

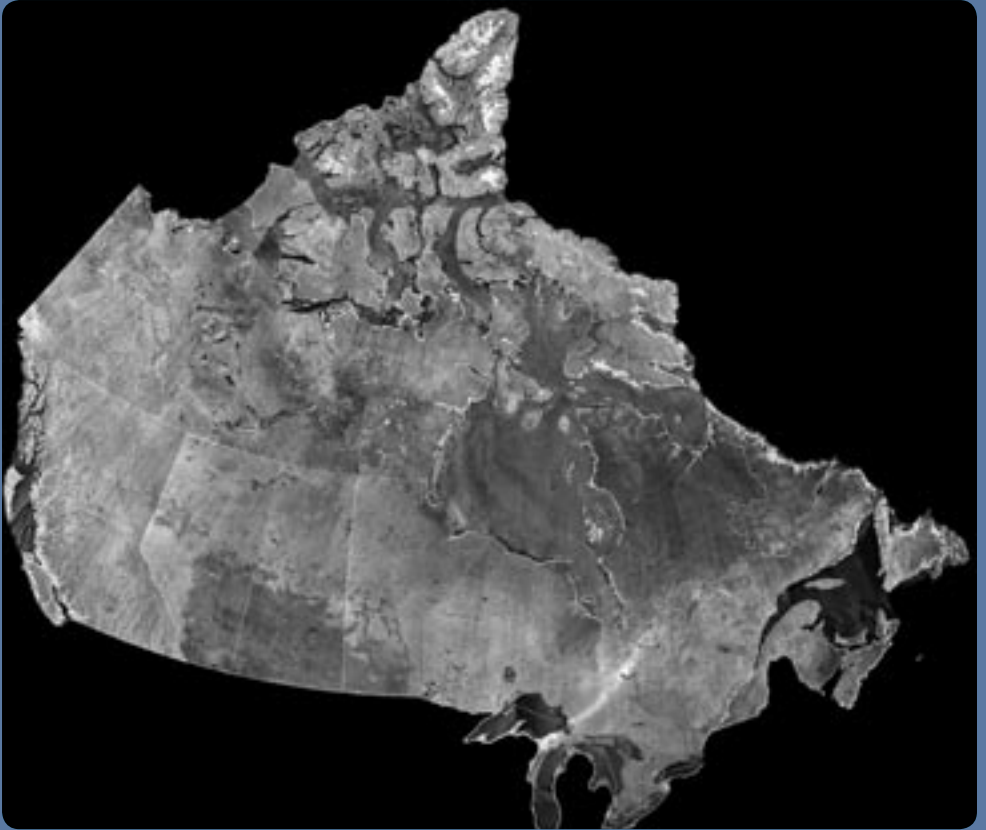
Facts on Canada



Government of Canada
High Commission of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada
Haut-commissariat du Canada

Canada



First complete view of Canada compiled using RADARSAT-1, Canada's first Earth observation satellite. The 276 images used in the mosaic were captured over a brief seven-day period in January 1999, producing a near instantaneous 'snapshot' of the entire country. The data for the mosaic of Canada were acquired under Canadian Space Agency's (CSA) Background Mission campaign and the digital mosaic was produced as a joint project between the CSA and RADARSAT International Inc. (RSI), of Richmond, British Columbia, the commercial distributor of RADARSAT data. The data were received by the Canada Centre for Remote Sensing (CCRS) and were processed by RSI. Full-scale mosaic is available from RSI.

Geography

One of the most defining characteristics of Canada is its size. With a total area of 9,984,670 square kilometres, Canada is the second-largest country in the world, surpassed only by Russia. It stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic Ocean, and spans six time zones, with the result that when offices begin opening for business in Vancouver, it is already early afternoon in Newfoundland. Not surprisingly, a sense of space and openness are central features of the Canadian identity.

Almost half the land is covered in forests, and Canada also holds the largest area of freshwater resources of any country in the world, boasting some 2 million lakes that cover almost 900,000 square kilometres. The most important are those of the Great Lakes system, which Canada shares with the United States. This network of five lakes – Superior, Michigan, Erie, Huron and Ontario – covers 244,000 square kilometres, and holds an estimated 23 quadrillion litres of water, or 20 per cent of the world's freshwater supply.

