



## Travel Information for International Guests

The following information has been put together to help make your holiday in Ontario run as smoothly as possible. Although Canada is known as the friendliest, most laid-back nation on earth, there are numerous 'quirks' to living in Canada and we want to make sure you don't get caught out by some of our more obscure customs and regulations. We do recommend that you take the time to at least acquaint yourself with the Important Information Section before you travel to Canada as this may prevent any embarrassing moments – and even save you from a hefty fine! The remainder of the booklet is additional information we hope you find useful.

### Important Information

#### *Documents*

- Your passport must have at least 6 months to run after your return flight.
- Visas are not required for British citizens.
- Medical or dental treatment can be expensive, so ensure that you have arranged adequate travel insurance.
- You must have a current driving licence for renting a car – the UK licence card is insufficient on its own; you will also need to present the paper portion of the licence.

#### *On the Road*

- Speed limits, unless otherwise posted – dual carriageways and motorways (100kmh or 62mph), on a two-lane highway (80kmh or 50mph) and in towns (50kmh or 30mph). Be very cautious in school zones and small towns, where posted speeds may be very slow.
- On-the-spot speeding fines are levied at the road side – fines are often posted on billboards on the highways and even minor roads.
- If you use the 407 ETR (Electronic Toll Route), a quicker route if you are heading east of Toronto, expect to be billed by your car rental company a month or so after you get home (as well as the toll fee an additional £3.50 per use is the norm as rental agencies charge a hefty admin fee).
- If a school bus is stopped with its lights flashing, traffic in **both** directions must stop to allow children to cross the road in front of the bus, unless the road is dual carriageway with a central reservation (median).

- A **4-way** or **All-way** junction often encountered in urban and rural areas, is where all vehicles must stop at the junction and the first to arrive at the junction is the first to move off – you need to be aware of your position in the queue so you don't miss your turn. Although the concept is very simple, be careful.
- It is an offence to use any motorised vehicle (including boats and snowmobiles) whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Traffic must give way to buses and coaches merging from the right.
- Unless indicated to the contrary, you can turn right on a red light. You must give way to traffic approaching from the left.
- Although you'd never believe it by looking around, eating, drinking and using a cell phone other than 'hands-free' all qualify as 'driving while distracted' and will incur a hefty fine.
- New from Jan 1, 2016 – At a pedestrian crossover (indicated by a black X on a yellow background above the crossover or on either side of the crossover) or any school crossing where a crossing guard with a stop sign is present, vehicles are to remain stationary until all pedestrians have reached the other side.

### ***Out and About***

- It is an offence in Ontario to consume alcohol in a public place such as a park or public beach. No alcohol can be carried or consumed on any vessel that does not have permanent sleeping accommodation and toilet facilities. These regulations are strictly enforced particularly on the larger lakes
- It is also an offence to carry opened cases of beer or part-bottles of wine or spirits in your car – even in the boot (trunk)!
- No fires are to be lit outdoors if there are fire restrictions in place – the fine is hefty (\$1,000 and up) for doing so. Your cottage guide will have instructions on how to check the current fire risk status.
- Visitors to Canada who wish to fish must first obtain a licence. Information on where to get a fishing licence is in the cottage guide.
- The law requires one approved life jacket or PFD (Personal Floatation Device) per person to be on board **any boat** together with a bailer, waterproof flashlight (torch), whistle and throwing line. Boating without these safety items on board can result in a hefty fine.

### ***At the Cottage***

- Cottage septic systems are designed to cope with human waste and toilet tissue only. Sanitary products, nappies and Q-tips WILL cause a blockage.
- Recycling garbage is mandatory in Canada. Follow the instructions in your cottage guide for disposal of garbage.
- Long-distance call charges that occur during your stay will be recovered from your security deposit. Use of credit or calling cards is encouraged.
- Please follow any 'rules of the cottage' closely, as they are there to ensure you have a problem free and enjoyable stay.

## Let the Adventure Begin

The flight to Canada can be an adventure in its own right. If the weather is clear, you may get the opportunity to experience the stunning scenery of Greenland and there are often icebergs to be seen in the waters of the North Atlantic, between Greenland and Canada itself. As you make landfall over Canada, usually over the coast of Labrador or Newfoundland, you will be struck by the amazing clarity of the air and the excellent visibility. You will also begin to get a feel for the vast numbers of water features that make up the topography of Eastern Canada.

