

The Princess Province

Established 1905 8th Province

Did You Know?



- Alberta is nicknamed the Princess Province because it was named after a daughter of Britain's Queen Victoria, Princess Louise Caroline Alberta.
- The world's tallest tepee is located in Medicine Hat. Designed for the Calgary Winter Olympics, it stands over 20 storeys high and weighs 200 tonnes (440,800 pounds)!
- In 1967, to celebrate Canada's *centennial* (100th anniversary), the residents of St. Paul built the world's first UFO landing pad.
- Some of the most intact dinosaur fossils have been found in Drumheller—the dinosaur capital of the world.
- Banff National Park, located west of Calgary, was Canada's first national park.
- The city of Lloydminster is the only Canadian city located right on the border between two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan.
- Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump is a high cliff in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. For thousands of years, natives killed herds of buffalo by driving them off the cliff and then collected their dead bodies below. Today, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Quick Facts



Capital city: Edmonton Population: 4,252,879

Total Area: 661,848 square kilometres (225,541 sq miles)

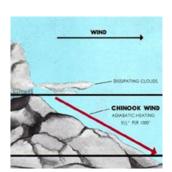
Population Density: 5.70 persons per square kilometre (14.70 per sq mile)





Climate

Alberta experiences cold winters, fed by chilling arctic winds from the north. Warmer *chinook* (western) winds sweep through the province in wintertime, drying things out and raising temperatures. Summers in Alberta are usually warm. The sky is often sunny during both winter and summer. Northern Alberta gets around 18 hours of daylight in the summertime but tends to be cooler than the southern part of the province. In July, the average temperature is 16°C (60°F) in northern Alberta and 21°C (70°F) in southern Alberta. Winter temperatures are much colder in both regions, averaging -27°C (-16°F) in the northern region and -12°C (10°F) in the southern region.



Average Seasonal High and Low Temperatures

Spring: 10/-3°C Summer: 23/9°C Fall: 10/-3°C Winter: -4/-16°C

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Geography

Alberta has an area of 661,848 square kilometres (255,541 square miles), making it Canada's fourth largest province. The westernmost of Canada's three Prairie Provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta), Alberta is the only one that contains all three of Canada's main geographic regions: the Canadian Shield, the High Plains, and the Rocky Mountains. The Canadian Shield, an ancient ring of rock that covers much of North America, can be seen above ground in the northeastern part of Alberta. The High Plains region, where Calgary, Edmonton, and other large cities are located, covers the south and central portions of the province. This region has good farmland, on which ranchers raise cattle and farmers grow wheat and *canola* (a type of seed).



Southeastern Alberta is often known as the "badlands," because wind, rain, and the Red Deer River have eroded the rock to form strange formations called *hoodoos*. *Hoodoos* are tall pillars of rock shaped like toadstools that grow out of the cliffs and gullies in the area. The badlands are also known for dinosaur fossils, found in layers of rock that have been worn away by wind and rain over the centuries. The Rocky Mountains region runs along Alberta's southwestern border and includes both the highest point in the province, Mount Columbia, at 3,747 metres (12,294 feet), and the highest town in Canada, Lake Louise, at 1,540 metres (5,052 feet).

Wildlife

White Goat, Siffleur, and Ghost River are Alberta's three designated wilderness areas and are strictly protected from development. Hunting, fishing, and horse riding are not permitted, and only foot traffic is allowed. Many caribou, grizzly bears, mountain goats, and bighorn sheep are found in these beautiful wilderness areas.



Flora and Fauna

Common Animals

American pelican Bighorn sheep Canada goose Cormorant Cow moose Elk Mallard duck Mountain goat Prairie dog Snowy owl

Common Plants

Begonia
Black bud willow
Bracted honeysuckle
Canada thistle
Common juniper
Creeping juniper
Dwarf birch
Firewood
Ponderosa pine
Trembling aspen
White spruce
Wild red raspberry

Endangered Animals

Banff Springs snail
Burrowing owl
Eskimo curlew
Five-spotted bogus yucca moth
Gold-edged gem

Endangered Plants

Western blue flag Small-flowered sand verbena Tiny cryptanthe



Greater sage-grouse
Half-moon hairstreak
Lake sturgeon
Mountain plover
Non-pollinating yucca moth
Ord's kangaroo rat
Peary caribou
Piping plover
Sage thrasher
Swift fox
Whooping crane
Yucca moth

Environmental Issues

Water Shortage

Water shortages have long been a concern, particularly in southern Alberta, where the rivers have been drying up for the past several decades. On top of this problem, water use has also increased because many people have moved to Alberta in response to better economic opportunities within the province. Researchers are trying to figure out how to bring some of the northern water supply to the southern regions of the province, where most of the people live. The provincial government is also encouraging Albertans to reduce their water usage.



