

Waterfront Loop (Hamilton)

OVERVIEW

This is no backcountry trek along rugged trails, but it's a lot of fun. You start out with a circular tour of Bayfront Park and then walk along the Waterfront Trail to get some great views of Lake Ontario and to let the onshore breeze blow your cares away. With your legs warmed up, you get to climb up to and explore the Hamilton Cemetery, Dundurn Castle and the Hamilton Military Museum. Give yourself extra time to visit these historical sites.

Packed with striking monuments and ancient trees, the Hamilton Cemetery is Canada's oldest municipal cemetery, and well worth a visit. When you explore Dundurn Castle accompanied by a guide clothed in period costume, you may wonder if you've happened onto the set of Downton Abbey and aren't in Hamilton at all. Take a peek in the period garden adjacent to the castle and stop by Hamilton's Military Museum to complete your history fix.

While they are not described in this loop, you can extend your adventure by heading further east along the waterfront, where there are more parks and restaurants, a roller rink, the HMCS *Haida* (tours available), a local brewery (Collective Arts Brewing) and the ever-popular James St. N.

*"I hike because it uncovers
the heart of who I am."*

JEFFREY LOVE



Insider Info

LENGTH 10.5 kilometres

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY Easy



LENGTH OF TIME

2.5 to 3.5 hours
(longer if you tour
Dundurn Castle)

% ON ROAD 20%

HIGHLIGHTS

Waterfront Trail, Dundurn National Historic Site (Dundurn Castle, Dundurn Historic Kitchen Garden & The Hamilton Military Museum), views of Cootes Paradise, the Fishway, and Hamilton Cemetery

PLACES TO EAT/DRINK

In Hamilton: Collective Arts Brewing, Democracy Coffee House, Hutch's Harbour Front, Mulberry Street Coffeehouse, Paisley Coffeehouse & Eatery, Saint James Espresso Bar & Eatery, Steeltown Garage Co, The Burnt Tongue (closed Sunday), The Mule.

ENTRANCE FEE n/a

TRAILHEAD

N43° 16.166'W79° 52.184'





Directions

1. Park in the Bayfront Park parking lot. There are washrooms in the large, round, painted building. This 16ha waterside park is a popular spot for Hamiltonians and tourists alike. During the warm season, the park is abuzz with merry-makers having fun in the sun. There are food trucks, trolleys and rental bikes.
2. Facing the water and with your back to the round building, take the middle of the 3 paths before you.





Let the lakeside breeze blow your cares away. Photo by Matt Carnwell

3. At the T-intersection, turn right to begin your counter-clockwise walk around the park.
4. The path loops around a small spit with great views, passes by a beach and loops out to a second spit before leading you back toward the parking lot.
5. Continuing along the path, there is a boat launch on your right. Turn right here, walk around the boat launch and look for the access point to the Waterfront Tr.
6. Turn right onto the Waterfront Tr. On your right, you pass a covered pavilion and a fenced-in viewing platform.
7. The path follows the lakeshore. Admire the view as you look for the ducks, geese, seagulls, herons and cormorants that congregate on the small, rocky islands just offshore.
8. The trail splits to accommodate some trees and benches then rejoins before making a 90° turn and passing under several overpasses.



These double-crested cormorants are a common sight on the small islands you pass on this hike.





Dundurn Castle is the former home of Sir Allan Napier MacNab.

9. Pass by an impressive staircase to your left. We are saving it for later. For now, views of Cootes Paradise are your goal.
10. Next up is the Cootes Paradise Fishway and a small dock. The Fishway was installed to keep invasive carp out of the Cootes Paradise marsh, while allowing water and smaller native fish to move freely. Larger fish, including carp, are temporarily captured in baskets. Native fish are released on the appropriate side, and carp are released back onto the harbour side. The Cootes Paradise Fishway is the only one in the world designed to allow fish to move in both directions so they can return to deep water after they spawn.



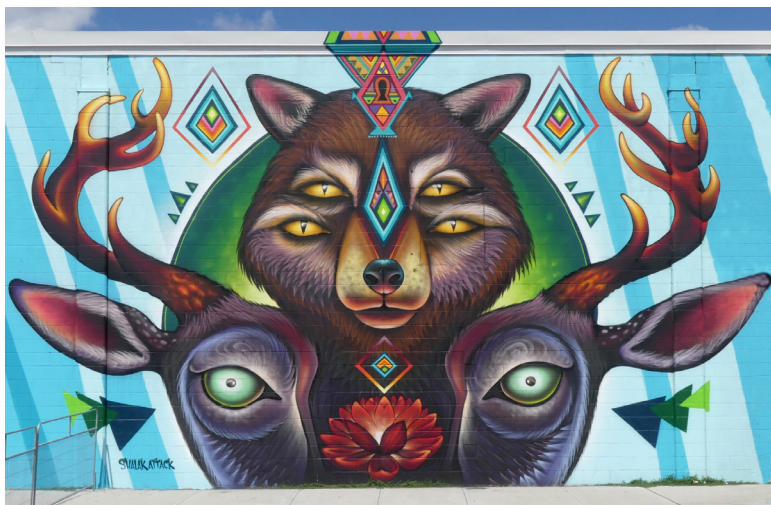
Guides dressed in period costumes lead tours of Dundurn Castle.

11. Visit the dock for an unobstructed view of Cootes Paradise, and then retrace your steps back to the staircase you passed in Point #9. Turn right and climb up the steps.
12. At the top is Dundurn Park. Follow the path between the road (York Blvd.) and a fence until you arrive at Dundurn Castle. Sir Allan Napier MacNab,



a railway magnate, lawyer and a premier of the Province of Canada, built this dignified mansion in 1835. Tours led by guides in period costume give you a peek into the lives of the servants and family members who lived here so long ago. The cost of the tour includes a visit to the Hamilton Military Museum.

13. Across the road is the Hamilton Cemetery. Cross at the traffic lights to take a wander through this beautiful cemetery. Then cross the road again to return to Dundurn Castle.
14. On the southeast side of the castle is a garden bordered by a log fence where gardeners grow heirloom plants using 19th-century techniques. The garden is open to visitors from June to September.
15. When facing the garden with your back to the castle and York Blvd. to your right, pick up a path that runs along the left side of the garden.
16. Follow this path until it ends at a road (Tecumseh St.) and then continue along this road.
17. At the intersection with Locke St. N, turn right onto Locke St. N. and then go left onto Barton St. W.
18. Turn left onto Bay St. N and cross a bridge over the railway tracks.
19. Just past the Hutch's Harbour Front restaurant, turn left onto Harbour Front Dr. Continue along a cherry-tree-bordered path until you come to a lookout. You are on the rooftop of the large, round washroom building, and you can get to your car by walking down either of the 2 sets of stairs.



This is one of several stunning murals found at Collective Arts Brewing.

