

Know Before You Go

There's a lot to know when you're planning to travel abroad—such as how to prepare for your trip, how to avoid risks and, perhaps, details about the current security situation in the country you're planning to visit. The onus is on you to find out everything that's essential. Here's a sample of the information that all travellers should have.



Top 10 countries Canadians visited in 2010

Figures include multiple visits by single individuals.

YOUR PASSPORT TO THE WORLD



A valid Canadian passport is the only reliable and universally accepted travel and identification document for Canadians. It allows you to travel to foreign countries (in accordance with visa requirements) and proves that you have a right to return to Canada. It also makes it easier to secure assistance from Canadian consular officials abroad if you encounter any problems.

But don't assume that your passport is valid until its date of expiry. Some countries require that your passport be valid for six months beyond your date of entry.

To protect yourself, complete the emergency contact information on page 4 of your passport. Be sure to provide the name of someone who would not normally accompany you on a trip abroad.

Another precaution you can take is to photocopy the identification page of your passport and carry it separately from your passport while abroad. Also, leave one photocopy at home.

DUAL CITIZEN?

If you're a citizen of both Canada and another country, always use your Canadian passport if possible, especially when entering the country of your other citizenship.

This gives you the best chance of getting access to Canadian consular services if you run into any trouble.

As a Canadian with dual citizenship, you should be aware of possible issues. For example, you may be legally required to register for—or even be inducted into—military service in the country of your other nationality. You could also have tax obligations that you may not be aware of.

To minimize risks for yourself and your family, it's important that you obtain all essential information from the appropriate authorities of any country where you may be a citizen. In the end, the responsibility lies with you and you alone.

TRAVELLING WITH KIDS

Children, like adults, need passports when travelling abroad. If a child is travelling with only one parent, it's wise to carry a consent letter from the other parent, certified by an official who can administer an oath.