

# Shipping to Canada: Expand Your International Growth





Vancouver, British Columbia



# Introduction

When Canada Goose CEO Dani Reiss wrote an article for the [Harvard Business Review](#) discussing his 2001 decision to keep his family's Toronto-based outerwear/parka business in Canada, he stressed the importance of having the "Made in Canada" label attached to his company's products, an attribute that, to him, was simply "nonnegotiable."

According to Reiss, his company had been under pressure to join other apparel makers that were relocating to countries with lower production costs. But, he explained, our Canadian heritage and commitment to

manufacturing our parkas domestically are at the heart of our business and brand. Many companies in our industry outsource to offshore manufacturers, but we will keep aggressively investing in producing premium products in Canada, the country from which we draw inspiration.

While maintaining Canadian authenticity was clearly a key driver, there were other reasons behind the decision. For one thing, the company realized that people in Japan and Europe trusted that jackets coming from frigid Canada, made by "people who lived and worked in the coldest places in the world," would be really warm and live up to

expectations. The company would lose that credibility by moving production to China, Vietnam, or some other lower-cost location with a warmer climate.

The company also had access to Canada's diverse talent pool, immigrants in particular, many of whom had expert sewing and craftsmanship skills. Another factor was the willingness of certain local governments —Winnipeg in particular—to invest in training programs that focused on Canada Goose-required skills.

There were lots of reasons behind Canada Goose's decision to remain in Canada. Today those same reasons are helping to drive a surge in international businesses choosing to invest in Canada. Canada regularly appears at the top of lists including "best business climate," "most livable," "best educated," and "most popular work destination." Canada provides an exciting atmosphere in which businesses can thrive, and employees can live amidst the world's most stunning geography and outdoor experiences.

The technology industry provides a good example of Canada's status as a preferred destination. The Greater Toronto Area is often referred to as "[the next Silicon Valley](#)," with research by [CBRE](#) citing the city as the fastest-growing market for technology jobs, outpacing San Francisco's Bay Area, Seattle, and Washington, DC. Reasons behind this surge include the country's favorable immigration policies, strong technology programs offered at regional universities, and federal government investments in developing the country's technology sector.

Today, there are an estimated [73,000 tech companies in Canada](#), and the country has emerged as a global leader in key sectors, including artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing.



## Canada's top 10 tech companies to work for in 2021

- Google
- Microsoft
- Apple
- Sage
- SAP
- Salesforce
- Ericsson – Worldwide
- Accenture
- Infosys
- Intuit

**Source: Glassdoor/ITWorldCanada**

Montreal, Québec







But technology is just one industry in which Canada has established itself on the global playing field. The country is home to the world's eighth-largest [medical device](#) market, a modernized [manufacturing](#) base that accounts for more than 10% of the country's overall GDP, and 37 million consumers who—even before the pandemic took hold—were steadily increasing the volume of purchases made online, with many of those purchases coming from international retailers. The country boasts one of the world's most educated workforces, and the government has shown its willingness to invest in attracting and fostering economic development.

It's no wonder, then, that a growing number of international businesses are looking to Canada with a new appreciation both as a potential source of new customers and as a viable market in which to expand operations.

## Canada's most valuable brands

### Brand

### Category

RBC	Banks
TD Bank	Banks
Bell	Telecom
Lululemon	Apparel
Scotiabank	Banks
Telus	Telecom
Tim Hortons	Fast Food
Rogers	Telecom
BMO	Banks
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	

Source: Kantar Canada, 2020



Whether a business is looking to expand sales to a new consumer base, identify supply chain partners, or shift manufacturing away from Asia, Canada can be an exciting source of growth and opportunity. And with an [experienced logistics partner](#) to help navigate the nuances of the Canadian market, a business can ensure success in its critical supply chain operations.

The following overview highlights aspects of the Canadian market that businesses should consider in [determining if an expansion to Canada](#) is right for them. The overview includes demographic information along with details about Canada's business and trade climate. And critically important, the discussion will highlight steps a business can take to ensure a seamless and successful entry into the Canadian market.



## Canada-at-a-glance: a demographic snapshot

When [Schitt's Creek](#) actress and Ontario-native Annie Murphy felt like celebrating her Emmy award nomination, an award she would go on to win, she did what any good Canadian would do—she traveled to her favorite bakery to indulge in [a butter tart](#). “Do you guys have butter tarts in America?” she asked television host Seth Meyers in an August 2020 [interview](#). When Meyers responded that, in fact, he had never heard of a butter tart, Murphy let him know that “a butter tart is just that—a butter tart—but with brown sugar and it’s delicious.”

In that same interview, Murphy revealed that when she found out she had been nominated for an Emmy in the “best actress in a supporting role” category, she choked on bacon.

Bacon and butter tarts, it turns out, are favorites among many Canadians, and each made the cut in the Reader’s Digest 2021 list of [“10 Must-Try Canadian Dishes \(and the Best Places to Find Them\)”](#). Other “must-try” foods include poutine, the “Caesar” cocktail, BeaverTails (pastry), Canadian pizza, Nanaimo bars, split pea soup, tourtière (meat pie), and ketchup.

Although this may seem like a rather inconsequential bit of Canadian trivia, it points to a bigger issue, which is the need for businesses to have an understanding of the country, including the nuances that make Canada truly unique. A few relevant pieces of information include:

### Population

Canada’s population is [38.2 million people](#), making it the world’s [38th-largest country](#) in terms of population. By way of comparison, the United Kingdom has a population of [68.2 million people](#) and ranks 21<sup>st</sup> in the world, while the United States is third largest, with almost 333 million people. The world’s most populated countries? That would be China with 1.44 billion people, followed by India with 1.39 billion people.





