Discovering *Canada*

Canada is the second-largest country in the world by land area, spanning North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific and northward to the Arctic Ocean. It is renowned for its stunning natural landscapes, including vast forests, towering mountain ranges, and pristine lakes. Highlights include the Great Lakes and the breathtaking Banff National Park in the Canadian Rockies.



Canada's society is highly diverse, shaped by both a deep Indigenous heritage and a multicultural population. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities contribute significantly to the country's cultural identity. With **two official languages—English and French—**Canada's history and traditions reflect both Indigenous roots and European influences.

Recognized globally for its high quality of life, universal healthcare system, and progressive human rights policies, Canada is often viewed as a welcoming and inclusive nation. Major cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal serve as cultural and economic hubs, blending modern urban living with historic charm. Canadians are widely known for their friendliness, politeness, and passion for outdoor activities—whether it's hockey in winter or hiking in the summer.

Check in Process

The standard hotel check-in time in Canada is usually 3:00 PM or 4:00 PM, depending on the property. Travelers arriving earlier may request early check-in; while not guaranteed, many hotels will accommodate this if rooms are available. If not, most properties will securely store luggage until the room is ready.

Visa Process

U.S. citizens do not require a visa to enter Canada for short visits (tourism, business, or family visits) of up to six months. However, entry requirements differ for citizens of other countries. However, they must obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) if arriving by air. Travelers entering by land or sea (for example, driving across the border or arriving by cruise ship) do not need an eTA.your flight. If entering by land or sea, an eTA is not required.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are widely accepted throughout Canada, including at restaurants, hotels, shops, and even on public transportation in many major cities. The most commonly accepted cards are: **Visa, Mastercard** and **American Express** (accepted at many locations, though less widely than Visa or Mastercard). Contactless (tap-to-pay) transactions are common, and mobile payment platforms such as Apple Pay and Google Pay are also widely supported.

Currency

Canada's official currency is the Canadian dollar (CAD), commonly represented by the symbol $ or sometimes C$ to distinguish it from the U.S. dollar.

Cultural Norms

Politeness: Say "please," "thank you," and "sorry" often.

Queueing: Always wait your turn.

Punctuality: Be on time for social and professional events.

Communication: Respect diversity, avoid interrupting, and stick to light topics like weather or sports.

Dining: Tip 15–20% in restaurants; wait for everyone to be served before eating.

Environment: Keep spaces clean, recycle, and follow park rules.

When visiting Indigenous cultural sites or participating in Indigenous experiences, be respectful and follow any guidelines provided by local communities.

Dining

Dining in Canada reflects the country's multicultural identity, blending international cuisines with regional specialties. Travelers can enjoy iconic Canadian dishes such as poutine (French fries topped with gravy and cheese curds), butter tarts, and foods infused with maple syrup. Coastal regions are known for their fresh seafood, including lobster, salmon, and mussels, while major cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal offer a wide range of global dining options, from Italian to Asian.

Please note: Menu prices in Canada do not include taxes (5% GST federal tax, plus provincial sales tax, which varies by province).

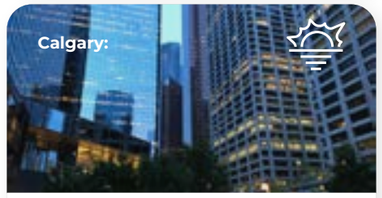
Canada experiences a wide variety of weather due to its vast size and diverse geography. Winters can be harsh, with snow and freezing temperatures common in many regions. Coastal areas, such as Vancouver, enjoy milder, wetter winters. Summers can range from warm and sunny in places to cooler temperatures in the northern territories. The country also experiences distinct seasons, with spring and autumn offering mild and pleasant weather, though conditions can vary greatly depending on the region.



Average Summer	Average Winter
55-72°F	34-43°F



Average Summer	Average Winter
45-68°F	23-5°F



Average Summer	Average Winter
48-77°F	30-10°F

Transport

Taxis are widely available in Canadian cities, and fares are metered. Ridesharing services such as Uber and Lyft also operate in most major urban areas.





Calgary

Calgary, located in Alberta's foothills, is a dynamic Canadian city that combines modern urban life with easy access to nature. Its downtown skyline is marked by sleek skyscrapers, set against the dramatic backdrop of the nearby Rocky Mountains.

Visitors can enjoy panoramic views from the **Calgary Tower**, explore diverse neighborhoods such as historic **Inglewood** and lively **Kensington**, and experience the city's thriving arts, festival, and culinary scenes. Known for its welcoming spirit and western heritage, Calgary offers both cultural discovery and outdoor adventure, making it a gateway to the Canadian Rockies.

