

# 读懂加拿大，

主编 黄建滨

## 一本就够了

Wanna Know Canada,  
Just Read It!



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# I. Geography and People

## 1.1 Size and Location





Canada is the world's second largest country, only next to Russia, with a total land area of about 10 million km<sup>2</sup> (9,976,186 km<sup>2</sup> to be exact). Covering about two fifths of the North American continent, its vast territory extends more than 3,200 km almost from the North Pole to the 45° north latitude, the eastern part of the southern border with the United States. East to west, the country stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific for almost 6,400 km.

Canada is surrounded by oceans on three sides: the Atlantic on the east, the Pacific on the west, and the Arctic on the north. Its endless maritime boundary extends some 244,000 km, enough to circle the earth more than six times.

Canada's only neighbor by land is the United States, with which it shares two borders with a total length of 6,378 km. Generally, Canada lies to the north of the US. Yet part of Canada lies east of the US State of Maine and part of Canada is on the direct route between Buffalo and Detroit, farther south than either of these cities of the United States. The 45th parallel marks the boundary between Canada and northern Vermont and New York of the United States. However, most of Canada is north of the 49th parallel.

Another Canada's neighbor is France, which owns the islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon off Newfoundland and Labrador. It also rubs shoulders with Denmark, since the Danish territory of Greenland, at its closest point, is scarcely 20 km far from Ellesmere Island in Canada's Far North.

### 1.2 Topology

Canada has an extremely varied topography. In the east the mountainous maritime provinces consist of rounded hills and rolling plains as well as rugged coasts. It is a region of mountains, formed mainly by the extension of the Appalachian Mountains, with an irregular coast line on the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Atlantic. The St. Lawrence plain and the interior continental plain are the principal cultivable areas. They are separated by a forested plateau rising from Lakes Superior and Huron. Westward towards the Pacific, the area is covered by mountain ranges from north to south, formed mainly by the extensions of the Rockies and Columbia Plateau. The Pacific border of the coast range is cut by fiords (a narrow arm of the sea between cliffs or steep slopes) or channels. The highest peak in Canada is Mount Logan (6,050 m) which is in the Yukon Territory of northwest Canada.

It is unexpected to many foreigners that Canada is a country with numerous lakes. Besides the Great Lakes on the US border, there are 9 others that are more than 161 km long and 35 that are more than 80 km long. The two principal river systems are the Mackenzie and the St. Lawrence. The St. Lawrence, with its tributaries, is navigable for over 3,058 km. The Mackenzie, 1,609 km in length, flows between the Canadian Shield and the Rocky Mountains in west Canada forming the second largest river system of North America. Other rivers in Canada include Yukon in the west, the North Saskatchewan, South

Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan in the central as well as the Ottawa River in the east.

Western Canada has many volcanoes and is part of the system of volcanoes found around the margins of the Pacific Ocean, which is called the Pacific Ring of Fire. There are over 200 young volcanic centers that stretch northward from the Cascade Range to the Yukon Territory. They are grouped into five volcanic belts with different volcano types and tectonic settings. The Northern Cordilleran Volcanic Province was formed by faulting, cracking, rifting, and the interaction between the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate. The Garibaldi Volcanic Belt was formed by subduction of the Juan de Fuca Plate beneath the North American Plate. The Anahim Volcanic Belt was formed as a result of the North American Plate sliding westward over the Anahim hotspot. The Chilcotin Group is believed to have formed as a result of back-arc extension behind the Cascadia subduction zone. The Wrangell Volcanic Field formed as a result of subduction of the Pacific Plate beneath the North American Plate at the easternmost end of the Aleutian Trench.

Volcanism has also occurred in the Canadian Shield. It contains over 150 volcanic belts (now deformed and eroded down to nearly flat plains) that range from 600 million to 2.8 billion years old. Many of Canada's major ore deposits are associated with Precambrian volcanoes. There are pillow lavas in the Northwest Territories that are about 2.6 billion years old and are preserved in the Cameron River Volcanic Belt. The pillow lavas in rocks over 2 billion years



old in the Canadian Shield signify that great oceanic volcanoes existed during the early stages of the formation of the Earth's crust. Ancient volcanoes play an important role in estimating Canada's mineral potential. Many of the volcanic belts bear ore deposits that are related to the volcanism.



