



CANADA

TOP SIGHTS, AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

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Welcome to Canada

Canada is more than its hulking-mountain, craggy-coast good looks: it also cooks extraordinary meals, rocks cool culture and unfurls wild, moose-spotting road trips.

The globe's second-biggest country has an endless variety of landscapes, from sky-high mountains and glinting glaciers to spectral rainforests and remote beaches, along with a big cast of local characters including grizzly bears, whales and moose. The terrain makes for a fantastic playground – whether it's snowboarding, surfing, kayaking, strolling Vancouver's Stanley Park or swimming off Prince Edward Island's pink-sand beaches.

Culturally, Canada is a mixed bag. You'll hear it in the wild-fiddling Celtic music, see it in the rainforest-cloaked Aboriginal villages on Haida Gwaii, and taste it in Vancouver's Asian dining scene.

Indeed, Canadian cuisine is another landscape to explore. If you grazed from west to east, you'd fill your plate with wild salmon, velvety scallops, and a bounty of cherries and peaches in British Columbia; poutine (golden fries topped with gravy and cheese curds) in Québec; and lobster with a dab of melted butter in the Atlantic provinces – all washed down with award-winning crisp whites and bold reds produced from the country's vine-striped valleys.

With all of this, you might be surprised to hear that Canada has world-class museums, too. Cultural hubs such as the new National Music Centre or Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 will leave you wowed, while the National Gallery of Canada gives you a taste of just how artistic these Canucks really are. It's true. Canada's got it all going on.

From sky-high mountains and glinting glaciers to spectral rainforests and remote beaches...



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Vancouver

Harmonic convergence of city and nature

With skiable mountains on the outskirts, 11 beaches fringing the core and Stanley Park's thick rainforest just blocks from the glass skyscrapers downtown, Vancouver (p201) is a heady, bewitching brew. Throw in Hollywood chic (many movies are filmed here), a freewheeling counterculture and buzzing multicultural communities, and you have a city that keeps on landing atop worldwide 'best places to live' lists. Above: Totem pole, Stanley Park (p204)

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The Prairies

Solitude reigns in Canada's middle ground

Driving through the flatlands (p161) turns up uninterrupted fields of golden wheat that stretch to the horizon. When the wind blows, the wheat sways like waves on the ocean, punctuated by the occasional grain elevator rising up like a tall ship, and when big storms come they are visible on the skyline for kilometers.

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Niagara Region

A world-renowned waterfall and a vineyard (or 10)

It may not be among the world's tallest waterfalls, but when those great bands of water arc over the precipice like liquid glass, roaring into the void below, Niagara Falls impresses big time. Nowhere in North America beats its thundering cascade, with more than a million bathtubs of water plummeting over the edge every second. Beyond it stretches a region (p61) speckled with vineyards and home to one of the country's best-preserved 19th-century towns.

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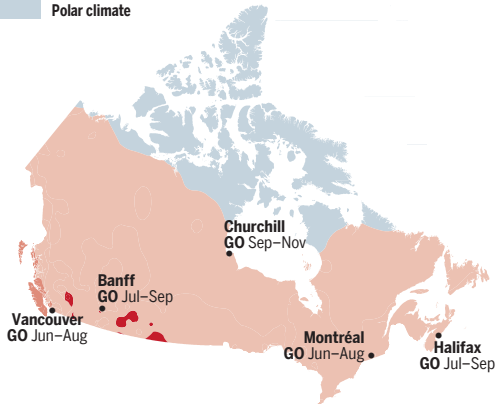
Plan Your Trip

Need to Know



When to Go

	Dry climate
	Warm to hot summers, mild winters
	Summers – mild to warm (north & east) & warm to hot (south), cold winters
	Polar climate



High Season (Jun–Aug)

- Sunshine and warm weather prevail; far northern regions briefly thaw.
- Accommodation prices peak (up 30% on average).
- December through March is equally busy and expensive in ski resort towns.

Shoulder (May, Sep & Oct)

- Crowds and prices drop off; attractions keep shorter hours.
- Temperatures are cool but comfortable.
- Fall foliage areas remain busy.

Low Season (Nov–Apr)

- Places outside the big cities and ski resorts close.
- Darkness and cold take over.

Currency

Canadian dollar (\$)

Languages

English, French

Visas

Visitors from certain countries require a visa to enter Canada. Those who are exempt require an Electronic Travel Authorization, with the exception of Americans. This must be applied for prior to traveling and can be completed online; see www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp.

Money

ATMs widely available. Credit cards accepted in most hotels and restaurants.

Cell Phones

Local SIM cards can be used in unlocked GSM 850/1900 compatible phones. Other phones must be set to roaming.

Time

Canada spans six of the world's 24 time zones. The time difference from coast to coast is 4½ hours.