



# Canada



# CANADA

The vast nation of Canada, second largest country in the world, offers a range of experiences for visitors that are as wide as the land itself. From its large cosmopolitan cities to its frozen northern tundra; its snowy mountain peaks to its rugged coastlines; and its rich farmlands to its pioneering outposts, Canada offers something to suit the taste of every traveller. Canada is bound in the west by the Pacific Ocean and Alaska, to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by the polar ice cap, and in the south by the United States of America.



Bow River Valley, Banff National Park © Travel Alberta

It is a country renowned for its stunningly beautiful scenery and love of the outdoors. Even the cities have been carefully designed to preserve metropolitan green belts and parklands, ensuring that Canadians are never far from their natural heritage. The country has a French and British colonial heritage, which is reflected in its cuisine, culture and customs, mixed in with the legacy of the country's own enigmatic aboriginal First Nations history.

In the south the Rocky Mountains intrude into Canada across the border with the United States, separating Canada's two main tourist provinces, British Columbia and Alberta. The mountains abound with winter sports resorts. Throughout the nation the most popular venues for outdoor pursuits, year round, are the country's huge national parks. There are more than 41 of these, one of them, Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta, being larger than the country of Switzerland. Canadian national parks are unique in that they have cities and towns inside the protected areas, which provide comfortable bases for exploring the natural and manmade attractions of the reserves.

## Basics

**Time:** Canada covers six time zones, from GMT 8 in the west to GMT -3.5 in the east.

**Electricity:** Electrical current is 110 volts, 60Hz. American style flat two-pin plugs and one with a third round grounding pin is standard.

**Money:** The currency used is the Canadian Dollar (CAD), which is divided into 100 cents. One-dollar coins are also known as loonies (due to the picture of a loon, a type of bird, on the coin), and two-dollar coins as toonies. Banks and bureaux de change will change money and travellers cheques, as will some hotels, but the rate will not be as good. Major credit cards are widely accepted and ATMs are plentiful. US Dollars are largely accepted, though due to fraud, larger notes might not be and change is usually given in Canadian dollars.

Currency Exchange Rates				
C\$1.00	C\$5.00	C\$10.00	C\$100.00	C\$1,000.00
A\$ 1.17	A\$ 5.85	A\$ 11.69	A\$ 116.95	A\$ 1,169.48
C\$ 1.00	C\$ 5.00	C\$ 10.00	C\$ 100.00	C\$ 1,000.00
€ 0.64	€ 3.21	€ 6.41	€ 64.14	€ 641.41
NZ\$ 1.43	NZ\$ 7.17	NZ\$ 14.35	NZ\$ 143.47	NZ\$ 1,434.72
R 7.28	R 36.39	R 72.78	R 727.84	R 7,278.36
£ 0.56	£ 2.80	£ 5.60	£ 55.98	£ 559.75
US\$ 0.89	US\$ 4.46	US\$ 8.92	US\$ 89.25	US\$ 892.46

Note: These rates are not updated daily and should be used as a guideline only.

**Language:** The official languages are English and French (predominantly in Quebec).

**Entry requirements for Americans:** US travellers should have a valid passport if departing from the USA, otherwise a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license, as well as proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, is recommended or a Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) compliant document. A visa is not required for a stay of up to six months.

**Entry requirements for UK nationals:** UK nationals must have a passport valid for the period of intended stay. A visa is not required for passports endorsed British Citizen, British Citizen (Overseas), British Overseas Territories Citizen and British National (Overseas). Other British passport holders are advised to check on visa requirements

for entry to Canada. Visa exemption is for a stay of up to six months.

**Entry requirements for Australians:** Australians must hold passports valid for period of intended stay. A visa is not required for a stay of up to six months.

**Entry requirements for South Africans:** South African nationals must be in possession of a passport valid for the period of intended stay. A visa is required.

**Entry requirements for New Zealanders:** New Zealanders require a passport valid for the period of the intended stay. No visa is necessary for stays of up to six months.

**Entry requirements for Irish nationals:** Irish nationals must hold a passport valid for the period of intended stay. A visa is not required for stays of up to six months.

