

CANADA

A land of SUPERLATIVES

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Alouette 1
 Alouette 1, used for scientific experiments in the ionosphere, was Canada's first satellite. It was launched in September 1962 and made Canada the third country to use a satellite for domestic communications.

The proto planet (4 billion years ago)
 The oldest known rock in Canada, part of the earth's crust, was found north of Yellowknife in 1960 and dated at 3.96 billion years old. Canada's oldest evidence of life — fossils of cyanobacteria, formerly called blue-green algae — date back 2.5 billion years.

Continental collisions (250 million years ago)
 The present shape of Canada is largely the result of the collision and separation of continental and oceanic plates riding over the mantle, the zone between the earth's crust and core. Some 250 million years ago, the collision of North America with Europe and Africa, built the Appalachian and Laurentian mountains. Today, Canada's east coast is tectonically calm geologically, but it was once a part of one of the world's most active areas, as the Pacific Ocean floor grew against the edge of the continent.

Buried in ice (55,000 to 10,000 years ago)
 Nearly the entire surface of Canada was covered by thousands of metres of glacial ice during the Wisconsin glaciation. North America's last major glaciation, which reached its maximum extent (shown here about 20,000 years ago). The broad valleys and sculpted peaks of the high mountains, the valleys of the Great Lakes, the bare rock of the Canadian Shield, the abundance of lakes and wetlands — much of what makes the Canadian landscape so striking and varied — are due to the tremendous force of moving ice.

Coming to the Americas (40,000 years ago to present)
 The earliest human migrations into the Western Hemisphere, from Asia, began as early as 40,000 years ago, and the earliest evidence in the Yukon's Old Crow River basin suggests that the waters of the Ice Age melted, and areas opened up for settlement by the first inhabitants of this world. The first known European settlement in the Americas, Newfoundland's 1,000-year-old L'Anse aux Meadows, was a precursor of the huge migrations from that continent over the last 500 years. In recent decades, Asia has become Canada's primary source of new citizens. (Globe shows modern vegetation and ice cover.)

