

# 11 CANADA

- **Total area:** 9,984,670 sq km
- **Population:** 38 million
- **Capital:** Ottawa



## Location, geography

Canada is **the second largest country in the world** (measured by area). It is located in North America – south of the Arctic and north of the United States. The border between Canada and the USA is the longest in the world at 8,891 km. Canada also has the world's longest coastline (more than 243,000 km). Canada has one of the world's biggest islands – Baffin Island, which is twice the size of the UK. The country also has two of the biggest lakes in the world – Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake. The biggest Canadian river is the Mackenzie. The largest mountain range is the Rocky Mountains which can be found in the west of the country. The highest mountain is Mount Logan at almost 6000 m. It is located in the St. Elias Mountains of southwestern Yukon.

## History

Canada was a British colony until a confederation of Canadian provinces was established in 1867. 'Kanata' meaning 'village' or 'settlement' was the original name for the country. The French and British conquered the country, and now Canada is both French and English speaking. Canada's national holiday is the 1st of July known as Canada Day. It marks the founding of the Dominion of Canada in 1867 and is celebrated with fireworks and barbecues and parades.

## Administrative division

Canada is made up of ten provinces and three territories.

**Provinces:** Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan.

**Territories:** Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut

## Population, people

Canada, despite its size, has a population of only 38 million people. A significant reason for this low number is the fact that a lot of the Canadian terrain is rough and uninhabitable and the climate is arctic in the north - only the toughest can survive the harsh winters of the territories. Most of the 38 million people live close to the US border where the climate is milder.

There are 3 groups of **indigenous peoples** (the original inhabitants of the land that is now Canada): **Indians** (more commonly referred to as First Nations), **Inuit** and **Métis**. These are 3 distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. Indians make up more than three-fifths of Canada's indigenous population. **The Inuit** primarily inhabit the northern regions of Canada. **Métis** peoples are of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry.

## Political system

Canada, along with Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, and others, Canada is a **member of the British Commonwealth of Nations**. It is a constitutional monarchy. The monarch of the UK is the official head of state, but has little influence on Canadian politics and is represented by the Governor General, whose role

is also symbolic. Canada is a parliamentary democracy based on the British system; the head of government is the Prime Minister, currently Justin Trudeau.

## National flag

Canada's National Flag consists of two vertical bands of red with a white square between them and a red maple leaf centred in the white square. The design of the flag is based on a strong sense of Canadian history: red and white were proclaimed the official colours of Canada in 1921 by the British King George V. Canada's aboriginal people had discovered the food properties of **maple sap**, which they gathered every spring to make **maple sirup**. It grew in public consciousness as a symbol of the country. Later, the maple leaf was the dominant symbol used by Canadian soldiers during the WWI and WWII. In 1965, it became a component of the national flag of Canada.

## Animals

The Canadian national animal is the beaver, which is less populous now than it used to be because of past trapping. Moose, bears (polar bears, grizzly bears, and black bears), foxes, wolves, seals, deer, and many different species of fish are among the other common wildlife of Canada.

## Cities and places of interest

The capital of Canada, Ottawa, has a population of about 775 thousand. Other important cities are Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Quebec. The city of Toronto is known for its CN Tower, which used to be the highest tower in the world. Vancouver is famous for its outdoor sports and the 2010 winter Olympics took place here. Montreal in French-speaking Canada is a culturally interesting city (jazz festival, film festival...). Other popular tourist attractions include the spectacular Niagara Falls and the Canadian Rockies (Rocky Mountains).