## Top Canadian celebrities

Canada has given the world many things, including some of television, film, and music's most accomplished performers. Entertainers who trace their roots to Canada, according to Reader's Digest and BuzzFeed, include:

- Sandra Oh—  
Nepean, Ontario
- Keanu Reeves—  
Toronto, Ontario
- Celine Dion—  
Charlemagne, Québec
- Shawn Mendes—  
Toronto, Ontario
- Ryan Gosling—  
London, Ontario
- Shay Mitchell—  
Mississauga, Ontario
- Drake—Toronto, Ontario
- Ryan Reynolds—  
Vancouver, British Columbia
- Elliot Page—  
Halifax, Nova Scotia
- Matthew Perry—  
Ottawa, Ontario
- Avril Lavigne—  
Belleville, Ontario
- Jim Carrey—  
Newmarket, Ontario
- Rachel McAdams—  
London, Ontario
- Seth Rogen—  
Vancouver, British Columbia
- Nina Dobrev—Toronto, Ontario
- Michael Bublé—  
Burnaby, British Columbia
- Michael Cera—  
Brampton, Ontario
- Neil Young—Toronto, Ontario
- Alessia Cara—  
Brampton, Ontario
- Justin Bieber—  
Stratford, Ontario
- Alex Trebek—Sudbury, Ontario
- Dan Aykroyd—Ottawa, Ontario
- Catherine O'Hara—  
Toronto, Ontario
- Jason Priestley—  
North Vancouver,  
British Columbia
- Joni Mitchell—  
Fort Macleod, Alberta
- Michael J. Fox—  
Edmonton, Alberta



Toronto, Ontario





## Diversity

What exactly does Canada's population look like? Two words to describe the people of Canada could be "increasingly diverse," an attribute Prime Minister Justin Trudeau refers to as "[Canada's Strength](#)."

According to the [Council on Foreign Relations \(CFR\)](#), "Canada has built a reputation over the last half century of welcoming immigrants and valuing multiculturalism," with foreign-born individuals accounting for roughly one-fifth of the total population. As CFR notes, this represents "one of the highest ratios for industrialized Western countries." During 2021 alone, Canada expects to welcome more than [400,000 new permanent residents](#) from countries that include:

- India—100,000 people (Immigration from India grew by almost 118% during the 2015–2019 period.)
- China—35,500 people
- Philippines—33,000 people
- Nigeria—14,805 people
- Pakistan—12,700 people
- United States—12,700 people
- Syria—12,000 people

## Language

Canada's rich diversity is reflected in the number of languages spoken throughout the country.

The country maintains two official languages—English and French. More than 75% of Canadians list English as their first language, with almost 23% citing French. Francophones can be found in every province and territory, with strong concentrations in Québec (85.4%) and New Brunswick (31.8%). The province of Québec, in fact, considers French its sole official language. Through the [Charter of the French Language](#), the provincial government has established strict language-related rules for businesses, including packaging requirements for items sold or advertised in Québec.

Beyond English and French, the Canadian government reports more than 20% of its population speak an "immigrant language," at home. [The Top five immigrant languages](#) include:

- Cantonese
- Mandarin
- Punjabi
- Tagalog
- Arabic



Canada also has a sizable Indigenous peoples population, which in 2016 included roughly 1.67 million individuals, or 4.89% of the total population. The Canadian Constitution recognizes [three separate groups of Indigenous Peoples](#), also referred to as Aboriginal Peoples. Those groups include:

- First Nations include all Aboriginal Peoples who are not Métis or Inuit. According to [Statistics Canada](#), there are more than 630 First Nations communities in Canada, representing more than 50 nations and 50 languages.
- [Métis](#) Peoples can be found in all provinces and territories, but most Métis live in Ontario and the western provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan).
- [Inuit](#) are the original inhabitants of the North American Arctic. In Canada, the Inuit comprise 85% of the population of the [Nunavut](#) territory.

## World's most educated—and friendliest—population

Not only are Canadians smart, they are also nice.

In 2018 rankings by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) put Canada at the [top of its list](#) with regard to “adult education level,” defined as “people between the ages of 25 and 64 who have completed some kind of tertiary education in the form of a two-year degree, four-year degree, or vocational program”. Canada’s smart population topped the list at 56.27%. Japan came in second at 50.50%, followed by Israel (49.90%), Korea (46.86%), United Kingdom (45.96%), and the United States 45.67%).

As impressive as that ranking may be, Canada’s inclusion on the list of [“world’s friendliest countries”](#) is surely a source of great pride. This list is compiled by InterNations and cited Canadians’ “friendly attitudes” and “ease of making friends.”

## World’s nicest people...

**An assessment of the Canadian population from comedian Jim Gaffigan:**

“...Everything about Canada is polite. Even the national flag. Most national flags have all these macho things, like Mexico has an eagle eating a snake and the United States has the STARS AND STRIPES, but Canada’s like, ‘just put a leaf up there...’”

As a result, Gaffigan continued, “everyone likes Canadians.”

—Jim Gaffigan  
The Pale Tourist



## Canadians are very proud of their country!

Canada may have a comparatively small population to the U.S., but its 38 million residents are quite proud of their country—and quite willing to support local brands whenever they have the chance. In 2020 research by the [Retail Council of Canada](#) found a whopping 90% of consumers said that “buying from a retailer in Canada is key,” with 83% agreeing that buying items made in Canada is very important.

But in terms of what they love about their country, 2019 research by the [Association for Canadian Studies](#) asked residents to identify specific elements about which they are most proud. Top responses included:

- Universal health care—73%
- Canadian passport—70%
- Canadian flag—67%
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom—65%
- National anthem—58%
- Armed forces—53%
- Multiculturalism—41%

Also making the list were the Toronto Raptors, with 27% of respondents calling the basketball team “a very important” source of pride in Canada. Coffee and donut retailer Tim Hortons was considered “very important” by 21%, followed by Air Canada (20%), the Toronto Maple Leafs (20%), the Toronto Blue Jays (19%), and the Montréal Canadiens (17%).



