


Canada is a country in North America. Its ten provinces and three territories extend from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and northward into the Arctic Ocean, making it the world's second-largest country by total area, with the world's longest coastline. Its border with the United States is the world's longest international land border. The country is characterized by a wide range of both meteorologic and geological regions. It is a sparsely inhabited country of 40 million people, the vast majority residing south of the 55th parallel in urban areas. Canada's capital is Ottawa and its three largest metropolitan areas are Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.


Indigenous peoples have continuously inhabited what is now Canada for thousands of years. Beginning in the 16th century, British and French expeditions explored and later settled along the Atlantic coast. As a consequence of various armed conflicts, France ceded nearly all of its colonies in North America in 1763. In 1867, with the union of three British North American colonies through Confederation, Canada was formed as a federal dominion of four provinces. This began an accretion of provinces and territories and a process of increasing autonomy from the United Kingdom, highlighted by the *Statute of Westminster, 1931*, and culminating in the *Canada Act 1982*, which severed the vestiges of legal dependence on the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Canada is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy in the Westminster tradition. The country's head of government is the prime minister, who holds office by virtue of their ability to command the confidence of the elected House of Commons and is "called upon" by the governor general, representing the monarch of Canada, the head of state. The country is a Commonwealth realm and is officially bilingual (English and French) in the federal jurisdiction. It is very highly ranked in international measurements of government transparency, quality of life, economic competitiveness, innovation, education and gender equality. It is one of

Canada



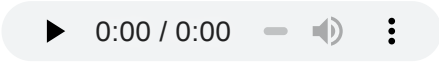
Flag



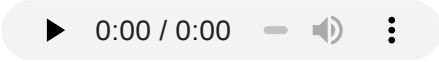
Coat of arms


Motto: *A mari usque ad mare* (Latin)
"From Sea to Sea"

Anthem: "O Canada"



Royal anthem: "God Save the King"^[1]





Capital	<u>Ottawa</u> 45°24'N 75°40'W
Largest city	<u>Toronto</u>
Official languages	<u>English</u> · <u>French</u>
Demonym(s)	<u>Canadian</u>
Government	<u>Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Monarch</u>• <u>Governor General</u>• <u>Prime Minister</u>	<u>Charles III</u> <u>Mary Simon</u> <u>Justin Trudeau</u>

the world's most ethnically diverse and multicultural nations, the product of large-scale immigration. Canada's long and complex relationship with the United States has had a significant impact on its history, economy, and culture.

A developed country, Canada has a high nominal per capita income globally and its advanced economy ranks among the largest in the world, relying chiefly upon its abundant natural resources and well-developed international trade networks. Canada is recognized as a middle power for its role in international affairs, with a tendency to pursue multilateral and international solutions. Canada's peacekeeping role during the 20th century has had a significant influence on its global image. Canada is part of multiple international organizations and forums.

Etymology

While a variety of theories have been postulated for the etymological origins of *Canada*, the name is now accepted as coming from the St. Lawrence Iroquoian word *kanata*, meaning "village" or "settlement".^[8] In 1535, Indigenous inhabitants of the present-day Quebec City region used the word to direct French explorer Jacques Cartier to the village of Stadacona.^[9] Cartier later used the word *Canada* to refer not only to that particular village but to the entire area subject to Donnacona (the chief at Stadacona);^[9] by 1545, European books and maps had begun referring to this small region along the Saint Lawrence River as *Canada*.^[9]

From the 16th to the early 18th century, "Canada" referred to the part of New France that lay along the Saint Lawrence River.^[10] In 1791, the area became two British colonies called Upper Canada and Lower Canada. These two colonies were collectively named the Canadas until their union as the British Province of Canada in 1841.^[11]

Upon Confederation in 1867, *Canada* was adopted as the legal name for the new country at the London Conference and the word dominion was conferred as the country's title.^[12] By the 1950s, the term *Dominion of Canada* was no longer used by the United Kingdom, which considered Canada a "realm of the Commonwealth".^[13]

Legislature	<u>Parliament</u>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Upper house</u><u>Lower house</u></div>	<div><u>Senate</u> <u>House of Commons</u></div>
Independence from the <u>United Kingdom</u>	
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Confederation</u><u>Statute of Westminster, 1931</u><u>Patriation</u></div>	<div>July 1, 1867 December 11, 1931 April 17, 1982</div>
Area	
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Total areaWater (%)Total land area</div>	<div>9,984,670 km² (3,855,100 sq mi) (2nd) 11.76 (2015)^[2] 9,093,507 km² (3,511,023 sq mi)</div>
Population	
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">2024 Q1 estimate2021 censusDensity</div>	<div>▲ 40,769,890^[3] (36th) ▲ 36,991,981^[4] 4.2/km² (10.9/sq mi) (236th)</div>
GDP (PPP)	2023 estimate
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">TotalPer capita</div>	<div>▲ \$2.379 trillion^[5] (16th) ▲ \$59,813^[5] (28th)</div>
GDP (nominal)	2023 estimate
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">TotalPer capita</div>	<div>▼ \$2.118 trillion^[5] (10th) ▼ \$53,247^[5] (18th)</div>
Gini (2018)	▼ 30.3 ^[6] medium
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.935 ^[7] very high (18th)
Currency	<u>Canadian dollar</u> (\$) (CAD)
Time zone	<u>UTC−3.5</u> to −8
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Summer (DST)</div>	<u>UTC−2.5</u> to −7
Calling code	+1
Internet TLD	.ca

The Canada Act 1982, which brought the Constitution of Canada fully under Canadian control, referred only to *Canada*. Later that year, the name of the national holiday was changed from Dominion Day to Canada Day.^[14] The term *Dominion* was used to distinguish the federal government from the provinces, though after the Second World War the term *federal* had replaced *dominion*.^[15]

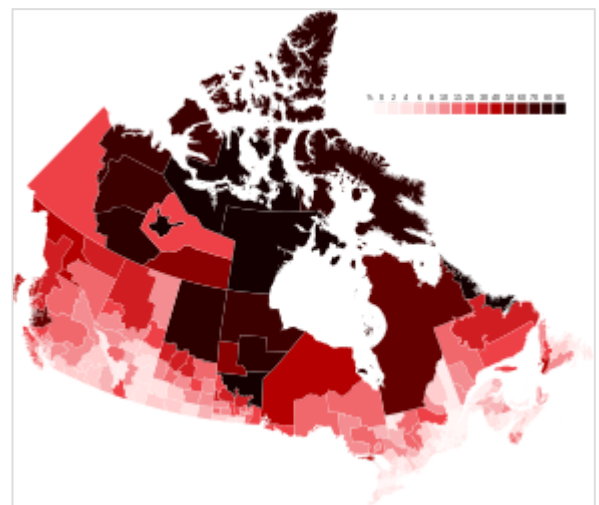
History

Indigenous peoples

The first inhabitants of North America are generally hypothesized to have migrated from Siberia by way of the Bering land bridge and arrived at least 14,000 years ago.^{[16][17]} The Paleo-Indian archeological sites at Old Crow Flats and Bluefish Caves are two of the oldest sites of human habitation in Canada.^[18] The characteristics of Indigenous societies included permanent settlements, agriculture, complex societal hierarchies, and trading networks.^{[19][20]} Some of these cultures had collapsed by the time European explorers arrived in the late 15th and early 16th centuries and have only been discovered through archeological investigations.^[21] Indigenous peoples in present-day Canada include the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis,^[22] the last being of mixed descent who originated in the mid-17th century when First Nations people married European settlers and subsequently developed their own identity.^[22]

The Indigenous population at the time of the first European settlements is estimated to have been between 200,000^[24] and two million,^[25] with a figure of 500,000 accepted by Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.^[26] As a consequence of European colonization, the Indigenous population declined by forty to eighty percent and several First Nations, such as the Beothuk, disappeared.^[27] The decline is attributed to several causes, including the transfer of European diseases, such as influenza, measles, and smallpox, to which they had no natural immunity,^{[24][28]} conflicts over the fur trade, conflicts with the colonial authorities and settlers, and the loss of Indigenous lands to settlers and the subsequent collapse of several nations' self-sufficiency.^{[29][30]}

Although not without conflict, European Canadians' early interactions with First Nations and Inuit populations were relatively peaceful.^[31] First Nations and Métis peoples played a critical part in the development of European colonies in Canada, particularly for their role in assisting European coureurs des bois and voyageurs in their explorations of the continent during the North American fur trade.^[32] These early European interactions with First Nations would change from friendship and peace treaties to the dispossession of Indigenous lands through treaties.^{[33][34]} From the late 18th century, European Canadians forced Indigenous peoples to assimilate into a western Canadian society.^[35] These attempts reached a climax in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with forced integration through state-funded boarding schools,^[36] health-care segregation,^[37] and displacement.^[38] A period of redress began with the formation



A map of Canada showing the percent of self-reported indigenous identity (First Nations, Inuit, Métis) by census division, according to the 2021 Canadian census.^[23]

of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by the Government of Canada in 2008.^[39] This included recognition of past colonial injustices and settlement agreements and betterment of racial discrimination issues, such as addressing the plight of missing and murdered Indigenous women.^{[39][40]}

