SPECIFIC ACTIVITY: STUDY ABROAD
COUNTRY: CANADA

This information is taken from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/canada

SUMMARY
Still current at: 2 April 2019
Updated: 28 March 2019

 Latest update:
On 28 March 2019, Icelandic airline WOW Air announced that it has ceased operation. All its flights, including those to and from Toronto and Montreal have been cancelled. For more information see the WOW Air travel alert. The UK’s Civil Aviation Authority has issued the following advice to UK consumers on WOW AIR suspending operations.

Visitors travelling to Canada by air are now expected to get an electronic travel authorisation (eTA) to enter Canada. For more information about the eTA system, and to apply online, visit the official Canadian government website. See Entry requirements

If you’re visiting Canada you’ll need an eTA to board your flight unless you’re otherwise exempted (for example, if you have a valid Canadian visa or a permanent resident card). If you have British-Canadian dual nationality you won’t be able to apply for an eTA and you’ll need to present a valid Canadian passport to board your flight to Canada.

Terrorists are likely to try to carry out attacks in Canada. See Terrorism

Severe snow storms are a regular occurrence during winter. Monitor local news and weather reports and visit Environment Canada. See Local Travel and Natural Disasters
Around 724,000 British nationals visit Canada each year. Most visits are trouble free.
If you’re abroad and you need emergency help from the UK government, contact the nearest British embassy, consulate or high commission.

Take out comprehensive travel and medical insurance before you travel.

SAFETY AND SECURITY
Crime
Take sensible precautions to protect yourself from petty crime. Don’t leave your handbag or luggage unattended. Thieves often target tourist hotels. Keep valuables including your passport in a hotel safe. Leave copies of important documents with family and friends in the UK. Carry a photocopy of your passport for ID. Keep luggage out of sight in cars.
If you need the police, call 911 or 0 and ask the operator to connect you. There is no charge for emergency calls placed from a public pay phone. If you lose your passport, contact the British High Commission or Consulate immediately.
**Road travel**
Each province and territory has the authority to establish its own traffic and safety laws.

Seat belts are compulsory. Right turns on red lights are generally allowed, but at some junctions in towns and cities, you can only turn right on a green light. In some parts of Quebec, right turns on red lights are not allowed.

You can drive a car in Canada using a full UK driving licence. However, some individual car hire companies may require you to have an International Driving Permit - you’re advised to check your car hire company’s requirements before you travel. Carry your licence with you at all times.

Take out full insurance cover if you hire a vehicle.

Obey speed limits and take extra care when travelling on country roads. Watch out for wild animals.

Winter driving conditions can be extreme. Monitor local news and weather broadcasts and take advice before driving in winter. Snow tyres are required in some provinces.

For detailed information on road conditions throughout Canada and safety tips, see the Government of Canada, the Canadian Automobile Association and the Travel Canada websites.

**Air travel**
Check with your airline and Canadian Air Transport Security Authority for information on screening procedures and prohibited/restricted items on board an aircraft.

**Wildlife**
If you are hiking or camping, be considerate and cautious of local wildlife. Take all rubbish with you, and treat any food items with great care to avoid attracting animals to your site. Animals with nearby young or nests will be particularly aggressive when protecting their territory. Research the region and learn how best to deal with the local wildlife you might encounter. Take particular care if you’re touring an area where bears have been sighted. Keep a safe and legal distance from any wildlife including marine animals and birds and closely follow park regulations.

**TERRORISM**
Terrorists are likely to try to carry out attacks in Canada. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places visited by foreigners. You should monitor media reports and remain vigilant.

On 30 September 2017, a policeman was stabbed and 5 other people were injured during an incident in Edmonton.

On 29 January 2017 a shooting at a Quebec City mosque left 6 dead and 19 wounded. Police have arrested and charged the suspected gunman who is believed to have acted alone.
In August 2016, Canadian authorities successfully disrupted a planned attack when a Daesh (formerly referred to as ISIL) supporter was shot and killed in Ontario as he attempted to detonate an improvised explosive device.

On 22 October 2014, a Canadian soldier was killed by a gunman in central Ottawa. The suspect was subsequently shot dead. On 20 October 2014, a man was shot dead by police in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu in Quebec after he struck two Canadian soldiers with his car. One of the soldiers was fatally injured.

In August 2016, the Canadian government published its 2016 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada.

The Canadian government’s threat level for Canada is published on the Government of Canada website.

There’s a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. You should be vigilant at this time.

