

# THE CANADA DOG SLED CHALLENGE

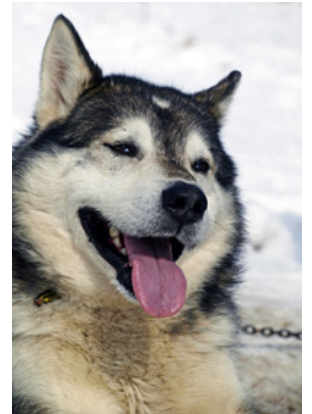
with  
DIFFERENT TRAVEL

## About Canada



Canada occupies most of North America and borders the United States of America at the south and at the north east. Despite being the second largest country in the world, there are only 33 million people living there (half that of the UK), making Canada one of the lowest density populations in the world at 3.3 person per km<sup>2</sup>. This is because a large majority of Canada is located in uninhabitable Arctic areas. The capital city is Ottawa. Canada is a bi-lingual country with the province of Quebec being populated by around 85% of French speakers. There are also several indigenous languages spoken in the territory of Nunavut. Canada's is one of the few developed nations that are a net exporter of energy. The oil and natural gas reserves in the Atlantic are second only to Saudi Arabia. The currency is in Canadian dollars and cents. Canada's climate is very varied. Winter temperatures can hover between -15°C and -40°C with

severe wind chill in the north and central areas. Snow can cover the ground 6 months in a year in the northern areas. British Columbia in the West experiences temperate weather with mild rainy winters and hot summers up to around 30°C.



## Yukon Territory

The name 'Yukon' means great river in Gwich'in, a Athabaskan language of the Gwich'in indigenous people. The climate is Arctic and Subarctic and experiences long cold winters. However, the long sunshine hours in the summer allow hardy fruits and plants to grow. The capital of Yukon is Whitehorse, which is famous for its landscapes and natural parks. Whitehorse experiences average daily temperatures of 21°C in July and -22°C in January, however despite its cold winters; Yukon is considered the territory with the most comfortable climate. Yukon is home to the Yukon quest, a 1000 mile international dog sledding race considered to be the toughest in the world.

## Itinerary

**Day 1: London / Vancouver or Calgary/ Whitehorse** Fly from London to Whitehorse. Spend the night at the Gold Rush Inn Hotel in Whitehorse.



**Day 2: Yukon** Meet your local team of guides this morning! As a group, we will do some last minute shopping before driving to the Sky High Wilderness Ranch, 20km South of Whitehorse, where you will enjoy a hot lunch and then be introduced to your 4 legged companions for the tour. Next you'll learn the basics of dog care; checking their feet and shoulders, dog massage, sledding and parts of the sled. Harness your team, hook up and go for your very first run! After taking care of the dogs we will have a hot dinner and discuss the activities and packing list for the following day. Spend your night in a comfortable warm bed as you dream of tomorrow's adventure!

**Day 3: Yukon** Imagine yourself years ago when only the dogsled was used for transportation. Head out into the untouched wilderness for 4 days of winter camping. Depending on the group you may go to one of our 3 camps; Coal Lake Trapper Cabin, Dry Creek Wall tent Camp or Mud Lake Wall tent camp. As you journey through this rugged terrain, a surge of new life creeps into your soul and you become one with the land that surrounds you. Keep an eye out for the wildlife which is abundant in the area. Take care of and feed your dog team and then learn how to cook on an open fire. Settle down for a well deserved rest. Sleep in your sled as only a true musher would and watch for the mystical Aurora Borealis, or take your sleeping bag into the shared wall tent accommodations. Don't forget to put wood on the fire!



**Day 4: Yukon** Wake to the crisp air as the sun's rays light up the morning skies. Check on your dog team and prepare and feed them their breakfast. After a hearty breakfast ourselves, we begin the challenge of a new day. Hook up your team and get ready - today we will go ice fishing - testing the skills and patience of all who participate. Remember this will be your supper so persevere and the



reward will be yours! Now it's time to hook up the team and head back to camp, feed your team and make sure they have straw for their beds. Chop some fire wood then fry up your catch and sit back to a delicious northern delicacy. Overnight at camp.

**Day 5: Yukon** The routine of your new life is comfortable now and you automatically go through the morning chores excited about what this new day will bring. Do not forget to pack your camera to record your adventure for friends and family back home. Breathe deeply the fresh, cleansing air and take each turn

with a new level of confidence, knowing your dogs will not let you down and that you are now a team, capable of mastering the most difficult of trails. Watch for animal tracks and wildlife on the trail and enjoy the serenity and peacefulness that comes at the end of an amazing day. Overnight at Camp.



**Day 6: Yukon** On this, your final day of mushing, take in the rugged beauty of the landscape for one last time. Reminisce as you listen to the sound of the runners and the soft panting of the dogs. Feel the strength in your limbs and the peacefulness of your mind. You are now one with the great land we call Yukon. No matter where you go, you need only to close your eyes and you will be back running softly along the snow covered trails with the sun on your face and your team leading the way. Spend one last night at Sky High Wilderness Ranch.



