

## Did You Know?

- In 1912, an iceberg off Newfoundland's coast sunk the famous *Titanic*.
- Most of Canada's population lives within 100 miles (161 km) of the U.S. border.
- Canada borders three oceans: the Atlantic to the east, the Pacific to the west, and the Arctic to the north.
- The newest territory, Nunavut, means "our land" in Inuktitut, the language of *indigenous* (native) Canadians.
- Canada stretches across six time zones.
- Canadians pronounce the last letter in the alphabet "zed" instead of "zee."
- In central Canada in early spring, people enjoy "sugaring off." This is when they collect maple sap and boil it until it's thick and sweet. Sometimes they toss some syrup on the snow, where it cools and makes a chewy maple treat!
- Yonge Street, in Toronto, is one of the longest streets in the world, at about 1,181 miles (1,900 km).
- Canada is the world's largest country that borders only one other country.
- Hockey and lacrosse are the national sports of Canada, and the national symbol is the maple leaf.
- The Trans-Canada Highway crosses through all 10 *provinces* (similar to states), spans 4,990 miles (8,030 km), and is one of the longest national highways in the world.
- Canadian inventor Charles Fenerty was the first person to make paper from wood pulp. Before that, paper was made from cotton or rags.
- Canada holds the record for the most gold medals ever won at the Winter Olympics with 14 gold medals at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics.

### Flag

The flag of Canada was most recently adopted on 15 February 1965. The red maple leaf in the flag's center is one of Canada's most recognized symbols. As you might guess, the flag is nicknamed the Maple Leaf.



### National Image

The national bird is the common loon, which is a waterbird. It can be found on Canada's one-dollar coins, which are called *loonies*.



## People and Places

### Land and Climate

Area (sq. mi.): 3,855,103  
Area (sq. km.): 9,984,670

Canada is the second largest country in the world; only Russia is larger. Canada is broken up into 10 *provinces* (similar to states) and 3 territories. The Canadian Shield covers much of the country, especially around Hudson Bay. This rocky, U-shaped area has many large forests and covers the majority of Québec, Canada's largest *province*



. Prairies stretch across south-central Canada. The land in the *provinces* along the Atlantic Ocean is mostly flat, low, and rocky along the coast.

The southwest coastal region of British Columbia has a mild, wet climate. It rains a lot there in the winter. Snow covers the prairies in winter, but summers are warm and dry. Regions in the north have an arctic climate, and very few people live there. The ground there never thaws! Winters see the sun only a few hours each day, but during the summer, the sun shines long into the night.

## Population

Population: 34,834,841

Although it's bigger than the United States, Canada is home to roughly one-tenth as many people as the United States. Almost 90 percent of Canada's population lives within 100 miles (161 km) of the U.S. border, so the northern part of the country has far fewer inhabitants. More than a third of all Canadians live in Ontario. Some of the largest cities include Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, and Calgary.



Canada has many different cultures. Many Asians, Caribbean peoples, and Europeans have settled in Vancouver and other cities. Many people from other countries move to Canada because of its friendly attitude toward immigrants. As a result, Canada has one of the highest per-capita immigration rates in the world. Also, different native groups, like the Inuit, are scattered across the country.

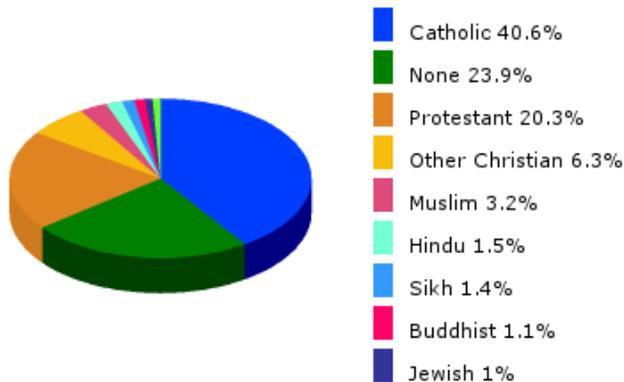
## Language

Both English and French are official languages. Most *provinces* (similar to states) use English, but in Québec, more than 8 out of 10 people speak French as a first language. The French spoken in Québec is called Québécois and is slightly different from what you would hear in France. Also, native groups speak their own languages; the Inuit use a language called Inuktitut, which is the main language spoken in the territory of Nunavut and is very complex and hard to learn. In the countryside, you might hear Canadians use the word *eh* (pronounced "ay"), which means "Ya know?" or "Isn't it?"