European colonization

It is believed that the first documented European to explore the east coast of Canada was Norse explorer Leif Erikson.^{[42][43]} In approximately 1000 AD, the Norse built a small short-lived encampment that was occupied sporadically for perhaps 20 years at L'Anse aux Meadows on the northern tip of Newfoundland.^[44] No further European exploration occurred until 1497, when seafarer John Cabot explored and claimed Canada's Atlantic coast in the name of Henry VII of England.^[45] In 1534, French explorer Jacques Cartier explored the Gulf of Saint Lawrence where, on July 24, he planted a 10-metre (33 ft) cross bearing the words, "long live the King of France", and took possession of the territory New France in the name of King Francis I.^[46] The early 16th century saw European mariners with navigational techniques pioneered by the Basque and Portuguese establish seasonal whaling and fishing early settlements during the Age of Discovery appear to harsh climate, problems with navigating trade routes and



Map of territorial claims in North America by 1750. Possessions of British America (pink), New France (blue), and New Spain (orange); California, Pacific Northwest, and Great Basin not indicated.^[41]

In 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, by the royal prerogative of Queen Elizabeth I, founded St John's, Newfoundland, as the first North American English seasonal camp.^[50] In 1600, the French established their first seasonal trading post at Tadoussac along the Saint Lawrence.^[44] French explorer Samuel de Champlain arrived in 1603 and established the first permanent year-round European settlements at Port Royal (in 1605) and Quebec City (in 1608).^[51] Among the colonists of New France, Canadiens extensively settled the Saint Lawrence River valley and Acadians settled the present-day Maritimes, while fur traders and Catholic missionaries explored the Great Lakes, Hudson Bay, and the Mississippi watershed to Louisiana.^[52] The Beaver Wars broke out in the mid-17th century over control of the North American fur trade.^[53]

The English established additional settlements in Newfoundland in 1610 along with settlements in the Thirteen Colonies to the south.^{[54][55]} A series of four wars erupted in colonial North America between 1689 and 1763; the later wars of the period constituted the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War.^[56] Mainland Nova Scotia came under British rule with the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht and Canada and most of New France came under British rule in 1763 after the Seven Years' War.^[57]

British North America

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 established First Nation treaty rights, created the Province of Quebec out of New France, and annexed Cape Breton Island to Nova Scotia.^[14] St John's Island (now Prince Edward Island) became a separate colony in 1769.^[59] To avert conflict in Quebec, the British Parliament passed the

Quebec Act 1774, expanding Quebec's territory to the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley.^[60] More importantly, the Quebec Act afforded Quebec special autonomy and rights of self-administration at a time when the Thirteen Colonies were increasingly agitating against British rule.^[61] It re-established the French language, Catholic faith, and French civil law there, staving off the growth of an independence movement in contrast to the Thirteen Colonies.^[62] The Proclamation and the Quebec Act in turn angered many residents of the Thirteen Colonies, further fuelling anti-British sentiment in the years prior to the American Revolution.^[14]



Benjamin West's *The Death of General Wolfe* (1771) dramatizes James Wolfe's death during the Battle of the Plains of Abraham at Quebec City.^[58]

After the successful American War of Independence, the 1783 Treaty of Paris recognized the independence of the newly formed United States and set the terms of peace, ceding British North American territories south of the Great Lakes and east of the Mississippi River to the new country.^[63] The American war of independence also caused a large out-migration of Loyalists, the settlers who had fought against American independence. Many moved to Canada, particularly Atlantic Canada, where their arrival changed the demographic distribution of the existing territories. New Brunswick was in turn split from Nova Scotia as part of a reorganization of Loyalist settlements in the Maritimes, which led to the incorporation of Saint John, New Brunswick, as Canada's first city.^[64] To accommodate the influx of English-speaking Loyalists in Central Canada, the Constitutional Act of 1791 divided the province of Canada into French-speaking Lower Canada (later Quebec) and English-speaking Upper Canada (later Ontario), granting each its own elected legislative assembly.^[65]

The Canadas were the main front in the War of 1812 between the United States and the United Kingdom. Peace came in 1815; no boundaries were changed.^[67] Immigration resumed at a higher level, with over 960,000 arrivals from Britain between 1815 and 1850.^[68] New arrivals included refugees escaping the Great Irish Famine as well as Gaelic-speaking Scots displaced by the Highland Clearances.^[69] Infectious diseases killed between 25 and 33 percent of Europeans who immigrated to Canada before 1891.^[24]



War of 1812 heroine Laura Secord warning British commander James FitzGibbon of an impending American attack at Beaver Dams^[66]

The desire for responsible government resulted in the abortive Rebellions of 1837.^[70] The Durham Report subsequently recommended responsible government and the assimilation of French Canadians into English culture.^[14] The Act of Union 1840 merged the Canadas into a united Province of Canada and responsible government was established for all provinces of British North America east of Lake Superior by 1855.^[71] The signing of the Oregon Treaty by Britain and the United States in 1846 ended the Oregon boundary dispute, extending the border westward along the 49th parallel. This paved the way for British colonies on Vancouver Island (1849) and in British Columbia (1858).^[72] The Anglo-Russian Treaty of

Saint Petersburg (1825) established the border along the Pacific coast, but, even after the US Alaska Purchase of 1867, disputes continued about the exact demarcation of the Alaska–Yukon and Alaska–BC border.^[73]

Confederation and expansion

Following three constitutional conferences, the British North America Act, 1867 officially proclaimed Canadian Confederation on July 1, 1867, initially with four provinces: Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.^{[75][76]} Canada assumed control of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory to form the Northwest Territories, where the Métis' grievances ignited the Red River Rebellion and the creation of the province of Manitoba in July 1870.^[77] British Columbia and Vancouver Island (which had been united in 1866) joined the confederation in 1871 on the promise of a transcontinental railway extending to Victoria in the province within 10 years,^[78] while Prince Edward Island joined in 1873.^[79] In 1898, during the Klondike Gold Rush in the Northwest Territories, Parliament created the Yukon Territory. Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces in 1905.^[79] Between 1871 and 1896, almost one quarter of the Canadian population emigrated south to the US.^[80]



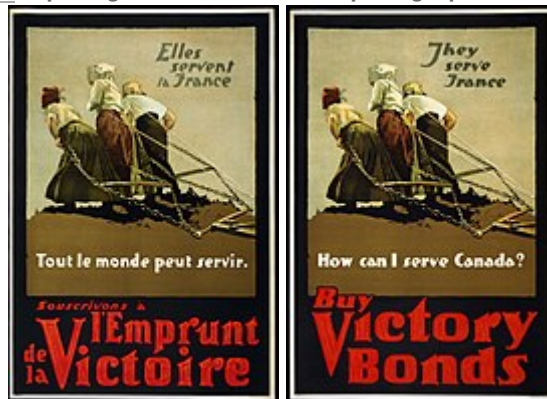
Animated map showing the growth and change of Canada's provinces and territories since Confederation in 1867^[74]

To open the West and encourage European immigration, the Government of Canada sponsored the construction of three transcontinental railways (including the Canadian Pacific Railway), passed the Dominion Lands Act to regulate settlement and established the North-West Mounted Police to assert authority over the territory.^{[81][82]} This period of westward expansion and nation building resulted in the displacement of many Indigenous peoples of the Canadian Prairies to "Indian reserves",^[83] clearing the way for ethnic European block settlements.^[84] This caused the collapse of the Plains Bison in western Canada and the introduction of European cattle farms and wheat fields dominating the land.^[85] The Indigenous peoples saw widespread famine and disease due to the loss of the bison and their traditional hunting lands.^[86] The federal government did provide emergency relief, on condition of the Indigenous peoples moving to the reserves.^[87] During this time, Canada introduced the Indian Act extending its control over the First Nations to education, government and legal rights.^[88]

Early 20th century

Because Britain still maintained control of Canada's foreign affairs under the British North America Act, 1867, its declaration of war in 1914 automatically brought Canada into the First World War.^[89] Volunteers sent to the Western Front later became part of the Canadian Corps, which played a substantial role in the Battle of Vimy Ridge and other major engagements of the war.^[90] Out of approximately 625,000 Canadians who served in the First World War, some 60,000 were killed and another 172,000 were wounded.^[91] The Conscription Crisis of 1917 erupted when the Unionist Cabinet's proposal to augment the military's dwindling number of active members with conscription was met with vehement objections from French-speaking Quebecers.^[92] The Military Service Act brought in compulsory military service,

1918 Canadian War bond posters depicting three French women pulling a plow that had been constructed for horses



French version of the poster roughly translates as "They serve France— Everyone can serve; Buy Victory Bonds".

