

Welcome to Canada



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA



If you're thinking about immigrating to Canada, you can familiarize yourself with the identities and cultures of the various Indigenous Peoples that were the first inhabitants of the land.

Indigenous Peoples have inhabited what is now called Canada since time immemorial and have unique cultures, languages, and rights in our country.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CULTURES

In Canada, there are three distinct and constitutionally recognized groups of Indigenous Peoples, each with unique traditions, histories, territories, and communities.

First Nations are Indigenous peoples who are distinct from Métis or Inuit. The term encompasses a diverse range of communities, each with its unique heritage, language, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs.

Inuit primarily inhabit the Arctic regions of Canada, including parts of Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Quebec, and Labrador. Their culture, language, and way of life are deeply connected to the northern environment.

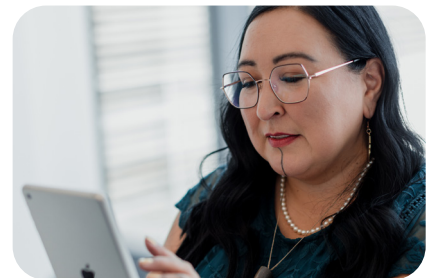
Métis people have a rich cultural heritage that blends Indigenous and European traditions from the fur trade. Métis communities are found in many provinces and territories across Canada.

There are over 70 distinct Indigenous languages spoken across the country. To learn more, consult [Crown-Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada](#) (web page is available in English and French).

THE DISPLACEMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA

Canada is a nation built on immigration and the displacement of Indigenous peoples from their traditional lands. For over 150 years, government policies attempted to erase Indigenous languages, cultures, and communities from Canada.

Indigenous peoples were intentionally denied rights held by Canadians and newcomers. Canada's legacy of colonialism is important to understand why Indigenous peoples today have unique rights and special relationships with the federal government. For more information, consult [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) (web page is available in English and French).



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TODAY: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Canada has been on a journey to Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. In 2015, the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#) (TRC) released its Final Report and made 94 recommendations, or Calls to Action, on how to address Canada's history of colonialism and advance reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous peoples.

In 2021, the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) also came into force, marking a key step in the path to renewing the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples. Consult [Crown-Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada](#) for more information on this topic (web page is available in English and French).

All Canadians and newcomers to Canada have an essential role to play in reconciliation, that begins with learning about Indigenous peoples, their rights and contributions to our collective success history. June 21st marks [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#) to celebrate Indigenous cultures, histories, and heritage, and takes place in National Indigenous History Month.



Every September 30th, the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#) provides an opportunity for national reflection on Indigenous issues and the history of the residential school system. It takes place the same day as Orange Shirt Day, where school children across the country wear the colour orange to raise awareness of the history of Indian residential schools. To learn more, consult [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) (web page is available in English and French).

MOVING FORWARD

The relationship between the Canadian Crown and Indigenous peoples is both statutory and traditional. Treaties are seen by Indigenous communities as legal contracts and perpetual promises by successive representatives of the Crown to protect their welfare, define their rights, and reconcile their sovereignty with that of the Crown in Canada. The federal government continues to work with Indigenous peoples to strengthen Nation-to-Nation, Government-to-Government, and Inuit-Crown relationships.

Specific claims resolution, implementing the TRC Calls to Action, and honoring Treaty relationships remain key priorities. Additionally, Canada and Indigenous partners are making progress in negotiations under processes to support the implementation of Modern Treaties. For additional information on this topic, consult [Maps of Treaty-Making in Canada](#) (web page is available in English and French).

Investments also aim to create strong, healthy, and prosperous communities for future generations, such as the [Urban, Rural, and Northern Housing Strategy](#), to address housing needs through co-development with Indigenous partners.

Indigenous peoples have strong connections to their traditional lands, which hold cultural, spiritual, and historical significance. [Land acknowledgments](#) are short statements that recognize the land and people who live or have lived there.

Understanding whose [traditional territory](#) you are on is a way to show respect and recognize the ties that descendants have to the land, acknowledge its importance to their culture and traditions and can serve as a starting point for conversations surrounding Truth and Reconciliation.

MORE INFORMATION



For more information about Indigenous Peoples in Canada, visit [Indigenous peoples – Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/indigenous-peoples).



To find newcomer settlement services in your area, visit canada.ca/find-newcomer-services.