Pharmacies

Large chain pharmacies such as **Shoppers Drug Mart and Rexall** generally operate from **8:00 AM to 10:00 PM**, with select locations open 24 hours. Independent or rural pharmacies may have shorter hours.

If you are bringing prescription medications, ensure they are in their **original packaging** and accompanied by a **copy of the prescription**. Note that some medications available over the counter in the United States may require a prescription in **Canada**.

Emergency Information

Emergency Services: Dial 911 for police, fire, or ambulance. This number is valid throughout Canada. **Healthcare:** Canada has a universal healthcare system, but visitors are not covered. Medical services must be paid for out-of-pocket unless you have travel insurance. It is strongly recommended to carry travel insurance that includes medical coverage.

For non-urgent situations:
Police (non-emergency): Contact the local police department's non-emergency number. **Health advice:** In most provinces, dial 811 to speak with a registered nurse or receive health information.

Vancouver

Vancouver, set between the Pacific Ocean and snow-capped mountains, is often regarded as one of the world's most beautiful cities. Its spectacular natural surroundings provide endless opportunities for outdoor adventure and wildlife encounters. Visitors can ride the gondola up **Grouse Mountain**, stroll the treetop walkways and suspension bridges at **Capilano Suspension Bridge Park**, or explore the 400-hectare **Stanley Park**, a green oasis with sweeping views of both mountains and ocean.

In addition to its natural beauty, Vancouver offers vibrant urban attractions, including a thriving arts and cultural scene and some of the finest culinary experiences in Canada. This laid-back city seamlessly blends outdoor adventure with cosmopolitan living.



Banff

Nestled in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, Banff is a breathtaking alpine town that enchants with its majestic mountain vistas, pristine wilderness, and charming mountain village atmosphere.

Surrounded by Banff National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, this natural wonderland offers a wealth of outdoor adventures. Explore the vast network of hiking trails, go wildlife spotting, or embark on a scenic drive along the Icefields Parkway. In winter, the town transforms into a winter wonderland, with world-class skiing and snowboarding opportunities. The town itself exudes a cosy charm, with its quaint streets, boutique shops, and inviting restaurants.

Plug Sockets

In Canada, the standard plug sockets are Type A and Type B, similar to those used in the United States: Type A: Two flat parallel prongs. Type B: Two flat parallel prongs with a round grounding pin below.

The standard voltage is 120V, and the frequency is 60Hz. If you're travelling from a country with different plug types or voltage, you may need a plug adapter or a voltage converter.

Gratuities

In Canada, tipping is common:

Restaurants: 15% to 20% of the bill.

Bars: $1 to $2 per drink or 15% to 20% of the tab.

Taxis: 10% to 15%.

Hotels: $1 to $2 for housekeeping, $5 to $10 for bellhops.

Tour guides: 10% to 20%

What to pack

Essentials:
Passport & Visa: Carry your valid U.S. passport, any required visas, and supporting travel documents. Keep photocopies in a separate location. **Travel Insurance:** Strongly recommended to cover medical emergencies, trip delays, or other unexpected situations. **Money:** Bring a mix of Canadian dollars (CAD) in small denominations and credit/debit cards. ATMs are widely available in cities. **Health Kit:** Pack prescription medications in their original containers, along with a copy of the prescription. Include basic over-the-counter medicines, and keep them in your carry-on luggage.

Clothing:
Pack a versatile selection of clothing to adapt to Canada's varied weather conditions. **Consider bringing:**Lightweight clothing for warmer days. Warm layers for cooler evenings or unexpected temperature changes. A waterproof jacket for rain or coastal climates. A hat and light scarf/shawl for added comfort and warmth. Comfortable walking shoes for sightseeing. Sandals for casual wear insummer months

Personal Items:
Toiletries: Pack essentials such as toothpaste, shampoo, soap, and any specific personal items you use regularly. **Sun Protection:** Sunscreen and sunglasses are recommended, particularly in summer or when visiting higher altitudes. **Insect Repellent:** Useful for added protection, especially in rural or wooded areas.

Electronics:
Phone & Charger: With a local SIM card, you can have better connectivity and avoid high roaming charges. **Camera:** A camera is great for capturing your trip. Don't forget extra memory cards and spare batteries.

Other Useful Items:
Small Backpack/Daypack: Ideal for day trips and carrying essentials such as snacks, a jacket, or travel documents. **Reusable water bottle:** Convenient for staying hydrated; refill with safe drinking water. **Hand Sanitizer:** Useful for maintaining cleanliness while on the go.

Air conditioning and heating

Most hotels in Canada, especially in urban areas and major tourist destinations, have air conditioning. However, in older or boutique hotels, particularly in cooler regions or smaller towns, air conditioning may not be standard.