The same poster in English, with subtle differences in text. "They serve France— How can I serve Canada? Buy Victory Bonds".

though it, coupled with disputes over French language schools outside Quebec, deeply alienated Francophone Canadians and temporarily split the Liberal Party.^[92] In 1919, Canada joined the League of Nations independently of Britain,^[90] and the Statute of Westminster, 1931, affirmed Canada's independence.^[93]

The Great Depression in Canada during the early 1930s saw an economic downturn, leading to hardship across the country.^[94] In response to the downturn, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in Saskatchewan introduced many elements of a welfare state (as pioneered by Tommy Douglas) in the 1940s and 1950s.^[95] On the advice of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, war with Germany was declared effective September 10, 1939, by King George VI, seven days after the United Kingdom. The delay underscored Canada's independence.^[90]

The first Canadian Army units arrived in Britain in December 1939. In all, over a million Canadians served in the armed forces during the Second World War and approximately 42,000 were killed and another 55,000 were wounded.^[96] Canadian troops played important roles in many key battles of the war, including the failed 1942 Dieppe Raid, the Allied invasion of Italy, the Normandy landings, the Battle of Normandy, and the Battle of the Scheldt in 1944.^[90] Canada provided asylum for the Dutch monarchy while that country was occupied and is credited by the Netherlands for major contributions to its liberation from Nazi Germany.^[97]

The Canadian economy boomed during the war as its industries manufactured military materiel for Canada, Britain, China, and the Soviet Union.^[90] Despite another Conscription Crisis in Quebec in 1944, Canada finished the war with a large army and strong economy.^[98]

Contemporary era

The financial crisis of the Great Depression led the Dominion of Newfoundland to relinquish responsible government in 1934 and become a Crown colony ruled by a British governor.^[99] After two referendums, Newfoundlanders voted to join Canada in 1949 as a province.^[100]

Canada's post-war economic growth, combined with the policies of successive Liberal governments, led to the emergence of a new Canadian identity, marked by the adoption of the maple leaf flag in 1965,^[101] the implementation of official bilingualism (English and French) in 1969,^[102] and the institution of official multiculturalism in 1971.^[103] Socially democratic programs were also instituted, such as Medicare, the Canada Pension Plan, and Canada Student Loans; though, provincial governments, particularly Quebec and Alberta, opposed many of these as incursions into their jurisdictions.^[104]

Finally, another series of constitutional conferences resulted in the Canada Act 1982, the patriation of Canada's constitution from the United Kingdom, concurrent with the creation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.^{[106][107][108]} Canada had established complete sovereignty as an independent country under its own monarchy.^{[109][110]} In 1999, Nunavut became Canada's third territory after a series of negotiations with the federal government.^[111]



A copy of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms^[105]

At the same time, Quebec underwent profound social and economic changes through the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, giving birth to a secular nationalist movement.^[112] The radical Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) ignited the October Crisis with a series of bombings and kidnappings in 1970,^[113] and the sovereigntist Parti Québécois was elected in 1976, organizing an unsuccessful referendum on sovereignty-association in 1980. Attempts to accommodate Quebec nationalism constitutionally through the Meech Lake Accord failed in 1990.^[114] This led to the formation of the Bloc Québécois in Quebec and the invigoration of the Reform Party of Canada in the West.^{[115][116]} A second referendum followed in 1995, in which sovereignty was rejected by a slimmer margin of 50.6 to 49.4 percent.^[117] In 1997, the Supreme Court ruled unilateral secession by a province would be unconstitutional, and the Clarity Act was passed by Parliament, outlining the terms of a negotiated departure from Confederation.^[114]

In addition to the issues of Quebec sovereignty, a number of crises shook Canadian society in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These included the explosion of Air India Flight 182 in 1985, the largest mass murder in Canadian history;^[118] the École Polytechnique massacre in 1989, a university shooting targeting female students;^[119] and the Oka Crisis of 1990,^[120] the first of a number of violent confrontations between provincial governments and Indigenous groups.^[121] Canada also joined the Gulf War in 1990 as part of a United States–led coalition force and was active in several peacekeeping missions in the 1990s, including the UNPROFOR mission in the former Yugoslavia.^[122] Canada sent troops to Afghanistan in 2001 but declined to join the United States–led invasion of Iraq in 2003.^[123]

In 2011, Canadian forces participated in the NATO-led intervention into the Libyan Civil War^[124] and also became involved in battling the Islamic State insurgency in Iraq in the mid-2010s.^[125] The country celebrated its sesquicentennial in 2017, three years before the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada began on January 27, 2020, with widespread social and economic disruption.^[126] In 2021, the possible graves of hundreds of Indigenous people were discovered near the former sites of Canadian Indian residential

schools.^[127] Administered by various Christian churches and funded by the Canadian government from 1828 to 1997, these boarding schools attempted to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture.^[36]

Geography

By total area (including its waters), Canada is the second-largest country in the world, after Russia.^[128] By land area alone, Canada ranks fourth, due to having the world's largest area of fresh water lakes.^[129] Stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the east, along the Arctic Ocean to the north, and to the Pacific Ocean in the west, the country encompasses 9,984,670 km² (3,855,100 sq mi) of territory.^[130] Canada also has vast maritime terrain, with the world's longest coastline of 243,042 kilometres (151,019 mi).^{[131][132]} In addition to sharing the world's largest land border with the United States—spanning 8,891 km (5,525 mi)^[a]—Canada shares a land border with Greenland (and hence the Kingdom of Denmark) to the northeast, on Hans Island,^[133] and a maritime boundary with France's overseas collectivity of Saint Pierre and Miquelon to the southeast.^[134] Canada is also home to the world's northernmost settlement, Canadian Forces Station Alert, on the northern tip of Ellesmere Island—latitude 82.5°N—which lies 817 kilometres (508 mi) from the North Pole.^[135]



A topographic map of Canada, in polar projection (for 90° W), showing elevations shaded from green to brown (higher)

Canada can be divided into seven physiographic regions: the Canadian Shield, the interior plains, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Appalachian region, the Western Cordillera, Hudson Bay Lowlands, and the Arctic Archipelago.^[136] Boreal forests prevail throughout the country, ice is prominent in northern Arctic regions and through the Rocky Mountains, and the relatively flat Canadian Prairies in the southwest facilitate productive agriculture.^[130] The Great Lakes feed the St. Lawrence River (in the southeast) where the lowlands host much of Canada's economic output.^[130] Canada has over 2,000,000 lakes—563 of which are larger than 100 km² (39 sq mi)—containing much of the world's fresh water.^{[137][138]} There are also fresh-water glaciers in the Canadian Rockies, the Coast Mountains, and the Arctic Cordillera.^[139] Canada is geologically active, having many earthquakes and potentially active volcanoes, notably Mount Meager massif, Mount Garibaldi, Mount Cayley, and the Mount Edziza volcanic complex.^[140]

Climate

Average winter and summer high temperatures across Canada vary from region to region. Winters can be harsh in many parts of the country, particularly in the interior and Prairie provinces, which experience a continental climate, where daily average temperatures are near −15 °C (5 °F), but can drop below −40 °C (−40 °F) with severe wind chills.^[141] In non-coastal regions, snow can cover the ground for almost six months of the year, while in parts of the north snow can persist year-round. Coastal British Columbia has a temperate climate, with a mild and rainy winter. On the east and west coasts, average high temperatures are

with many glaciers and ice fields, dense coniferous forest, and alpine landscapes.^[158] Canada's oldest provincial park, Algonquin Provincial Park, established in 1893, covers an area of 7,653.45 square kilometres (2,955.01 sq mi). It is dominated by old-growth forest with over 2,400 lakes and 1,200 kilometres of streams and rivers.^[159] Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area is the world's largest freshwater protected area, spanning roughly 10,000 square kilometres (3,900 sq mi) of lakebed, its overlaying freshwater, and associated shoreline on 60 square kilometres (23 sq mi) of islands and mainland.^[160] Canada's largest national wildlife region is the Scott Islands Marine National Wildlife Area, which spans 11,570.65 square kilometres (4,467.45 sq mi)^[161] and protects critical breeding and nesting habitat for over 40 percent of British Columbia's seabirds.^[162] Canada's 18 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves cover a total area of 235,000 square kilometres (91,000 sq mi).^[163]

Government and politics

Canada is described as a "full democracy",^[164] with a tradition of liberalism,^[165] and an egalitarian,^[166] moderate political ideology.^[167] An emphasis on social justice has been a distinguishing element of Canada's political culture.^{[168][169]} Peace, order, and good government, alongside an Implied Bill of Rights, are founding principles of the Canadian government.^{[170][171]}

At the federal level, Canada has been dominated by two relatively centrist parties practising "brokerage politics":^[b] the centre-left leaning Liberal Party of Canada^{[178][179]} and the centre-right leaning Conservative Party of Canada (or its predecessors).^[180] The historically predominant Liberals position themselves at the centre of the political scale.^[180] Five parties had representatives elected to the Parliament in the 2021 election—the Liberals, who formed a minority government; the Conservatives, who became the Official Opposition; the New Democratic Party (occupying the left^{[181][182]}); the Bloc Québécois; and the Green Party of Canada.^[183] Far-right and far-left politics have never been a prominent force in Canadian society.^{[184][185][186]}



Aerial view of Canadian Parliament Buildings and their surroundings

Canada has a parliamentary system within the context of a constitutional monarchy—the monarchy of Canada being the foundation of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.^{[187][188][189][190]} The reigning monarch is also monarch of 14 other Commonwealth countries (though, all are sovereign of one another^[191]) and each of Canada's 10 provinces. To carry out most of their federal royal duties in Canada, the monarch appoints a representative, the governor general, on the advice of the prime minister.^{[192][193]}