## Canadians like their beer...

**Something else Canadians are proud of is their beer!**

During 2020, the country was home to more than 1,200 breweries, an 8% increase from 2019.

Although breweries can be found across the country, most are concentrated in Ontario (350), Québec, (240), British Columbia (200), Alberta (120), Nova Scotia (60), and New Brunswick (60).

Canadians are very loyal to local brands, with domestic sales accounting for 85% of total beer sales during 2020.

### Top-rated Canadian beers include:

- ✓ Pêché Mortel—Bourbon—Brasserie Dieu du Ciel!—Québec
- ✓ La Fin Du Monde—Unibroue—Québec
- ✓ Nectarous—Four Winds Brewing—British Columbia
- ✓ Sartori Harvest IPA—Driftwood Brewery—British Columbia



## World's second-largest country size-wise

Canada's population has lots of room to spread out, as the country is the world's second largest in terms of geographic area. The country accounts for [9.984 million square kilometers](#), or 3.8 million square miles, which means a population density of just [four people](#) per square kilometer, or 60 acres per resident!

Another way to look at it...Canada's population is 38 million people. California's population is 39.5 million people. Imagine the entire population of California being the sole inhabitants of the United States.

But even with all that space, most Canadians—more than 70%—live within 100 kilometers of the U.S. border. And more than 86% of the population (32 million people) [live in 4 of the 13 provinces and territories \(10 provinces 3 territories\)](#): Ontario (38.6%), Québec (22.6 per cent), British Columbia (13.5%), and Alberta (11.6%).

A big part of the reason most Canadians reside in southern regions of the country? About 80% of the country's land is uninhabited due largely to geographic and climate factors, which have been called "[rather unfriendly to humans](#)."

## 10 provinces, 3 territories, and lots of unsettled regions

Canada is composed of [ten distinct provinces and three territories](#), each of which maintains unique characteristics and attributes. Many non-Canadians make the mistake of thinking of the country as a single entity and drawing broad conclusions about the Canadian population. "All Canadians love ice hockey" is a sentiment often heard, along with "Canada is always freezing."

But just as a U.S. swimwear manufacturer would probably not consider Anchorage or Duluth to be top markets, neither should businesses make assumptions about Canada. Instead, a business should commit the time to learning about the different regions of the country to determine whether or not its products are a good "fit" for those regions. The Canadian government divides the nation into [five distinct regions](#):



Region	Province/ Territory	Capital City	Key Economic Sectors/Attributes
<b>Atlantic Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• Prince Edward Island</li> <li>• Nova Scotia</li> <li>• New Brunswick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. John's</li> <li>• Charlottetown</li> <li>• Halifax</li> <li>• Fredericton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Farming</li> <li>• Forestry</li> <li>• Mining</li> </ul>
<b>Central Canada</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Québec</li> <li>• Ontario</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Québec City</li> <li>• Toronto</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home to more than half of Canada's population</li> <li>• Seat of federal government</li> <li>• Most Québec residents speak French as their first language</li> <li>• Tech, industrial, and manufacturing "heartland"</li> <li>• Nation's financial centre</li> </ul>
<b>Prairie Provinces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manitoba</li> <li>• Saskatchewan</li> <li>• Alberta</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winnipeg</li> <li>• Regina</li> <li>• Edmonton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farming</li> <li>• Mining</li> <li>• Hydroelectric power generation</li> <li>• Oil and gas production</li> </ul>
<b>West Coast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Columbia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victoria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shipping</li> <li>• Forestry</li> <li>• Mining</li> <li>• Gateway to Asia-Pacific</li> </ul>
<b>North</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nunavut</li> <li>• Northwest Territories</li> <li>• Yukon Territory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iqaluit</li> <li>• Yellowknife</li> <li>• Whitehorse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupies one-third of Canada's land mass, with a population of just 100,000 people</li> <li>• Mining</li> <li>• Oil and gas development</li> <li>• "Land of the Midnight Sun"</li> </ul>



## British Columbia is so big...

Canada's provinces and territories cover an area of 3.855 million square miles, making Canada the world's second-largest country in terms of geographic size. But several provinces and territories are larger than many countries.

For example, British Columbia is Canada's fifth-largest province in terms of geographic area. At 364,800 square miles, this single province is larger than countries including:

- New Zealand (103,483 square miles)
- The United Kingdom (93,627 square miles)
- Republic of Ireland (27,133 square miles)
- Thailand (198,117 square miles)

Other provinces—Nunavut, Québec, Ontario, and the Northwest Territories—are even bigger. Nunavut, for example, is larger than France in terms of area.



Yoho National Park, British Columbia





## Doing business in Canada —a few considerations

The Canadian dollar is called the [loonie](#). For real. The currency is [controlled](#) by the [Bank of Canada](#) and regarded as one of the world's [reserve currencies](#) due to its stability and reliability. But because a solitary loon appears on the \$1 gold coin, quick-witted Canadians dubbed it “the loonie,” and the name has stuck. The \$2 dollar coin, which features a polar bear, is called the “[toonie](#).”

This is one of many “uniquely Canadian” attributes a company should be aware of before entering the Canadian market. Additional considerations include:

### Sales tax system

Just about every product bought and sold in Canada is assessed a 5% federal Goods and Services Tax (GST). In addition, goods may be assessed a “provincial tax,” depending on final destination. Some provinces choose to combine their provincial tax with the GST, thereby allowing the federal government to collect the entire amount up front. The combined tax is known as the “harmonized sales tax (HST).” [Prince Edward Island](#), for example, collects a 15% HST on eligible goods entering the province. Of that amount, 5% is the GST collected by the federal government, and the remaining 10% is claimed by the province.

