









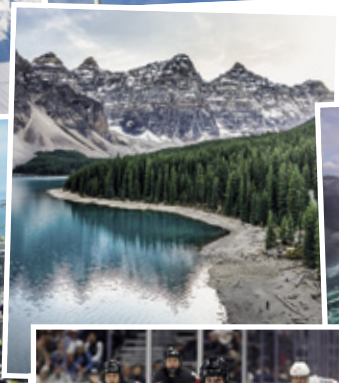



















What basic facts do you know about Canada?

What do you know about the people of Canada and the languages they speak?

What are some of Canada's geographical features?

What can you tell me about Canadian wildlife?

What can you tell me about some major Canadian cities?

What other popular places in Canada do you know?

Can you name any famous Canadians?

Could you describe some sports or pastimes popular in Canada?

Would you like to visit Canada? Why?

MATURITA CARD CANADA

Overview

Canada occupies the north of the continent of North America. It is divided into ten provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island) and three territories (Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon). The most populous province is Ontario, home to almost 40% of the Canadian population. The least populous is Nunavut, with a population of under 40,000. Canada is a constitutional monarchy. The British monarch is the ceremonial head of state, but the real power is held by the government led by the prime minister. Canada has a federal (national) parliament in the capital, Ottawa, with a Senate (upper house) and House of Commons (lower house). The country's flag has a maple leaf.

History

People arrived in North America from Siberia more than 20,000 years ago, including the ancestors of today's First Nations. In the far north, Inuit migrations have probably never stopped. Vikings visited Newfoundland around 1,000 years ago. Europeans first arrived in the late 15th century, and the British and French fought for control of the valuable fur trade. The British eventually won, but part of the country, Quebec, is mainly French-speaking even now. In 1867, the country became a British dominion, meaning it was independent of the British government except in foreign affairs. Full independence was only made official with the Canada Act in 1982.

The land and its wildlife

Canada is the second-largest country in the world by area. It lies between the Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic Oceans. It shares land borders with the US to the south and northwest (Alaska). It has a 2.2km land border with Denmark on Hans Island, and in the northeast it has a maritime (sea) border with Greenland. The large Rocky Mountains are in the west. The lands closest to the US include large grassy prairies where crops are grown. A lot of the country is forest, including maple forests in the east, the source of maple syrup. In the far north, 40% of Canada is Arctic. The Mackenzie and the St Lawrence are the country's longest rivers. Canada's highest mountain is Mount Logan (5,959m), located in Yukon. Animals found in Canada include the beaver (the Canadian national animal), moose, Canada goose, black bear, grizzly bear and, in the Arctic, polar bear.

The people

Canada's population passed 40 million in 2023. Most people live within 150km of the US border. There is a large immigrant population (23%). About 6% of the population are indigenous, which includes the Inuit (the peoples of the Arctic), the First Nations and the *Métis* ("mixed"), descendants of First Nations and early European arrivals. About 20% of Canadians have Asian origins. English is the major language except in Quebec and Nunavut. French is the preferred language in Quebec, though 36% of Québécois can speak English. Nunavut is majority Inuit and mostly bilingual in Inuktut and English.

Places to visit

The most visited cities are Ottawa, the capital of Canada, which is in Ontario; Montreal, the largest city in the French-speaking province of Quebec and home to a famous jazz festival; and Toronto, the largest Canadian city, also in the province of Ontario. Toronto's attractions include the CN Tower, a tall communications and observation tower. Vancouver is also a popular destination and is the largest city on the west coast. Canada's national parks include Banff National Park in Alberta, which is known for its dramatic landscape and wildlife. The Niagara Falls lie on the border between Canada and the United States.

Famous Canadians

Canadian writers include Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Blind Assassin*), Michael Ondaatje (*The English Patient*) and the Nobel laureate Alice Munro, known for her short stories. The singer and poet Leonard Cohen and singer-songwriter Neil Young are among the most influential songwriters of the last 50 years. Pop singers Nelly Furtado, Celine Dion, The Weeknd and Justin Bieber are all Canadian. Prominent actors include "the Ryans" (Gosling and Reynolds), Dan Aykroyd (*Ghostbusters, The Blues Brothers*) and Elliot Page (*Juno*, *The Umbrella Academy*). Many famous hockey players come from Canada, such as Wayne Gretzky.

Sports and pastimes

Canada is a great sporting nation. Popular sports include ice hockey, Canadian football (similar to American football), basketball, lacrosse and curling. There are several major ski resorts. Countryside pursuits such as hunting, hiking, kayaking and rafting are also popular, especially in national parks.