Find out more about the global threat from terrorism, how to minimise your risk and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack.

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

The information on this page covers the most common types of travel and reflects the UK government’s understanding of the rules currently in place. Unless otherwise stated, this information is for travellers using a full ‘British Citizen’ passport.

The authorities in the country or territory you’re travelling to are responsible for setting and enforcing the rules for entry. If you’re unclear about any aspect of the entry requirements, or you need further reassurance, you’ll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you’re travelling to.

You should also consider checking with your transport provider or travel company to make sure your passport and other travel documents meet their requirements.

**Visas**

British Citizens don’t usually need a visa to visit Canada for short periods, but you’ll need to get an Electronic Travel Authorisation before you travel (see below).

If you have a different type of British nationality or intend to travel for a longer period, such as for work or study, check entry requirements with the Canadian High Commission. Effective from 31 July 2018, you may need to give your fingerprints and photos (biometrics) at a visa application centre when applying for a study or work permit, or permanent residence. When you arrive in Canada, you will need to be able to show that you have enough funds available to support yourself during your stay, even if you’re staying with family and friends.

If you have any doubts about whether you’re eligible to enter Canada (e.g. if you have a criminal record or have been arrested even if it did not result in a conviction), or about visa matters generally, contact the Canadian High Commission before you travel.
Some unauthorised websites charge for submitting visa applications. These websites are not endorsed by or associated with the Canadian government. Be wary of such sites and businesses, particularly those that seek additional fees.

Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA)

Visitors travelling to Canada by air are now expected to get an electronic travel authorisation (eTA) to enter Canada.

If you’re visiting Canada you’ll need an eTA to board your flight unless you’re otherwise exempted (for example, if you have a valid Canadian visa or a permanent resident card). If you have British-Canadian dual nationality you won’t be able to apply for an eTA and you’ll need to present a valid Canadian passport to board your flight to Canada.

If you’re travelling by land or sea, you won’t need an eTA when you enter Canada. However, you must travel with acceptable travel documents and identification.

For more information about the eTA system, and to apply online, visit the official Canadian government website.

Passport validity
Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay. No additional period of validity beyond this is required.

UK Emergency Travel Documents
UK Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) are accepted for entry, airside transit and exit from Canada. You can apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation using an ETD.

Travelling with children
If you are travelling with children, and only one parent is present, you should carry a letter of consent from the non-travelling parent. Immigration officers have the right to question children using simple and appropriate language to establish whether there are any concerns about child abduction. A letter of consent may help to dispel potential concerns. For further information check with the Canadian High Commission or the Canada Border Services Agency.

Travelling to the United States
If you intend to travel on to the United States you should check the entry requirements of the US authorities (see the US section of the FCO’s Travel Advice).
Travellers who have been admitted to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme and make a short trip to Canada are usually readmitted to the United States under the VWP as long as they still meet the requirements. Granting entry under the VWP is a matter for the US authorities. You can check the US entry requirements on the website of the US Customs and Border Protection.
**LOCAL LAWS AND CUSTOMS**

Don't attempt to bring meat, animal or dairy products into Canada at any time without declaring them to the customs authorities. Banned food products will be confiscated and you could be fined. For more information see the website of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

You must declare any visit to a farm within 14 days of arrival.

As of 17 October 2018, recreational cannabis is legally available throughout Canada. Local laws can vary depending on the province or territory you are visiting. Cannabis remains a Class B prohibited substance in the UK and it is illegal to carry any form of cannabis into the UK without a valid licence issued by the Home Office. This includes cannabis and cannabinoid oils prescribed for medicinal purposes in Canada. It is also illegal to take cannabis across the Canadian border without a permit or exemption authorised by Health Canada. Further information can be found on the [Canadian Border Services Agency website](https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/).

For more information on customs regulations in Canada visit the website of the [Canadian Border Services Agency](https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/).

**HEALTH**

At least 8 weeks before your trip, check the latest country-specific health advice from the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) on the [TravelHealthPro website](https://www.nathnac.org/). Each country-specific page has information on vaccine recommendations, any current health risks or outbreaks, and factsheets with information on staying healthy abroad. Guidance is also available from NHS (Scotland) on the [FitForTravel website](https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/).

General information on [travel vaccinations](https://www.nathnac.org/tv/) and a [travel health checklist](https://www.nathnac.org/tvhc/) is available on the NHS website. You may then wish to contact your health adviser or pharmacy for advice on other preventive measures and managing any pre-existing medical conditions while you’re abroad.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in the UK can be different in other countries. If you’re travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](https://www.nathnac.org/tv/). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you’ll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you’re travelling to.