Following is an [overview](#) of the tax structure in each province and territory, as reported by the Retail Council of Canada:

Province	GST	PST	HST
Alberta	5%	0	0
British Columbia	5%	7%	0
Manitoba	5%	7%	0
New Brunswick	0	0	15%
Newfoundland and Labrador	0	0	15%
Northwest Territories	5%	0	0
Nova Scotia	0	0	15%
Nunavut	5%	0	0
Ontario	0	0	13%
Prince Edward Island	0	0	15%
Québec*	5%	9.975% (QST)	0
Saskatchewan	5%	6%	0
Yukon	5%	0	0

\*In [Québec](#), responsibility for collecting the GST/HST falls to [Revenu Québec](#). Consumers must pay the 5% federal GST plus a 9.975% Québec Sales Tax (QST).

Businesses that collect the GST/HST are required to register with the government and receive a registration number. Businesses are responsible for keeping abreast of all tax policy changes and for ensuring that correct taxes are collected and paid.



## Corporate tax rate

Canada imposes a federal corporate rate of [15%](#). Businesses are also subject to corporate taxes assessed by each province and territory.

By way of comparison, the United Kingdom is scheduled to increase its corporate tax rate to 25%, effective April 2023.

In the United States, the tax rate was reduced from 35% to 21% as part of a comprehensive 2017 tax overhaul.

## World-class infrastructure system—plus 3,300 miles of ice roads

The [World Bank](#) gives Canada an infrastructure score of 3.75 out of 5.0 and ranks the country 21st best in the world. For purposes of this ranking, infrastructure is defined as “the quality of trade and transport-related infrastructure (e.g., ports, railroads, roads, and information technology).”

Fast, dependable infrastructure is high on the priority list for companies looking to build new facilities or expand their customer bases. The Canadian government has long understood this and is proud of the country's world-class ports, airports, highways, and railways. A brief snapshot, as provided by the [Canadian government](#), includes:

## Trucking

More than 70% of domestic freight traveling to and within Canada is transported by truck, with the remaining 30% transported via rail. Air and marine modes mostly accommodate international shipments.

Canada's trucking industry consists of a significant number of small for-hire carriers and owner-operators, along with some medium- and large-size for-hire companies that operate fleets of trucks and offer comprehensive logistics services.

Trucking companies are mostly located in four provinces:

- Ontario—44%
- Québec—18.1%
- Alberta—14.1%
- British Columbia—12.9%

The trucking industry offers three main types of activities:

- For-hire services that fall into two categories:
  - “Less-than truckload” (LTL), in which freight from different shippers is transported in a single truck.
  - “Truckload” (TL), in which a shipment from a single shipper occupies an entire truck.
- Courier operators that specialize in transporting parcels. As of December 2019, 16,900 companies focused mostly on courier or messenger services.
- Private carriers, such as Walmart and Costco, that maintain their own fleets.



Montreal, Québec

Many industries choose to outsource their transportation and logistics needs to companies that can provide transportation, warehousing, storage, shipment consolidation, packing, labeling, customs clearance, and international freight forwarding. Courier companies, in particular, have been especially sought after in helping businesses meet manufacturers' just-in-time needs and small-shipment requirements. "Demand for their [courier] services have increased," the government assessment [notes](#), "as a result of more stringent regulations and security measures for international cargo, as well as growing complexity in managing the supply chain."

During 2019, [the busiest U.S.-Canada truck crossing points](#) included:

Border Crossing	U.S.–Canada Location	<u>Two-Way Truck Traffic</u>
<a href="#">Ambassador Bridge</a>	Detroit, Michigan—Windsor, Ontario	2,969,642 crossings
<a href="#">Blue Water Bridge</a>	Port Huron, Michigan—Sarnia, Ontario	1,530,124 crossings
<a href="#">Peace Bridge</a>	Buffalo, New York—Fort Erie, Ontario	1,020,070 crossings
<a href="#">Pacific Highway</a>	Blaine, Washington—Surrey, British Columbia	767,304 crossings
<a href="#">Lewiston-Queenston Bridge</a>	Lewiston, New York—Queenston, Ontario	814,952 crossings
<a href="#">Champlain/Lacolle</a>	Champlain, New York—St. Bernard de Lacolle, Québec	558,796 crossings
<a href="#">Pembina/Emerson</a>	Pembina, North Dakota—Emerson, Manitoba	422,248 crossings

## Rail

Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways are the two main [railways](#) that serve the national market, offering services such as intermodal transportation, logistics, and brokerage services. There are also 36 short-line and regional railways operating in Canada.

## Ports

[Six major ports](#) accounted for 85% of international container traffic during 2019: Vancouver (42%), Montréal (12%), Prince Rupert (9%) and Sept-Îles (8%), Québec (8%), and Saint John (7%).

## Air

Air transportation is mostly used for moving high-value and perishable goods, or to expedite orders on short notice. Eleven air carriers serve Canada's North, which is highly reliant on air transportation for year-round supply. Some of the 26 largest airports in the country handle approximately 90% of all passenger traffic as well as freight. In terms of cargo (in 1,000 metric tons), [Canada's largest airports](#) include:

- Toronto Pearson International—465
- Vancouver International—285
- Montréal—Pierre Elliott Trudeau International—121
- Hamilton International—97
- Calgary International—88
- Montréal—Mirabel International—83
- Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International—58
- Edmonton International—26
- Halifax Stanfield International—25

## Ice roads

A uniquely Canadian form of infrastructure includes the more than [3,300 miles](#) of ice roads that provide vital transportation links for businesses and residents located in the northern parts of the country, specifically the Northwest Territories. The network of ice roads emerges when lakes and rivers freeze, allowing ground access to remote towns and villages that are only accessible via air or water for most of the year.

