



Canada

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"It is wonderful to feel the grandness of Canada in the raw, not because she is Canada but because she's something sublime that you were born into, some great rugged power that you are a part of." *Emily Carr (1871-1945), Canadian artist. Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of Emily Carr, entry for April 16, 1937.*

Canada is an immense country, with its population over 32.5 million. Immigration continues to increase this number annually by almost a quarter million. The country is divided into six different time zones and six different geographical regions. These regions include the Atlantic Provinces, the Canadian Shield, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Interior Plains, the Cordillera and the North. Under further inspection, however, you will find ten separate provinces and three territories. This division is politically important as each province is administered by their own government which is responsible for many facets particularly relevant to that province. That is, each regional government takes responsibility for the public transportation, schooling, health and other services in that province. The three northern territories, do not have their own local government, rather they are governed by the federal government in Ottawa. These numerous divisions, however, create a complete country rich in unity as well as diversity. Whether you find yourself in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta or British Columbia, you will discover a friendly, hospitable culture.

Notable Cities

Edmonton, or "The Gateway to the North" is situated in the central region of the Alberta province just dividing this farmland from the resource-rich northern territory. Alberta Province, which is populated by nearly three million people, boasts Edmonton as its capital. This population is represented by a diverse group of British, Germans, French and Ukrainians. Similarly, Edmonton is made up of a diverse population of approximately one million which includes these ethnic groups as well as many more.

Edmonton is one of Canada's largest metropolitan centers and boasts a thriving economy. This economy is based on numerous elements including manufacturing, petroleum refining, professional services and distribution, to name a few. Edmonton is a city which offers a hope for future growth and promising economic development. Expatriates will find this region of Canada full of eager, genuine people perpetually seeking a progressive future.

Located at the foothills of the scenic Canadian Rocky Mountains, Calgary owes much of its success to its location. Its place at the junction of the Bow and Elbow Rivers first encouraged the Northwest Mounted Police to set up their headquarters there in 1875. But it was not until the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway that the town started to emerge from provincial anonymity to become the regional centre of farming and ranching. Calgary got its biggest boost from the discovery of oil in nearby Turner Valley in 1914. Since then, the city has come a long way and is now an international center for oil development and the energy industry.

Of course, a city of almost a million inhabitants has a diversified economy and does not rely solely on oil for its income. Calgary also leads as the regional capital for wireless and software industries. Another booming industry is housing and development, which is only fitting considering the recent population growth spurts.

Many new residents are attracted by the variety of housing options and a high standard of living. Calgary also offers its residents the cultural amenities of city life in a city that continues to be clean, safe and prosperous.

Vancouver, on the Pacific coast, is not your typical Canadian city. In fact, it lacks many of their traditional characteristics, but nonetheless, it remains Canada's third largest city in population. The city's population exceeds 500,000 people, and the metro area adds two million. Since Vancouver is strategically located, it remains one of the busiest ports on the continent. Likewise, it is a large North American city and a gateway to the Pacific Rim. The area, then, is serviced by many transportation options and continues to grow in tourist popularity.

Vancouver offers a calm atmosphere with easy access to both the sea and mountains. Many recreational events and facilities are at your convenience and you will find that, being one of Canada's most important cities, Vancouver offers many attractions, business and governmental offices, as well as many restaurants and shops. It is also one of the most beautiful areas in all of Canada.

Ottawa, Canada's national capital, is the fourth largest metropolitan area in the country. Its location on the border of Quebec and Ontario gives the city a truly international atmosphere that combines the English and French cultures with German, Lebanese, Italian, Polish, Dutch, Portuguese, Asian and other cultures. Although Ottawa was originally a city of government, its role as a leader in advanced technological research has earned it the distinction of the nation's Advanced Technology Capital.

Toronto is Canada's largest city which continues to grow in population, multiculturalism and economic strength. Toronto is home to many large domestic and foreign corporations, and offers many commercial and financial opportunities. This city is the capital of the Ontario province, which remains a booming region, filled with wealth and economic success. Toronto is a city unlike many others. It offers, for example, safety not known by other cities, and one of the world's most efficient public transportation systems. In addition, you will find some of the best executive hotels, restaurants, recreational activities and an entertainment community comparable to that of New York City's. Expatriates will find this area and its occupants very productive, as it continues to set the pace of the country's financial and economic progression.

Metropolitan Toronto's history begins in the eighteenth century when it was claimed

by the French, much like the rest of Canada at the time. However, it was the arrival of the British Loyalists from the newly formed United States that began the city's growth. Toronto, then known as York, was recognized as the administrative capital of Upper Canada in 1793 and later became a thriving manufacturing centre in the nineteenth century.

