**Canadian Culture and Traditions**

Canada is known worldwide as a multicultural country with a vast range of cultural influences that create its distinct range of customs and traditions. Proud for their unique identity, Canadians stick out like a thumb in any country they visit, as they take pride in being citizens of the world's 2nd largest country in terms of total area.

**Culture and Tradition**  
Canadian culture is heavily influenced by its conquerors - the French and the British. Add these influences with the country's indigenous cultures, and you've got the distinct Canadian identity.  
  
With a large number of immigrants, there are many regions in the country with different adaptations of the different nationalities that have called Canada home. This has resulted to a diverse and multicultural nation that has made Canada a welcoming country - welcoming of any religion and any nationality - making it a favorite place to migrate to by individuals from different countries all over the world.  
  
**Common traditions and etiquette include:**

* Handshaking as the most common form of greeting - with a strong grip and eye contact;
* Leaving footwear inside the entrance when you enter someone's home;
* Giving flowers, the best quality wine, and chocolates when invited to someone's dinner party;
* Giving someone his/her personal space in a conversation, avoiding touching as much as possible;
* Using appropriate titles or last names when addressing a person - use the first name only when invited, as first names tend to be used by family and close friends.

**Art and Architecture**  
There is no distinct style or preference of Canadian art but most of their artists create pieces influenced by French and British styles. Popular painters in the past include Paul Kane, David Mine, and Cornelius Krieghoff - who often depicted landscapes and the Canadian wilderness. Sculpture has been mainly done by the Inuit artists, and most aboriginal artwork found are preserved in museums.  
  
Architecture has also been heavily influenced by Baroque and Cape Cod styles with homes having the neoclassical style. Recent structures are predominantly minimal and modern - such as the Telus Sky Tower in Calgary and the seemingly floating structure of the Fifth Pavilion of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.  
  
**Literature**  
Like Canada's art, their literature are also influenced by French and English styles. Notable Canadian authors include Man Booker Prize winner Michael Ondaatje for The English Patient; Yann Martel for the Life of Pi; 1995 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction awardee Carol Shields for The Stone Diaries; and 2013 Nobel Prize awardee for Literature Alice Munro for her life-long work on the modern short story.  
  
**Society**  
Canadians are predominantly tolerant, polite, and extremely conservative. They're very community-oriented and though most social gatherings take place in private spaces such as homes and restaurants, they instill the sense of giving back to the community.  
  
Public humility is highly valued and visible signs of excess consumption and massive residences are not common.  
  
Their constitution is also progressive, making same-sex marriage legal, eliminating capital punishment, their publicly funded health care, strict gun controls, and their strong efforts to vanish poverty.  
  
**Clothing**  
Clothing in the last hundreds of years were heavily influenced by European styles. Most of these clothing are now preserved at the Royal Ontario Museum and the McCord Museum of Canada.  
  
Today, Canadians dress as the Westerners do with the basic t-shirt and jeans as the most common outfit. Cotton and lightweight fabrics are preferred in the summer while sweaters and lightweight jackets are recommended for spring and fall. Since Canada is relatively colder than most countries, dressing in winter takes a lot more effort.  
  
Thick jackets, parkas, and heavy layering of sweaters are much needed to survive the cold Canadian climate during the winter season. The toque is the most common piece of accessory - which is a knit winter hat that keeps the head warm.  
  
**Cuisine**  
Much like the country's culture, Canadian cuisine is also very multicultural. It has been dubbed as a smorgasbord of different international cuisine with different offerings depending on the different regions of the country.  
  
There is no Canadian national food but the poutine and the butter tart are large contenders. Poutine is available in pubs and even fast food chains - it is described as french fries topped with brown gravy and cheese curds. Butter tarts are Canada's quintessential dessert made of a crust and butter custard inside.  
  
**Festivals**  
Canada has every kind of festival for everyone. Visited by millions of people each year, the top 4 festivals are:

* **Winterlude in Ottawa -** A celebration of everything winter, this winter festival boasts of the largest skating rink in the world and accommodates over 1.6 million visitors a year with its vast range of entertainment and educational offerings for the entire family.
* **Celebration of Light in Vancouver -** A musical fireworks competition with some of the world's best international competitors with an annual visitor number of over 1 million.
* **Just for Laughs in Montreal -** The biggest international comedy festival in the world that attracts almost 2 million tourists a year.
* **Pride Toronto -** One of the biggest gay pride parades in the world, this is a festival that celebrates the LGBT world community.