

Getting To And From Toronto

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<http://www.alfacanadese.ca/index.php>

Driving into Canada requires proof of citizenship and identity. Getting back into the U.S. requires a passport or an equivalent used for frequent crossings, such as a Nexus Card. Michigan, New York and Washington residents have the option of an (RFT) Enhanced Drivers License that allows Customs agents to read the license at 50 feet once removed from its protective sleeve. Michigan residents can acquire one when renewing for approximately \$15 additional cost above a standard drivers license.

For your own minor children, a birth certificate is needed. Bringing someone else's children requires a notarized letter signed by both parents.

The standard questions will be: citizenship, where are you going, how long will you be staying, what are you bringing with you? Keep answers short and to the point. Unless you are acting very nervous or appear to be hiding something, the recitation at a Customs booth typically takes about 15 seconds.

Many thousands of people cross the border every day and local residents go to dinner or entertainment to and from either side. There's even a tunnel shuttle bus between Detroit and Windsor.

Convention co-chair Oliver Collins, has driven his Alfa Romeo 6C2500 Touring coupe back and forth without encountering a problem. Our Duetto goes into and out of Canada without a hitch. Oliver Collins asked three participants at Lime Rock who come to Canada and the Mosport Vintage Festival (Ontario) and Mt. Tremblant (Quebec) events on an annual basis. They each stated emphatically that they have never been overly questioned or had their cars/tools/etc. searched. Usually all they get is 'Are you bringing that car back out with you? Have nice day.' They stated they have NEVER had any delay more than a normal crossing. Collins has been going back and forth with cars, tools, spares, etc., for 30 years and was only delayed once (after expressing impatience about the car ahead). He has traveled with an open trailer, a closed trailer, and rarely has Customs even looked inside the trailer.

Collins has personally been going back and forth with cars, tools, spares, etc., for 30 years and was only delayed once (after expressing impatience about the car ahead). He has traveled with an open trailer, a closed 20 trailer, and rarely has Customs even looked inside the trailer.

Among things not to bring into Canada is a radar detector. It is illegal and will be confiscated. Dog food may not be brought into Canada. Visitors may bring "personal baggage" duty free, provided they are declared to Customs. Personal baggage includes a reasonable amount of personal items (52 pairs of jeans for one week would look suspect), supply of food for personal use and a full tank of gas. Believe it or not, they sell food and even soap and toothpaste in Canada, so do not pack for a wilderness safari.

You'll recognize many brands in stores and often the stores themselves. For instance, the only visible difference between a U.S. McDonald's and one in Canada is a small maple leaf added to the golden arches. Requesting 'hot tea' is raising your hand that you are a foreigner, it is simply "tea." Iced tea is sweet, so get over it. And last time we

looked, Tim Horton's (he was a Toronto Maple Leaf hockey player) still sold traditional British butter tarts that were dropped in the States because only border town U.S. residents seemed to know what they were. Some better restaurants close between lunch and dinner; not all, but more than U.S. visitors expect. A 4 PM dinner is known as a Florida Early Bird, and you'll likely be dining alone.

Gifts brought across the border may not exceed \$60 Cdn for a friend or relative in Canada, not including tobacco or alcohol. Gifts valued at more than \$60 Cdn are subject to duty or taxes on the amount over \$60.

Major Crossings

The primary U.S.-Canada border crossings for this convention are located in Michigan and New York.

- Detroit/Windsor Ambassador Bridge
- Detroit/Windsor Tunnel
- Port Huron/Sarnia Blue Water Bridge
- Marine City/Sombra Bluewater Ferry
- Buffalo/Fort Erie Peace Bridge
- Niagara Falls Rainbow Bridge
- Niagara Falls Whirlpool Rapids Bridge (Nexus Card and daytime only)
- Lewiston/Queenston Bridge
- Alexandra/Lansdowne Thousand Islands Bridge (northeast from Toronto)

Some major crossings have websites with real-time updates and cameras showing average waiting times and traffic.

For anyone suffering from border crossing paranoia, I suggest taking the Marine City, Michigan/Sombra, Ontario ferry across the St. Clair River. It's a small town crossing, the ferry can take trailers, but then driving a fair distance through rural areas to get to a highway on either side can be a reason not to go that route.

Currency

The Blue Water Bridge crossing at Port Huron/Sarnia has a convenient currency exchange office on the Canadian side. Bank rates paid on U.S. Funds. Low rates on amounts over \$1,000 in American Express Travelers Cheques are available. Drive-through, walk-up and lobby service available. 24/7 access to ATMs, accepts both US and Canadian debit/credit cards.

Phone: (519) 337-3703

Toll-Free: (888) 529-0899

Fax: (519) 337-8038

Email: cgardiner@bwbc.gc.ca

ATMs are as common as in the States, as are the fees. Before pulling out that credit card, be aware that currency exchange fees of 6-to 9-percent are typical. The card reader at gas station pumps might not accept your Visa or MasterCard because it is foreign, but the person behind the counter has always accepted credit cards if I walk into the station. If you have a Mobil gas card, it is the same as Exxon or Esso in Ontario. Fill the gas tank on the U.S. side of the border. Gas is about a buck per gallon more on the other side, and is sold in liters, not gallons.

Auto Insurance

Check your policy or call your agent to verify that you have full coverage while in Canada. If not, ask if a short-term rider can be added. You must be able to provide proof of insurance and ownership upon request.

Medical Insurance

The free medical service you've heard about applies to Canadians and their provincial Medicare cards, not visitors. Canadian health care providers do not accept U.S. domestic health insurance. Visitors must pay by cash or credit card at the time of medical service. On the other hand, medical care is far less expensive than in the U.S. If you feel it is necessary, travel insurance is available. My personal advice in the case of a catastrophe is to carry a widely accepted credit card, pay for services until the patient is stabilized and can be transported home, then let your own insurance handle it from there.

Traffic Laws

Generally the same as in the States. Right turns at red lights are legal. Daytime running lights are required for vehicles imported into Canada, but that law does not apply to visitors and their cars.

Phone Service

Virtually all carriers will connect calls to and from Canada, but unless you have international service as part of your contract, the Roaming charges will be high.

All The Details

Detailed information regarding U.S. border regulations and what can be brought back to the U.S. is covered in an 86-page government booklet, *Know Before You Go*, available as a PDF download at: <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>

High and Low Tea

Not essential, but interesting if you are sitting by the statue of General Brock in Niagara-on-the-Lake with a plate of scones and reading the plaque extolling his efforts in beating back the American invasion.

British high tea tends to be on the heavier side. Afternoon tea (because it was usually taken in the late afternoon) is also called "low tea" because it was usually taken in a sitting room or withdrawing room where low tables (like a coffee table) were placed near sofas or chairs generally in a large withdrawing room. There are three basic types of Afternoon, or Low Tea:

Cream Tea - Tea, scones, jam and cream

Light Tea - Tea, scones and sweets

Full Tea - Tea, savories, scones, sweets and dessert

Useful websites

http://gocanada.about.com/od/canadatravelplanner/u/Plan_Your_Trip.htm#s4

<http://www.cbp.gov/>

<http://apps.cbp.gov/bwt/>

www.crossingmadeeasy.com

www.dwtunnel.com

<http://bluewaterferry.com/>

http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9618_11070---,00.html