In recent years, though, concerns have risen about the effect of climate change on Canada's ice roads. According to [the New York Times](#), roads have been freezing later and melting earlier, "drastically reducing the precious window of time that isolated residents rely on to restock a year's worth of vital supplies, or simply to take a road trip."



## Trans-Canada highway—world's fourth longest

Canada is home to the world's fourth- longest highway in the world. The Trans-Canada Highway measures nearly 5,000 miles, crosses six time zones, and passes through all ten provinces.





## Market nuances— three key takeaways

- Prices tend to be higher in Canada, both because of the comparatively small population and the difficulty in reaching geographically large—and, in parts, challenging—regions of the country.
- Some large global transportation providers tend to include Canadian service as an “add-on” to overall U.S. service agreements. As a result, Canadian transportation strategies are often not as thoughtful or innovative as they could be, meaning businesses often pay more for lackluster service.
- Most Canadian companies offer regional service, rather than comprehensive coverage, to all provinces and territories. This often means that a business with customers located across the country will need to enlist multiple regional providers, with each responsible for a specific geographic territory.

**[An alternative to this, as explained in this overview’s “Getting Started” section, is Purolator Inc. Purolator stands apart from most competitors in its ability to offer comprehensive transportation and logistics services to every province and territory, including to the country’s most rural and remote regions.]**



## Canada and international trade

In December 2020, the [OECD](#) published an economic update that showed Canada's economy had contracted by 5.4%—a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada's performance was worse than that of the United States, which posted a 3.7% contraction. While the report projected a 3.5% growth rate for the Canadian economy during 2021, the broader implication is the long-term effect of the pandemic on the Canadian economy.

In response, the government has resolved to use all resources at its disposal—including global trade opportunities—to persevere and regain Canada's economic footing. "Trade remains crucial to the prosperity of Canadians, accounting for nearly two-thirds of our national economy and supporting 3.3 million Canadian jobs before COVID-19," Mary Ng, Canada's Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion, and International, said in [releasing Canada's 2020 trade overview](#). "We are recognized globally as a strong, stable, and reliable trading nation and one of the best places in the world to invest and start a business," Ng added.

A snapshot of Canada's current trade environment includes:

### United States and the European Union (Pre-Brexit) are top trade partners

During 2019, Canada's top trade partners for both import and export goods included the United States, the European Union, and China. Within the European Union, Germany and the United Kingdom were Canada's largest trading partners.





## Value of Canadian Goods EXPORTS by Partner (2019)

Exports	Value (\$B)	Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Growth, 2010–2019 (%)
Total	595	1.7	4.4
United States	443	2.5	4.6
European Union	50	7.7	3.3
China	24	-16	6.3
Japan	13	-2.8	3.2
Mexico	8.4	-12	2.5
South Korea	5.8	-5.9	4.3

- Exports to China were adversely affected by various trade measures that impacted sales of Canadian canola, soybeans, meat, and other food products.
- Exports to the United Kingdom have been affected by the provisional application of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which became effective in 2017.

## Value of Canadian Goods IMPORTS by Partner (2019)

Exports	Value (\$B)	Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Growth, 2010–2019 (%)
<b>Total</b>	614	1.1	4.5
<b>United States</b>	392	0.3	4.7
<b>European Union</b>	66	4.2	5.6
<b>China</b>	47	1.1	6.6
<b>Japan</b>	12	-2.4	2.4
<b>Mexico</b>	20	-2.0	4.4
<b>South Korea</b>	8.5	2.4	6.8



## What does Canada import and export?

**Exports:** Energy products, motor vehicles and parts, and consumer goods accounted for almost 47% of Canada's goods exported during 2019.

**Imports:** Consumer goods, motor vehicles and parts, and electronic and electrical parts accounted for more than 50% of total imports during 2019.

domestic product. Through these agreements, Canadian businesses have access to 1.5 billion consumers around the world.

More notable FTAs include:

### Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)

On July 1, 2020, a revised version of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect among Canada, the United States, and Mexico. NAFTA had been Canada's most consequential trade agreement, accounting for almost [70%](#) of Canada's total global trade during 2018. The agreement, which took effect in 1995, did not reflect 21st Century business practices, including eCommerce, digital trade, and intellectual property rights.

The [Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement](#) replaces NAFTA, and while it maintains most core NAFTA provisions, the agreement also modernizes trade policies and seeks to reduce red tape and harmonize processes where possible.

Partner Countries: United States and Mexico

### Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement ([CETA](#)) took effect on September 21, 2017, and benefits all participants with reduced tariffs and greater market access. Through CETA, Canadian goods are exempt from 98% of European Union tariffs.

Partner Countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom.\*

## World's largest maple syrup producer

- Canada produces 85% of the world's maple syrup, with 2019 production of 13.2 million gallons.
- Syrup-producing provinces include Québec, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.
- Québec was responsible for 91% of total Canadian production, with much of that production exported to markets including Germany, the UK, and Japan.

**Source:** Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

## 15 Free Trade Agreements—including two during the pandemic

Free trade agreements (FTAs) encourage businesses to expand to international markets by offering preferential access and conditions. In most free trade agreements this includes significant reductions in tariff rates or duty-free status for eligible goods.

Canada currently has 15 free trade agreements in force, which span 51 countries and 60% of the world's gross

\*The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union in 2020 and has negotiated a separate free trade agreement with Canada.

### Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement (Canada-UK TCA)

Following the United Kingdom's (UK) withdrawal from the European Union, UK businesses were at risk of losing access to CETA benefits. In response, the [Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement](#) was negotiated, which preserves preferential trade benefits for Canadian and UK businesses. The Canada-UK TCA entered into force on April 1, 2021.

Partner Countries: The United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland).