**Passport/Visa Note:** All visitors must hold a valid passport. Visitors are recommended to hold onward or return tickets, all documents needed for the next destination and sufficient funds to cover the period of intended stay. As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA a valid passport will be required by immigration authorities.

**Health:** No vaccinations are necessary for travel to Canada. The West Nile virus, spread by mosquitoes breeding in stagnant water, poses a threat during summer months in rural areas, so insect-repellent measures are advised for those visiting the countryside particularly in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and Quebec. Rabies is a problem and can be spread by a bite from small animals such as racoons and bats. Medical care is excellent, but expensive, so medical insurance is advised.

**Tippling:** There is no service charge added to restaurant bills in Canada and staff expect a tip of around 15%. Hairdressers and taxi drivers are also usually tipped at the same rate, while bellhops, doormen, porters and similar service providers at hotels, airports and stations are generally paid \$1 per item of luggage carried. Tour guides and bus drivers generally receive \$3-\$5 per day.

**Climate:** Being such a large country, Canada's climate varies depending on which area one visits. It also has very distinct seasons. The warmest months are July and August, and in winter (December, January and February) it is very cold with heavy snowfalls in most provinces. Autumn is a beautiful season with crisp air and brilliant fall foliage, while in some areas spring brings the emergence of carpets of wild flowers.

**Safety:** Most visits to Canada are trouble-free. The country is politically stable, but does share the common international risk of terrorism. There have been no recent terrorism events. The crime rate is low, but travellers are advised to take sensible precautions to safeguard their belongings as they would anywhere. Canada is prone to tornadoes between May and September.

**Customs:** Smoking bans have been implemented in Canada in enclosed public places such as restaurants, bars and shopping malls.

**Business:** Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Montreal are the main business centres. English is the language of business except in French-speaking Quebec, where all written material and business cards should be in French as a result. Business cards are not traditionally exchanged during an initial meeting, but at some appropriate time thereafter; it is best to wait for the host to offer theirs first. A firm handshake is used by way of greeting, and meetings begin on time so punctuality is taken seriously, as is appearance, which should be conservative and smart; business suits are the norm. Gifts can be given in conclusion to celebrate a deal, but should be understated; taking someone out for a meal is a popular way to conclude business dealings. Hours of business are usually 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

**Communications:** The international access code for Canada is +1. The outgoing code is 011 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 01144 for the United Kingdom); the outgoing code is not necessary for calls to the US and the Caribbean. The area code for Ottawa is (1)613, and (1)416 for Toronto. Internet cafes are widely available. Most international mobile phone companies have roaming agreements with Canadian operators, however it may be cheaper to buy a pay-as-you-go SIM card if visiting the country for long periods.

**Duty Free:** Travellers to Canada are allowed to enter the country with the following items without incurring custom duties: gifts to the value of C\$60 per recipient (excluding advertising material, tobacco and alcoholic beverages); 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or cigarillos and 200g of tobacco or 200 tobacco sticks; 1.14 litres of liquor or wine or 24 x 355ml bottles or cans of beer or ale. There are strict regulations governing the import of the following: explosives, endangered animal and plant species, items of heritage, fresh foodstuffs and weapons. The plant Qhat (Khat) is illegal in Canada and prison sentences are heavy.

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## Tourism

Canadian Tourism Commission, Vancouver: +1 604 638 8300 or [www.travelcanada.ca](http://www.travelcanada.ca)

## Canada Embassies

Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 682 1740.

Canadian High Commission, London, United Kingdom: +44 (0)20 7258 6600.

Canadian High Commission, Canberra, Australia: +61 (0)2 6270 4000.

Canadian High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 422 3000.

Canadian Embassy, Dublin, Ireland: +353 (0)1 417 4100.

Canadian High Commission, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 (0)4 473 9577.

### **Foreign Embassies in Canada**

United States Embassy, Ottawa: +1 613 688 5335.

British High Commission, Ottawa: +1 613 237 1530.

Australian High Commission, Ottawa: +1 613 236 0841.

South African High Commission, Ottawa: +1 613 744 0330.

Irish Embassy, Ottawa: +1 613 233 6281.

New Zealand High Commission, Ottawa: +1 613 238 5991.

### **Canada Emergency Numbers**

Emergencies: 911 (in most provinces).

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