## Can You Say It in French?

Hello	<i>Salut</i>	(SA-loo)
Good-bye	<i>Au revoir</i>	(OH rev-WAHR)
Please	<i>S'il vous plaît</i>	(SEEL voo play)
Thank you	<i>Merci</i>	(mare-SEE)
Yes	<i>Oui</i>	(wee)
No	<i>Non</i>	(noh)

## Religion



Source: *The World Factbook 2014*. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2014.

The Roman Catholic Church is the largest church in Canada, followed by the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church. The majority of people are Christian, though religion does not play a big role in Canadian society. In some of Canada's larger cities, the influx of immigrants has increased the numbers of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs. The percentage of the population that claims to belong to no religion is also growing.

## History

### Time Line

	Thousands of years ago, Canada's first inhabitants migrate to North America from Asia
AD 1000	
ca. AD 1000	The Vikings visit what is now Newfoundland
1497	Italian-born navigator John Cabot reaches the coasts of Newfoundland and Cape Breton
1534	Jacques Cartier explores the Saint Lawrence River, claiming the area for France
1583	Newfoundland becomes England's first overseas colony
1600s	Britain and France fight over the fur trade and what is now Canada
1605	The French build and settle a fur-trading post in Nova Scotia
1642	Montréal is established
1670	London traders establish Hudson's Bay Company
1700	
1701	Thirty-eight native nations sign a peace treaty with the French near Montréal

1710	Britain gains control over much of Nova Scotia	
1756	The Seven Years' War begins between New France and the British colonies	
1763	The Treaty of Paris gives Britain control of France's territory in North America	
1774	The Québec Act recognizes the French language and the Roman Catholic religion in the colony of Québec	
1776	<i>Refugees</i> (people forced to leave their homes by war) from the American Revolutionary War who are loyal to the British arrive and settle in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Québec, and Ontario	
1783	Fur traders in Montréal set up the North West Company, which builds up a network of trading posts across the west and north	
1791	Québec is divided into Upper and Lower Canada; New France becomes the colony of Québec	
1800		
1800s	Thousands of newcomers from England, Scotland, and Ireland arrive each year	
1821	Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company join together after years of bitter rivalry	
1867	The British North America Act joins Québec (formerly Lower Canada), Ontario (formerly Upper Canada), Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick	
1870–73	Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island become part of Canada	
1873	The North-West Mounted Police are first organized; nearly 50 years later, they become the Royal Canadian Mounted Police ( <i>Mounties</i> )	
1885	The Canadian Pacific Railway is completed	
1898	A gold rush takes place along the upper Yukon River	
1900		
1905	Alberta and Saskatchewan become new <i>provinces</i> (similar to states)	
1914	Canada fights on the side of Britain and France in World War I	
1918	Women gain the right to vote in federal elections	
1939	World War II breaks out and Canadian forces are active in the war	
1949	Newfoundland joins Canada	
1980	Québec votes to remain part of Canada	

1982	Changes are made to the constitution so that Britain no longer has power over Canada
1989	Canada and the United States agree to establish free trade
1993	Kim Campbell becomes Canada's first female prime minister
1995	The public again votes to defeat a proposal to give Québec greater independence in the Canadian federation
	
1999	Nunavut becomes Canada's third territory and the first Canadian territory where the majority of the population is native
2000	
2003	Canada decides not to be part of the military coalition led by the United States against Iraq
2006	A major terrorist operation is uncovered in Toronto; 17 suspected plotters are arrested
2008	The government formally apologizes for forcing First Nations and other native children into boarding schools during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s
2010	Vancouver hosts the 2010 Winter Olympics
2012	A student protest against higher tuition rates in Montréal grows into a movement in support of free speech as Québec's provincial government arrests more than 2,500 people and passes an emergency law heavily controlling protests
2013	Heavy rains cause rivers to overflow and severely flood areas of western Canada; 100,000 homes are evacuated in Alberta
2014	A gunman kills a guard at the National War Memorial before storming the national parliament building; Parliament's seargent-at-arms shoots and kills the attacker, a Canadian citizen who recently converted to Islam
PRESENT	

### First Inhabitants

Thousands of years ago, Canada's first inhabitants came to North America, probably by crossing a small strip of land connecting Asia and Canada. These early peoples spread across the continent. Some started communities and farmed the land, and others moved around, hunting herds of animals. Some early native peoples included the Inuit and Innu groups in the north and the Beothuk, Micmac, and Malecite groups in the east. When Europeans came, they traded with these groups. However, the Europeans also brought with them diseases that killed many of the natives.