The monarchy is the source of sovereignty and authority in Canada.^{[190][194][195]} However, while the governor general or monarch may exercise their power without ministerial advice in certain rare crisis situations,^[194] the use of the executive powers (or royal prerogative) is otherwise always directed by the Cabinet, a committee of ministers of the Crown responsible to the elected House of Commons and chosen and headed by the prime minister,^[196] the head of government. To ensure the stability of government, the governor general will usually appoint as prime minister the individual who is the current leader of the political party that can obtain the confidence of a majority of members in the House of Commons.^[197] The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is thus one of the most powerful institutions in government, initiating most legislation for parliamentary approval and selecting for appointment by the Crown, besides the aforementioned, the governor general, lieutenant governors, senators, federal court judges, and heads of

Crown corporations and government agencies.^[194] The leader of the party with the second-most seats usually becomes the leader of the Official Opposition and is part of an adversarial parliamentary system intended to keep the government in check.^[198]

The Parliament of Canada passes all statute laws within the federal sphere. It comprises the monarch, the House of Commons, and the Senate. While Canada inherited the British concept of parliamentary supremacy, this was later, with the enactment of the Constitution Act, 1982, all but completely superseded by the American notion of the supremacy of the law.^[200]

Each of the 338 members of Parliament in the House of Commons is elected by simple plurality in an electoral district or riding. The Constitution Act, 1982, requires that no more than five years pass between elections, although the Canada Elections Act limits this to four years with a "fixed" election date in October; general elections still must be called by the governor general and can be triggered by either the advice of the prime minister or a lost confidence vote in the House.^{[201][202]} The 105 members of the Senate, whose seats are apportioned on a regional basis, serve until age 75.^[203]

Canadian federalism divides government responsibilities between the federal government and the 10 provinces. Provincial legislatures are unicameral and operate in parliamentary fashion similar to the House of Commons.^[195] Canada's three territories also have legislatures; but, these are not sovereign and have fewer constitutional responsibilities than the provinces.^[204] The territorial legislatures also differ structurally from their provincial counterparts.^[205]

The Bank of Canada is the central bank of the country.^[206] The minister of finance and minister of innovation, science, and industry use the Statistics Canada agency for financial planning and economic policy development.^[207] The Bank of Canada is the sole authority authorized to issue currency in the form of Canadian bank notes.^[208] The bank does not issue Canadian coins; they are issued by the Royal Canadian Mint.^[209]

Law

The Constitution of Canada is the supreme law of the country and consists of written text and unwritten conventions.^[210] The Constitution Act, 1867 (known as the British North America Act, 1867 prior to 1982), affirmed governance based on parliamentary precedent and divided powers between the federal and provincial governments.^[211] The Statute of Westminster, 1931, granted full autonomy, and the Constitution Act, 1982, ended all legislative ties to Britain, as well as adding a constitutional amending formula and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.^[212] The Charter guarantees basic rights and freedoms that usually cannot be over-ridden by any government; though, a notwithstanding clause allows Parliament and the provincial legislatures to override certain sections of the Charter for a period of five years.^[213]



The House of Commons in its temporary location, the West Block.^[199]

Canada's judiciary plays an important role in interpreting laws and has the power to strike down acts of Parliament that violate the constitution. The Supreme Court of Canada is the highest court, final arbiter, and has been led since December 18, 2017, by Richard Wagner, the Chief Justice of Canada.^[214] The governor general appoints the court's nine members on the advice of the prime minister and minister of justice.^[215] The federal Cabinet also appoints justices to superior courts in the provincial and territorial jurisdictions.^[216]



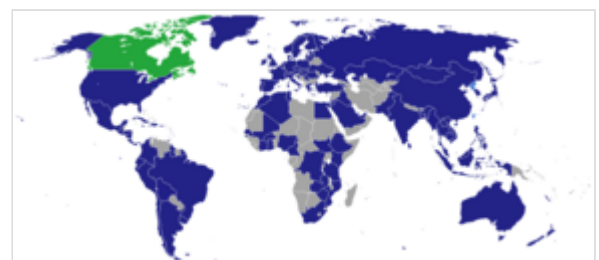
The Supreme Court of Canada in Ottawa, west of Parliament Hill

Common law prevails everywhere, except in Quebec, where civil law predominates.^[217] Criminal law is solely a federal responsibility and is uniform throughout Canada.^[218] Law enforcement, including criminal courts, is officially a provincial responsibility, conducted by provincial and municipal police forces.^[219] In most rural and some urban areas, policing responsibilities are contracted to the federal Royal Canadian Mounted Police.^[220]

Canadian Aboriginal law provides certain constitutionally recognized rights to land and traditional practices for Indigenous groups in Canada.^[221] Various treaties and case laws were established to mediate relations between Europeans and many Indigenous peoples.^[222] Most notably, a series of 11 treaties, known as the Numbered Treaties, were signed between the Indigenous peoples and the reigning monarch of Canada between 1871 and 1921.^[223] These treaties are agreements between the Canadian Crown-in-Council, with the duty to consult and accommodate.^[224] The role of Aboriginal law and the rights they support were reaffirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.^[222] These rights may include provision of services, such as healthcare through the Indian Health Transfer Policy, and exemption from taxation.^[225]

Foreign relations and military

Canada is recognized as a middle power for its role in global affairs with a tendency to pursue multilateral and international solutions.^{[227][228][229]} Canada's foreign policy based on international peacekeeping and security is carried out through coalitions, international organizations, and the work of numerous federal institutions.^{[230][231]} The strategy of the Canadian government's foreign aid policy reflects an emphasis to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, while also providing assistance in response to foreign humanitarian crises.^[232] The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) is tasked with gathering and analyzing intelligence to prevent threats such as terrorism, espionage, and foreign interference,^[233] while the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) is focused on cyber security and protecting Canada's digital infrastructure.^[233]



Diplomatic missions of Canada^[226]

- Countries that host a Canadian Embassy or High Commission
- Interests section and other representations
- Countries that do not host Canadian diplomatic missions
- Canada

Canada and the United States have a long, complex, and intertwined relationship;^{[234][235]} they are close allies, co-operating regularly on military campaigns and humanitarian efforts.^{[236][237]} Canada also maintains historic and traditional ties to the United Kingdom and to France,^[238] along with both countries'

former colonies through its membership in the Commonwealth of Nations and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.^[239] Canada is noted for having a positive relationship with the Netherlands, owing, in part, to its contribution to the Dutch liberation during the Second World War.^[97] Canada has diplomatic and consular offices in over 270 locations in approximately 180 foreign countries.^[226]

Canada's peacekeeping role during the 20th century has played a major role in its positive global image.^{[240][241]} The Suez Crisis of 1956, saw future prime minister Lester B. Pearson eased tensions by proposing the inception of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force, for which he was awarded the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize.^[242] Canada has served in over 50 peacekeeping missions providing the greatest amount of peacekeepers during the Cold War.^[243] Since the 21st century, Canadian direct participation in UN peacekeeping efforts has greatly declined.^[244] The large decrease was a result of Canada directing its participation to UN-sanctioned military operations through NATO, rather than directly through the UN.^[245] Canada has also faced controversy over its involvement in some foreign countries, notably the 1993 Somalia affair.^[246]

As of 2024, Canada's military had over 3000 personnel deployed overseas in multiple operations.^[248] The unified Canadian Forces (CF) comprise the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, and Royal Canadian Air Force. The nation employs a professional, volunteer force of approximately 68,000 active personnel and 27,000 reserve personnel—increasing to 71,500 and 30,000 respectively under "Strong, Secure, Engaged"^[249]—with a sub-component of approximately 5,000 Canadian Rangers.^{[250][c]} In 2022, Canada's military expenditure totalled approximately \$26.9 billion, or around 1.2 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) – placing it 14th for military expenditure by country.^[252]



A Canadian McDonnell Douglas CF-18 Hornet in "special markings" used by the 2014 CF-18 Demonstration Team.^[247]

Canada is a member of various international organizations and forums.^[253] Canada was a founding member of the United Nations in 1945 and formed the North American Aerospace Defense Command together with the United States in 1958.^[254] The country has membership in the World Trade Organization, the Five Eyes, the G7 and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).^[227] The country joined the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1990,^[255] and seeks to expand its ties to Pacific Rim economies through membership in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC).^[256] Canada ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and seven principal UN human rights conventions and covenants since then.^[257]

Provinces and territories

Canada is a federation composed of 10 federated states, called provinces, and three federal territories. In turn, these may be grouped into four main regions: Western Canada, Central Canada, Atlantic Canada, and Northern Canada (*Eastern Canada* refers to Central Canada and Atlantic Canada together).^[259] Provinces and territories have responsibility for social programs such as healthcare, education, and welfare,^[260] as well as administration of justice (but not criminal law). Together, the provinces collect more revenue than the federal government, a rarity among other federations in the world. Using its spending powers, the federal government can initiate national policies in provincial areas such as health and child care; the

provinces can opt out of these cost-share programs but rarely do so in practice. Equalization payments are made by the federal government to ensure reasonably uniform standards of services and taxation are kept between the richer and poorer provinces.^[261]

The major difference between a Canadian province and a territory is that provinces receive their sovereignty from the Crown^[262] and power and authority from the *Constitution Act, 1867*, whereas territorial governments have powers delegated to them by the Parliament of Canada^[263] and the commissioners represent the King in his federal Council,^[264] rather than the monarch directly. The powers flowing from the *Constitution Act, 1867*, are divided between the federal government and the provincial governments to exercise exclusively^[265] and any changes to that arrangement require a constitutional amendment, while changes to the roles and powers of the territories may be performed unilaterally by the Parliament of Canada.^[266]



