

Oh, Canada! As much as we just love to get away we also love to come home. Read these hints before you leave and take this Inside Scoop with you. It's packed with hints to help you ease back home.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Why is it when I am in Rome I'd give an eye to be at home? But when on native earth I be, my soul is sick for Italy?

Excerpt: *On Being a Woman*
by Dorothy Parker

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- insurance coverage and types such as our Visitors Emergency Medical Plan
- destination and weather travel alerts (don't panic!)
- clarifying government re-entry information you must know such as your limits and exemptions.

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Inside Scoop:

Returning to Canada

Know before you go: travel isn't just going, it's also coming home

Some of the best things in returning from being away is sharing your memories, photos and souvenirs. Before you buy, know that it's your responsibility to be aware of the personal exemptions and limits established by Canada Border Services Agency' (CBSA). Exemptions depend on the amount of time you've been out of the country:

- **Day trips/less than 24hrs: no exemption**
Goods must be declared, duties/taxes paid
- **Between 24 to 48hrs: up to \$200**
Alcohol and tobacco cannot be brought back, goods must be in your possession
- **From 48 hours to 7 days: up to \$800.**
Alcohol and tobacco no more than the limits must be declared, all goods with you
- **7 days and more: up to \$800.** Alcohol and tobacco must be declared and with you.
Goods may be with you or follow later.

You can't combine personal exemptions with another person or transfer exemptions to someone else, nor can you combine one exemption with a different time period.

In general, goods must be for personal or household use including *any* gifts received. If you bring back goods for commercial use, you must declare it. All amounts must be declared in Canadian funds, so if you paid US\$100 for clothing and the exchange rate is US\$1=CDN\$1.30 you must declare \$130.

Authorization is needed for certain purchases: if you intend to bring in a vehicle, whether a car or snowmobile, first ask CBSA.

Tip: bring 2 envelopes: in one put expense receipts (restaurants, hotels). In the other, put receipts for items coming home, list amounts and the total on the outside in CDN\$. This will be very handy if you're asked for details at border control. |

If you are selected for a secondary check, don't panic—it could be to pay duty, for a document check or merely your cosmic turn to see what goes on in the back rooms...

Limits & Exemptions

The CBSA collects duty and taxes on imported goods above your exemptions. If you bring back alcohol and/or tobacco products, those costs must be included in your total exemption amount. When you return to Canada, don't say you were not aware of limits: "I didn't know!" won't help. If you are pulled over in a random check, besides bound to feel a very Canadian guilt, you can be charged with the transgression and receive a fine. Tips:

- You're generally not allowed to bring back unprocessed "food;" if something is fresh, raw or requires refrigeration, don't risk it. (US Customs Declaration cards lists "fruits, vegetables, plants, seeds," then "food"). Err on the side of declaring; if you stashed a sandwich for a connecting flight check the "Yes" box and print "sandwich" beside it.
- See those adorable airport dogs working with a handler? If so, let them do their job. Most often, dogs are behind the scenes sniffing baggage but sometimes come into baggage claim as a gentle reminder. It should go without saying; *never* try to bring in illegal drugs and/or accept *any* item from anyone asking you to "mail this to my grandma".
- Don't bring any type of meat products (the dogs love finding these) including processed deli meats or that artisanal Italian sausage. You may get an AMP; a snappy acronym for Administrative Monetary Penalty, which means a \$400 fine to be paid immediately or \$800 if you can't pay until later. In March 2018, a couple declared \$300 yet border agents found jewellery worth \$35,000.
- You're not allowed to bring in certain items (ivory) and wooden items with small holes (that might hide bugs). Certain baby products are also prohibited due to Canadian safety and community protection standards.
- Bringing cannabis products into Canada is a criminal offence and remains so under the *Cannabis Act*.

Before Leaving Canada

The standard is to **ensure passports do not expire within 6 months of your trip**: they are the only reliable and universally accepted ID for international travel www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp. You've likely heard rumours that Canadian passports are the most prized by pickpockets; that's not a rumour so keep all passports safe. A very small number of checked bags are lost or delayed: besides putting your airline's baggage tag on the outside of bags, put tags inside all bags with your phone number(s) and addresses.