### 1.3 Geographic Features

The physical geography of Canada is widely varied. Boreal forests prevail throughout the country, ice is prominent in northerly Arctic regions and through the Rocky Mountains, and the relatively flat Canadian Prairies in the southwest facilitate productive agriculture. The Great Lakes feed the St. Lawrence River (in the southeast) where lowlands host much of Canada's population.

To be specific, Canada, consisting of ten provinces (Grand Banks, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfound & Labrador) and three territories (Yukon Territory, Northwest Territory and Nunavut Territory) can be divided into six geographical regions from east to west: Atlantic provinces, St. Lawrence and Great Lakes provinces, the Canadian Shield, Prairie provinces, British Columbia, Northern Canada.

(1) Atlantic provinces include New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland. This region consists of hills which are northern extensions of the Appalachian Highlands and rolling plains. The short growing season and thin, rocky soil of this region have made farming difficult. However, potatoes grow well, and they are particularly important in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Some farming also takes place in the valleys of Nova Scotia, where apples are grown.



Dairying, mining, raising animal for fur, fishing and tourism are the other economic activities in this region. The irregular coast line on the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Atlantic allows for good fishing harbors and the Grand Banks, off the eastern shore of Newfoundland, form one of the world's great fishing grounds.

However, this is not a developed industrial region. Except on the coast, the population is quite small in these provinces, and the people of this region are partly cut off from the major Canadian markets. The leading city of the region is Halifax, Nova Scotia, which is a major manufacturing and rail center. It also has a good natural harbor that is ice free. But the port is too far from the most productive areas of Canada to be very successful.

(2) St. Lawrence and Great Lakes provinces include the St.



Lawrence Lowlands and the southern part of Quebec and Ontario. Benefited from being close to the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes, this region is the most highly developed region of Canada. This area, which is among the most fertile, was easily accessible to European settlers and is today the most densely populated and industrialized part of Canada.

Quebec is one of Canada's two most important provinces. It differs from the other provinces of Canada in its strong French culture. Most of Canada's French Canadians live in the province of Quebec.

Southeastern Ontario is the chief manufacturing district of Canada. Toronto, Hamilton, London, Windsor, and a number of other smaller cities are gathered in this area. Ottawa, the capital of Canada, is also located in Ontario.

(3) The Canadian Shield covers almost half of Canada, including the northern parts of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, as well as most of Labrador, the mainland portions of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is a semicircular band of rocky highlands and plateaus around Hudson Bay from the northern shores of Quebec to the Arctic shores of the Northwest Territories.

The Shield mostly consists of eroded hilly terrain and contains many important rivers used for hydroelectric production, particularly in northern Quebec and Ontario. The Shield also encloses an area of wetlands, the Hudson Bay lowlands. Some particular regions of the Shield are referred to as mountain ranges. They include the Torngat



and Laurentian Mountains.

The Shield cannot support intensive agriculture, although there is subsistence agriculture and small dairy farms in many of the river valleys and around the abundant lakes, particularly in the southern regions. Boreal forests cover much of the Shield, with a mix of conifers that provide valuable timber resources. The region is known for its extensive mineral reserves.

(4) Prairie provinces lie west of Ontario. They are Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. The name, however, is misleading because flat expanses are not the region's only geographic feature. Rather, it includes mountains in the west, lakes, rock outcroppings, forests, and tundra to the north. It even has a saltwater port.

This region is the Canadian section of the Great Plains of North America. Much of the southern part of these provinces is made up of





great stretches of level and fertile grasslands. It is ideal for growing wheat and very rich in deposits of oil, gas, coal and potash.

Prairie provinces are thinly settled. Winnipeg is the chief city of this wheat region, through which all east-west rail traffic passes. This important collection and shipping point for the products of the prairie is sometimes called “the Chicago of Canada”. Other cities of the area are Edmonton, Calgary, the heart of the oil district of Alberta, and Regina, Saskatchewan, the center of the potash industry.

(5)The province of British Columbia lies on the Pacific coast of Canada. It consists of rugged mountain ranges, intermountain plateaus, and fertile river valleys. The most important mountain ranges are the Rocky Mountains and the Coast Mountains, which extend the length of the province. The Coast Mountains descend