Political map of Canada showing its 10 provinces and 3 territories^[258]

Economy

Canada has a highly developed mixed-market economy,^{[268][269]} with the world's ninth-largest economy as of 2023, and a nominal GDP of approximately US\$2.221 trillion.^[270] It is one of the world's largest trading nations, with a highly globalized economy.^[271] In 2021, Canadian trade in goods and services reached \$2.016 trillion.^[272] Canada's exports totalled over \$637 billion, while its imported goods were worth over \$631 billion, of which approximately \$391 billion originated from the United States.^[272] In 2018, Canada had a trade deficit in goods of \$22 billion and a trade deficit in services of \$25 billion.^[272] The Toronto Stock Exchange is the ninth-largest stock exchange in the world by market capitalization, listing over 1,500 companies with a combined market capitalization of over US\$2 trillion.^[273]



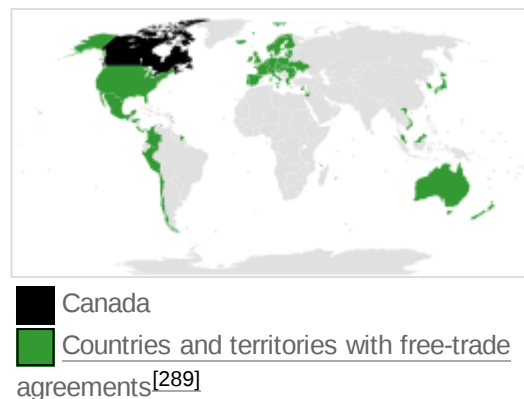
The Toronto financial district is the second-largest financial centre in North America, the seventh-largest globally in employment and the heart of Canada's finance industry.^[267]

Canada has a strong cooperative banking sector, with the world's highest per-capita membership in credit unions.^[274] It ranks low in the Corruption Perceptions Index (14th in 2023)^[275] and "is widely regarded as among the least corrupt countries of the world".^[276] It ranks high in the Global Competitiveness Report (14th in 2019)^[277] and Global Innovation Index (15th in 2023).^[278] Canada's economy ranks above most Western nations on The Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom^[279] and experiences a relatively low level of income disparity.^[280] The country's average household disposable income per capita is "well above" the OECD average.^[281] Canada ranks among the lowest of the most developed countries for housing affordability^{[282][283]} and foreign direct investment.^{[284][283]}

Since the early 20th century, the growth of Canada's manufacturing, mining, and service sectors has transformed the nation from a largely rural economy to an urbanized, industrial one.^[285] Like many other developed countries, the Canadian economy is dominated by the service industry, which employs about

three-quarters of the country's workforce.^[286] Among developed countries, Canada has an unusually important primary sector, of which the forestry and petroleum industries are the most prominent components.^[287] Many towns in northern Canada, where agriculture is difficult, are sustained by nearby mines or sources of timber.^[288]

Canada's economic integration with the United States has increased significantly since the Second World War.^[290] The Automotive Products Trade Agreement of 1965 opened Canada's borders to trade in the automobile manufacturing industry.^[291] The Canada – United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) of 1988 eliminated tariffs between the two countries, while the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) expanded the free-trade zone to include Mexico in 1994 (later replaced by the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement).^[292] As of 2023, Canada is a signatory to 15 free trade agreements with 51 different countries.^[289]



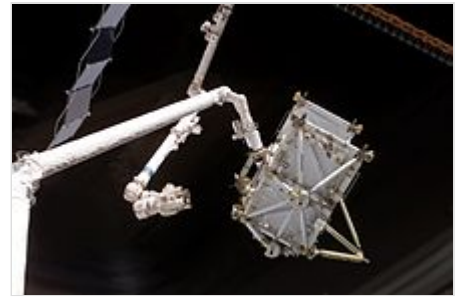
Canada is one of the few developed nations that are net exporters of energy.^{[287][293]} Atlantic Canada possess vast offshore deposits of natural gas,^[294] and Alberta hosts the fourth-largest oil reserves in the world.^[295] The vast Athabasca oil sands and other oil reserves give Canada 13 percent of global oil reserves, constituting the world's third or fourth-largest.^[296] Canada is additionally one of the world's largest suppliers of agricultural products; the Canadian Prairies region is one of the most important global producers of wheat, canola, and other grains.^[297] The country is a leading exporter of zinc, uranium, gold, nickel, platinoids, aluminum, steel, iron ore, coking coal, lead, copper, molybdenum, cobalt, and cadmium.^{[298][299]} Canada has a sizeable manufacturing sector centred in southern Ontario and Quebec, with automobiles and aeronautics representing particularly important industries.^[300] The fishing industry is also a key contributor to the economy.^[301]

Science and technology

In 2020, Canada spent approximately \$41.9 billion on domestic research and development, with supplementary estimates for 2022 at \$43.2 billion.^[302] As of 2023, the country has produced 15 Nobel laureates in physics, chemistry, and medicine.^[303] The country ranks seventh in the worldwide share of articles published in scientific journals, according to the Nature Index,^[304] and is home to the headquarters of a number of global technology firms.^[305] Canada has one of the highest levels of Internet access in the world, with over 33 million users, equivalent to around 94 percent of its total population.^[306]

Canada's developments in science and technology include the creation of the modern alkaline battery,^[308] the discovery of insulin,^[309] the development of the polio vaccine,^[310] and discoveries about the interior structure of the atomic nucleus.^[311] Other major Canadian scientific contributions include the artificial cardiac pacemaker, mapping the visual cortex,^{[312][313]} the development of the electron microscope,^{[314][315]} plate tectonics, deep learning, multi-touch technology, and the identification of the first black hole, Cygnus X-1.^[316] Canada has a long history of discovery in genetics, which include stem cells, site-directed mutagenesis, T-cell receptor, and the identification of the genes that cause Fanconi anemia, cystic fibrosis, and early-onset Alzheimer's disease, among numerous other diseases.^{[313][317]}

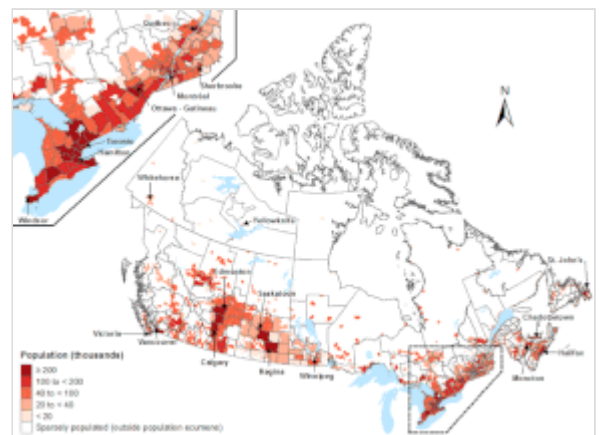
The Canadian Space Agency operates a highly active space program, conducting deep-space, planetary, and aviation research and developing rockets and satellites.^[318] Canada was the third country to design and construct a satellite after the Soviet Union and the United States, with the 1962 Alouette 1 launch.^[319] Canada is a participant in the International Space Station (ISS), and is a pioneer in space robotics, having constructed the Canadarm, Canadarm2, Canadarm3 and Dextre robotic manipulators for the ISS and NASA's Space Shuttle.^[320] Since the 1960s, Canada's aerospace industry has designed and built numerous marques of satellite, including Radarsat-1 and 2, ISIS, and MOST.^[321] Canada has also produced one of the world's most successful and widely used sounding rockets, the Black Brant.^[322]



The Canadian-built Space Shuttle robotic arm (left), referred to as Canadarm, transferred the P5 truss segment over to the Canadian-built space station robotic arm, referred to as Canadarm2.^[307]

Demographics

The 2021 Canadian census enumerated a total population of 36,991,981, an increase of around 5.2 percent over the 2016 figure.^[324] It is estimated that Canada's population surpassed 40,000,000 in 2023.^[325] The main drivers of population growth are immigration and, to a lesser extent, natural growth.^[326] Canada has one of the highest per-capita immigration rates in the world,^[327] driven mainly by economic policy and also family reunification.^{[328][329]} A record 405,000 immigrants were admitted to Canada in 2021.^[330] Canada leads the world in refugee resettlement; it resettled more than 28,000 in 2018.^[331] New immigrants settle mostly in major urban areas in the country, such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.^[332]



Canada population density map (2014)^[323]

Canada's population density, at 4.2 inhabitants per square kilometre (11/sq mi), is among the lowest in the world.^[324] Canada spans latitudinally from the 83rd parallel north to the 41st parallel north and approximately 95 percent of the population is found south of the 55th parallel north.^[333] About 80 percent of the population lives within 150 kilometres (93 mi) of the border with the contiguous United States.^[334] Canada is highly urbanized, with over 80 percent of the population living urban centres.^[335] The most densely populated part of the country, accounting for nearly 50 percent, is the Quebec City–Windsor Corridor in Southern Quebec and Southern Ontario along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River.^{[336][333]}

The majority of Canadians (81.1 percent) live in family households, 12.1 percent report living alone, and those living with other relatives or unrelated persons reported at 6.8 percent.^[337] Fifty-one percent of households are couples with or without children, 8.7 percent are single-parent households, 2.9 percent are multigenerational households, and 29.3 percent are single-person households.^[337]