### Canada's post-Brexit relationship with the United Kingdom

- The UK is Canada's [most important commercial partner](#) in Europe and its fifth largest globally.
- The UK is Canada's third most important source of foreign direct investment after the United States and the Netherlands.
- Currently more than 700 UK firms have a presence in Canada.
- The UK is Canada's second most important destination for investment abroad, with more than 1,100 UK firms owned or controlled by Canadian interests.
- Canada and the UK have strong partnerships in science, technology, and innovation, with many links between universities, researchers, funding agencies, and companies in each country.

### Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

[The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership](#) is a trade agreement among Canada and 10 other countries in the Asia-Pacific: Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam.

According to the [BBC](#), the agreement was enacted in 2018 and provides access to 500 million people. Participating countries generate more than 13% of the world's income. In early 2021, the United Kingdom applied to become a CPTPP member, and that application remains pending.

### Additional Free Trade Agreements:

- Canada-European Free Trade Association (EFTA)
- Canada-Chile
- Canada-Colombia
- Canada-Costa Rica
- Canada-Honduras
- Canada-Panama
- Canada-Peru
- Canada-Israel
- Canada-Jordan
- Canada-Korea
- Canada-Ukraine

(Source: [InvestCanada](#))





## Customs clearance—an unavoidable step in the process

Every product crossing the Canadian border must undergo a review by [Canada Border Services Agency \(CBSA\)](#). The good news is CBSA has significantly upgraded its processing system in recent years such that the compliance process can be a relatively smooth process for organized shippers that successfully meet all [paperwork, documentation, and monetary requirements](#).

But understanding precise requirements can be confusing, with any incomplete or incorrect submission likely to result in shipments held at the border and, potentially, the imposition of punitive fines. In addition, customs requirements frequently change, often with little advance notice or explanation. To ensure full and accurate compliance, many companies choose to enlist an experienced customs broker to manage the clearance process on their behalf.

While CBSA maintains a [list of all licensed customs brokers](#) on its website, many offer only regional expertise, and like most industries, some have better performance records than others. It's important then, for a business to do its due diligence and research a customs broker's performance record before entering into any type of agreement.

Also important to note, an individual shipper maintains liability for all information submitted to CBSA, including information submitted by a customs broker on its behalf.



## Top reasons for customs delays...

### Incomplete documentation

- Incomplete commercial invoice
- Failure to complete invoicing requirements
- Missing documentation from other government agencies

### Inaccurate documentation

- Incorrect tariff numbers
- Incorrect country of origin
- Inaccurate product description

### Illegible documents

Source: Livingston





Regardless of whether a business chooses to enlist a customs broker, any business bringing goods into Canada must follow several specific steps. As outlined by [CBSA](#), these steps include:

**1 Obtain a business number.**

All businesses or individuals importing commercial goods into Canada will need to obtain a [Business Number \(BN\)](#) issued by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), which is required to open an import/export account.

**2 Identify the goods you want to import.**

A business should gather as much information as possible about its Canada-bound goods. This includes descriptive literature, product composition information, and, whenever possible, product samples. This information will be crucial when it comes time to determine each product's tariff classification. The tariff classification number is used to determine the rate of duty applied to a good and to determine eligibility for free trade agreement benefits.

**3 Determine if you will use the services of a licensed customs broker.**

As mentioned above, many businesses decide to enlist a customs broker to manage the customs process on their behalf. But as CBSA points out, "It is important to remember that you are ultimately responsible for the accounting documentation, payment of duties and taxes, and subsequent corrections such as redetermination of classification, origin, and valuation even if you use the services of a broker." A broker's services typically include:

- Obtaining the release of imported goods
- Paying any applicable duties
- Obtaining, preparing, and presenting or transmitting the necessary documents or data
- Maintaining records
- Responding to any CBSA concerns after payment

**4 Determine the country of origin for the goods you are importing.**

Identify the country where your goods originate. This does not simply mean the country from which you had the product shipped. Instead, country of origin may include where individual parts of the product are from and the country in which the product underwent final assembly.

**5 Ensure the goods you wish to import are permitted into Canada.**

Certain goods are not eligible for importation into Canada. According to CBSA, this includes "the obvious such as child pornography and hate propaganda, as well as less obvious items such as used mattresses and some used automobiles." [Other prohibited items](#) include goods made by prison labor, used or secondhand motor vehicles, and "white phosphorous matches."

**6 Determine whether the goods you intend to import are subject to any permits, restrictions, or regulations.**

- More than a dozen government agencies have a role in determining which goods are eligible to be brought into the country. These agencies, known as "[other government departments](#)," or "[OGDs](#)," range from Health Canada, which oversees imports of medical-related products, to Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), which oversees energy efficiency regulations for certain electrical products.
- A shipper—or its customs broker—is responsible for determining OGDs with jurisdiction over the products to be imported and fulfilling all documentation and permit requirements.

## 7 Classify your goods.

Once you are certain the goods are eligible to be imported, you will need to determine the correct tariff classification number. The classification number, along with a product's country of origin, will determine the rate of duty that must be paid. Most countries, including Canada, use the international Harmonized System (HS) as the basis of their classification system. HS codes are six digits and serve as common identifiers across all countries. Canada supplements the HS code with four additional digits as listed in the Canadian Customs Tariff.

## 8 Determine duties and taxes.

The above is intended as a basic overview of steps required in preparing goods for the importation process. There are many details not included in this overview, but suffice it to say, the process is exacting and time-consuming. While many businesses successfully manage customs compliance using internal resources, options are available for companies that prefer to outsource the responsibility to a third-party customs broker or qualified logistics provider.





# Getting Started

You're sold! You've done your homework and made the decision to expand to the Canadian market—but now what?

In fact, taking the first step can be the most difficult part of entering an international market. The “not knowing where to start” is among the [top reasons](#) businesses give for not pursuing export opportunities, along with other reasons, including:

- Exporting is too complicated.
- What if I don't get paid?
- Exporting is too risky.
- My domestic market is secure—no need to export.
- I'm too small to go global.
- I don't know how to find international customers.
- I have no idea where to turn for help.

