Discovering *Canada*

Canada is the second-largest country in the world by land area, stretching across North America from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and all the way up to the Arctic Ocean. Known for its stunning natural beauty, it's home to vast forests, towering mountains, and pristine lakes, including the famous Banff National Park and the Great Lakes. The country's multicultural society is a mosaic of people from diverse backgrounds, enriched by a deep Indigenous heritage. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples all contribute to the nation's cultural fabric. With two official languages—English and French—Canada's colonial history is reflected in its linguistic diversity.

Renowned for its high standard of living, universal healthcare system, and progressive policies on human rights, Canada is a beacon of inclusivity. Major cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal serve as cultural hubs, offering a blend of modern amenities and rich historical influences. Canadians are celebrated for their politeness, friendliness, and love for outdoor activities—from hockey to hiking.



Check in Process

The typical check-in time for hotels in Canada is 3:00 PM or 4:00 PM, depending on the property.

If you arrive earlier, some hotels may accommodate an early check-in if rooms are available, or they may store your luggage until your room is ready.

Visa Process

UK, Australian and New Zealand citizens do not require a visa for short visits to Canada (for tourism, business, or family visits) of up to six months. However, they must obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) if arriving by air.

The eTA is a simple online application that typically gets approved within minutes, and you'll need it to board your flight. If entering by land or sea, an eTA is not required.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are widely used in Canada and accepted almost everywhere, including restaurants, shops, hotels, and public transport in many cities. The most commonly accepted cards are:

Visa
Mastercard
American Express (less common but still accepted in many places)

Currency

Canada uses the Canadian dollar (CAD).

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

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

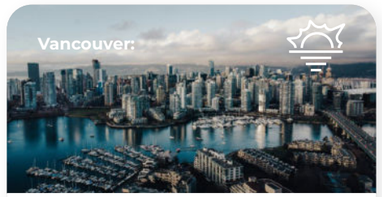
When visiting Indigenous cultural sites or participating in Indigenous experiences, be respectful and follow any guidelines provided by local communities.

Dining

Dining in Canada reflects its multicultural diversity, offering a mix of global flavours alongside traditional dishes. Popular foods include poutine (fries topped with gravy and cheese curds), butter tarts, and maple syrup-infused dishes. Major cities feature a wide variety of international cuisines, from Italian to Asian. Seafood, especially in coastal regions, is a staple, with fresh lobster, salmon, and mussels being favourites.

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

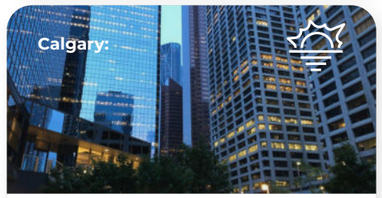
Canada experiences a wide variety of weather due to its vast size and diverse geography. Winters can be harsh, with snow and freezing temperatures common in many regions. Coastal areas, such as Vancouver, enjoy milder, wetter winters. Summers can range from warm and sunny in places to cooler temperatures 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 **13-22°C** Average Winter **1-6°C**



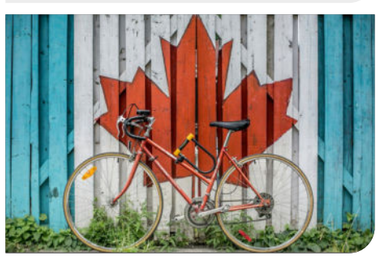
Average Summer **7-20°C** Average Winter **-5--15°C**



Average Summer **9-25°C** Average Winter **-1--12°C**

Transport

Taxis & Ridesharing: Uber and Lyft operate in most urban areas.





Calgary

Calgary, a vibrant Canadian city nestled in Alberta's foothills, boasts a captivating blend of urban allure and natural beauty. The downtown skyline is graced with modern skyscrapers, while the nearby Rocky Mountains provide a stunning backdrop.

The Calgary Tower offers panoramic views, and the city's diverse neighbourhoods offer cultural exploration, from the historic Inglewood to trendy Kensington. With a thriving arts scene, festivals, and culinary delights, Calgary is a dynamic hub for adventure and culture, where modern living harmoniously coexists with the rugged spirit of the West.

Pharmacies

Chain pharmacies like Shoppers Drug Mart and Rexall typically operate from 8 AM – 10 PM, with some offering 24-hour service. Independent and rural pharmacies may have shorter hours.

If you require prescription medications, ensure they are in their original packaging and accompanied by a copy of the prescription. Some medications available over the counter in the UK may require a prescription in Canada.

Emergency

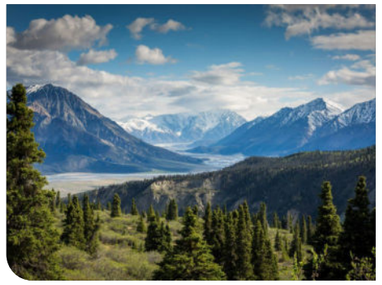
In the event of an emergency, dial 911 for immediate assistance. This number connects you to police, fire, and ambulance services. Canada has universal healthcare, but visitors must pay for services out-of-pocket unless covered by travel insurance, therefore it's advisable to have travel insurance that covers medical emergencies.

For non-urgent situations:
Police non-emergency: Contact the local police department's non-emergency line.
Health advice: Dial 811 in most provinces to speak with a nurse or get health information.

Vancouver

Vancouver, poised between the sparkling ocean and majestic snow-draped mountains, has been named one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

With spectacular scenery that offers plenty of opportunities to see wildlife and roam the great outdoors; head to Grouse Mountain where you could have breakfast with a grizzly bear, drink in spectacular nature from the thrilling perspective of the Capilano Suspension Bridge or roam the 400-hectare oasis of Stanley Park with scenic mountain and ocean views. This easy-going city has many urban attractions too, including an exciting arts culture and some of Canada's best culinary experiences.



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: Ensure you have your passport, visa, and any necessary travel documents.
Travel Insurance: Always a good idea for unexpected situations.
Money: Cash (especially small denominations) and credit/debit cards.
Health Kit: Any prescription medications, over-the-counter medicines (Ensure that you travel with these in your hand luggage)

Clothing:

Consider packing lightweight clothing, warm layers for chillier days and evenings, a waterproof jacket, a hat, a light scarf or shawl, comfortable walking shoes, and sandals.

Personal Items:

Toiletries: Basic items like toothpaste, shampoo, soap, and any specific personal items you use
Sunscreen & Sunglasses
Insect Repellent: For extra protection.

Electronics:

Phone & Charger: With a local SIM card, you can have better connectivity and avoid high roaming charges
Camera: To capture your travels (with extra memory cards and batteries).

Other Useful Items:

Small Backpack/Daypack: For day trips and carrying essentials
Reusable water bottle
Hand Sanitiser: For cleanliness 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.