Largest metropolitan areas in Canada
2021 Canadian census^[338]

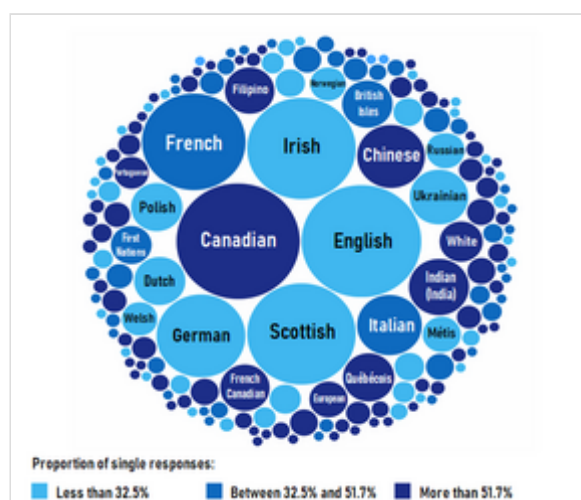
Rank	Name	Province	Pop.	Rank	Name	Province	Pop.
1	<u>Toronto</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	6,202,225	11	<u>London</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	543,551
2	<u>Montreal</u>	<u>Quebec</u>	4,291,732	12	<u>Halifax</u>	<u>Nova Scotia</u>	465,703
3	<u>Vancouver</u>	<u>British Columbia</u>	2,642,825	13	<u>St. Catharines–Niagara</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	433,604
4	<u>Ottawa–Gatineau</u>	<u>Ontario–Quebec</u>	1,488,307	14	<u>Windsor</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	422,630
5	<u>Calgary</u>	<u>Alberta</u>	1,481,806	15	<u>Oshawa</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	415,311
6	<u>Edmonton</u>	<u>Alberta</u>	1,418,118	16	<u>Victoria</u>	<u>British Columbia</u>	397,237
7	<u>Quebec City</u>	<u>Quebec</u>	839,311	17	<u>Saskatoon</u>	<u>Saskatchewan</u>	317,480
8	<u>Winnipeg</u>	<u>Manitoba</u>	834,678	18	<u>Regina</u>	<u>Saskatchewan</u>	249,217
9	<u>Hamilton</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	785,184	19	<u>Sherbrooke</u>	<u>Quebec</u>	227,398
10	<u>Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	575,847	20	<u>Kelowna</u>	<u>British Columbia</u>	222,162

Ethnicity

According to the 2021 Canadian census, over 450 "ethnic or cultural origins" were self-reported by Canadians.^[339] The major panethnic groups chosen were: European (52.5 percent), North American (22.9 percent), Asian (19.3 percent), North American Indigenous (6.1 percent), African (3.8 percent), Latin, Central and South American (2.5 percent), Caribbean (2.1 percent), Oceanian (0.3 percent), and other (6 percent).^{[339][340]} Over 60 percent of Canadians reported a single origin, and 36 percent of Canadians reported having multiple ethnic origins, thus the overall total is greater than 100 percent.^[339]

The country's ten largest self-reported specific ethnic or cultural origins in 2021 were Canadian^[d] (accounting for 15.6 percent of the population), followed by English (14.7 percent), Irish (12.1 percent), Scottish (12.1 percent), French (11.0 percent), German (8.1 percent), Chinese (4.7 percent), Italian (4.3 percent), Indian (3.7 percent), and Ukrainian (3.5 percent).^[345]

Of the 36.3 million people enumerated in 2021, approximately 25.4 million reported being "White", representing 69.8 percent of the population.^[346] The Indigenous population representing 5 percent or 1.8 million individuals, grew by 9.4 percent compared to the non-Indigenous population, which grew by 5.3 percent from 2016 to 2021.^[346] One out of every four Canadians or 26.5 percent of the population belonged to a non-White and non-Indigenous visible minority,^{[347][e]} the largest of which in 2021 were South Asian (2.6 million people; 7.1 percent), Chinese (1.7 million; 4.7 percent), and Black (1.5 million; 4.3 percent).^[349]



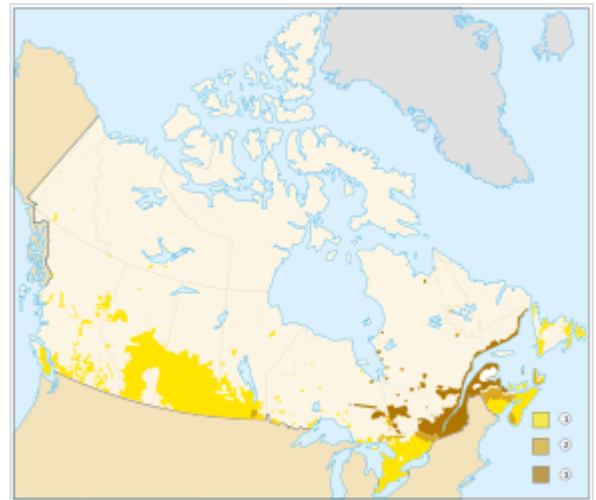
The top 168 ethnic or cultural origins self-reported by Canadians in the 2021 census^[341]

Between 2011 and 2016, the visible minority population rose by 18.4 percent.^[350] In 1961, about 300,000 people, less than two percent of Canada's population, were members of visible minority groups.^[351] The 2021 census indicated that 8.3 million people, or almost one-quarter (23.0 percent) of the population,

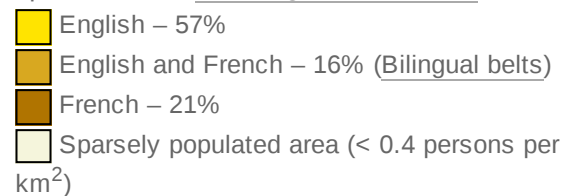
reported themselves as being or having been a landed immigrant or permanent resident in Canada—above the 1921 census previous record of 22.3 percent.^[352] In 2021, India, China, and the Philippines were the top three countries of origin for immigrants moving to Canada.^[353]

Languages

A multitude of languages are used by Canadians, with English and French (the official languages) being the mother tongues of approximately 54 percent and 19 percent of Canadians, respectively.^[337] As of the 2021 census, just over 7.8 million Canadians listed a non-official language as their mother tongue. Some of the most common non-official first languages include Mandarin (679,255 first-language speakers), Punjabi (666,585), Cantonese (553,380), Spanish (538,870), Arabic (508,410), Tagalog (461,150), Italian (319,505), German (272,865), and Tamil (237,890).^[337] Canada's federal government practises official bilingualism, which is applied by the commissioner of official languages in consonance with section 16 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the federal *Official Languages Act*. English and French have equal status in federal courts, Parliament, and in all federal institutions. Citizens have the right, where there is sufficient demand, to receive federal government services in either English or French and official-language minorities are guaranteed their own schools in all provinces and territories.^[355]



Approximately 98 percent of Canadians can speak either or both English and French.^[354]



Quebec's 1974 *Official Language Act* established French as the only official language of the province.^[356] Although more than 82 percent of French-speaking Canadians live in Quebec, there are substantial Francophone populations in New Brunswick, Alberta, and Manitoba; Ontario has the largest French-speaking population outside Quebec.^[357] New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province, has a French-speaking Acadian minority constituting 33 percent of the population.^[358] There are also clusters of Acadians in southwestern Nova Scotia, on Cape Breton Island, and in central and western Prince Edward Island.^[359]

Other provinces have no official languages as such, but French is used as a language of instruction, in courts, and for other government services, in addition to English. Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec allow for both English and French to be spoken in the provincial legislatures and laws are enacted in both languages. In Ontario, French has some legal status, but is not fully co-official.^[360] There are 11 Indigenous language groups, composed of more than 65 distinct languages and dialects.^[361] Several Indigenous languages have official status in the Northwest Territories.^[362] Inuktitut is the majority language in Nunavut and is one of three official languages in the territory.^[363]

Additionally, Canada is home to many sign languages, some of which are Indigenous.^[364] American Sign Language (ASL) is used across the country due to the prevalence of ASL in primary and secondary schools.^[365] Quebec Sign Language (LSQ) is used primarily in Quebec.^[366]

Religion

Canada is religiously diverse, encompassing a wide range of beliefs and customs.^[368] The Constitution of Canada refers to God and the monarch carries the title of *Defender of the Faith*; however, Canada has no official church and the government is officially committed to religious pluralism.^[369] Freedom of religion in Canada is a constitutionally protected right, allowing individuals to assemble and worship without limitation or interference.^[370]

Rates of religious adherence have steadily decreased since the 1970s.^[368] With Christianity in decline after having once been central and integral to Canadian culture and daily life,^[371] Canada has become a post-Christian, secular state.^{[372][373][374]} Although the majority of Canadians consider religion to be unimportant in their daily lives,^[375] they still believe in God.^[376] The practice of religion is generally considered a private matter throughout Canadian society and by the state.^[377]



Freedom of religion sculpture by Marlene Hilton Moore at the McMurtry Gardens of Justice in Toronto.^[367]

