



## The Garden Province

Established 1873  
7th Province

### Did You Know?

- Islanders refer to anyone who wasn't born on the island as being "from away."
- The stories in the *Anne of Green Gables* books were set in Prince Edward Island and written by islander Lucy Maud Montgomery.
- Prince Edward Island is the smallest province in Canada. Every place you can go on the island is less than 16 kilometres (10 miles) from the ocean.
- The island is named after Queen Victoria's father—Prince Edward, Duke of Kent.
- Prince Edward Island has the lowest crime rate in Canada.
- Lobster dinners have been a tradition on Prince Edward Island for nearly 50 years. Today, community organizations and churches use lobster dinners as part of their fundraising events.
- In the 1700s, mice overran the province, eating their way across the island's farmland. The town of Souris (French for "mouse") got its name from this plague.
- The island's famous red soil gets its color from the high iron content.
- Prince Edward Island produces around one-third of Canada's potatoes.
- There are only two cities in the entire province: Charlottetown and Summerside.

### Quick Facts

**Capital city:** Charlottetown

**Population:** 148,649

**Total Area:** 5,660 square kilometres (2,185 sq miles)

**Population Density:** 24.70 persons per square kilometre (63.90 per sq mile)

### The Place

#### Climate

Prince Edward Island has a gentle climate with cool summers and long, mild winters. The average summer temperature is 22.5°C (73°F), while winter temperatures stay around -7°C (20°F). The island is very humid. In fact, it generally rains one out of every three days on the island, and about 3.4 metres (11 ft) of snow falls every year. The Strait of Northumberland usually freezes over in wintertime, and ferries called *icebreakers* (special ships that can sail through ice) keep sea channels open for travel and shipping.

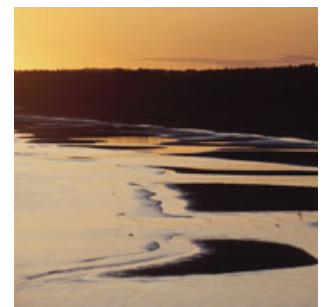
#### Average Seasonal High and Low Temperatures

*Spring:* 6/-1°C

*Summer:* 21/12°C

*Fall:* 14/6°C

*Winter:* -2/-9°C



## Geography

As the smallest province in the nation, Prince Edward Island covers a total area of 5,660 square kilometres (2,185 sq miles). It's about the same size as the state of Delaware. Prince Edward Island is 224 kilometres (140 miles) long. The island is 6 kilometres (4 miles) wide at the narrowest point, and 64 kilometres (40 miles) wide at the widest point. Prince Edward Island is located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and is shaped like a crescent moon. The province is separated from its fellow Maritime Provinces—Nova Scotia and New Brunswick—by the Northumberland Strait. All but one lake and one river in the province are saltwater, and the island's stunning beaches stretch for close to 800 kilometres (500 miles). The coastline is dotted with lagoons, bays, and sandstone cliffs, while the inland is covered in sandy dunes and rolling hills. Hillsborough Bay and Malpeque Bay are the two largest bays in the province.



## Wildlife

At one time moose, bear, and caribou were common animals on the island. After European settlers came to the island, those populations completely disappeared. Now, smaller animals like beaver, foxes, squirrels, and hundreds of species of birds make up the majority of the island's wildlife.



## Flora and Fauna

### Common Animals

Atlantic salmon  
Coyote  
Duck  
Fox  
Geese  
Herring  
Lobster  
Mackerel  
Mink  
Muskrat  
Pheasant  
Partridge  
Perch  
Skunk  
Snowshoe hare  
Weasel

### Common Plants

Ash  
Devil's paintbrush  
Irish moss  
Mayflower  
Oak  
Pine  
Primrose

### Endangered Animals

Eskimo curlew  
Piping plover

### Endangered Plants

Broom crowberry  
Woody hudsonia

## Environmental Issues

### Air Pollution

Prince Edward Island has many of the same air pollution problems as the other Maritime Provinces. Islanders try not to burn their trash, since rubber, plastics, and treated wood release dangerous *toxins* (poisons) into the air when they are burned. The harmful smoke can cause or irritate many *respiratory* (breathing) health problems. Prince Edward Island also provides environmentally responsible waste disposal services across the island. Islanders' garbage is separated three ways: compost, waste, and recyclables.



### Forest Improvements

The forest industry is at a low point, and many workers have moved away or taken other jobs to make a living. The government is working on improvements, including planting new trees, increasing the different kinds of tree species, increasing public education and support, and starting better forest management. These improvements are meant to recover the quality of the island's forests and also help the industry make a turnaround.