The city held fast to its commitment to British interests until the mid twentieth century, at which time the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway allowed for an influx of immigrants who came to share in the city's success. The more diverse makeup of Toronto led to a more international culture, changing the conservative anglophile city into a lively, thriving worldwide business and entertainment arena. Today, Toronto's global interests, impressive local culture and comfortable atmosphere make it one of the most favorable cities in North America for family and business.

Toronto is located in the lower end of the Ontario province along the shores of Lake Ontario. Canada's largest city is also the most southerly major city, on the border of the Ontario large peninsula. Almost equidistant from two major US cities, Chicago and New York City, Toronto is in a prime location, uniquely suited for international business.

Montreal, which is bordered by the St. Lawrence River, is Quebec's largest city with a population of over one million. The population in the Greater Montreal area is over three million. It is the second largest French-speaking city in the world, with over 65 percent of the population speaking French. The remaining people speak English as a first language, and most understand it as a second language.

Montreal is a very modern city in all respects, with a vibrant downtown business district exhibiting skyscrapers of unusual colors and shapes. Underground Montreal is a city in itself -- a maze of tunnels and corridors where people can shop and avoid the cold of winter altogether.

Similarly, the Quebec province is a major commercial and cultural orientated region. The Quebec province in general will both surprise and please any foreigner with its older roots as well as its modern facilities and attitudes. This region will amaze the expatriate with its world renowned cuisine, museums, fashion and overall efficiency. Quebec City is the capital, and is another immense economical center which provides safety, excellent transportation, and similar facilities and cultural events like Toronto.

As one of the earliest European settlements of North America, Quebec began its long history as a commercial center in the early seventeenth century upon the arrival of Samuel de Champlain. This city, located along the St. Lawrence River, became an important port in early Canada and New France. Some of the first city divisions made Upper-Town the center for religious and administrative affairs, while the Lower-Town was a place of ports, merchants and markets.

Today, the capital of the Quebec province is still divided into "quarters." Upper Town and Lower Town both contain parts of Vieux-Quebec (Old Quebec), but only the Upper segment is enclosed within the fortification walls. Upper Town also has several neighborhoods such as Montcalm, Saint-Jean-Baptiste and Saint-Sacrement. Lower Town's districts are Cap-Blanc, Saint-Roch, Saint-Sauveur and Vieux-Quebec-Basse-ville.

The two relatively new quarters are the center of modern Quebec City's commercial

and industrial interest. However, both the Des Rivières sector (Duberger, Lebourneuf, Les Saules and Neufchâtel) and the Limoilou district (Lairêt, Maizerets and Vieux-Limoilou) have some limited residential areas.

Today, Quebec City proper is home to about 170,000 residents. However, the city's influence has expanded into outlying towns and suburban areas. The total population of the Greater Quebec City area is approximately 675,000.

Climate

Alberta's summers are quite pleasant; the winters, however, are long and cold. In the winter, winds off the slopes of the Rocky Mountains may even warm up the area for a short time. Alberta is under snow for a good portion of winter and may even see a snowstorm as late as June. However, it is also sunny most of the time, with little yearly rainfall. In contrast, Vancouver receives a great deal of rain throughout the year, but with temperatures that are somewhat milder due to its geographic location.

Ontario's climate is comparable to that of the northern United States, and is somewhat milder than other provinces in Eastern Canada. While there are four distinct seasons, spring and fall are brief. Midwinter temperatures hover somewhere between 0 degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit) and -8 degrees Celsius (17 degrees Fahrenheit). In the summer, temperatures average between 25 degrees Celsius (78 degrees Fahrenheit) and 16 degrees Celsius (60 degrees Fahrenheit). It rains about 66 centimeters (26 inches) per year.

Due to its southerly location, Toronto enjoys a milder climate than most Canadian cities, especially in the winters. Average temperatures in January and February, the coldest months of the year, range between -9 to -1 degree Celsius (15 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit). Although winters also tend to be damp, snow does not usually accumulate. The springs are often sunny, with an average temperature between 10 and 20 degrees Celsius (about 45 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit). Summer temperatures don't often increase past 27 degrees Celsius (about 80 degrees Fahrenheit), although increasing humidity may make it feel hotter. Autumns are crisp with the average temperature at about 10 degrees Celsius (45 degrees Fahrenheit).

