

# DEPARTURES

— Travel —

## Why You Should Visit Canada Now



Getty Images/iStockphoto

SHARE: [✉](#) [f](#) [t](#) [p](#)

Between its natural beauty and cultural offerings, there are more than enough reasons to make the trip north.

By Cailey Rizzo on August 22, 2018

Even if Canada isn't [your home and native land](#), there are more than enough reasons to visit. In addition to boasting the world's longest coastline and largest number of lakes, the country has a fast-growing culinary scene, a well-preserved history, and an astonishingly friendly culture. Read on for why you should book a trip as soon as possible.

## National Parks



*Chase Dekker Wild-Life Images/Getty Images*

Since 1885, Canada's National Park system has grown to include more than 40 different entities. While that number may not seem impressive, consider that the national park system makes up about [three percent of Canada's entire landmass](#). From the impressive Banff, the snowboarding destination in Alberta that is also the nation's first national park, to Quttinirpaaq, one of the northernmost places in the country, the diversity of Canada's national parks means that you can spend a lifetime exploring them all.

## It's More Affordable

The currency conversion rate is one very practical reason for Americans to visit: The Canadian dollar is now worth about 75 cents stateside. Splurge on luxury hotels, indulge in fine cuisine, and know that you're paying less for these experiences than you would back home.

## French Heritage



*Stuart Gregory/Getty Images*

Canada's bilingual system is fascinating to watch in action, particularly in the Quebec province. A visit to Montreal or Quebec City might feel more like a trip to Europe than anywhere else: About 7.3 million people (or 80 percent of Quebec) claim French as their first language to this day.

## Food

Canadian cuisine is finally getting the recognition it deserves—and yes, there's more to it than maple syrup and poutine. The country's growing food scene takes inspiration from indigenous foraging techniques and borrows from the culture of modern immigrants, like those from Syria. Some of the most exciting places to dine right now include [Canoe](#) in Toronto (for dishes like rabbit or fresh Atlantic lobster) and [Toqué](#) in [Montreal](#) (for an elevated seven-course tasting menu centered on Quebecois classics).

## Cultural Festivals



*Anthony Sheardown Photography/Getty Images*

Some of the world's finest festivals call Canada home. Every year, the [Toronto International Film Festival](#) (TIFF) premieres groundbreaking new films and brings the industry's biggest names up north. On the other side of the country, the [Edmonton Folk Fest](#) brings thousands of people to North Saskatchewan River valley for four days of music. This year's lineup included heavy-hitters (like The Decemberists and Regina Spektor) alongside exciting up-and-comers like This Is The Kit.

## Niagara Falls



*Peter Mintz/Design Pics/Getty Images*

There has never been a better time for thrill-seekers to visit Niagara Falls. Earlier this year, a zipline opened over the Canadian side of the Falls, allowing visitors to experience the mist from 220 feet above the water. The zipline extends 2,200 feet and sends visitors up to 40 miles per hour to their landing over Horseshoe Falls. While the entire experience only lasts about 30 seconds, it's certainly the most thrilling way to see the natural wonder.

## Preserved History



*Getty Images/iStockphoto*

Last year, Canada celebrated its 150th year of independence. But those who wish to explore Canada's history throughout the ages will find plenty of well-preserved buildings that date back hundreds of years. Visit Old Quebec City (dating back to the 1600s), Inuksuk Point in Nunavut (structures estimated to be 2,000 years old) and Dawson City (preserved from the 1890s Gold Rush in Yukon) for a firsthand look at Canadian history.

## Northern Lights



*Vincent Demers Photography/Getty Images*

Canada claims to have the best spot in the world for viewing the Northern lights. In [Yellowknife](#) (Northwest Territories), visitors have a 90 percent chance of seeing the aurora borealis on most nights from mid-November through April. [Aurora Village](#), located just outside of Yellowknife, is the most popular place in Canada for viewing the phenomenon. But don't be afraid to venture beyond the most popular sites. From Yukon to Nova Scotia, there are plenty of locations where it's possible to get a glimpse of the lights.

## Craft Beer + Wine

Canadian beer is much more than Labatt Blue and Molson. Today, there's a thriving microbrewery scene for beer fanatics, plus many vintners producing unique wines. For the most variety in terms of beer, make a stop at [Bar Hop](#) or the [Craft Brasserie](#), both in Toronto, for the best of what the country has to offer. Wine fanatics should book a trip through the Okanagan Valley or the [Niagara region of Ontario](#).