Forest management officials are trying to reach a balance between the concerns of the logging industry and the preservation of water and protection of wildlife. The forest industry brings in billions of dollars each year and provides jobs for tens of thousands of Albertans. At the same time, the process of *clear-cutting*, or cutting down all the trees in a specific area, creates several environmental problems. One of the biggest problems is the reduction of species of trees in an area. A possible healthier alternative is *selection management*, in which individual trees are cut and small clearings are left to be naturally reseeded by the surrounding trees.





Resources and Industries

Agriculture

When settlers first came to Alberta, much of the land was very dry and not ideal for farming. However, farmers worked hard to set up effective *irrigation* (watering) systems, and soon the farming industry took off. Today, Alberta produces the most barley and oats in all of Canada and produces the second most wheat. Close to half of Alberta's total farm *revenue* (income) comes from cattle ranching. Most of these ranches are located in the southeastern portion of the province. There are also many sheep and dairy farms.





Manufacturing

Meat-packing plants form the major part of Alberta's manufacturing industry. Most of the major plants are centered in large cities such as Calgary or Edmonton. These cities also have several other food- and beverage-processing plants, including flour mills, dairies, and sugar refineries. The 1970s and '80s saw an oil boom in Alberta, which caused the construction industry to grow. However, this industry slows when oil prices are high. Tourism has become a productive industry in the province, as Alberta has more national and provincial parks than any other province. Banff and Jasper national parks are the two most popular tourist destinations, followed by the badlands area, in southern Alberta, and the Peace River Valley, in northern Alberta.



Mining

Mineral resources such as oil, natural gas, and coal are plentiful in Alberta, making up more than half of Canada's total mineral resources. This means that the nation as a whole relies heavily on Alberta's ability to mine and process these materials. Coal mines, which were originally found only in cities like Lethbridge and Drumheller, now exist throughout the province. Alberta produces millions of tonnes of coal each year, the majority of which is used to create heat and electricity. The oil and natural gas industries also provide jobs to thousands of Albertans. Alberta *exports* (sells to other countries) much of its oil and gas. Some of it goes to neighbouring provinces and the United States.



History



Time Line

3500 BC

3500 BC	Bands (tribes) of buffalo hunters roam what is now Alberta thousands of years before Europeans arrive		
		ALCONOMIC SERVICE	
AD 1700			
1754	Hudson's Bay Company explorer Anthony Henday reaches Alberta seeking trade with the Blackfoot people		
1788	Fort Chipewyan is built on the banks of Lake Athabasca		
1800			
1840	Reverend Robert Rundle is the first missionary to arrive in Alberta		
1870	Canada buys Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company		



1874	The North West Mounted Police build Fort Macleod and Fort Calgary	
1876	The Cree and Assiniboine sign Treaty Number 6, giving their lands in central Alberta to the federal government	
1877	The Blood, Peigan, Blackfoot, Sarcee, Tsuu, and Stoney <i>bands</i> sign Treaty Number 7, giving up their lands in southern Alberta to the federal government	
1880	The first newspaper in Alberta, the <i>Edmonton Bulletin</i> , begins publication	
1882	As part of the Northwest Territories, Alberta is divided into two districts: Athabasca in the north and Alberta in the south	
1883	The Canadian Pacific Railway reaches Calgary	
1898	The Klondike gold rush brings thousands of gold <i>prospectors</i> (people exploring for minerals) to Edmonton on their way to the Yukon	

1899

The Cree, Beaver, Slavey, and Chipewyan *bands* sign Treaty Number 8, surrendering their lands in northern Alberta to the federal government



1900		
1905	Alberta becomes an official province, with Edmonton as its capital city ALBERTA	
1908	The University of Alberta is established	
1915	Prohibition (ban on alcohol) begins in Alberta	
1916	Women gain the right to vote in provincial elections	
1918	The Spanish Influenza strikes Alberta; so many become ill that all schools, churches, and theatres close and one in every ten people who get the disease die from it	
1924	Prohibition ends and alcohol sales start again	
1929	In the famous Persons Case, five Alberta women get the government to declare that women are officially persons in the sight of the law	
1939	The Métis Betterment Act creates seven Métis settlements and begins a series of <i>reforms</i> (changes) for the Métis people	
1947	Oil is discovered in Leduc	
1967	Native peoples gain the right to vote in Alberta	