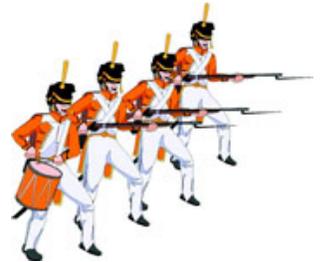
## Early Explorers

Vikings from Greenland were the first Europeans to visit North America, around AD 1000. The Vikings built the settlement L'Anse aux Meadows, and the remains of homes, workshops, and even a *forge* (blacksmith shop) can still be seen today. Explorers came hundreds of years later to look for a short route to Asia. When they came back and told of the land's wealth, more groups from England, France, and Spain left Europe to fish and trap beaver in the new land. Beaver *pelts* (skins) were used to make hats, which were popular in England. The fur trade dominated Canada's economy for the next two hundred years.



## French Influence

In the 1600s, the French settled along the Saint Lawrence River, naming the area New France. The English also began to colonize the area, and they fought with the French. In the Treaty of Paris, France gave the land to Britain. Britain divided the English and French settlements into two territories since the two groups didn't always get along. The English settlement became what is now Ontario. The French settlement, now Québec, has kept its unique culture. During the past century, Québeckers have debated whether Québec should become its own country. However, more people feel Québec should stay part of Canada.



## Growth and Independence

As the territories in Canada grew, the people wanted a single government to make the same laws everywhere. In 1867, Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick were joined together to form the Dominion of Canada. Most of the other colonies joined soon after.

Britain gradually gave Canada more independence. In 1982, Canada changed its constitution so that Britain had no more control over it. But Canada still recognizes Queen Elizabeth II as its official *head of state*, a person who represents the country but lacks political power.



## Canada Today

In recent years, each region in Canada has faced its own challenges. Along the Atlantic coast, the numbers of fish (particularly cod) in provincial waters has dropped significantly. Many fishermen whose families have been fishing for generations are out of work. Some people blame it on overfishing; others claim seals are eating the fish.

In the western *provinces* (similar to states), native groups have been trying to achieve self-government, while in Québec there has been a movement toward *seceding* (withdrawing) from the nation entirely. The most recent attempt at independence came in 1995 but was rejected by a small number of votes. Since 2006, the Canadian government has considered Québec a "nation" within Canada, but this status doesn't mean much.

In 1999, the Northwest Territories was split in two with the creation of the territory of Nunavut. Some people believe the three territorial governments should be given the same rights provincial governments have, with more control for the territorial government and less monitoring from the federal government.



## Lifestyle

### Games and Sports

Hockey is the most popular sport in Canada. Wayne Gretzky, one of the best hockey players ever, is Canadian. Kids begin playing hockey when they are very young, playing on local teams or participating in hockey camps. Canadians also play a game called *curling*. Like hockey, this game is played on ice. Two teams take turns sliding a large stone over the ice to reach a target. *Curling* takes a lot of strategy, such as knocking the other team's stone out of the way or sweeping the ice in front of the stone so it slides straighter. Players even wear special shoes for the game. Canadian kids love the outdoors and go fishing, camping, and canoeing whenever they can.



### Holidays

Canadians celebrate New Year's Day, Labor Day, and Christmas, among others. However, they also have unique holidays. Canada Day (1 July) is the country's national holiday in honor of the day in 1867 when two British colonies (Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) and one British province (the Province of Canada) were united. It's a time for picnics, barbecues, and fireworks at night. People usually wear red and white. Canadians celebrate Thanksgiving, but Canadian Thanksgiving is in October and is based on the harvest, not on the pilgrims and Native Americans. Boxing Day is the day after Christmas. This holiday comes from an old British tradition of giving boxed presents to the servants and the poor. Today, people use this day to relax and visit friends and relatives.



