The worst part about attending a conference in downtown Toronto is resisting the temptation to step outside and start exploring. And one of the best parts about attending a conference in Toronto is giving in to that temptation.

The list is endless: international cuisine, unique shopping venues, diverse cultural facilities and events, trails, parks, distinctive architecture and nonstop top-caliber entertainment.

If you have limited time because you’re taking in every minute of education, networking and practice-building that’s available at the Ontario Dental Association Annual Spring Meeting, it helps to step out the door with a plan in mind.

Here are a few nearby possibilities.

The Toronto Islands offer some great appeal to conference attendees who start feeling a bit cooped up by the end of the day. Plus getting there is half the fun, with a $7 (round trip), 10-minute (one-way) ferry ride.

If you have at least two people and one them is at least four feet tall, you qualify for the swan boat rides at Centreville Amusement Park on Toronto Islands.

Now that you’re here, no matter how detailed your preliminary planning, you have a few decisions to make. The Ontario Dental Association knows how to put on a meeting, so there are some tough choices ahead.

Whatever you do, though, be sure to carve out some exploration time for the exhibit floor.

Some of the top dental companies in the world are ready to help you explore the latest advancements in products and services that can help make your practice more helpful, safe, fun and profitable. It’s all available inside the Metro Toronto Convention Centre South Building, at the Ontario Dental Association Annual Spring Meeting.

Explore offerings from the exhibit floor’s 300-plus companies.
Cocktail hour
One opportunity that’s worth taking advantage of is the cocktail reception on Friday that runs from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. You will have needed to have signed up for this complimentary ticketed event when you registered. There will be food, beverages and live entertainment — and, of course, great opportunities to meet with company representatives and fellow dental professionals.

New products
Also today and Friday are a number of opportunities to learn more about new products being represented on the exhibit floor.

The new-products forum provides attendees a no-pressure, hands-on opportunity to learn about products that have been on the market for less than two years.

No sales pressure
Exhibitors demonstrate products in an interactive, non-sales environment. If you’re ready to buy or seek out even more details, all you need to do is hunt down the exhibitor’s booth on the exhibit floor.

Located at the back of the exhibit floor, the forum features mini lectures and demonstrations, giving attendees a unique environment in which to learn about some of the most recently released products on the market.

The format is structured as six different hour-long sessions that run simultaneously, at 10:30 a.m., noon, 1:45 p.m., and 3:15 p.m., today and Friday. Most of the sessions run at least twice across the two days of presentations.

The new-products forum is just one highlight in the meeting’s packed agenda, which includes more than 60 speaker sessions and workshops across the three-day schedule.

Ahhh ... Relaxation Zone
When you think you’re on your last leg, here’s an idea for getting your second wind if you’ve covered only half of the exhibit hall. Stop by booth No. 246. Billed as the “Relaxation Zone,” this booth offers you a chance to wind down and recharge courtesy of a complimentary, 10-minute relaxing chair massage. It might even give you an idea for a new feature in your waiting area.

(Source: Ontario Dental Association)