1979	Albertan Joe Clark becomes prime minister
1985	Helen Hunley is appointed Alberta's first female lieutenant-governor
1988	Calgary hosts the Winter Olympics
1995	Alberta adoption laws change to allow people to search for birth parents or children given up for adoption through search agencies
2000	
2005	Alberta celebrates its <i>centennial</i> (100th anniversary)
2010	The largest dinosaur graveyard ever documented is discovered near Hilda
2011	Alison Redford is elected the first female premier of Alberta
2013	Heavy rains cause rivers to overflow and severely flood areas of western Canada; 100,000 homes are evacuated in Alberta
2016	Raging wildfires in northern Alberta force more than 90,000 people to evacuate

Buffalo Hunters

PRESENT

The first people to live in what is now Alberta were buffalo hunters. They were *nomads*, moving from place to place in pursuit of the buffalo herds. The *nomads* worked together to herd the buffalo in large numbers off the edges of cliffs. The buffalo hunters shouted at the animals, waving their arms and sometimes brightly coloured cloths at them to scare them into running off the cliffs. The hunters then collected the buffalo *carcasses* (bodies) below.

Many of these ancient "buffalo jumps" still exist today, including Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, near Fort Macleod, which was used for thousands of years, up until the mid-1800s. The jump gets its name from a Blackfoot legend of a young boy who got a head injury from a runaway buffalo during one of these hunts. The buffalo hunters used every part of the buffalo's body to make food, clothing, tepees, tools, and weapons such as spears. The only recorded evidence we have of these people are the pictures they carved on cliffs and other rock faces, as well as the stories they passed on from one generation to the next.





Fur and Bibles

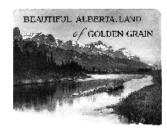
The first fur-trading post in Alberta was built on the banks of the Athabasca River in 1778. The success of this first post, which was built by the North West Company, caused an explosion of fur traders to come to Alberta and set up many more posts throughout the countryside. *Aboriginals* (natives) and Europeans frequently met at these posts and exchanged goods and services, and *aboriginal* people often served as guides for European trappers. The Europeans traded clothing, pots, guns, and knives to the *aboriginals* in exchange for furs.



Many Europeans married *aboriginal* women and learned their wives' traditions and languages. Their children were called *Métis* (French for "mixed blood"). In the 1840s, European missionaries joined the fur traders and attempted to convert the *aboriginal* people to Christianity. Missionaries set up schools for native and *Métis* children and served as peacemakers in disagreements between native groups and the trappers.

Population Bursts

After the Dominion of Canada bought the large chunk of territory known as Rupert's Land, the government was anxious to link the eastern provinces with the far-flung cities and towns of the western territories. The Canadian Pacific Railway set about laying tracks westward. The government promised the railway would reach from Ontario to British Columbia by 1885. Rail lines through both Calgary and Edmonton brought settlers in search of good farmland to Alberta. To encourage immigration from Europe and the United States to Alberta, the federal government promised free land. At the end of the 19th century, gold was discovered in the Yukon Territory, and thousands of *prospectors* (people exploring for minerals) passed through Edmonton on their way north. Many of them ended up staying in Alberta and opened businesses or started farms.



The Famous Five

In the famous Persons Case of 1927, Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, and Nellie McClung *petitioned* (called on) the Supreme Court of Canada to declare that women were "persons" and could therefore be appointed to the Senate of Canada. At the time, the British North America Act stated that "persons" could be appointed to the Senate. So, these five women from Alberta asked the Supreme Court of Canada to rule that women were, in fact, "persons." Instead, the court ruled that women were not "persons," stating that the act had been written in 1867, at a time when women were not involved in politics, and that the writers of the act did not mean for women to serve in public office. The Famous Five, as they became known, were not satisfied with this ruling and decided to take the case to Canada's highest court of appeal at the time—the Judicial Committee of England's Privy Council. On 18 October 1929, the committee ruled that the word "persons" included both men and women. Four months later, Cairine Wilson became the first female to be appointed to the Canadian Senate.



Black Gold Rush

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Alberta

After World War II, Alberta experienced its own type of "gold rush." On 13 February 1947, a geyser of oil spewed up into the sky at Leduc, south of Edmonton. Soon after, oil was discovered in towns across the province. The discovery of enormous oil reserves took Albertans by surprise and began the transformation of Alberta's farm-based economy into one focused on oil and industry. Alberta's "black gold" rush fueled the growing transportation and construction industries, providing oil for markets across the nation and the United States as well. Edmonton and Calgary quickly became Alberta's main commercial and industrial cities. Because the Albertan economy was so tied to the price of oil, it experienced many booms and busts. In order to protect itself from the instability of the world oil market, Alberta expanded its industries into other successful areas including forestry and tourism.