### *Arrival*

Hopefully the arrival at Toronto International Airport will also give you a stunning view of the city of Toronto and the world-famous CN Tower on the shore of Lake Ontario. This is where the adventure really begins as you follow the signs to the Customs and Immigration area. If you are arriving at Terminal 3 this is a seemingly endless walk that makes you wonder if you should have booked an internal flight! But eventually, clutching your passport and declaration card (passengers of all nationalities must fill in one of these cards supplied by the airline, but family members with the same address can use a single card), you arrive in a large room with dozens of computer terminals. One by one each passenger inserts their individual or family declaration card. A receipted copy is then received, which has to be shown to an immigration officer before you proceed to the baggage reclaim area

If you need to use a baggage trolley (cart) there are plenty in the reclaim area and they are free. Once you have been reunited with your luggage, you pass out of the reclaim area, past a customs officer, who will relieve you of your landing card receipt, and out into the main arrivals area. The car hire desks are signposted.

### *Picking up your rental vehicle*

The majority of hire vehicles will have automatic transmission and it is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the car's controls, switches etc, and adjust your seat and mirror positions. This is because about a minute after you drive off for the first time in Canada you meet Highway 409/401 and more than likely in rush hour - which is akin to the M25 on a bad day and on the wrong side of the road! That said, driving in Canada is generally very relaxed and once you are away from the centre of Toronto, you will be ready to engage cruise control and head off in the direction of your chosen piece of heaven.

### *Driving in Canada*

As a general rule regarding speed limits; unless otherwise posted, on dual carriageways and motorways the limit is 100 km/hr (62mph), on a two-lane highway 80km/hr (50mph) and in towns 50km/hr (30mph). **BE VERY CAUTIOUS IN SCHOOL ZONES AND SMALL TOWNS, WHERE POSTED SPEEDS MAY BE VERY SLOW.**

If a School Bus is stopped with its lights flashing, traffic in both directions must stop to allow children to cross the road in front of the bus. You are also expected to stop and allow pedestrians to cross at Signed Pedestrian X-Walks.

Unless there are indications to the contrary, you may turn right on a red light once you have stopped and made certain there is no oncoming traffic. When turning left at traffic lights, a flashing green light or green arrow means that opposite direction traffic is stopped and you are cleared to cross over. A 4-Way Stop is something you may not have seen before, where all vehicles must stop at an intersection and the first to arrive is the first to leave - be careful!

You may be happy to know that there are almost no roundabouts in Canada, only underpasses, overpasses and many, many traffic signal lights.

Drivers under 25yrs of age will not be permitted to drive a hire-vehicle without paying additional premiums. Check with your rental car agency, if applicable.

### **Highway 401**

Highway 401 deserves a mention, as you will likely be forced to travel on it sometime during your holiday. The 500 mile East-West motorway was originally intended to bypass the City of Toronto but is now an integral part of the city's transit system. It is one of the busiest motorways in North America with sections around Toronto exceeding 20 lanes.

Basically the centre 6 Express lanes (3 in each direction) are for longer journeys and the other 14 or so Collector lanes are for shorter on-off type trips. You may exit directly from the Express lanes to the Airport and a few major intersections (like the 400 or 404) otherwise follow the signs and exit via the collector lanes always easing to the right so as not to miss your exit. Don't get too far right or you may be forced to exit prematurely. Try to avoid using this route in the vicinity of Toronto on weekdays before 9:30AM, between 3:00-7:00PM and on Sunday evenings. An alternative route to/from the Airport is via the 407 ETR (Electronic Toll Route), although not completed in its entirety, and will avoid much of the potential congestion. If you use this road expect to be billed a month or so after you get home. On motorways the exit numbers don't appear to make any sense; in fact they are the distances from the start of the motorway in km. So if you pass exit 521 and are looking to get off at exit 543 you have 22km to go.

### **Documents**

Your passport must have at least 6 months to run after your return flight. Visas are not a requirement for British citizens; however, travellers of other nationalities should refer to the Canadian Consulate or their respective embassy to determine their current related visa requirements. All travellers to Canada must have a return or onward ticket. If you possess an onward travel ticket which involves travel to the United States, then it is very important that visa requirements for the USA are checked before leaving your country of departure.

### **Health**

For travellers to Canada there are no specific immunisation requirements. Medical and health services in Canada are of a high standard and readily available. However, medical or dental treatment can be expensive, so we recommend that you have

adequate health insurance. Also, if you are taking any form of medication, ensure you take an adequate supply and a copy of your prescription in case you need a repeat prescription during your stay. Should you need to see a physician call one from the phone book and if he cannot see you he will refer you to the nearest "walk-in" clinic or hospital emergency. For prompt emergency response most properties in Ontario have a blue and white number sign on the road adjacent to the property; just dial "911" giving the roadway and number and the nearest response vehicle will be dispatched.

