

# CANADA

**Official name:** Canada

**Size:** 9,984,670 sq km – slightly larger than USA

**Population:** 33,981,800 (December 2009)

**Capital:** Ottawa, The largest city: Montreal

**Official languages:** English, French

**Currency:** Canadian dollar

**Products:** Wheat, barley, maple syrup, fish, dairy, wood, paper, motor vehicles, natural gas

**Canadian flag:** Maple leaf (since 1965)

## Geography

Canada is the second largest country in the world. It occupies most of North America, extending from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west and northward into the Arctic Ocean.

It is covered with rivers and lakes - the Great Lakes are on the border with USA. Canada also has the world's longest coastline (more than 243,000 km).

Much of Canada is still wilderness, cover by forests.

The Rocky Mountains cover a major part of western Canada. West-central Canada is mostly prairie, consisting of large grain farms. The east-central part of Canada are the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

These are major population and industrial areas. The maritime provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland rely heavily on fishing and natural resources such as timber. Prince Edward Island is also well known for its potatoes.

Most of Canada's northern islands are located inside the Arctic Circle.

The climate varies considerably throughout the country. Canada is generally known for its cold winters and hot, but short, summers.

The Mackenzie River is the longest river in Canada.

Canada has the third largest amount of glaciers (after Antarctica and Greenland).

## History

The name Canada comes from Iroquoian word, kanata, meaning "village" or "settlement".

The first people came to North America from Asia.

Europeans first arrived when the Vikings settled here around AD 1000; after the failure of the colony, there was no further attempt at North American exploration until 1497, when John Cabot explored Canada's Atlantic coast for England, followed by Jacques Cartier in 1534 for France.

The Constitution Act created Dominion of Canada on July 1, 1867, with four provinces: Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

## Political system

Canada was a British colony until Confederation in 1867 when the Dominion of Canada was born.

Canada is a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as its monarch. She is the head of state, and the Governor General is her representative in Canada. Canada has a party system, and the leader of the ruling political party become the prime minister.

A federation consists of ten provinces and three territories. Currently, the ten provinces are Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan, while the three territories are Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon. The capital city is Ottawa, in the province Ontario. Canada is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as its head of state. Her representative in Canada is the Governor General. Canada has a party system in parliament. Party leader of the major political party becomes the Prime minister. It is a bilingual and multicultural country, with both English and French as official languages.

## People

Most of Canada's population lives in the southern part of Canada, near the US-Canadian borders. Most of Quebec and parts of eastern Canada are still heavily influenced by their French origins. Much of the rest of Canada is English origin. Canada has also had significant immigration from other European countries such as Germany, Italy and the Ukraine. There are also many immigrants from Asia.

## Places of interest

Niagara Falls is one of Canada's best known tourist attractions. It is the largest waterfalls in the world, measured in volume of water. To get to the other side there is a pedestrian bridge that links Canada with the United States.

Ottawa is the Capital City of Canada and a great place to soak in Canadian culture. The Changing of the Guard on Parliament Hill is always popular sight, along with some world class museums. There are also many parks and bike paths that make summer holidays fun.

Vancouver (British Columbia) – the place of Winter Olympic Games 2010.

Visiting Quebec City is like taking a tour of France in North America. Quebec culture is rich and unique from the rest of Canada, and nowhere is it as evident as it is in Quebec City.

Toronto – CN Tower - Located in the heart of Downtown Toronto, it is the world's tallest building (553 metres)