Alas, if you've experienced any of these thoughts, it's good to know you're not alone. But rest assured, there is plenty of help available from a variety of sources.

## Where to turn—U.S. businesses

A good starting point for U.S. businesses is to download a copy of [“A Basic Guide to Exporting.”](#) Published by the U.S. Commercial Service, which is a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce, “A Basic Guide to Exporting” provides comprehensive information about the export process, and is considered a “must read” for any business interested in pursuing export opportunities.



Calgary, Alberta



Once a business has a basic understanding of the export process, it can then look to other government resources for additional information and assistance. This includes the critically important [Export.gov](#), which serves as a gateway to the trade promotion and export finance programs of the federal government. Administered by the [International Trade Administration](#), Export.gov is a collaborative effort with the [19 federal agencies](#) that offer export assistance programs and services. Export.gov is the go-to source for information on key topics, including:

- ✓ Export [basics](#)
- ✓ Access to [webinars](#) and [videos](#)
- ✓ Access to Country Commercial Guides, which include detailed market overviews for more than 125 different countries. The [“Doing Business in Canada”](#) guide, for example, provides a detailed overview of Canadian market conditions, identifies top markets for U.S. businesses, and offers an assessment of current political and economic conditions.
- ✓ Information about [export finance programs](#)
- ✓ Access to [local trade specialists](#)

The [United States Embassy in Canada](#) is another source of expertise. Among its many services, trade personnel can help U.S. businesses identify trade opportunities, find Canadian trading partners, develop an entry strategy, and launch their businesses.

## Where to turn—United Kingdom businesses

Canada and the United Kingdom have extensive historical ties, including a roughly [150-year period](#) when Canada was under direct English rule. Although Canada today is a fully sovereign country, it remains a part of the British Commonwealth and recognizes Elizabeth II as [monarch](#), a role that is essentially ceremonial.

With these close historical ties serving as a strong basis, the two countries have long promoted opportunities for growth and investment. United Kingdom-based businesses looking to enter the Canadian market can start with the Institute of Export and International Trade, which publishes a guide, [“Doing Business in Canada.”](#) The guide provides a basic overview of the Canadian market and identifies issues associated with market entry, risk management, and cultural matters.



Another source of assistance is [the Office of the British High Commission in Ottawa](#), which offers numerous services, including helping members of the business community identify potential business partners and opportunities in the Canadian market.

## A good entry plan starts with a solid logistics strategy

An aspect of operating in the Canadian market often overlooked by international businesses is the need for a solid Canada-based logistics strategy. U.S. businesses, for example, often assume Canadian transportation and distribution processes are similar to U.S. practices and that logistics strategies that work well in the United States can be replicated in the Canadian market with similar results. And shipments arriving from Europe or Asia are often routed via a “globally recognized” transportation provider on the assumption that companies of that size “must” have strong capabilities in the Canadian market.

Unfortunately, that’s not how it works. Canada has its own unique requirements, and unless a logistics strategy is built to accommodate those nuances, it will never produce the desired levels of efficiency and performance.

It’s critical for a business to [choose a logistics provider with experience](#) in the Canadian market and the capabilities needed to ensure success. A few considerations include:

Transit time and Canada-specific expertise. Many U.S. companies are unpleasantly surprised to receive transit time estimates of 10–14 days for regular ground service to Canada. This is roughly twice the time it takes for deliveries within the U.S. and does not allow U.S. businesses to meet Canadian manufacturing schedules or consumer expectations. Why does it take so long? A few reasons include:

Most U.S. logistics companies have limited access in the Canadian market. For most U.S. providers, service capabilities end at the Canadian border. Once shipments pass through customs, they are often handed off to Canadian carriers. Such handoffs take time and often require time-consuming diversions to a Canadian distribution centre for unloading and sorting before being reloaded for delivery within Canada. Such carrier transfers can add days to a shipment’s transit time, and be problematic for companies pressed to meet just-in-time delivery requirements.

Lack of comprehensive intra-Canada service. Once a shipment is transferred to a Canadian provider, it is possible that shipment will have to be handed off again, resulting in additional delivery delays. This is because most Canadian companies offer only regional service, and shipments in need of service beyond a certain geographic point will be transferred to a different provider. For companies with delivery needs across Canada, this often means enlisting a patchwork of regional providers, with each responsible for deliveries to a certain geographic area.

- Inventory sourcing. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of global supply chains, which is why many companies are now considering relocating parts of their manufacturing processes away from China, often to North America. In doing so, businesses operating in Canada may find they have options with regard to where inventory is sourced.

This is especially true for U.S. businesses. Direct ground service from the United States can make it possible to eliminate Canadian warehouses and distribution centres and instead source inventory from the United States. As logistic capabilities have improved, certain companies are able to offer solutions that can guarantee on-time deliveries within Canada that enable U.S.-based sourcing. This allows companies to manage their cross-border supply chains more efficiently while also achieving significant cost savings.

- Scope of service. Today's logistics providers can offer a range of service options that can be customized to fit a business's precise needs. If you find that a logistics provider is forcing you to adapt your needs to meet its capabilities, it's a good sign that the carrier is not up to the job.

- Technology. Choose a logistics provider with its own customized technology solution that integrates directly with customers' internal systems. This allows for an expedited onboarding process and allows several critical functions, including real-time access to warehouse and transportation updates, and extensive reporting capabilities.
- Expedited services. Expedited or "[mission critical](#)" services have become an increasingly attractive solution for ensuring guaranteed deliveries of time-sensitive parts shipments, especially in meeting just-in-time delivery requirements. An expedited solution can be customized to meet a shipper's specific needs, with delivery available on a global basis. In Canada, expedited services are especially helpful for deliveries to remote regions, which lack access to major highway networks.

