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home abroad.

Relocation Guide to Yellowknife, NWT, Canada

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YELLOWKNIFE OVERVIEW



Yellowknife

Yellowknife's hometown feel and urban amenities make it a great place to live, work and play. As the capital city of the Northwest Territories (NWT), there are numerous daily flights connecting us to the rest of Canada and has year-round road access.

Up here, work-life balance truly exists. Whether you're interested in a northern adventure filled with fishing and snowmobiling, or just looking to live in a beautiful, small urban centre filled with other well-educated professionals, Yellowknife is a city of contrasts and vibrancy. With a population just under 20,000 and one of the youngest populations in the country, it maintains the friendliness of a small town and the opportunity and energy of a metropolis.

The summers are incredible. Not too hot with a stretch or two of 30C, 86F, filled with sunshine and socializing, festivals and other community gatherings. Plus, it rarely rains and every year we have more hours of sunshine than just about anywhere else. But even our cold winters are nothing to be scared of. Dress properly, and you're ready for anything.

City Overview

- [City of Yellowknife](#)
- [Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [City Council and Mayor](#)
- Land Area: 105.44 km² (40.71 sq mi)
- Currency: Canadian Dollar
- [Government of the Northwest Territories' Museum](#)
- [Visitors Guide](#)
- [Public Library](#)
- [Recreation Department](#)
- [Events Calendar](#)

Government organizations

- [Government of Northwest Territories](#)
- [NWT Ministry of Health](#)

Useful Local Links

- [Canadian International Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Bank of Canada Exchange Rate Information](#)
- [Yellow Pages Yellowknife](#)

Post Office

Canada Post locations offer various office hours and services differ depending on the location. Find your office through the [post office finder](#), where you can also find a rate, find a postal code and track your mail.

Time Zone

Yellowknife is in the Mountain Time Zone. Daylight savings time is in effect from the second Sunday in March until the first Sunday in November. You can see time in relation to most cities on the globe by visiting www.TimeAndDate.com, which also can provide a Canadian calendar.

Metric System

The metric system is used in Canada.

Dates

Dates are written in the order of day/month/year.

Currency

Canadian one dollar coin ("loonie") (\$) = 100 cents. Canadian two dollar coin ("toonie") (\$) = 200 cents. Notes, or bills, come in denominations of \$5 (blue), \$10 (purple), \$20 (green), \$50 (pink) and \$100 (brown). Coins are in denominations of \$2, \$1, \$0.25, \$0.10, \$0.05 (frequently used) and \$0.50, \$0.01 (rarely used).

Electricity

Just like the United States, Canada uses 110-volt electric power with two- or three-pin plugs. Visitors from the UK and Europe will need adaptors, available at most hotels and department stores, to use their appliances from home.

Smoking

Smoking regulations are strict in Canada. It is banned in public spaces and workplaces (including restaurants, bars, and casinos). Smoking is also banned in vehicles if anyone under the age of 16 is present.

Pet Information

There will be no quarantine imposed on your pet when entering Canada as long as certain [requirements](#) are met.

AREA MAP



The past few years have seen huge growth in housing options in Yellowknife, from one-bedroom condos to single-family dwellings. Depending on where you're coming from, housing prices can be surprising, but the market is supported by some of Canada's highest average personal and household incomes.

Renting a Property

Some apartments can be rented by the month, but to rent a house or apartment you usually need to sign a rental agreement (or lease) for a year. This is a legally binding contract between you and the landlord. Make sure you understand exactly what you have to pay for and what is included in your rent before you sign a lease. If you are unsure about anything, ask questions and make sure you understand and are satisfied with the answers you get before you sign any lease.

The cost of renting a place depends on:

- **Location.**
- **Size and condition** of the place.
- **Amenities.** Condominiums with full facilities may command a higher price. Rent also depends on whether the place is furnished, partially furnished or unfurnished.

These are the steps in renting a home:

- Sign a lease with the owner, the terms of which are agreed between the two parties. Most landlords and housing agents ask to see a copy of your passport, a copy of your visa, passport sized photographs and an employment letter confirming your position. Sign an inventory listing of all the items provided by the owner, including their condition.
- Usually, a deposit or “security bond” equivalent to one month’s rent is required for leases that are over a year. This deposit is returned after move-out is deemed acceptable.
- Rental usually excludes utility bills but includes maintenance fees.