Canada has only one neighbour, the United States, and is fortunate in having enjoyed excellent relations with the latter for most of its history. The two countries share the longest undefended border in the world, stretching 8,890 kilometres from east to west.



Some 20 per cent of the world's fresh water supply resides in Canada. A spectacular example: Bow Lake in Icefield Parkway, Banff National Park, Alberta.

Name and National Symbols

The name 'Canada' derives from the Huron-Iroquois word 'kanata', which means village or settlement. Possibly failing to understand that his guides were only referring to the Iroquois settlement of Stadacona (present-day Quebec City), French explorer Jacques Cartier used the term in 1535 to refer to the area subject to Chief Donnacona. The name became attached to ever-greater areas on maps of the day, and by the early 1600s was used interchangeably with 'New France'. It received official status in 1791, with the Constitutional Act that divided British North America into the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada.

The best known symbol of Canada is the maple leaf. Its distinctive shape has long been associated with the country, and it stands at the centre of the Canadian flag. It is usually represented as bright red, evoking the brilliant autumn hues of Canada's forests.

The beaver is a national emblem of Canada, chosen because of its distinctive appearance and its association with Canada's early history. From the early 17th century until the 1830s, beaver fur was an essential material in the manufacture of hats in Europe. Canada's enormous beaver population stimulated demand for the fur, and became the basis of a highly lucrative trade that saw pelts being sold in Europe for 20 times their original purchase price. The beaver was soon adopted for the coats of arms of the Hudson's Bay Company, the City



The inaugurating of the 'new' flag was held in Ottawa on February 15, 1965. 'The flag is the symbol of the nation's unity, for it, beyond any doubt, represents all the citizens of Canada without distinction of race, language, belief or opinion' — The Honourable Maurice Bourget, then Speaker of the Senate.



Ice Hockey – so much a part of the Canadian identity that it is nostalgically depicted on the current five dollar bill. The detail, above, of the illustration 'Children at Play' is from the 2001-2004 series *Canadian Journey* depicting a 'pick-up' game of ice hockey being played on a pond.



The beaver – a national emblem of Canada – is associated with the fur trade.

of Quebec and the City of Montreal, and in 1851 it featured on Canada's first postage stamp. It was adopted as an official emblem of the country in 1975.

While Canada has two official sports – ice hockey and lacrosse – there is no question that the former is not only the more popular of the two but also so deeply ingrained into the Canadian psyche that it forms part of the country's mythology. For many Canadians, nothing symbolises the country more than ice hockey.

Government

Canada is a federal constitutional democracy, governed by a parliamentary system modelled on Westminster. The country is divided into 10 provinces and three territories. It is a highly decentralised federation, with the provinces having been granted constitutional jurisdiction over a number of important areas, such as education, control of natural resources and the delivery of health care services. The division of powers between the federal and provincial levels of government has sometimes been a source of tension in the Canadian federation, yet has also produced considerable flexibility in approaching political issues. Universal health care, for example, was first developed at the provincial level in Saskatchewan and then spread nationwide as other provinces and the federal government adopted its principles.

Parliamentary elections are required to be held no later than five years after the previous election, although in the case of minority governments fresh elections are usually called after only a few years.



Canada is a federal constitutional democracy, governed by a parliamentary system in the Houses of Parliament in Ottawa, Ontario.

History

Canada was first settled by peoples migrating across the Bering Strait from Asia some 40,000 years ago. Over several thousand years, these groups spread out across the land and split into a variety of linguistic and cultural branches. Most adopted a nomadic hunter-gatherer existence, with the notable exceptions of tribes that established permanent or semi-permanent settlements in southern Ontario and the Pacific Northwest.

Their way of life continued largely unchanged until the arrival of European explorers at the end of the 15th century. During the next few centuries, the aboriginal populations were decimated by wars and diseases against which they had no resistance, and the British and French encroachment on their land in the struggle for control of North America. The wars between the two European peoples came to an end in 1759, as most of the continent passed into the hands of the British. Unlike the United States, however, Canada was to evolve into a bilingual country shared by both English and French.