## Resources and Industries

### Agriculture

Island farms are known for their unusual red soil. The redness comes from the soil's high levels of *iron-oxide* (rust). Crops grow so well in this soil that Prince Edward Island was nicknamed The Garden Province. Potatoes are the most important crop and are responsible for almost half the island's total farming output. Prince Edward Island supplies Canada with more potatoes than any other province. Potatoes are shipped to dozens of different countries all over the world. Cattle, pigs, and tobacco are also important crops, and dairy farms are found throughout the province.



### Manufacturing

The aerospace industry is Prince Edward Island's fastest growing industry. Several of the best known companies in aerospace today are found on the island. Products from this industry make up one-quarter of the island's total *exports* (goods sold outside the country or region).

### Mining

The mining industry on the island is small. Sand and gravel are mined in small amounts.



Time Line

9000 BC

9000 BC Early inhabitants hunt and live on what is now Prince Edward Island

500

500 The Mi'kmaq people arrive on the island

AD 1500

AD 1534 French explorer Jacques Cartier lands on the island



1700

1719 French settlers name the island Île Saint-Jean and establish a capital at Port LaJoie

1755 *Acadians* (descendents of the original French settlers) who were forced to leave Nova Scotia arrive on the island

1758 Great Britain takes control of the island from France and renames it St. John's Island

1763 The island is made a part of Nova Scotia

1769 The island is separated from Nova Scotia

1771 Farmers grow potatoes for the first time on the island

1770s U.S. raiders attack the island several times



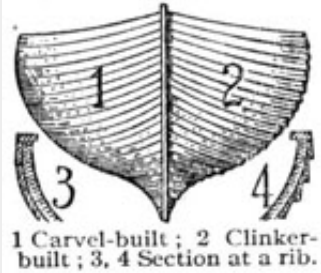
1799 The island is renamed Prince Edward Island by the British




1800

1830 Roman Catholics are granted full civil rights



1851	Great Britain grants Islanders the right to govern themselves	
1855	Charlottetown becomes the island's first official city	
1864	The Charlottetown Conference is held to discuss a Canadian union	
1871	The island is mortgaged to build a railway	
1873	Prince Edward Island joins the Dominion of Canada in exchange for having the railway debt paid off	
1880s	The shipbuilding industry in Atlantic Canada collapses, and thousands of Islanders move to New England in search of work	
<b>1900</b>		
1908	Lucy Maud Montgomery's book <i>Anne of Green Gables</i> is published	
1922	Women gain the right to vote in provincial elections	
1924	Cars begin driving on the right side of the road	
1964	The Confederation Centre of the Arts opens in Charlottetown	
1965	The <i>Anne of Green Gables</i> musical opens	

1991	Prince Edward Island hosts the Canada Games	
1993	Islander Catherine Callbeck becomes the first elected female premier in Canada	
1997	Confederation Bridge opens	
<b>2000</b>		
2003	Hurricane Juan hits eastern Canada causing evacuations and power outages across Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia	
2005	The province legalizes same-sex marriage	
<b>PRESENT</b>		

### Cradled by the Waves

The island’s first permanent inhabitants, the Mi’kmaq, called the island *Minegoo*, meaning “the island.” The nickname for their home was *Epekwiik*, meaning “cradled by the waves.” The Mi’kmaq were *nomadic*, meaning they moved from place to place and followed the movement of the animals they hunted. They built some permanent villages on the mainland and returned there during the cold winters. In these villages, families lived in *wigwams* (grass huts), which they covered with fur to keep warm.



The Mi’kmaq believed in the Great Spirit, who created the world. Mi’kmaq parents told their children stories of how the Great Spirit created the Mi’kmaq people and then formed the island out of a handful of red clay, making it into a crescent shape. The Great Spirit then gave the island to the Mi’kmaq to be their home.

### Île Saint-Jean

French explorer Jacques Cartier landed on the north shore of the island in 1534 and claimed it for France. Cartier thought the island was beautiful, and European fishermen quickly made use of its waters. But overall, the French had very little to do with the island over the next hundred years. In 1719, a group of French settlers established a capital at Port LaJoie, on the southern coast. They named the island Île Saint-Jean, and along with what is now New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, it became part of a French region known as Acadia. The people who lived there were called Acadians, and they were very protective of their land and way of life.