Lease Tips

- When you go to see apartments and meet landlords, make sure you are well-dressed and smart. Treat it like a job interview. If the apartment is good many people may be after it and the landlord will have their pick of several potential tenants.
- Take note of general appearance and upkeep. Are the carpets or flooring worn? Are the walls cracked or in need of painting? Is there staining on the roof or walls (an indication of a water leak)?
- Is an ensuite bathroom important? Is on-site laundry important or do you mind going to a Laundromat? Does the building feature security features such as security patrols or video cameras? Do you want the convenience of a dishwasher, an on-site gym or pool, a balcony etc.? Think about these when deciding on the home you want to rent.

Utilities

[Water Basic Service Charge](#) includes cost and maintenance of the water meter, the costs of reading the meter monthly and issuing your bill. It also covers costs associated with the infrastructure that is required to collect the wastewater from your home and for operating and maintaining the storm sewers.

[NWT Power Corporation](#) and [Northland Utilities](#), are fully regulated by the [Public Utilities Act Board](#) (PUB), and supply power to NWT communities by three very different methods: Hydro, Thermal and Alternative Energy. A regulated utility company cannot change the rates its charges to its customers without first obtaining the approval of the PUB. While utility rates do not change frequently, they do change from time to time to reflect changes in the utility companies' capital and operating costs.

Recycling

Yellowknife has had a [recycling program](#) since 1990, when Ecology North identified the need for one and started a recycling pilot project.



EMERGENCY & IMPORTANT CONTACTS

**IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY
DIAL 669-1111 POLICE
DIAL 873-2222 FIRE AND AMBULANCE
(911 DOES NOT WORK IN NWT)**

DO NOT HANG UP UNTIL THE CALL TAKER TELLS YOU TO DO SO

Language line: If the person calling is unable to speak English, they can tell the operator what language they speak. The Operator will have an interpreter on the line within one minute to assist with the translation.

Remain calm and speak clearly. Identify which emergency service you require (police, fire, or ambulance).

They will ask for the following information so keep this page close to your phone:

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

Emergency Preparedness

The City of Yellowknife has an [Emergency Measures Plan](#) that coordinates its response to any major emergency. The City's role is different depending on the type of emergency. In many cases, the City will broadcast and relay important information to the public through available communication channels.

Weather in the Northwest Territories

Summers can be mild in the Northwest Territories, but it can be very cold in the winter, when temperatures can go below -30, even -40 degrees Celsius. It is very important to ensure that you are prepared for the cold weather. Invest in warm winter clothing, including sweaters, winter jackets, boots, hats, scarves and gloves or mittens. If you do not dress warmly in the winter you will risk becoming ill or getting frost bite. Frost bite is severe damage to the skin caused by winter wind exposure.

Canadians keep candles and matches, warm blankets, flash lights, first aid kits, and small snow shovels in their cars and homes in case of emergencies. In most parts of Canada your car must have specially designated winter tires in order to legally, and safely, drive in the winter.

HEALTH FACILITIES

Health care needs are served by Stanton Territorial Health Authority. Health care professionals, technicians and support staff provide excellent care and services. For more information on health services visit:

- [Stanton Territorial Hospital](#)
- [Yellowknife Health and Social Services](#)
- [GNWT Health and Social Services](#)

Canada has a good standard of general healthcare with a wide range of facilities. It is a system that has been in place for many years and is one that is publicly funded. The standards for healthcare are established by the national government, but it is overseen by each provincial government in the form of the Medicare system. In order to access the free Medicare system operated by the government you must be in possession of a healthcare card, which is issued by the health department in your province. The Medicare system is not completely free, though, and it should be noted that some treatments and medications will incur costs.

For many expats, this Medicare does not apply as expats do not have the permanent residency status. Those who don't have permanent residency status will need to obtain private healthcare insurance while you are in the country. There are many companies which provide this type of insurance at a reasonable price. Some operate on a nationwide basis and others solely in one or two provinces. It is possible with some companies to arrange healthcare insurance before you arrive in the country. In some provinces, private healthcare is essential for at least the first three months as they do not allow new arrivals to claim on Medicare for that time.