The country took its first steps towards autonomy in the early part of the 19th century, and achieved self-government on July 1, 1867, when the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario created a federal union. The country steadily expanded over the next 40 years, with the incorporation of Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia and the creation of the territories of Yukon and North West Territories. Newfoundland



Descendants of the first peoples who migrated across the Bering Strait from Asia, 40,000 years ago. First Nations traditions and culture are proudly preserved within Canada.

and Labrador and Nunavut were the last province and territory to join confederation in 1949 and 1999 respectively. Key to the uniting of the country was the building of a transcontinental railway that linked east and west, and made Canada a country that looked across the Pacific as well as the Atlantic.

Canada was founded by newcomers to the continent, and throughout its history immigration has been key to determining its identity. Waves of immigrants arrived in the country throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and in many ways the history of Canada during this time is the history of immigration. As the country's population expanded, its confidence grew. It played an ever-growing role on the world stage, notably in the two world wars and the founding of the United Nations in 1945. By the 1960s Canada was an increasingly urbanised, economically advanced and technologically sophisticated society, far removed from its origins as a source of fish and furs for European markets.

Tensions within the federation mounted during the post-war period, as predominantly French-speaking Quebec underwent a social and political revolution far more wide-ranging than anything experienced in the rest of the country. As Quebec modernised, it gave birth to a separatist movement that questioned the role of the province within Canada. Accommodation of differences has always been a hallmark of Canada as a country, however, and the ability of Canadians to live with people of different languages, religions and ethnic or racial backgrounds augurs well for the country's future as it enters the 21st century.



Population

Canada today is home to some 32.5 million people. Almost 18 per cent were born outside the country, and this figure will only grow in the future as Canada opens its doors to more and more immigration.

For most of its history, immigrants to Canada were of European ancestry. Since the 1960s, however, the immigrant population to Canada has become increasingly diverse. While immigrants from the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe still make up the largest number of foreign-born people in Canada, accounting for 42 per cent of that population, those from Asia and the Middle East represent 37 per cent. A further 11 per cent come from the Caribbean or Central and South America, five per cent from Africa and four per cent from the United States.

As a result of its changing immigration patterns, Canada has become a truly multicultural society. It is now home to people from more than 200 different ethnic and cultural groups, and 13 per cent of the population is represented by visible minorities. The native peoples of Canada are also an important part of Canada's cultural mix. After experiencing a precipitous decline with arrival of Europeans in North America, their population began to rebound in the latter part of the 20th century, and today it stands at almost 1 million people.



Group of refugees or immigrants on ship, 1907-14, Martin Wolff, ©McCord Museum, Montreal, MP-1981.160.258.



Canada's diversity is considered to be part of its strength when addressing global issues.

Economy, Science and Technology

Canada is one of the wealthiest and most technologically advanced countries in the world, with a GDP in 2005 of approximately \$1.25 trillion. In recent years it has experienced robust growth and excellent economic fundamentals. It is the only G8 country currently running a budget surplus, a feat it has managed every year since 1997. It has also for several years run a current account surplus, which in 2005 reached \$30.2 billion.

The country's economy is highly diversified. It features a strong industrial base, notably in the manufacture of automobiles and automobile parts, and commands enormous natural resources that have made it a world leader in such industries as mining and metals, timber products and agriculture. Canadians have not been content to simply exploit the resources available to them, however, but have also developed highly advanced technical services related to these resources, such as forestry management, financing for mining exploration and development, and geophysical mapping. Of particular note is Canada's growing role in the field of energy. Canada is home to the second-largest oil reserves in the world, and by 2015 is expected to be producing 4 million barrels of crude oil per day – making it one of the leading secure suppliers in the world.

Increasingly, Canada is evolving into a knowledge-based economy, with the services sector now employing three-quarters of Canadians and generating two-thirds of the country's wealth. High-tech industries figure prominently in this development, with such companies as Nortel Networks and Research in Motion – maker of the popular BlackBerry® communications device – leading the transformation. Not surprisingly, Canada is one of the most internet-intensive countries in the world, regularly ranking among the top two or three countries for online banking, government online services and broadband penetration.