The climate of Quebec is similar to that of Ontario, but it snows more frequently. In February, Quebec may accumulate as much as 46 centimeters (23 inches) of snow. Average winter and summer temperatures are comparable to those of Toronto, but snow comes to Quebec early, usually by November. Montreal's climate-controlled underground city allows residents and tourists to avoid the winter cold altogether. Quebec does not thaw out until April, and spring temperatures are felt around the middle of May. Summers are humid. Temperatures in Montreal are usually a little higher than in Quebec City.

The Culture

Since Canada is a country rich in diversity; it in some respects resembles its neighbor, the United States. It is, however, an insult to refer to a Canadian as an American, so be cautious concerning this sticky subject. Apart from this issue, though, you should find Canadians a reasonable, polite, and hospitable people.

Canada offers a rich mix of ethnicity, linguistics, religion and customs, as many immigrants came to Canada after the Second World War. Since Canadians are known for their tolerance and hospitality, diversity is welcomed, and more importantly,

accepted. Similarly, you will find a wide range of languages spoken in Canada, including some native languages like Cree and Iroquois. Since there is such widespread ethnic diversity, languages ranging from Chinese to Polish will be found in Canada, but the two official languages are French and English. These main languages, however, are distinctly colored by Canadian usage. Throughout the entire country you will discover that both English and French differ from one province to another.

In general, English-speaking Canadians are more reserved than French Canadians. Natives of Ontario may not be as receptive to body contact or physical displays of affection, despite the fact that they are extremely friendly and welcoming. By contrast, Quebec natives are very physically expressive; they typically greet each other in the traditional French manner - with a kiss on both cheeks.

Natives of Ontario and Quebec are also formal in regard to social etiquette. Men will rise from their chairs when a woman enters the room, and may offer his seat if necessary. Men follow tradition by opening doors for women as well.

Canadians usually have a strong fashion sense, derived from European tastes. Dining out may require formal dress, but casual situations call for more relaxed attire.

Toronto's local culture takes its cue more from the more recent multiculturalism rather than its anglophile history. The city has worked hard to achieve its present prestige by encouraging new businesses, residential projects, the regeneration of the lakefront and the local arts community.

Montreal offers a culture that is rich in French heritage and ambience, and you will find that its elegance, modernism, and vitality stems directly from this European heritage.

The people of Western Canada are extremely friendly and intensely genuine. Like the whole of Canada, this region is filled with a diverse culture and a delicate mix of ethnicity. Together, however, everyone works for a safer, cleaner home. Many nationalities, call this region home, and a constant stream of immigrants permeate the country each year. This large scale blending is welcomed by the tolerant Canadian populous, and this diversity can be seen on other social levels.

Although Canada values unity, some disharmony exists with its neighbor, the United States. It is advised to acknowledge the differences between these two countries. The typical expatriate will probably find Canadians to be real, objective people.

The Language

English is the most frequently used, but depending upon where you are in the country, this fact can easily be reversed. In Quebec, for instance, French is certainly used more often, especially in Montreal. In fact, the official language in Quebec is French, so when addressing someone from this area be more sensitive as this is an important issue.

To ease the tension in this linguistic dilemma, many items including most products purchased in Canada and the federal government's documentation are printed with both languages. In Quebec, small concentrations of bilinguals reside, and the country tries to promote this movement, but the foreign national should expect either French or English to be spoken by the typical Canadian. Understand, however, the accent

and vocabulary of French spoken in Quebec is different from Parisian French.

English dominates as the official language in Ontario, but due to the large numbers of ethnic populations such as Chinese, Italian, Greek and others, Toronto may be considered a multi-lingual city. Many dual-language street signs can be found around town, especially in the areas of ethnic population concentration, such as Little Italy, Little Portugal, Little India, Little Jamaica and so forth.

Religion

The majority of the Canadian population follow the Christian faith. Although you will find a large Jewish, and growing Muslim, community in both Montreal and Toronto, Christians dominate the religious adherents. There are many different brands of Christianity, but Anglican and Roman Catholic are among the most popular.

While many Toronto citizens practice some form of Christianity, the multicultural makeup of the city provides many resources for the practitioners of other major religions. There are over 100 official religious or spiritual groups, in addition to places of worship, operating in Toronto.

Conclusion

The United Nations has rated Canada as the best country in the world to live in, for seven consecutive years. Being an expat is an excellent way to enjoy life in Canada. Unlimited opportunities for development exist in the natural resources, manufacturing, construction, import/export, commerce, high-tech and service industries, in addition to its diverse, educated and warm people.