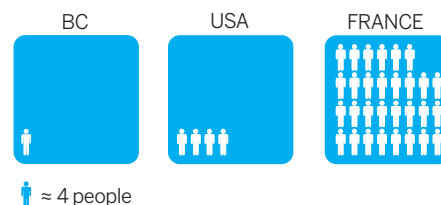




population per sq km



BC & the Canadian Rockies Today

Olympic Legacies

When Vancouver hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in 2010, the eyes of the world feasted on British Columbia's snowcapped peaks, endless blue skies and street-partying locals. The province used the event to showcase its billion-dollar looks, aiming to encourage tourism and investment. But since the flame went out, the benefits of the Games have been harder to grasp. In its aftermath, government-funded programs were radically cut, while locals – most of whom enjoyed the world's biggest party at the time – now frequently state that it cost too much.

It's an indication, perhaps, that economies need more than mega-sized events to generate development. Alberta proved this after hosting the Winter Olympics in 1988: the province strutted through the recent global recession better than any region in Canada, due to its reputation as a low taxation-big business capital with an economy centered on its booming oil industry. While BC wrings its hands over exploiting gas reserves in its pristine, coastal wilderness, the environmentally controversial northern Alberta oil sands continue to pump out money-spinning black gold.

Leaping Loonie

Constantly hovering around parity with the US dollar like a persistent housefly, the rising Canadian dollar, known as the 'Loonie' because of the loon bird depicted on \$1 coins, is a challenge for the regional economy. While the country was not subjected to the bankruptcy-threatening damage that recently afflicted other nations, the fact that the US is by far Canada's main trading partner has serious consequences here. Dollar parity means that fewer American tourists are traveling north. And while visitors from China, Australia and the UK are rising, they can't fill the massive deficit from what has always been the region's biggest tourist market.

» Estimated number of grizzly bears in BC: 13,000

» Estimated number of wolves in Alberta: 4000

» Estimated number of caribou in the Yukon: 150,000

Newspapers

Vancouver Sun The west coast's leading daily broadsheet; entertainment pull-out on Thursdays.

Georgia Straight Vancouver's free alternative weekly.

Calgary Herald Alberta's main newspaper, along with its *Edmonton Journal* sister.

Top Blogs

The Tye (www.thetyee.com) Alternative news source.

Miss 604 (www.miss604.com) Vancouver's leading blog, with a lifestyle and local history focus.

Urban Yukon (www.urbanyukon.com) Dozens of local bloggers come together on one handy site.

Top Music

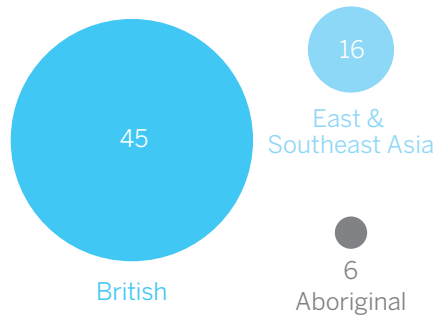
Letter from an Occupant New Pornographers

I Love Myself Today Bif Naked
In My Fingertips The Buttless Chaps

Smash the State DOA
Everything is Automatic Matthew Good Band

belief systems

(% of population)



if British Columbia were 100 people



74 would be white
 20 would be Asian
 2 would be Latino
 3 would be Aboriginal
 1 would be black

It's not all Green

The 2011 federal election encapsulated the differences between the regions of western Canada. BC's bucolic Salt Spring Island elected Canada's first Green Party MP – party leader, Elizabeth May – while the rest of the province gave one of the highest votes in the country to the left-wing New Democratic Party (NDP), helping it to become the official opposition in Ottawa for the first time. On the other side of the Rockies, Alberta gave the NDP its second-lowest proportion of the votes in Canada and gave by far the highest vote across the country to the Conservative Party. Not surprisingly, Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper was hanging out in Calgary on election day.

Meanwhile in the Yukon

Although BC and the Yukon share a border, they share little else. The history of the Yukon has always been more closely linked to that of neighboring Alaska. The Yukon remains in many ways as it was 200 years ago: a forbidding wilderness bursting into life during a brief summer. Its politics lean towards the conservative, an outgrowth of the area's popular image of self-reliance. But while the Yukon (which changed its only MP from Liberal to Conservative in the 2011 election) has for years kept itself quietly under the radar, things may soon change dramatically.

Few doubt that enormous energy and mineral riches lie under the Yukon. The territory's remoteness currently limits efforts to explore further, but that will eventually change. Will the region adopt Alberta's oil sands approach or struggle with environmental considerations as BC has?

Adbusters magazine, published in Vancouver, promotes an anti-corporate, anti-consumerism lifestyle even as it uses a slick design to do so. It's one of North America's most popular alternative magazines and has legions of starry-eyed students lining up to become interns.

Fun Facts

- » Canadians eat three times as many doughnuts as people in the US.
- » Duncan BC is home to the world's largest hockey stick.
- » Drumheller in Alberta houses the world's largest dinosaur (model).

Dos & Dont's

- » Smoking is banned in most of the region's public places.
- » French is rarely spoken in this region, even though this is officially a bilingual country.
- » Don't mistake Canadians for Americans: they won't be amused.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'