1988 Winter Olympics

In 1988, on the third try, Calgary, Alberta, won the right to host the Winter Olympics. A few years before, the city had built the Saddledome arena to house their National Hockey League (NHL) team, the Calgary Flames. The Saddledome was a perfect *venue* (location) for Winter Olympics indoor ice events and helped the city win the bid. Even though Calgary has long been growing quickly, until the Olympics were held in the city, it had been known mainly as a "cow town." Hosting the Olympics brought the attention of the world to Calgary. The 16-day event was a huge success, and the city is still benefiting, as athletes continue to come to the Saddledome and other facilities to train for winter sports. Skaters say Calgary has the best and fastest ice in the world.





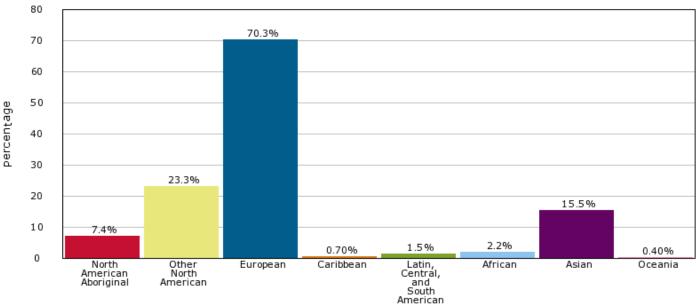


Population

Alberta has the fourth largest population in Canada. The population has grown steadily for more than one hundred years. Calgary and Edmonton each have around one million residents in their metropolitan areas, with the rest of the population spread out in more *rural* (countryside) areas. Both cities also have Chinatowns. Besides Chinese, there are large groups of East Indians, Métis, and First Nations peoples in Alberta.

Aboriginal (native) people represent 44 different First Nations bands (tribes) and five major aboriginal languages: Blackfoot, Cree, Chipewyan, Sarcee, and Stoney. There are 123 reserves (federal land set aside for natives) in Alberta and eight distinct Métis settlements, where many native people live.

Total Population: 3,645,257



Canadians may belong to more than one group. Totals may not equal 100%.

Government

Federal

Senators: 6

Liberals: 1

Conservatives: 2

Non-affiliated: 3

Members of Parliament: 34

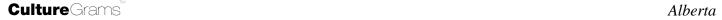
Conservatives: 27

New Democratic Party: 1

Liberal: 4

Vacant: 2

In Canada, members of Parliament are elected from across the country. The leader of the party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons becomes the prime minister. The prime minister is the head of government in Canada. The monarch (today, Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom) is leader in name only. She appoints a governor-general to be her representative in Canada. The role of this governor-general is largely ceremonial. In Canada, there are two separate lawmaking bodies, the House



of Commons, which is made up of elected members, and the Senate, whose members are appointed by the governor-general under the advice of the prime minister. The House of Commons debates and votes on *bills* (proposed laws). The Senate carefully examines the *bills* and decides whether to approve, change, or reject them. For a *bill* to become law, it must be passed by both the House of Commons and the Senate and be given *royal assent* (approval) by the governor-general.

Provincial

Capital: Edmonton, population 1,176,300

Province Abbreviation: AB

Premier: Rachel Notley (New Democratic Party)

Lieutenant-Governor: Lois Mitchell

Members of the Legislative Assembly: 83

Female MLAs: 29

The lieutenant-governor of Alberta represents the monarch (queen of the United Kingdom) and calls on the leader of the party with the most votes to be the premier. The premier chooses the members of the Cabinet from the elected Members of the Legislative Assembly, who represent voters. These members are then appointed by the lieutenant-governor. Each is placed in charge of a department such as education, health, or aboriginal affairs. The Cabinet members advise the premier, while the Legislative Assembly makes the laws.

Key Issues

Labour Shortages

Alberta's growing economy has created more jobs than Albertans can fill. Many companies and organizations have been unable to hire enough skilled workers to support advances in technology and research. In response to these shortages, the Albertan government designed a strategy to build up and educate the workforce. This strategy includes counselling people on career choices, teaching workers skills in the areas with the most shortages, and providing support for people with disabilities.