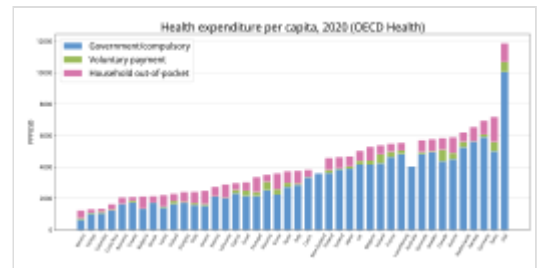
According to the 2021 census, Christianity is the largest religion in Canada, with Roman Catholics representing 29.9 percent of the population having the most adherents. Christians overall representing 53.3 percent of the population,^[f] are followed by people reporting irreligion or having no religion at 34.6 percent.^[380] Other faiths include Islam (4.9 percent), Hinduism (2.3 percent), Sikhism (2.1 percent), Buddhism (1.0 percent), Judaism (0.9 percent), and Indigenous spirituality (0.2 percent).^[381] Canada has the second-largest national Sikh population, behind India.^[382]

Health

Healthcare in Canada is delivered through the provincial and territorial systems of publicly funded health care, informally called Medicare.^{[383][384]} It is guided by the provisions of the Canada Health Act of 1984^[385] and is universal.^[386] Universal access to publicly funded health services "is often considered by Canadians as a fundamental value that ensures national healthcare insurance for everyone wherever they live in the country."^[387] Around 30 percent of Canadians' healthcare is paid for through the private sector.^[388] This mostly pays for services not covered or partially covered by Medicare, such as prescription drugs, dentistry and optometry.^[388] Approximately 65 to 75 percent of Canadians have some form of supplementary health insurance; many receive it through their employers or access secondary social service programs.^{[389][388]}

In common with many other developed countries, Canada is experiencing an increase in healthcare expenditures due to a demographic shift toward an older population, with more retirees and fewer people of working age. In 2021, the average age in Canada was 41.9 years.^[337] Life expectancy is 81.1 years.^[390] A 2016 report by the chief public health officer found that 88 percent of Canadians, one of the highest proportions of the population among G7 countries, indicated that they "had good or very good health".^[391] Eighty percent of Canadian adults self-report having at least one major risk factor for chronic disease:

smoking, physical inactivity, unhealthy eating or excessive alcohol use.^[392] Canada has one of the highest rates of adult obesity among OECD countries, contributing to approximately 2.7 million cases of diabetes.^[392] Four chronic diseases—cancer (leading cause of death), cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, and diabetes—account for 65 percent of deaths in Canada.^{[393][394]}



Health expenditure and financing by country. Total health expenditure per capita in US dollars (PPP).

In 2021, the Canadian Institute for Health Information reported that healthcare spending reached \$308 billion, or 12.7 percent of Canada's GDP for that year.^[395] In 2022, Canada's per-capita spending on health expenditures ranked 12th among health-care systems in the OECD.^[396] Canada has performed close to, or above the average on the majority of OECD health indicators since the early 2000s, ranking above the average on OECD indicators for wait-times and access to care, with average scores for quality of care and use of resources.^{[397][398]} The Commonwealth Fund's 2021 report comparing the healthcare systems of the 11 most developed countries ranked Canada second-to-last.^[399] Identified weaknesses were comparatively higher infant mortality rate, the prevalence of chronic conditions, long wait times, poor availability of after-hours care, and a lack of prescription drugs and dental coverage.^[399] An increasing problem in Canada's health system is a lack of healthcare professionals,^[400] and hospital capacity.^[401]

Education

Education in Canada is for the most part provided publicly, funded and overseen by federal, provincial, and local governments.^[402] Education is within provincial jurisdiction and a province's curriculum is overseen by its government.^{[403][404]} Education in Canada is generally divided into primary education, followed by secondary and post-secondary education. Education in both English and French is available in most places across Canada.^[405] Canada has a large number of universities, almost all of which are publicly funded.^[406] Established in 1663, Université Laval is the oldest post-secondary institution in Canada.^[407] The largest university is the University of Toronto, with over 85,000 students.^[408] Four universities are regularly ranked among the top 100 worldwide, namely University of Toronto, University of British Columbia, McGill University, and McMaster University, with a total of 18 universities ranked in the top 500 worldwide.^[409]

According to a 2022 report by the OECD, Canada is one of the most educated countries in the world;^{[411][412]} the country ranks first worldwide in the percentage of adults having tertiary education, with over 56 percent of Canadian adults having attained at least an undergraduate college or university degree.^[413] Canada spends an average of 5.3 percent of its GDP on education.^[414] The country invests heavily in tertiary education (more than US\$20,000 per student).^[415] As of 2022, 89 percent of adults aged 25 to 64 have earned the equivalent of a high-school degree, compared to an OECD average of 75 percent.^[416]

The mandatory education age ranges between 5–7 to 16–18 years,^[417] contributing to an adult literacy rate of 99 percent.^[418] Just over 60,000 children are homeschooled in the country as of 2016. The Programme for International Student Assessment indicates Canadian students perform well above the OECD average, particularly in mathematics, science, and reading,^{[419][420]} ranking the overall knowledge and skills of

Canadian 15-year-olds as the sixth-best in the world, although these scores have been declining in recent years. Canada is a well-performing OECD country in reading literacy, mathematics, and science, with the average student scoring 523.7, compared with the OECD average of 493 in 2015.^{[421][422]}

Culture

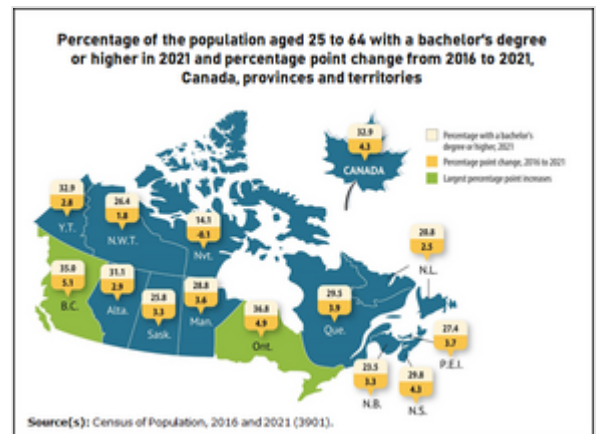
Canada's culture draws influences from its broad range of constituent nationalities and policies that promote a "just society" are constitutionally protected.^{[424][425][426]} Since the 1960s, Canada has emphasized equality and inclusiveness for all its people.^{[427][428][429]} The official state policy of multiculturalism is often cited as one of Canada's significant accomplishments^[430] and a key distinguishing element of Canadian identity.^{[431][432]} In Quebec, cultural identity is strong and there is a French Canadian culture that is distinct from English Canadian culture.^[433] As a whole, Canada is in theory a cultural mosaic of regional ethnic subcultures.^{[434][435][436]}

Canada's approach to governance emphasizing multiculturalism, which is based on selective immigration, social integration, and suppression of far-right politics, has wide public support.^[437] Government policies such as publicly funded health care, higher taxation to redistribute wealth, the outlawing of capital punishment, strong efforts to eliminate poverty, strict gun control, a social liberal attitude toward women's rights (like pregnancy termination) and LGBT rights, and legalized euthanasia and cannabis use are indicators of Canada's political and cultural values.^{[438][439][440]} Canadians also identify with the country's foreign aid policies, peacekeeping roles, the national park system, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.^{[441][442]}

Historically, Canada has been influenced by British, French, and Indigenous cultures and traditions. Through their language, art, and music, Indigenous peoples continue to influence the Canadian identity.^[443] During the 20th century, Canadians with African, Caribbean, and Asian nationalities have added to the Canadian identity and its culture.^[444]

Symbols

Themes of nature, pioneers, trappers, and traders played an important part in the early development of Canadian symbolism.^[446] Modern symbols emphasize the country's geography, cold climate, lifestyles, and the Canadianization of traditional European and Indigenous symbols.^[447] The use of the maple leaf as a Canadian symbol dates to the early 18th century. The maple leaf is depicted on Canada's current and previous flags and on the Arms of Canada.^[448] Canada's official tartan, known as the "maple leaf tartan", has four colours that reflect the colours of the maple leaf as it changes through the seasons—green in the



Canada by province and territory, showing the percentage of the population aged 25 to 64 who had a bachelor's degree or higher, and the percentage point change from 2016 to 2021^[410]



Monument to Multiculturalism by Francesco Pirelli, in Toronto^[423]

spring, gold in the early autumn, red at the first frost, and brown after falling.^[449] The Arms of Canada are closely modelled after those of the United Kingdom, with French and distinctive Canadian elements replacing or added to those derived from the British version.^[450]

Other prominent symbols include the national motto, "*A mari usque ad mare*" ("From Sea to Sea"),^[451] the sports of ice hockey and lacrosse, the beaver, Canada goose, common loon, Canadian horse, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Rockies,^[448] and, more recently, the totem pole and Inuksuk.^[452] Canadian beer, maple syrup, tuques, canoes, nanaimo bars, butter tarts, and poutine are defined as uniquely Canadian.^{[452][453]} Canadian coins feature many of these symbols: the loon on the \$1 coin, the Arms of Canada on the 50¢ piece, and the beaver on the nickel.^[454] An image of the previous monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, appears on \$20 bank notes and the obverse of all current Canadian coins.^[454]



The mother beaver on the Canadian parliament's Peace Tower.^[445] The five flowers on the shield each represent an ethnicity—Tudor rose: English; Fleur de lis: French; thistle: Scottish; shamrock: Irish; and leek: Welsh.

