

2. Just for A While

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Coming to Visit and Reconnoiter

Do come and visit. Ontario used to describe itself as “friendly, foreign and near”, and that’s a good description. There are even a few programs that allow you to work while you’re vacationing.

2.1 For Tourism

Canada is a nice place to visit. You can do everything from summer water-skiing to winter polar-bear watching in Churchill, Manitoba.

Canadians joke a *lot* about it being cold. In reality, most Canadians live in the part that’s below the top of France. Indeed, even the western provinces overlap heavily with France. About the lower 140 miles of Manitoba, for example.

There are a plethora of sites and brochures about visiting. For example, the national parks are described at <https://travel.gc.ca/canadian-tourism>. All sorts of things to do in Ontario are described at <https://www.destinationontario.com/en-ca>

2.2 For Reconnaissance

Read the federal and provincial tourist guides above and in Chapter 1, and plan a vacation that takes you to the areas you want to know more about.

Make a list of things you want to find out about in Canada.

- Information about cities and provinces.
- Rental costs in the cities you’re interested in.
Toronto and Vancouver can be pricey, especially right downtown. On the other hand, if you want a one-bedroom apartment in an inner suburb of Toronto you’ll pay about \$950 US.
- Support organizations you want to know more about, like the519’s [Newcomer Information Session](#)
- Canadian professional societies if you’re an engineer, a nurse, or the like.
- Universities for your kids.

- Churches.
- Canadian branches of your company.
- Canadian immigration lawyers.

Visit family, friends or friends of friends, be a tourist and have fun, while you get a feeling for how you'd like to live in Canada.

Resources

- Todd Maffin's video, "How to Speed-Date Canada", about a "weekend (April 24-26, 2026) where you can come visit ... the Nanaimo BC area, as maybe a place you could move with your family to". <https://2026.nanaimoinfusion.ca>
- The519's Newcomer Information Session, <https://www.the519.org/programs/nis/>
- To know what to prepare for, the federal government's "Welcome to Canada, What you should know", <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
- Ontario's "Settlement.Org, Welcome To Ontario", <https://settlement.org/> and the other provincial guides in Section 1.1
- Tod Maffin's videos, "I Am the Very Model of a Modern-Day Canadian", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k7OUowPPMQ> and Moving to Canada: A Guide for Americans, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egRvtVTbPnY>
- IRCC prearrival guides, <https://www.prearrivalcanada.ca/e-library/>
- For medical people, <https://engageq.notion.site/infusionhosts>

2.3 For "The Grand Tour"

If you prearrange visitor visas, you could visit Canada, then France, then Germany, and then perhaps Canada again, for six months to a year in each country.

The term refers to the old British custom of sending their sons (always sons) for a tour of Europe after university, with meaningful stays in multiple countries.

Canadians also have a tradition of being "snowbirds". Those are people who live in Canada in the summer, then fly south for the winter.

2.4 What *Not* to Do

Be careful not to tell fibs to customs. Those can mess you up later.

For example, don't say you're working unless you have preregistered into one of three specific programs:

Program	Duration	Key Characteristics	Target Group	Chapter
"Digital Nomad" Visitor-Visa	Typically 6-12 months	Remote work for international companies	Tech professionals, freelancers	4

Program	Duration	Key Characteristics	Target Group	Chapter
Working Holiday Visa (International Experience Canada)	Up to 2 years	Allows temporary work for young professionals	Ages 18-35	4
International Co-Op (IEC)	12-18 months	Allows one to gain Canadian work experience while in school	Post-secondary students	3

Don't bring all your prescriptions, university degrees, resumes, or the like on what is supposed to be a visit. Similarly, don't bring a year's supply of a prescription if you're only going to be here for two weeks.

Instead, tell customs the truth. If you're coming here on vacation, the federal and Ontario guides will help you make a list of destinations. Come and visit Canadian friends if you have some, or have some other real reason, like a campus visit with a prospective student.

The criteria customs use include:

- genuine visitor intent – you aren't obviously lying about going home,
- sufficient financial resources – you have enough money or credit to pay for yourself, and a
- clear exit plan – you are going home, or if you're going to another country afterwards, you have a ticket.

Resources

- Applying for a Canadian Visitor Visa? Considerations and Tips for Avoiding Refusals
<https://www.migrationlawgroup.com/post/applying-for-a-canadian-visitor-visa-considerations-and-tips-for-avoiding-refusals>

2.5 Three Variants on “Visitor” Visas

As a “Digital Nomad”

Officially, there is no “digital nomad” visa, but really that just a more meaningful name for a formal visitor visa, called a Temporary Resident Visa (TRV).

You are required to work for an international employer, not a Canadian one.

If you just show up, you will be considered to be doing so under a visitor visa, but you really need to preapply for a TRV if you plan to be doing anything *other* than just touring. In particular, having a written TRV will make you look less suspicious when you show up at the border. See the “Considerations and Tips for Avoiding Refusals” page, mentioned above

All this is described in Chapter 4, Digital Nomads..

On a Working Holiday

Canada has an “International Experience Canada (IEC) Working Holiday Program”. It is aimed at young professionals to work and travel, to gain Canadian experience

Typically, the program allows one to work in Canada for up to two years at “temporary work”. It is described in more detail in Chapter 5, *International Experience Canada Programs*, with the caveat that the program is aimed at countries other than the US.

Many countries have programs like these first two variants, so either or both can be used as a part of a “grand tour”.

Resources

- Moving2canada has a rather complete (56-page!) guide on working holidays, [Moving to Canada through IEC’s Working Holidays program](#).

As a Co-Op Student (Internship)

International Experience Canada also has a program for post-secondary co-op programs, for people registered at a university, college, vocational school or a profession-specific school, like a law school.

It allows you to take up a paid work placement or an internship in Canada, if work experience is part of your regular educational program.

It too is described in Chapter 5, *International Experience Canada Programs*.

2.6 Retirees

There are a few Tod Maffin videos for older folks who have a retirement income and want to live here:

- How to Move to Canada As a Retiree, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgHmZRR1DSY>
- Some advice for American seniors, wanting to move to Canada, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p49ibOA29QA>
- Also there are Reddit discussions in
 - <https://www.reddit.com/r/IWantOut/>
 - <https://www.reddit.com/r/ImmigrationCanada/>

This is a living document. These links will change. Always refer to the government pages for current rules. And please file an issue at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> so I’ll know what needs updating.

In Short

Come as a visitor and have a look. Use that to help you decide what your next steps will be.