Travelling with children? They need their own passports—also bring authorization/custody documents (see LeGrow's Travel Inside Scoop: Solo Parents). Be aware the parameters for travelling with children with different last names than adults, and children in mixed families are heightened (for a child's protection, particularly by non-custodial adults).

Plan transition days before and after—it can be stressful getting ready to go especially if you're responsible for others. Having a day eases transitions to daily life and allows time for jet lag and tasks such as laundry and grocery shopping (welcome home).

Tip: If you subscribe to email alerts and newsletters, consider suspending them to cut information overload while you're away. Going through them might shorten your vacation glow and the pleasures of being away (if anything important happens, someone is bound to tell you...).

 **Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!**

Canadians: Emergency?

Contact Global Affairs:

in North America **1-888-949-9993**

outside North America **613-996-8885**

(call collect if needed),

sos@international.gc.ca,

<https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>

Coming Home: Essential Information

The CBSA website www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca is a compelling read; surf around at the "Travellers" tab. Also read *I Declare: A guide for residents returning to Canada* www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/declare-eng.html. It details **laws, restrictions, entitlements and your obligations in returning**, your master document where you'll find information on exemptions, paying duties, what happens if you make a false declaration (don't do it), gifts, restrictions and what to do if you're bringing in more than \$10,000 CAN (lucky you; you must declare all "monetary instruments"). At the website, you can even sign up for CSBA's quarterly email on prohibited "Obscenity & Hate propaganda." You're allowed to bring in alcohol free of duty and taxes in your personal exemption, no more than 1.5 litres (2x750ml bottles) wine or 1.14 litres (40oz) spirits or 8.5 litres beer/ale. (**Tip:** Coolers are classified under the type of alcohol; as vodka is a spirit, that's the classification for vodka coolers, so not such a deal to bring back.) Minimum ages for bringing in alcoholic beverages are provincial/territorial: 18 in Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec; 19 years for the remaining provinces/territories. Don't be tempted by duty free deals such as "2 litres of vodka \$39!" (unless another adult with you declares the second bottle). **Duty free and border services/customs are separate entities.** For smokers 18 years of age or over, you're allowed to bring in no more than: 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, 200grams(7oz) of tobacco and 200 tobacco sticks.

Before disembarking your plane, have all documents ready to present to CBSA. Depending on your airline, you will have received your Declaration Card before you board or be given it during the flight (pack a pen). Or, save time at the border using CBSA's app: androids (Google Play), Blackberry (Blackberry World) and iPhone App Store). You must also present a valid Canadian passport for each person in your group. You can be asked any question such as the reason for your trip, details of what you brought back and if you packed your bags yourself. Yes, you can be asked anything (yes, anything) the agent deems of interest or if their suspicion is aroused.

Follow CSBA on social media such as <https://twitter.com/canborder> and <https://www.facebook.com/CanBorder>. Calls within Canada are toll-free: 1-800-461-9999.

Note that legislation and requirements change; all resources/websites noted are current at the time of this publication: please refer to original sources for clarification and updates. In estimating the costs in Canadian funds of items you bring home, CBSA uses Bank of Canada rates <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/exchange/currency-converter>.

Take Peace of Mind

Travel isn't just the destination, it's also the journey so it's doubly important to have insurance. It provides you with peace of mind and a safety net. It should be bought when booking your trip but can be bought up to 48hrs after—just know you're not protected until you have (some credit cards and generous employee health plans include it with restrictions; check the fine print). The two main types—Medical and Cancellation/Interruption are best bought together in a package that includes 24hr assistance and referrals such as immediate care and return to Canada (repatriation home can cost \$25,000 for a short distance). **Review coverage with your counsellor, read and understand your policy's Covered Risks, Conditions, Limitations and Exclusions: they make for good reading**—a surprising number of aspects are covered; Jury Duty, baggage/contents replacement, advisories by the Canadian government, being called to emergency service, hospitalization of a host, quarantine and reimbursement of prepaid expenses. See LeGrow's Travel Inside Scoop: Insurance.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don't let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue's local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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