The cost of medical treatment can be very expensive and there are no special arrangements for British visitors. For emergency health care you can go to a hospital’s emergency room or to a large number of walk-in clinics where an appointment is not required beforehand.

Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

If you have dual British-Canadian citizenship you may still have to pay for medical treatment if you don’t meet provincial residency requirements for health care. Check with the relevant province or territory for more information.

If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 911 and ask for an ambulance. You should contact your insurance/medical assistance company promptly if you are referred to a medical facility for treatment.
NATURAL DISASTERS

Hurricanes
From July to November coastal areas are sometimes affected by hurricanes. For the latest weather conditions and hurricane activity check the National Hurricane Centre, Environment Canada and The Weather Network websites. See Tropical cyclones.

Winter conditions
During the winter, highways are often closed in Alberta, British Columbia and other Provinces because of snow storms and avalanches. You can check local weather conditions on The Weather Network website.

Even when roads remain open during a winter storm, driving conditions may still be treacherous. Take care, follow any local restrictions or guidelines, and make sure your vehicle has snow tyres and emergency supplies.

Avalanches
Avalanches can occur in mountainous regions, especially in Alberta and British Columbia. Always comply with avalanche advisories and stay away from closed trails. Follow the directions of local nature guides or instructors. For more information and updated avalanche bulletins visit the Canadian Avalanche Foundation.

Earthquakes and tsunamis
British Columbia and Yukon are located in an active earthquake zone with the coast of British Columbia being most at risk from a major earthquake. Parts of the British Columbia coastline are also at risk from tsunamis. For up to date information please visit Earthquakes Canada and West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center websites.

You should familiarise yourself with safety procedures in the event of either an earthquake or tsunami. Further information on emergency preparedness can be found on the Government of Canada's 'Get Prepared' website.

Thunderstorms
Summer thunderstorms are fairly frequent in most parts of Canada. A small number of these intensify causing property damage, and threatening lives.

Tornadoes
Tornadoes can occur almost anywhere in Canada. May to September are the main tornado months with the peak season in June and early July in southern Ontario, Alberta, south eastern Quebec, and a band stretching from southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba through to Thunder Bay. The interior of British Columbia and western New Brunswick may also experience tornadoes. Monitor local and international weather updates on television and radio and follow any instructions from Canadian officials or law enforcement personnel. You can also find updates on the National Hurricane Centre website.
**Forest fires**

Forest fires can break out at anytime, regardless of the season. In the grasslands and forests of western Canada the fire hazard is higher. Generally Canada has cold dry winters and warm dry summers. Follow any local warnings and monitor news bulletins for latest details on outbreaks.

For more information visit the [Environment Canada](https://www.ec.gc.ca) website.

**ARCTIC TRAVEL**

Large numbers of British nationals travel successfully and safely in and around the Arctic each year. The Arctic is, however, a vast region, comprising the northerly areas of Canada, Finland, Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Alaska (United States). In addition to reading the specific travel advice for each of these countries, prospective visitors to the Arctic should also consider carefully the potential remoteness of certain destinations from search and rescue, evacuation and medical facilities. Independent travellers are particularly advised to develop contingency arrangements for emergency back-up.

The most popular way of visiting the Arctic is by ship. As some areas of the Arctic - specifically the more northerly and remote regions - can be uncharted and ice-covered, you should check the previous operational experience of cruise and other operators offering travel in the region. You should also consider the on-board medical facilities of cruise ships and talk to cruise operators as appropriate, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition.

The eight Arctic States take their international search and rescue obligations very seriously, and have recently signed a binding agreement on search and rescue co-operation in the Arctic. However, in the highest latitude regions of the Arctic, cruise ships may be operating in relative isolation from other vessels and/or inhabited areas. You should be aware that in these regions, search and rescue response will often need to be despatched from many hundreds of miles away, and assistance to stranded vessels may take several days to arrive, particularly in bad weather. Search and rescue assets are also likely to offer only basic transport and basic medical care, and are unlikely to be capable of advanced life-support. Responsible cruise operators should happily provide additional information relevant to the circumstances of the cruise they are offering, and address any concerns you may have.

Consular assistance and support to British nationals in the Arctic will be affected by the capacity of national and local authorities. You should make sure you have adequate travel insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment or potential repatriation.