**Day 7: Whitehorse** Wake to a new day of yet another exciting challenge. Say good bye to your four legged friends and begin the final step of your Yukon Journey. Today you will join the Yukon's Kwanlin Dun First Nation which has been your host for part of this journey. You will get to help them with a community project, such as helping to restore the ski paths which are essential for transportation in winter (exact details tbc). Spend your last night at the Gold Rush Inn Hotel.

**Day 8: Whitehorse / Vancouver or Calgary** This morning we fly to Vancouver or Calgary and spend the rest of the day enjoying the sights of one of Canada's great cities. Enjoy a farewell dinner and overnight at a central hotel.

**Day 9: Whitehorse / Vancouver or Calgary** Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK

**N.B. Due to unforeseeable circumstances, such as weather conditions, wind chill factor, extreme temperatures (-30C or lower), condition of the group or illness of the dogs, we may be forced to change this itinerary. The safety of our guests and dogs takes precedence and our decisions are final.**

## BEFORE YOU GO: AN A - Z OF INFORMATION ON CANADA

**A is for Arrival.** British Citizens do not need a visa to enter Canada but we recommend that your passport should have a remaining validity of at least six months after departure and that you have enough empty pages for your entry and exit stamp.

**B is also for Begging.** This is quite rare and you are unlikely to be bothered by beggars.

**C is for Communications.** The country code from UK to Canada is +1. There is also a widely spread mobile phone network across the country. It is thus quite likely that your mobile phone will work. Whilst in the hotel you may access the internet and e-mail and cyber cafes are common in towns and cities.

**C is also for Clothing.** It is essential that you wear the correct kind of clothing for your comfort and safety. For this reason, cotton is absolutely not to be worn. Cotton absorbs moisture and reduces the core body temperature leading to an increased risk of hypothermia. It only takes a 2 degree drop in body temperature to become hypothermic so it is vital that you wear man-made wicking fabrics such as polyester and preferably specialist wicking thermal base layers. All cotton items should be left at home.

A layering system of dressing should be adopted, with thermal base layers, followed by standard base layers, with a micro fleece, a windproof fleece, and a waterproof windproof ski jacket. For bottoms, thermal pants or long johns, warm breathable trousers and waterproof over trousers are suggested. If you get too warm you can remove some layers and if you are too cold you can add more. Temperatures may drop to around -22°C so you must not underestimate how important it is to dress properly. A very warm fleece or fur hat is essential, and a scarf or thermal Buff ([www.buffwear.co.uk](http://www.buffwear.co.uk)) must be worn to keep your neck warm. A hooded fleece is also great for keeping the head and neck warm in conjunction with a hat and scarf or Buff. Extra clothing can be hired in Canada (see 'J is for Jacket' and 'S is for Sleeping Bag').

**D is for Dehydration.** Dehydration can be dangerous and you should bring a supply of rehydration salts with you. You can buy the small packets from chemists in different flavours and just add the powder to quantity of water mentioned on the packet.

**D is also for Daypack.** Throughout the trip your daypack is your responsibility and you will be carrying your own – so don't make it too heavy. We recommend a 25 litre pack.

**D is also for Dietary Requirements.** The majority of special diets, such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, etc., can be catered for. Please ensure that you notify us of any dietary requirements at the time of booking or as soon as possible.

**E is for Expenses.** Laundry, Drinks, Personal Spending Money, Personal Equipment, Souvenirs, Tips. There are lots of ATMs if you wish to withdraw cash, but be aware that your bank may charge for overseas withdrawals and transactions.

**E is also for Electricity.** Mains electricity is 120v/ 60 Hz. Plugs are 2 flat blade sockets (USA style). The camps have no power or telephone, showers are of basic gravity fed nature and not available in tent camp.

**F is for First Aid kit.** Especially whilst on the trip you should have a small first aid kit of essential items (personal prescription medicine, painkillers, plasters/blister spray, insect repellent (containing 50% DEET), anti-histamine tablets and cream, Imodium (loperamide), rehydration sachets, throat lozenges, painkillers such as Ibuprofen, decongestant, lip balm with SPF, antiseptic cream, antifungal powder, scissors, tweezers, thermometer, sanitary towels and/or tampons or a Mooncup, spare glasses or contact lenses, toilet roll. See packing list for more detail.

**F is also for Fitness.** A good general level of fitness is required as dog sledding is akin to cross country skiing. You should start a programme of body conditioning well before your departure including walking and cardio vascular workouts to both improve your stamina. DTC has the right to refuse anyone who they feel is not fit enough for the challenge.

**F is also for Food and Drink.** All the food provided for you is delicious and filling. All dietary requirements are catered for. (Please let us know in advance about any dietary requirements you may have.)

**G is for Gloves.** You must take 2 pairs of gloves - a thin and a thick pair – and it is important that you can put them both on together.

