10 Things Canada Does Better Than America (From an American Perspective)

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As Americans, we often think of our neighbors to the north as polite and quirky relatives. We walk around proud, like we are the successful members of the family. But there’s a lot we can learn from Canada that we can embrace culturally.

In a time when “How to move to Canada” is being Googled more than ever due to the scary possibility of Donald Trump becoming president, here are 10 things we should seriously consider weaving into our own lives that Canadians simply do better:

1. Multicultural Harmony

World peace does exist people, and it’s present in Canada. For some reason, America still hasn’t learned from years of bigotry and discrimination. This couldn’t be more obvious than it is now, what with Donald Trump’s presidential run and the wave of people supporting his message.

America has always been known as a melting pot, and many schools teach that in a positive light. Canada, however, is known as a cultural mosaic.

What sounds better: everyone melting into some homogeneous outcome, or preserving, celebrating and understanding a wide swath of cultures? It’s a beautiful thing that Canada has going.

2. Politeness

It’s one of those things Americans think of when describing Canadians, and most would say it’s something we lack. There’s a whole lot of truth there.

Chivalry is (near) dead, and the politeness of previous generations has all but evaporated into a self-consumed, American culture. Saying “sorry” and being a nice human being isn’t a sign of weakness. It shows a good display of etiquette that many of us could certainly brush up on.

3. Food

Say what you want about American food, but it’s kind of gluttonous and nothing really special. “American” on any menu means things like pizza, hamburgers and hot dogs.

With the Canadian landscape representing a cultural mosaic, all it takes is one trip to Toronto to understand how many different types of (amazing) cultural foods are at your tastebuds’ fingertips.

We’re talking everything from Caribbean, Ethiopian, Filipino, Jewish, German, Portuguese and Chinese, and that’s not even close to the end of the list. With the large immigrant population in Canada, you will find authentic cuisines from all over the world.

4. Cottage Country And The Great Outdoors

Canadians love their outdoors, and who can blame them? They have a ton of land that boasts beautiful natural parks, lakes and other things to see and do. One thing that is intrinsically Canadian is “cottage country.” Most people know someone with a cottage, and summers are spent there en masse.

This is the equivalent to what we might think of as a lake house. Their love for the outdoors goes beyond just cottages, though. Even in the cities, enjoying food and drinks on the patio is a favorite past time among Canadians. We should take note and appreciate more of the beautiful land we have here as well.

5. Political Progression

With election year pushing politics to the forefront of American culture right now, it’s kind of sad to think about some of the political views that are out there. One look up north quickly makes you yearn for the US to be a little more progressive with things like gay marriage, universal health care and stricter gun laws.

When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau chose a gender-equal cabinet, [his response](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLk2aSBrR6U) to questions about his reasoning is something you can only hope for in America.

Sigh. Maybe one day, we can learn to be a modern society.

6. Pride With Acceptance

Whether we’re talking sexual pride, nationalistic pride or anything else, Canadians are proud. But that pride doesn’t come with the slight bit of arrogance that comes with American pride. No. Canadians are proud and accepting at the same time.

Imagine that? There’s no nose snubbing there.

You can be proud of the country you were born in, but love Canada as well for taking you in. You can join one of the [largest gay pride celebrations](http://www.pridetoronto.com/) in the world in Toronto.

7. Free Health Care

There are times when health care costs come out of nowhere for Americans. Just look at families who have loved ones with cancer. That often leads to charitable fundraisers to help them get through the crisis.

That’s not the case in Canada. Health care is taken care of, and the random costs are taken out of the equation, opening people up to doing more preventative visits. Sure, you pay more in taxes for it, but isn’t that an easier pill to swallow than a random bill from a recent hospital visit?

How about their [one year](http://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0512/maternity-leave-basics-canada-vs.-the-u.s..aspx) of paid maternity leave? Yeah, one year.

What guarantee do women get in the US? Exactly.

8. Language

What’s your background, and what languages do you speak? Most people in Canada speak both English and at least one other language. French is also widely taught in Canada, as it’s the other national language of the country.

There have been multiple studies that show that [bilingualism can make you smarter](http://www.scilearn.com/blog/does-being-bilingual-make-you-smarter). This makes sense, given what it requires of your brain.

Why is the US so egocentrically concerned with English? I can’t count the number of times I’ve heard, “You’re in our country, so speak our language.”

9. “Cheers” And “Eh”

First off, “cheers” means goodbye for many in Canada. It sounds great because it seems like drinking is right around the corner (and it often is). This is way better than goodbye, hands down.

The second is “eh,” and it’s something many Canadians are teased about. Let’s compare apples to apples though.

Here in America, our similar speech filler is “huh.” As in, “Nice weather, huh?” Canadians would substitute “huh” with “eh.” I would argue that our “huh” sounds a lot less intelligent.

10. Worldly Knowledge

The US is the kid on the playground who only talks about him or herself, and knows nothing more than his or her own world. Need a test? Travel abroad with a US flag on your bag versus a Canadian one, and see which gets you accepted, and which gets you a dirty look.

America’s arrogance and lack of worldly knowledge — just look at how much we don’t know about our neighbors, let alone the rest of the world — lends itself to people disliking us. Who can blame them?

Canadians are actually very knowledgeable about their own country, the US and many others around the globe. Many Canadians love to travel, and their worldly knowledge is enviable.

Bonus: Poutine

This wouldn’t be a solid article if I didn’t include poutine. The French fries with cheese and gravy dish is simply amazing. When you factor in all of the various twists that exist for this classic, you can see why it’s sad that we haven’t adopted it ourselves (much like the rest of the list).

America, can we get over ourselves? Can we get with the times and start borrowing from the amazing culture of our northerly neighbors? At the very least, we should stop poking fun of them. They’re miles ahead of us in a lot of ways.

**Assignment:**

**Are there any of the above points that you do not agree with? Explain your ideas and how they differ from the perspectives above.**

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**Which of the above points do you think are the most important in identifying yourself as a Canadian? Which do you take the most pride in? Explain your response and how it applies and effects you personally.**

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**It’s your turn! What do you love about being Canadian? Come up with your own idea about what makes Canada better than America. Provide a detailed response.**

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