives Back to the Community - Profits Donated to Charity

The Festival combines exquisite food, culture, and music with extraordinary philanthropy to benefit the local community. Profits from the Festival are donated every year back to the community by the GreekTown on the Danforth BIA and its Chair -- Constantine Voidonicolas.

Over the years, GreekTown has donated several millions of dollars to the Michael Garron Hospital (formerly Toronto East General Hospital) as well as a host of other charities.

III. Big Economic Impact for Toronto

The Festival and GreekTown on the Danforth BIA contribute significant impact to the Province and City. In 2018, the Festival's single weekend economic impact was \$106 million.

The Festival is a tourist magnet, with 43% of attendees travelling 40 kilometers or more to attend the Taste of the Danforth last summer, and 77% of visitors stating the Festival was the primary reason for them to travel to Toronto. Equally important to the Province's economy is the fact that 94% of out-of-towners plan to return this year. In addition, the Festival provides a significant source of exposure for the small retailers and restaurateurs on the Danforth.

The Festival would not be possible without the support of our many sponsors, particularly the Ontario Government through the Celebrate Ontario Grant.

For more information visit: www.tasteofthedanforth.com

For additional information, please contact:

Howard Lichtman - 416 402 4948 – howard@lightning-group.com