**H is for Health.** Remember to take all your existing medication in clearly labelled packages. Normal body temperature is 98.6 f / 37 C. Resting pulse rate should be 60 – 90 per minute (higher at higher altitude). Respiratory rate should be 12-20 breaths per minute. You should seek medical advice at least 8 weeks before travelling and ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up-to-date. For further information on health, check <http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk>.

**J is for Jacket.** You will need a warm, windproof, waterproof, padded jacket such as a ski jacket, or better still, a down filled waterproof, windproof jacket. Temperatures can be as low as -40C so it is important to keep warm. Warm Northern Outfitters jacket/pants can be hired in Canada for \$35 (£22) and warm mitts for \$10 (£6.50), payable on arrival by cash or credit card.

**L is also for Laundry.** Laundry facilities will be available at the hotel.

**M is for Money.** We suggest you carry Canadian dollars or British Pounds which can be cashed in at the hotel or on arrival at the airport. There are ATMs available, but your bank may charge you for withdrawals and transactions.

**M is also for Medical insurance.** This is an absolute necessity. You should make sure that you inform any current insurance providers of your intention to get involved with a dog sledding challenge, or please contact us for information about a policy which covers the activities you will participate in.

**N is for Nibbles.** High energy snacks will be welcome during the trip. Dried fruit, nuts – especially walnuts and almonds, Kendal mint cake, bananas, popcorn, energy bars such as Mulebar, Clif bars, etc.

**P is for Photocopies.** Remember to take a photocopy of all your documents (insurance details, flight numbers, passport etc) and also leave a photocopy of the aforementioned with a reliable person in the UK. Should you lose everything you can make a call to retrieve your information. It is also recommended to scan these documents and email them to yourself too.

**R is for Religion.** About 73% of the population practice Christianity and the remaining 27% either have no religious affiliation or are members of small religious groups.

**S is for Sleeping bag.** Sleeping bags can be hired while in Canada, or you can bring your own. It must be a 5+ season comfort rating (**comfort rating** of -30C or lower) and will likely to cost well above £150. It is easier to simply hire one in Canada at the cost of \$45 (around £29). A fleece liner is highly recommended.

# Packing List

## Clothing

- Trainers/Comfortable shoes
- Underwear x 7-8 (inc. thermal underwear)
- Thermal socks x 4 (plus normal socks)\*
- Long thermal base layer trousers x2\*
- Breathable waterproof trousers
- Warm breathable trousers x2\*
- Fleece lined trousers\*
- Base layer long sleeved t-shirts x2\*
- Long sleeved thermal base layers x2\*
- Breathable waterproof jacket
- Micro fleece\*
- Thick sweater/fleece\*
- Warm Jacket (down or ski jacket)
- Warm hat covering ears
- Gloves x2 (to be worn together)
- Balaclava/Polar Buff and scarf

\*Must **NOT** be cotton. Warm clothing can be hired in Canada – see above, in 'Clothing'

## Baggage

- Large rucksack/holdall for main luggage
- Daypack (25-30 litres)

## Sleeping

- Thermal sleeping bag liner
- Ear plugs
- Eye mask

## Eating/Drinking

- Energy snacks (dried fruit/nuts/glucose sweets etc)
- 2 litre personal water bottle

## Essentials

- Tickets (or e-tickets)
- Passport & copy
- Money
- Books/playing cards
- LED head torch and spare batteries
- Diary/Notebook and pen
- Sunglasses (preferably polarized)
- Toilet roll and a large pack of baby wipes
- Adaptor (2 flat pins)
- Sewing kit
- Plastic bags – all sizes; black bin bags, carrier bags, ziplock food bags
- Pocket knife/Swiss Army Knife

## First Aid Kit

- Prescription medicine
- Painkillers
- Plasters (waterproof and fabric) and blister spray
- Imodium (Loperamide)
- Rehydration sachets (Electrolade/Diaorlyte)
- Antifungal cream/ powder
- Muscle rub (tiger balm/Deep Heat)
- Anti-histamine tablets/cream
- Lip balm with SPF protection
- Calamine lotion
- Antiseptic cream/powder
- Decongestant
- Throat lozenges
- Moisturizing lotion
- Scissors/tweezers

## Optional

- Camera
- Video Camera
- Chargers
- Films/batteries/memory stick
- Mobile phone & charger
- MP3 player/walkman
- Goggles (to prevent eyes drying out in wind)
- Sleeping bag with comfort of -30C or lower (5-season) - **can be hired**
- Dry bags

## Hygiene

- Wash bag and wash kit
- Personal toiletries
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Travel towel
- Multi purpose travel wash
- Sun cream (high SPF)
- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Nail brush
- Sanitary towels/tampons/Mooncup
- Spare glasses/contact lenses

If you have any questions about anything on this packing list please contact [info@different-travel.com](mailto:info@different-travel.com) for more information.

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