Great Britain fought France over ownership of Acadia, and control of the land went back and forth between the countries. As the two countries fought, Great Britain offered the Acadians the option of swearing loyalty to Great Britain or be forced to leave the land. The Acadians chose to remain *neutral* in the war (not fight on either side). When the British forced the Acadians on the mainland to leave their homes, many of them fled to Île Saint-Jean and settled there.



## British Colony

In 1758, Britain finally gained control of the island and changed the name to St. John's Island. They immediately forced the Acadians living there to go back to France. But a handful of families hid from British forces for years until it was safe to come out of hiding. These hearty people were the ancestors of today's Acadian Islanders. At the time, St. John's Island was part of Nova Scotia, and the British divided it into three counties, each with its own capital. Charlottetown became the capital of Queens County and later the capital of the province.



A land lottery was held in London, England, in 1799 for British nobles. The island was divided into 67 lots, and numbers were drawn by nobles, who could then rent the land to tenant farmers. These British landlords did a poor job of settling the island's towns. They charged the farmers who worked their land high rents while failing to pay their own rent or taxes on the land. Yet the lot numbers can still be found in community names today and on modern maps. The island eventually became a colony, separate from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The name was changed to Prince Edward Island in 1799. Throughout the 1800s, many Irish and Scottish farmers immigrated, and Prince Edward Island's population soared.

## The Charlottetown Conference

The Charlottetown Conference was held in 1864 to discuss a Maritime Union between the colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Delegates from Canada East and Canada West, in the Colony of Canada, invited themselves to the Conference to convince the other colonies to unite. Prince Edward Island said no after the week-long conference since the island was a very wealthy colony due to the growing shipbuilding industry.



Prince Edward Island started to build an island-wide railroad that was supposed to have a fairly straight track from one end to the other. Unfortunately, politicians started moving the track through their own communities, which drove the price to over one million 1870 dollars. Nearly bankrupt, the island colonial government began talks with Canada to join the Confederation. Their main goals were that Canada pay all Prince Edward Island's debts, that the island would always be guaranteed four members of Parliament no matter its size, and that Canada would provide free and continuous transportation for passengers and mail to the mainland. Canada agreed, and Prince Edward Island joined on 1 July 1873 as the seventh province.

## Fox Farming

At the end of the 19th century, a new industry was born on Prince Edward Island. Robert Oulton and Sir Charles Dalton set up a small ranch around Alberton and began raising and breeding silver foxes. The fur of the silver fox was highly prized in Europe. Soon Oulton and Dalton had a booming business, and many people began fox farms across the island and down in the New England states as well. The fox farming industry brought millions of dollars into Prince Edward Island and lasted until the outbreak of World War II. During the war, the European market was no longer open, and fur prices dropped. Low demand combined with the growing animal rights movement eventually led to the end of the once successful silver fox farms of Prince Edward Island.



## The Fixed Link

Transportation between Prince Edward Island and the mainland of Canada has always been a problem, especially in the wintertime when the Northumberland Strait freezes over. When the island joined the Dominion of Canada, Canada promised to maintain constant access between the island and the mainland for mail and passengers. But for many years, steamship services were unreliable, and Islanders began trying to come up with another solution.



There was discussion of building a bridge to the mainland for many years, but it wasn't until the 1980s that the federal government offered help. The federal government promised to provide funding to build a bridge or tunnel if the island would stop the expensive ferry services. Islanders nicknamed the proposed structure "the fixed link." Construction on the Northumberland Strait Crossing Project began in the fall of 1992 and continued through 1997, costing around one billion dollars. The two-lane bridge opened 31 May 1997, and its official name is the Confederation Bridge. The longest bridge in Canada, "the fixed link" stretches 12.9 kilometres (8.1 miles) and is 11 metres (36 ft) wide. Having a permanent link to the mainland has increased both tourism and business on Prince Edward Island.