### Food

The foods Canadians eat depend partly on where they live. In the Atlantic *provinces* (similar to states), where fishing is common, people enjoy seafood, especially lobster. Newfoundland has dishes like cod tongues and cod cheeks. In Québec, there is a definite French influence, with foods such as pea soup, French pastries, breads, crêpes, special cheeses, lamb, and veal. In some western cities, because of the many immigrant communities, a variety of ethnic foods are available. In central Canada, one finds wild rice, smoked fish, beef, and a variety of other foods. People from native tribes eat common foods like hamburgers, as well as traditional foods like *muktaaq* (whale skin), salmon, caribou, berries, and roots. Fast food is popular in Canada, but some Canadians top their fries with gravy and cheese or salt and vinegar instead of ketchup. A favorite fast food is *poutine*, which consists of french fries covered with gravy and cheese curds.



## Schools

*Adult Literacy: 99%*

Most kids start school when they're about five or six years old. Canadian children can attend public school, private school, or be homeschooled. Many students finish after the 12th grade. School generally lasts about nine months of the year. In Québec, kids whose parents speak English can go to an English-speaking school, but everyone else (including new immigrants who don't speak English or French) must go to French-speaking schools.

## Life as a Kid

Unless it's summertime, kids wake up each morning and head to school. There they study subjects like math, science, and Canadian history. After school, they go home to study or help around the house. They might turn on the television to watch their favorite show or hockey team. Or they might play video games or surf the internet. Better yet, kids might go play in their own hockey league, which they can join when they're seven years old. If they're not in a league, they can play street hockey with their friends.



## Society

### Government

*Capital: Ottawa*

*Head of State: Queen Elizabeth II (U.K.)*

*Head of Government: PM Stephen Harper*

Canada's law-making body, called Parliament, includes a 105-member Senate and a 308-member House of Commons. The House of Commons debates and votes on *bills* (proposed laws). The Senate carefully examines the *bills* passed by the House of Commons and decides whether to approve, change, or reject them. The prime minister selects senators, while members of Parliament (House of Commons) are elected. Each Canadian *province* (similar to a state) also has a *legislature* (lawmaking body) with its own leaders.

The leader of Canada's government is the prime minister. The leader of the political party with the most representatives in the House of Commons becomes the prime minister. Parliamentary elections are held at least every four years. The federal government is responsible for national defense, international affairs, the banking system, and policies related to the native population. The provincial governments are responsible for education, health care, and welfare of their population. Traditionally, the *provinces* have worked hard to maintain as much independence from the federal government as possible. The voting age is 18.



## Money and Economy

Currency: Canadian dollar



Canada has one of the strongest economies in the world. It is a leader in the production of gold, uranium, lead, oil, natural gas, wood pulp, and timber-related products. The country is also a leader in agriculture. Canadian farmers grow wheat, barley, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Many people in the Atlantic *provinces* (similar to states) earn their living by fishing. Canadians refer to their one-dollar coin as the *loonie* because there is a loon on one side. Likewise, the two-dollar coin is called the *toonie*.

## Getting Around

Transportation is very important in a country as large as Canada. Most people drive themselves from one place to another. Canadians in the west have more cars than those in the east because everything is farther apart there. In bigger cities, where everything is closer together, people might take the bus or subway. In the eastern *provinces* (similar to states), people take a ferry to get from one island to another. Planes, trains, and buses are commonly used to travel longer distances.



## Culture Facts & Contacts

### The Mounties

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, called *Mounties*, are Canada's national police officers. One of the most recognized police forces in the world, they are called Mounties because they used to be "mounted" on horses, but today they ride in cars and planes. They fight drugs, gangs, and other problems that face the country. When they were first organized in 1873, they were called the North-West Mounted Police. They used to wear bright red jackets but now only wear them during festivals and special ceremonies.



### Learn More

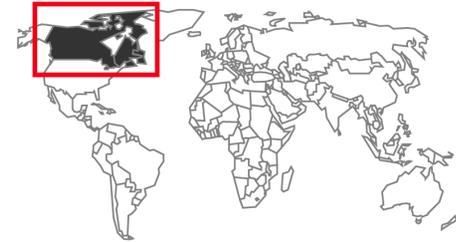
Contact the Canadian Consulate General, 1251 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; phone (212) 596-1628; web site <http://can-am.gc.ca/new-york>. Or contact the Embassy of Canada, 501 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20001; phone (202) 682-1740; web site <http://can-am.gc.ca/washington>.

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# Canada



Canada's lowest temperature of -81°F (-63°C) was recorded in the Yukon Territory.

Newfoundland fogs can last longer than any other fog on earth.

Prince Edward Island is the smallest province.

Niagara Falls is one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Canada's total area is 3,851,788 square miles (9,976,085 sq km).