### **Currency**

There is little need to take a lot of traveller's cheques as there are cash points at almost all banks, supermarkets and Malls that are accessible 24-hours a day and accept most cash cards. Major credit cards (MasterCard, VISA, American Express, Diners Club, and En-Route) are universally accepted however small general stores and shops in remote areas may demand cash. Canadian dollar traveller's cheques are accepted in most large stores and restaurants. Banks generally open between 10am - 4pm Monday to Thursday and 10am - 6pm on a Friday.

### **Taxes and Rebates**

There is a 13% Harmonized Services Tax (HST) in Ontario, which is applied to almost every Canadian purchase. (i.e. you will actually have to pay C\$3.39 for an advertised C\$3.00 item) Taxes are included in the listed price of gasoline, liquor and beer. Some groceries and certain children's items may be exempt. You are eligible for a GST (5%) rebate when you leave Canada but the following restrictions apply - individual receipts must be greater than C\$50.00 and the total must exceed C\$200.00. You will also need to supply your boarding card, so make sure you keep this in a safe place.

### **Duty and Tax Free**

Any visitor to Canada over the age of 19 is permitted to purchase tax and duty free alcoholic beverages and tobacco up to the following amounts –

- 1.14 litres(40 oz) liquor or wine and
- 200 cigarettes or 400 gms tobacco or 50 cigars

Duty and taxes will be charged on quantities exceeding these amounts.

Travel Hint - Duty-free is often cheaper on board the aeroplane but the selection may be limited. Canadian duty free prices are much cheaper than British ones.

### **Alcohol**

The minimum age in Ontario to purchase or import wine or beer is 19. Unlike the UK, beer, wines and spirits cannot be purchased from supermarkets and are only available from government licensed Beer and Liquor stores – The Beer Store and LCBO. These stores are widespread but are generally closed on Sundays and public holidays although in some locales extended opening times are becoming more common. Beer stores only sell domestic beers and foreign beers whilst wines, spirits and a limited selection of beer can be obtained at LCBOs. It is an offence in Ontario to consume alcohol in a public place such as a park or public beach so restrict consumption to private property or licensed establishments. Understandably it is an offence to use any motorised vehicle (including boats and snowmobiles) whilst under the influence of

alcohol. Refusing to take a breathalyser or failing a breathalyser test (a reading greater than 80mg or 0.08% per 100ml of blood) will make you liable for conviction. It is also an offence to carry opened beer or part-bottles of wine or spirits in your car – it is OK to carry it in the trunk or in closed baggage. Basically alcohol cannot be readily accessible to the driver or passengers.

### **Smoking**

Canada, like the UK, is rapidly becoming a smoke-free environment so if in doubt ask if it is OK to light up. All our Cottages are designated as non-smoking inside the cottage; if you do smoke outdoors please do not leave butts all over the grounds. Children under the age of 16 are not permitted to buy cigarettes.

### **Climate and Weather**

Summer is from Mid-June to the end of August with daytime temperatures ranging between 25-35° C with relatively high humidity levels and almost no wind (a good time to be by a lake). It can go for 2-3 weeks without any significant rain other than the odd shower. Shorts, sandals, T-shirts, sunscreen and a good sun hat are in order. Winter takes control from around the end of November to the end of March with temperatures around freezing and often dropping to - 20° C. Significant snow accumulations may not occur until after Christmas, but white Christmases are the norm in the Snow Belt areas. Spring can be variable, with warm spells and maybe even a late snowfall but are invariably wet with the melting snow. The fall is stunning with clear crisp days as the leaves change colour in preparation for winter. Late October and November can be a bit blustery with quite windy days. You will need warm jumpers and a windbreaker at this time.

### **Time Zone and Canadian Holidays**

Ontario and Québec lie within the Eastern Time Zone (EST) and there is a minus 5-hour time change between the UK and Ontario. (i.e. 11 AM UK is 6 AM in Ontario). Unlike UK, daylight saving time changes are on the second Sunday in March and the first Sunday in November; for 2017 the change dates are March 12 and November 5.

Holidays in 2017 -	School summer holidays
New Year's Day (January 1)	(All of July and August) Canada Day (July 1)
Family Day (Ontario only) (February 20)	Ontario Civic Holiday (August 7)
Easter (April 14-17)	Labour Day (September 4)
Queen Victoria Day (May 22)	Thanksgiving (October 9)
St John the Baptist Day (Québec only) (June 24)	Remembrance Day

(November 11)

(December 25-26)

Christmas Break

### ***Shopping and dining out***

Basically Canadian prices in C\$ are similar to UK prices in £s, so as a result of the current exchange rate most things are about 30-35% cheaper. But be aware that the Canadian equivalent of VAT (HST @ 13%) is added to the advertised price when you go to pay, even small items such as a paper or a pack of gum.