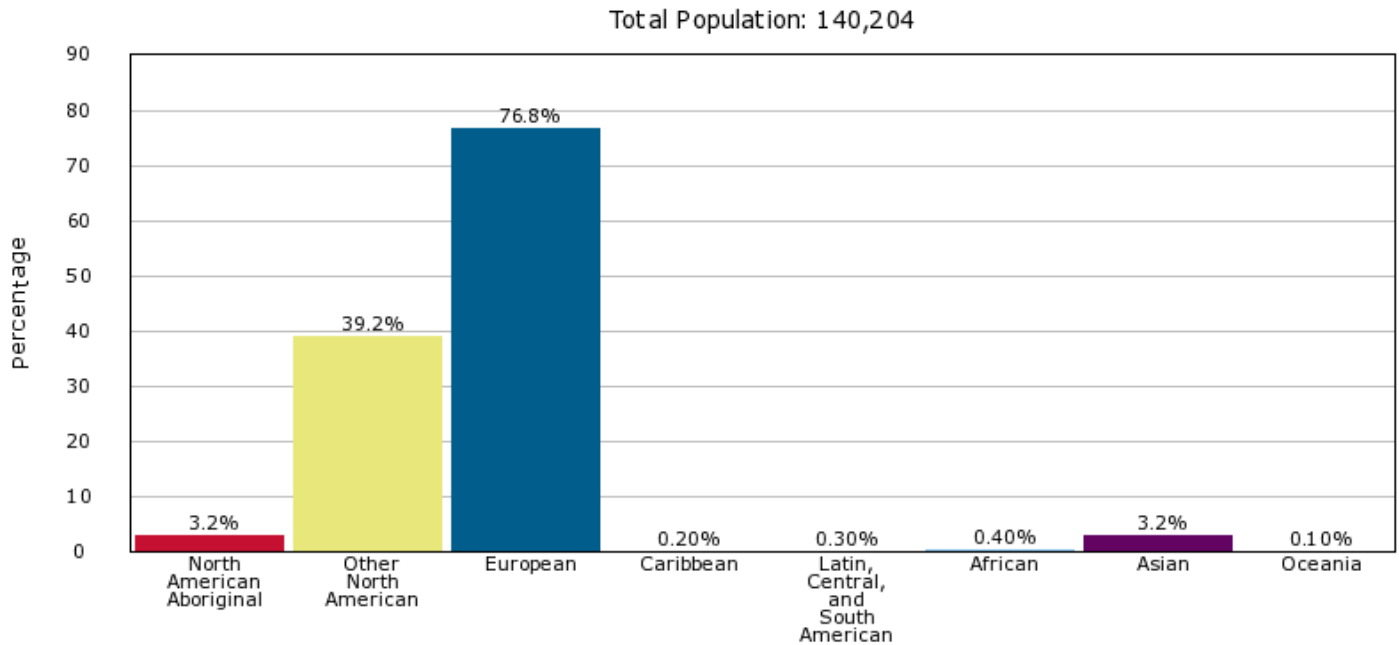
## The People



### Population

Prince Edward Island's small population makes up one-half of 1 percent of Canada's total population. In fact, there are 27 cities in Canada with larger populations than the total population of Prince Edward Island. Residents are known as Islanders. The majority of Islanders have ancestors who came from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Several thousand descendants of the Acadians live in Prince County, along with a few hundred Mi'kmaq. Prince Edward Island is the second most *rural* (countryside) province in the country, after Nunavut. Around half the population lives in the countryside. The other half lives in the area around Charlottetown—the capital and largest city.





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

## Government

### Federal

**Senators: 4**

- Liberals: 2
- Independents: 1
- Vacancies: 1

**Members of Parliament: 4**

- Liberals: 4



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:** Charlottetown, population 64,487

**Province Abbreviation:** PE

**Premier:** Wade MacLauchlan (Liberal)

**Lieutenant-Governor:** Frank Lewis

**Members of the Legislative Assembly:** 27

**Female MLAs:** 5

The lieutenant-governor of Prince Edward Island 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

## Unemployment

There is a high unemployment rate in Prince Edward Island. Part of it is due to many industries being seasonal, such as tourism, farming, and fishing. There is also a lack of manufacturing jobs in the province. Today, the province has one of the highest unemployment rates in all of Canada.

## Population

The government of Prince Edward Island is concerned over the population of the province, particularly in *rural* (countryside) communities. These populations are shrinking steadily as young people move away for job opportunities in Charlottetown or Summerside or leave the province entirely to find work. This, combined with a low birth rate, results in some concern about keeping up public buildings, roads, and power supplies, as well as social services.

## First Nations, Métis, and Aboriginal Peoples

Two separate groups of Mi'kmaq live on Prince Edward Island—the Abegweit First Nation and the Lennox Island First Nation. There are three reserves belonging to the Abegweit on Prince Edward Island: the Morell Rear Reserve, Rocky Point Reserve, and the Scotchfort Reserve. All three are located around Charlottetown. The fourth reserve, the Lennox Island reserve, belongs to the Lennox and is located near Summerside. About half the *aboriginal* (native) population lives on reserve and half lives off reserve.

The Abegweit First Nation and the Lennox Island First Nation both have tribal councils, which work together to improve the lives of the First Nations peoples. Together they formed the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island (MCPEI) to give a voice to First Nations Islanders and to address treaty rights and land-use issues within the province.