Class Size Reductions

The Albertan government is concerned with the growing size of classes in schools across the province. The government is working to reduce the number of children in each classroom by investing millions more in education. This money is being used to bring in new teachers, pay them higher salaries, and build or upgrade more school buildings.





First Nations, Métis, and Aboriginal Peoples

Aboriginal (native) peoples are the fastest growing population in Alberta today. They are a young population. These young people are achieving higher levels of education and training than previous generations and are set to play an important role in relieving Alberta's growing labour shortage. Most Albertans who have *aboriginal* backgrounds live in the northwestern portion of the province. Alberta also has the largest *Métis* (people with both native and European ancestry) population in Canada.

Alberta

Alberta's 123 reserves (land set aside for native use) cover about 700,537 hectares (1,731,065 acres) of land. These reserves are called "treaty areas" because the federal government gave them to Alberta's First Nations peoples by signing three specific treaties with native leaders in the late 19th century. Today's First Nations population considers these treaties important agreements, which define their rights and shape the way they interact with the larger Albertan population and with the federal and provincial governments.

Famous People



Michael J. Fox

- Jerry Potts Métis interpreter and guide
- Jann Arden Musician
- Kurt Browning World figure skating champion
- Crowfoot Blackfoot chief
- Beckie Scott Olympic cross-country skier
- K.D. Lang Singer
- Michael J. Fox Actor
- Mark Messier National Hockey League player
- Joni Mitchell Musician
- Joe Clark 16th prime minister of Canada
- *Tom Three Persons* World bronco-riding champion
- Terri Clark Country music star
- Father Albert Lacombe Missionary
- Victoria Callihoo Métis author
- Kalan Porter Singer
- Nathan Fillion Actor
- Tegan and Sara Quin Musicians



Kurt Browning



Terri Clark









The Calgary Stampede

The Calgary Stampede is a 10-day rodeo held in Calgary each year in the second week of July. It is known as The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth, and every year more than a million rodeo competitors and fans from around the world descend on Calgary. The stampede includes a festival and exhibition, complete with a parade, a Ferris wheel, concerts, and chuck wagon races. First Nations peoples set up a traditional village to display their culture and crafts, while ranchers and farmers come to display their livestock and produce. Bronc riding and barrel racing are popular sporting events, while the annual pancake breakfast is always a favourite. Stampede volunteers serve up thousands of pounds of bacon, sausage, and pancakes to hungry spectators!



Edmonton Fringe Festival

During the month of August, the city of Edmonton is home to the second largest performing arts festival in the world (after Edinburgh's). Any available building is converted into a theatre for the duration of the festival. At night, the streets are filled with acrobats and street performers. Hundreds of thousands of people attend the festival each year to enjoy the wide array of artists and forms of entertainment. The festival also encourages children to develop their artistic talents by sponsoring the Fringe Theatre for Young People—a family theatre company with an emphasis on storytelling and theatre for children and their families.



Fun Facts & Contacts



Official Emblems

Provincial Flower

Wild Rose

The bright pink of this little flower can be seen all across the province. It grows on a small bush with prickly stems and produces red seed pods called *rosehips*.



Provincial Bird

Great Horned Owl

In 1977, children across the province voted to make this bird a symbol of the province. It represents Alberta's concern for its wildlife.



Provincial Tree

Lodgepole Pine

In the early 1900s, this tree was used to make *railway ties* (wooden beams that support the rails). Today it is manufactured into many different items, including timber, poles, plywood, and pulp.



Provincial Tartan

The green squares represent Alberta's forests. The gold lines stand for the many wheat fields throughout the province. The blue lines represent Alberta's lakes and clear, blue skies. The pink stands for the provincial flower, the wild rose, and the black stripes for



Alberta

Alberta's abundance of coal and oil.

Provincial Coat of Arms

The wild roses are the provincial flower. The image on the shield shows the various beauties of Alberta's landscape: the Rocky Mountains, the rolling wheat fields, and the grass prairies. The St. George cross stands for the English heritage of many Albertans. The shield is supported by a golden lion (representing power) and a pronghorn antelope (an animal found all over southern Alberta). The beaver, the Canadian national animal, wears a crown as a symbol of the British monarchy.



Major League Sports Teams

- Calgary Flames (NHL)
- Edmonton Oilers (NHL)
- Calgary Stampeders (CFL)
- Edmonton Eskimos (CFL)

For More Information

To learn more about Alberta, see www.alberta.ca. Or contact Travel Alberta, PO Box 2500, Edmonton, AB, T5J 2Z4; phone (800) ALBERTA; web site www.travelalberta.us.

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