Literature

Canadian literature is often divided into French- and English-language literatures, which are rooted in the literary traditions of France and Britain, respectively.^[455] The earliest Canadian narratives were of travel and exploration.^[456] This progressed into three major themes that can be found within historical Canadian literature: nature, frontier life, and Canada's position within the world, all three of which tie into the garrison mentality.^[457] In recent decades, Canada's literature has been strongly influenced by immigrants from around the world.^[458] By the 1990s, Canadian literature was viewed as some of the world's best.^[459]

Numerous Canadian authors have accumulated international literary awards,^[460] including novelist, poet, and literary critic Margaret Atwood, who received two Booker Prizes;^[461] Nobel laureate Alice Munro, who has been called the best living writer of short stories in English;^[462] and Booker Prize recipient Michael Ondaatje, who wrote the novel *The English Patient*, which was adapted as a film of the same name that won the Academy Award for Best Picture.^[463] L. M. Montgomery produced a series of children's novels beginning in 1908 with *Anne of Green Gables*.^[464]

Media

Canada's media is highly autonomous, uncensored, diverse, and very regionalized.^{[465][466]} The *Broadcasting Act* declares "the system should serve to safeguard, enrich, and strengthen the cultural, political, social, and economic fabric of Canada".^[467] Canada has a well-developed media sector, but its cultural output—particularly in English films, television shows, and magazines—is often overshadowed by imports from the United States.^[468] As a result, the preservation of a distinctly Canadian culture is supported by federal government programs, laws, and institutions such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).^[469]



A Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) satellite truck, used for live television broadcasts

Canadian mass media, both print and digital, and in both official languages, is largely dominated by a "handful of corporations".^[470] The largest of these corporations is the country's national public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which also plays a significant role in producing domestic cultural content, operating its own radio and TV networks in both English and French.^[471] In addition to the CBC, some provincial governments offer their own public educational TV broadcast services as well, such as TVOntario and Télé-Québec.^[472]

Non-news media content in Canada, including film and television, is influenced both by local creators as well as by imports from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and France.^[473] In an effort to reduce the amount of foreign-made media, government interventions in television broadcasting can include both regulation of content and public financing.^[474] Canadian tax laws limit foreign competition in magazine advertising.^[475]

Visual arts

Art in Canada is marked by thousands of years of habitation by its Indigenous peoples,^[477] and, in later times, artists have combined British, French, Indigenous, and American artistic traditions, at times embracing European styles while working to promote nationalism.^[478] The nature of Canadian art reflects these diverse origins, as artists have taken their traditions and adapted these influences to reflect the reality of their lives in Canada.^[479]

The Canadian government has played a role in the development of Canadian culture through the department of Canadian Heritage, by giving grants to art galleries,^[480] as well as establishing and funding art schools and colleges across the country, and through the Canada Council for the Arts, the national public arts funder, helping artists, art galleries and periodicals, and thus contributing to the development of Canada's cultural works.^[481]



The Jack Pine by Tom Thomson.
Oil on canvas, 1916, in the
collection of the National Gallery
of Canada.^[476]

Canadian visual art has been dominated by figures, such as painter Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven.^[482] The latter were painters with a nationalistic and idealistic focus, who first exhibited their distinctive works in May 1920. Though referred to as having seven members, five artists—Lawren Harris, A. Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer, J. E. H. MacDonald, and Frederick Varley—were responsible for articulating the group's ideas. They were joined briefly by Frank Johnston and commercial artist Franklin Carmichael. A. J. Casson became part of the group in 1926.^[483] Associated with the group was another prominent Canadian artist, Emily Carr, known for her landscapes and portrayals of the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast.^[484]

Music

Canadian music reflects a variety of regional scenes.^[486] Canada has developed a vast music infrastructure that includes church halls, chamber halls, conservatories, academies, performing arts centres, record companies, radio stations, and television music video channels.^[487] Government support programs, such as the Canada Music Fund, assist a wide range of musicians and entrepreneurs who create, produce and market original and diverse Canadian music.^[488] As a result of its cultural importance, as well as

government initiatives and regulations, the Canadian music industry is one of the largest in the world,^[489] producing internationally renowned composers, musicians, and ensembles.^[490] Music broadcasting in the country is regulated by the CRTC.^[491] The Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences presents Canada's music industry awards, the Juno Awards.^[492] The Canadian Music Hall of Fame honours Canadian musicians for their lifetime achievements.^[493]

Patriotic music in Canada dates back over 200 years. The earliest work of patriotic music in Canada, "The Bold Canadian", was written in 1812.^[494] "The Maple Leaf Forever", written in 1866, was a popular patriotic song throughout English Canada and, for many years, served as an unofficial national anthem.^[495] "O Canada" also served as an unofficial national anthem for much of the 20th century and was adopted as the country's official anthem in 1980.^[496] Calixa Lavallée wrote the music, which was a setting of a patriotic poem composed by the poet and judge Sir Adolphe-Basile Routhier. The text was originally only in French before it was adapted into English in 1906.^[497]



Original publication of "O Canada" in English, 1908^[485]

Sports

The roots of organized sports in Canada date back to the 1770s,^[499] culminating in the development and popularization of the major professional games of ice hockey, lacrosse, curling, basketball, baseball, soccer, and Canadian football.^[500] Canada's official national sports are ice hockey and lacrosse.^[501] Other sports such as golf, volleyball, skiing, cycling, swimming, badminton, tennis, bowling, and the study of martial arts are all widely enjoyed at the youth and amateur levels.^[502] Great achievements in Canadian sports are recognized by Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.^[503] There are numerous other sport "halls of fame" in Canada, such as the Hockey Hall of Fame.^[503]



The Canadian men's national ice hockey team celebrates shortly after winning the gold medal final at the 2010 Winter Olympics.^[498]

Canada shares several major professional sports leagues with the United States.^[504] Canadian teams in these leagues include seven franchises in the National Hockey League, as well as three Major League Soccer teams and one team in each of Major League Baseball and the National Basketball Association. Other popular professional competitions include the Canadian Football League, National Lacrosse League, the Canadian Premier League, and the various curling tournaments sanctioned and organized by Curling Canada.^[505]

Canada has enjoyed success both at the Winter Olympics and at the Summer Olympics^[506]—though, particularly, the Winter Games as a "winter sports nation"—and has hosted several high-profile international sporting events such as the 1976 Summer Olympics,^[507] the 1988 Winter Olympics,^[508] the 2010 Winter

Olympics,^{[509][510]} and the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup.^[511] Most recently, Canada hosted the 2015 Pan American Games and 2015 Parapan American Games in Toronto.^[512] The country is scheduled to co-host the 2026 FIFA World Cup alongside Mexico and the United States.^[513]

See also



[*Canada portal*](#)



[*Countries portal*](#)

- [Index of Canada-related articles](#)
- [List of Canada-related topics by provinces and territories](#)
- [Outline of Canada](#)

Notes

- 6,416 km (3,987 mi) via the [contiguous 48 states](#) and 2,475 km (1,538 mi) via [Alaska](#).^[132]
- "Brokerage politics: A Canadian term for successful [big tent parties](#) that embody a [pluralistic catch-all approach](#) to appeal to the median Canadian voter ... adopting [centrist policies](#) and [electoral coalitions](#) to satisfy the short-term preferences of a majority of electors who are not located on the ideological fringe."^{[172][173]} "The traditional *brokerage* model of Canadian politics leaves little room for ideology."^{[174][175][176][177]}
- "The [Royal Canadian Navy](#) is composed of approximately 8,400 full-time sailors and 5,100 part-time sailors. The Army is composed of approximately 22,800 full-time soldiers, 18,700 reservists, and 5,000 [Canadian Rangers](#). The Royal Canadian Air Force is composed of approximately 13,000 Regular Force personnel and 2,400 Air Reserve personnel."^[251]
- All citizens of Canada are classified as "Canadians" as defined by [Canada's nationality laws](#). "Canadian" as an ethnic group has since 1996 been added to census questionnaires for possible ancestral origin or descent. "Canadian" was included as an example on the English questionnaire and "Canadien" as an example on the French questionnaire.^[342] "The majority of respondents to this selection are from the eastern part of the country that was first settled. Respondents generally are visibly European (Anglophones and Francophones) and no longer self-identify with their ethnic ancestral origins. This response is attributed to a multitude or generational distance from ancestral lineage."^{[343][344]}
- Indigenous peoples are not considered a visible minority in Statistics Canada calculations. Visible minorities are defined by Statistics Canada as "persons, other than aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour".^[348]
- [Catholic Church](#) (29.9%), [United Church](#) (3.3%), [Anglican Church](#) (3.1%), [Eastern Orthodoxy](#) (1.7%), [Baptism](#) (1.2%), [Pentecostalism and other Charismatic](#) (1.1%) [Anabaptist](#) (0.4%), [Jehovah's Witness](#) (0.4%), [Latter Day Saints](#) (0.2%), [Lutheran](#) (0.9%), [Methodist and Wesleyan \(Holiness\)](#) (0.3%), [Presbyterian](#) (0.8%), and [Reformed](#) (0.2%).^[378] 7.6 percent simply identified as "Christians".^[379]

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- [Canada profile \(https://www.oecd.org/canada/\)](https://www.oecd.org/canada/) from the [OECD](#)
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Travel

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