- Dining Out for 2 with wine at a mid-range restaurant costs around £35 (10-15% tip is expected for good service)
- Casual clothing - T-shirts, sweatshirts, shorts, jeans, jumpers are excellent value.
- Footwear - runners, sandals and casual shoes are also a good buy.
- CDs
- A 24-bottle case of domestic beer costs around £20.00 depending on brand and you get a £1.35 back for the empties!

### ***Postage***

Any mail posted in Canada must have Canadian postage stamps upon them. Most small towns have post offices. C\$2.83 (Inc HST) is the cost of 1st class airmail to UK

### ***Tourist Information Centres***

Ontario has Tourist Information Centres scattered all over the province and in most towns, especially in recreational areas, so look for the 'I' signs and drop in to see what is available. As North Americans are accustomed to driving considerable distances whilst on holiday you will not only be able to find out about local activities but also attractions and points of interest farther afield.

### ***Wildlife***

Wildlife, large and small, is an important part of cottage life. They come in all shapes and sizes - from little frogs and salamanders to mice and raccoons to deer, bear and moose. Please do not feed or encourage these animals to become too friendly; they may wish to take up residence with you. Keep all exterior screen doors closed at all times.

### ***Bugs and Critters***

Canada has its share of flying bugs, which if you think about it, is to be expected with so much open water and warm weather. The mosquito is probably the biggest pest but they don't like the heat and usually hang around shady areas and only come out in any numbers just after sunset. This is the primary reason for the screening on doors and windows. You may have heard of the black fly but they too can't stand the heat and disappear after the 1st couple of weeks of warm weather; usually by the 1st of June depending on the region. Keep your insect repellent handy and liberally apply it to the children.

Mice like cottages and signs of mice about do not indicate unhygienic conditions; simply that someone may have left a screen door open encouraging a little furry creature to take up residence. They are only there in search of food, so don't leave crumbs lying around. A couple of traps or some poison mouse seed will quickly get rid of them. If you are squeamish about setting traps, call the cottage caretaker who will deal with the problem for you. If you have chipmunks, squirrels or racoons about make certain they do not have access into the cottage as they can make a real mess of a kitchen. Canada seems to be synonymous with bears, but your chances of encountering one near your cottage is most unlikely. They really don't like humans and would only venture into your domain if there is a severe shortage of their natural food (berries & bugs) and you perhaps have enticed them with some fresh garbage. If you are hiking in bear country wear a bell or sing so you don't come upon one by surprise. You're best to go the other way if you come across signs of a bear (droppings that look like blueberry pie filling). If you see a cub, the mother isn't far away and wouldn't take kindly to you getting between her and her offspring, so again walk the other way. Bears don't see very well but have an excellent sense of smell and if they wish to, can move quickly and are good tree climbers, so don't surprise them by running, just quietly and slowly move out of their space.

You are unlikely to encounter any of these critters but we believe a little forewarning is better than an unexpected surprise.

### ***Fishing***

Visitors to Canada who want to fish must first obtain a licence; there are different classes of licence depending on how much of your catch you intend to keep as well as quota limits for specific species of fish. Licences can be purchased from most sporting goods stores, fishing lodges, marinas, some general stores in resort areas and at Ministry of Natural Resources district offices. Ontario has over 450 fish sanctuaries and all visitors are asked to help maintain the quality and cleanliness of these waters. Always read the published size limits and quotas before fishing as these vary from area to area. Also remember that a quota limit applies to the number of fish in your possession - including any in your fridge or freezer back at the cottage! Regardless of the remoteness of your chosen fishing spot, all areas are patrolled regularly.

### ***Heading Home***

Sadly, your vacation will come to and end, but departure is easier as you are now an ace left-hand driver and your flight usually leaves in the early evening, allowing you all day to get there and get rid of your chariot. There are also a few tips for departing Toronto as well. Firstly, do allow time to return your vehicle, which may be a protracted process if the desks are busy. Secondly, after you have checked in your luggage; don't be in a hurry to go through to the departure area, as, unlike UK and European airports, there are only 2 moderately sized duty-free shops and a very expensive bar airside. All the main fast food outlets, bars and other good value shops are just behind the check-in area. However, depending on which gate you are departing from (which is usually Terminal 3 unless you are flying Air Canada in which case it will be Terminal 1), you will need a fair amount of time to purchase your duty-free goods, as the queues can be quite long. You may wish to check the selection available and prices of the duty free items on offer on your aircraft during your outbound flight and compare those with what's on offer at the airport. If you do buy goods from the first duty-free shop your purchases will be collected by the shop's cashier and delivered to the departure gate for you to collect immediately prior to boarding the aircraft.



***We hope you have a wonderful time at your cottage and leave with many happy memories of your stay in Ontario.***