Famous People



**Lucy Maud Montgomery**

- *George H. Coles* – One of the Fathers of Confederation
- *Lucy Maud Montgomery* – Author
- *Brad Richards* – Professional hockey player
- *Michael Thomas* – Mi'kmaq long distance runner
- *Stompin' Tom Connors* – Folk singer
- *Robert Harris* – Artist



**Lori Kane**

- *Eli MacEachern* – Olympic champion bobsledder
- *Lori Kane* – Professional golfer
- *Tara MacLean* – Singer
- *Adam McQuaid* – Professional hockey player
- *Milton Acorn* – Poet



**Brad Richards**



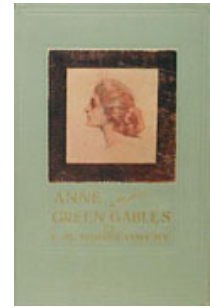
**Tara MacLean**

Cultural Notes



Anne of Green Gables

In 1908, Lucy Maud Montgomery published her first novel, a book called *Anne of Green Gables*. Set in the small town of Avonlea on Prince Edward Island, the story of the feisty orphan, Anne Shirley, became an international bestseller and instant favourite with readers. The book was so popular that Montgomery wrote seven more books about Anne. These books have been translated into seventeen different languages and made into five movies, a musical, and an animated series. Since its publication, *Anne of Green Gables* has never gone out of print. Today, many of the places featured in the books have become major tourist sites on Prince Edward Island, including the Green Gables farmhouse in Cavendish and the nearby Balsam Hollow, which was the model for Anne's Haunted Woods.



### College of Piping

The majority of the island's population descends from either Scottish or Irish settlers. These descendants take great pride in the establishment of the College of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts of Canada, in Summerside. This college is the only one of its kind in North America. Open year-round, the college offers instruction in traditional Celtic disciplines such as dance, drumming, and Highland bagpiping. When it was founded in 1990, the college had 30 full-time students. Now it has more than 350 year-round students from around the world. As part of its goal to preserve the island's Celtic culture, the College of Piping hosts an annual Celtic Festival with evening concerts all summer long.



## Fun Facts & Contacts

### Official Emblems

#### Provincial Flower

##### The Lady's Slipper

This flower is from the orchid family and gets its name from the shape of its delicate petals. It grows in moist, shady areas and blooms in the summer.



#### Provincial Bird

##### The Blue Jay

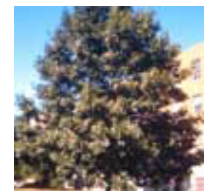
This bright blue bird lives on the island year-round and raises chicks in the spring and summer.



#### Provincial Tree

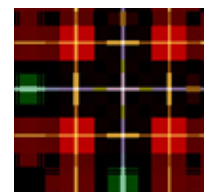
##### The Red Oak

This tree was common in the eastern part of the island when Cartier landed there in 1534. Its strong wood was used to make furniture.



#### Provincial Tartan

The red squares represent the province's soil, while the green stands for the grass and the trees. The white is for the caps on the waves, and the yellow stripes symbolize the sun.



## Provincial Coat of Arms

The lion and large oak tree both represent Great Britain, while the three small trees stand for Prince Edward Island's three counties. The gold helmet symbolizes the island's status as a founding member of the Confederation. The blue jay is the provincial bird, and the branch of red oak represents the provincial tree. The silver foxes represent the fur farming industry that began in the province. The potato blossoms and fishing net symbolize the farming and fishing industries. The eight-pointed star is a traditional Mi'kmaq symbol for the sun. The rose, lily, thistle, and shamrock are the flowers of England, France, Ireland, and Scotland, respectively. The lady's slipper is the provincial flower.



## Major League Sports Teams

- Island Storm (NBL Canada)

## For More Information

To learn more about Prince Edward Island, see [www.gov.pe.ca](http://www.gov.pe.ca). Or contact Tourism PEI, PO Box 940, Charlottetown, PE, C1A 7M5; phone (800) 463-4PEI; web site [www.tourismpei.com](http://www.tourismpei.com).

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# Prince Edward Island

## EXTREMES

Coldest: The lowest recorded temperature was  $-37.2^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-35^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) at Kilmahumaig on 26 January 1884.

Lowest: The province's lowest point is sea level, at the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Highest: The highest point in the province is Bonshaw Hills, at 152 metres (499 ft).

Hottest: The highest temperature was  $36.7^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $98.1^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) at Charlottetown on 19 August 1935.