Innovation in transportation, communications and technology has always been a defining attribute of Canada, and will continue to be because of the enormous size and geographic diversity of the country. Canada invented the snowmobile and was the third country to launch a communications satellite, Alouette, after Russia and the United States.

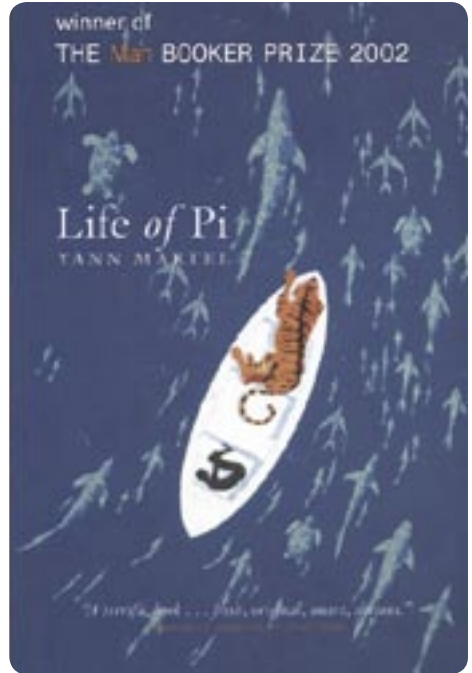


BlackBerry® - 8700 series.

Arts and Culture

Canada has a flourishing arts community. It is home to vibrant film, television and animation industries. It has a growing performance arts sector and a long tradition of excellence in the visual arts, epitomised by the Group of Seven and Emily Carr. The city of Toronto is today the third-largest city for theatre in the English-speaking world, after New York and London. Canada has also nurtured countless individuals and artistic ensembles of world repute – such as jazz legends Oscar Peterson and Diana Krall, classical pianists Glenn Gould and Angela Hewitt, opera greats Ben Heppner and Measha Brueggergosman, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the Cirque du Soleil, theatre director Robert Lepage, and film directors Atom Egoyan and David Cronenberg, to name a few.

Perhaps the most outstanding example of Canada's contribution to the arts in recent years, however, has been in the field of literature. Canadian literature has mushroomed in popularity over the past 30 years. Today, Canadian authors routinely figure among the winners and nominees for such prestigious accolades as the Man Booker Prize, and writers such as Margaret Atwood, Rohinton Mistry, Carol Shields, Yann Martel, Douglas Coupland and Alice Munro have brought a unique voice to the international world of letters. Canadians have also been prominent supporters of PEN, the international organisation in support of freedom of speech around the world.



Man Booker Prize winning novel (2002) *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel.



FIFA Manager 06 game by EA Games – displaying the excellence which has become synonymous with growing gaming and animation industries of Canada.

Canada in the World

Canada recognises that many of the problems it faces are global in nature, and as a result it has embraced multilateralism and international cooperation as central to its foreign policy. Canada is a founding member of the United Nations, and has steadfastly advocated a greater role for that organisation in world affairs. It was under the leadership of Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson that the UN first deployed multinational peacekeeping troops to defuse the Suez crisis, and Canada has been a major contributor to peacekeeping missions around the world since then. Currently in Afghanistan Canada has 2,300 peacekeepers and a reconstruction team; since 2001, it has contributed some \$600 million towards development and rebuilding the province of Kandahar.

Canada also participates in many of the political and military alliances that have shaped the post-war world. It was a founding member of NATO and has been a member of the G7 – now G8 – group of countries since 1976. As an officially bilingual country, it has the advantage of belonging to both the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, which has allowed it to develop exceptionally broad ties with much of the developing world. These ties are furthered by Canada's membership in such groups as the OAS (Organisation of American States), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) and the ASEAN forum (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Canada's participation in such a wide array of multilateral organisations has given it a unique perspective on the need for the developed and developing worlds to work together towards common ends.



Canadian soldiers from the Civil Military Cooperation section of the 3rd Battalion Royal 22nd Regiment Battalion Group, deliver 11 tons of humanitarian aid to an orphanage in Kabul, Afghanistan. The aid, which was donated by Canadians, consisted of clothing, blankets and toys.