Although expedited services have traditionally been associated with "rush" or high-value shipments, certain sectors—auto, health care, tech—have incorporated this solution into their regular supply chains because of its guaranteed delivery times and high levels of customer service.

- Experience. There is no substitute for experience. And with so many providers from which to choose, it's essential for a business to carefully research a logistics provider before signing on the dotted line. An experienced provider will have documented success in the Canadian market and understand the nuances of your industry. This will include a broad range of logistics solutions that have been used with other customers, along with ideas about how to efficiently address your specific issues.
- Customization and collaboration. It's essential to view your logistics provider as a partner. You want to build a relationship based on mutual understanding of your business objectives, priorities, and needs. This information sharing can only happen through many, many direct conversations and ongoing open lines of communication. A qualified logistics provider will use this information to create a customized solution to meet your specific needs.





## About Purolator

Ontario-based Purolator Inc. is a leading integrated freight, package, and logistics solution provider for shipments moving within Canada, between the United States and Canada, and between Canada and essentially anywhere in the world.

As a company with its roots firmly planted in Canada, Purolator has invested deeply in its Canadian network. For example, Canada's extensive courier network can reach 99% of all Canadian postal codes, meaning just about all shipments are considered "in network." This eliminates the need to enlist multiple regional providers since essentially all deliveries are handled—from start to finish—via a Purolator solution.

In addition to its courier network, Purolator offers a full range of truckload, LTL, air, and "hybrid" solutions that can accommodate essentially any delivery need. The company is proud of its informal "Tell us where it needs to go and we'll get it there" mantra.

International shippers rely on Purolator for highly efficient air and marine solutions for shipments originating in Europe, Asia, or any other international location. Shipments arrive in Canada and immediately enter Purolator's network for ground delivery—either via the company's freight or courier network—for final delivery.

## Purolator by the numbers—unmatched level of Canadian assets

- ✓ 98% on-time rate
- ✓ 99% access to Canadian postal codes
- ✓ 240 drop boxes
- ✓ 114 shipping centres
- ✓ 1,300 customer access points
- ✓ 914 authorized shipping agents
- ✓ 175 operations facilities
- ✓ 2,760 courier vehicles  
(including more than 550 hybrid vehicles)
- ✓ 460,000 packages delivered daily

**Learn more about Purolator's Canadian footprint and how it's reducing its greenhouse gas emissions.**



## Purolator International— U.S. subsidiary with unmatched Canadian access

Within the United States, the company's non-asset-based subsidiary Purolator International leverages its deep distribution network to identify the ideal service option for a shipper's specific situation. Key capabilities include:

- ✓ Access to “best-possible” solutions, versus competitors that offer “best-we-can-do” options.
- ✓ Flexible pickups that accommodate a facility's production schedule.
- ✓ Ability to place courier and freight shipments on the same truck, thereby eliminating the need for separate pickups.
- ✓ Consolidation services that add efficiency and improve transit time.
- ✓ Special handling for shipments requiring temperature monitoring and secure loading and packaging.
- ✓ Direct service to the Canadian border, with most shipments arriving on the same day as U.S. pickup.
- ✓ Express air services for [critical, time-sensitive shipments](#).
- ✓ All customs documentation pre-filed to minimize risk of delays. In addition, consolidated shipments clear customs as a single unit, which reduces clearance time and processing fees.
- ✓ Once a U.S.-based shipment arrives in Canada, it is immediately inducted into Purolator's Canadian freight or courier network. As a result 99% of deliveries are made within two days.

## 2020 by the numbers

Retail shipments up **34%**

Technology shipments up **21%**

Healthcare shipments up **16%**

50M packages processed during the holiday season—**30%** increase from 2019

Home deliveries up over **70%**—Delivery stops up **35%**

## Single-Source Provider

Purolator leverages the power of its U.S. and Canadian networks, along with its access to international air and marine providers, to offer businesses the peace of mind of a single-source solution. The company's industry-leading network of vehicles, assets, and capabilities across Canada enables highly innovative solutions without shipments having to leave its network. This offers many benefits, including:

- ✓ On-time delivery guarantees.
- ✓ 99% of deliveries are from within the company's “closed loop” network. Since shipments never leave Purolator's network, there is less risk of theft or mishandling.
- ✓ Greater visibility with “control tower” oversight of all parts of the logistics strategy.
- ✓ Consistency of service.



## Conclusion

What happens when you combine world-class universities and research organizations, a welcoming business environment, an entrepreneurial spirit, an educated workforce, access to skilled foreign workers, a solid infrastructure system, and access to venture funding and public funding grants? Well, you get Toronto, and Montréal, and Vancouver, and Halifax, and dozens of other Canadian cities that have established themselves as vibrant hubs of key industries, including technology, life sciences, medical devices, and manufacturing.

As a 2018 article in [Forbes](#) pointed out, Canada used to be regarded as “the business world’s best-kept secret.” But the secret didn’t last long, as Canada’s fingerprints were increasingly found on innovations, especially in artificial intelligence, clean technology, and health care.

Today, Canada is regularly cited as a top destination for businesses looking to expand. Earlier this year, [U.S. News & World Report](#) gave Canada the number one ranking on its “Overall Best Countries” list. In doing so, the country was celebrated for its multiculturalism, plentiful trade agreements, and high standard of living. Meanwhile, Calgary, Vancouver, and Toronto ranked fifth, sixth, and seventh on the [Global Liveability Index 2019](#) list of “10 most livable cities.” The cities received high marks for stability, health care, culture, education, and infrastructure.

As the rest of the world catches on, Canadians—often considered among the world’s most polite people—will no doubt have the welcome mat out. After all, there’s plenty of room, eh?





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## Are you ready for the future of delivery?

Get in touch with us today to find out how Purolator can help your business prepare for tomorrow.

[Contact us](#)