Healthcare for foreign visitors is provided regardless of status and there is a special scheme known as the [Interim Federal Health Program](#) which is designed for those who have come to the country as refugees or with another special status. It will give temporary cover until residency status can be established.

In recent years both federal and provincial governments have taken steps to tackle smoking and the health issues that it raises. Smoking is banned in many public places and it is becoming increasingly unacceptable to smoke in the presence of a non-smoker.

Counseling services are sometimes available through the Medicare system although this depends upon the province that you are in. In addition to this there are large numbers of organizations that offer counseling for specific problems such as alcoholism or bereavement and many of these work on a charitable basis, so treatment is free. You can also choose to see a private therapist and lists of registered therapists are available from the health department of your local provincial government.

DRIVERS LICENCE

When applying for a Northwest Territories (NWT) Drivers Licence you must have proof of identification. For information on the identification requirements, please contact a Driver and Vehicle Licensing office in your area. An NWT Drivers Licence may only be issued to residents of the Northwest Territories. A resident is a person lawfully entitled to be in the Northwest Territories, whose home is in the Northwest Territories, who is ordinarily present in the Northwest Territories. Applicants originating from outside Canada must produce suitable immigration documents to be considered as residents. Persons on student or employment visas can apply as residents only for the time period specified on their visas.

People who have recently become residents of the Northwest Territories who wish to operate a motor vehicle may use a valid Drivers Licence from outside of the Northwest Territories for a maximum of 30 days. Residents of another Canadian jurisdiction who are in the Northwest Territories for more than 90 days must apply for a Northwest Territories Drivers Licence. Students attending an NWT education institution are exempt from this provision. (See International licence section for information applicable to non-residents of the NWT whose residence is not in Canada.)

A Drivers Licence from another jurisdiction must be surrendered before an NWT Drivers Licence can be issued. It is illegal to be in possession of more than one valid Drivers Licence.

Depending on your residence within the NWT, it can take a minimum of 3 weeks for your driver's licence or general identification card to be delivered by Canada Post.

Wearing of seat belts is required by law at all times while driving. Failing to buckle up will result in a fine plus two demerit points applied to your driver's licence. Young children must be secured in an appropriate child restraint system.

Detailed information for NWT can be found [here](#).

Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you with this process.

BANKING & MONEY MATTERS

Banks and other financial institutions, such as credit unions, offer a variety of services. These services include:

- checking and saving accounts
- credit and debit cards
- online bill pay
- loans
- insurance
- financial planning

Banking

The most common banks are the following:

- [Bank of Montreal](#)
- [RBC Royal Bank](#)
- [Scotiabank](#)
- [TD Canada Trust](#)
- [List of banks in Yellowknife](#)

Credit cards are accepted in most of the larger shops, hotels, and restaurants. ATMs (also called ABMs in Canada) can be found all over the city.

Opening an Account

To open an account, you must present various pieces of identification, for example a Canadian driver's licence, passport, certificate of citizenship, permanent resident card, birth certificate, social insurance number, old age security card, health insurance card, document issued by provincial governments, employee identity card, a credit card, a foreign passport, etc. For more information go to [the Canadians Bankers Association](#). Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will also be able to provide you with more detailed information.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION & DRIVING

Public Transportation

There are three regular bus routes in the [Yellowknife Transit System](#). Yellowknife Transit information can be found in our [Yellowknife Transit Brochure](#). In addition, you can track your bus with [the phone app](#).



Driving

While Yellowknife is small and very walkable, driving is the main form of transportation in the area. Always have a travel plan when driving on NWT highways. Know where to get fuel, where the nearest repair facilities are, and what the hours of operation are. Check road conditions by visiting our [highway conditions](#) page or calling 1-800-661-0750.

Parking

City of Yellowknife's free mobile app, [Pingstreet](#) provides residents with real-time access to information.

Taxi and Ridesharing Services

Yellowknife currently does not have Rideshare Services, but there are taxis everywhere and never a shortage of them. In addition, taxis have stands at the airport and hotels.

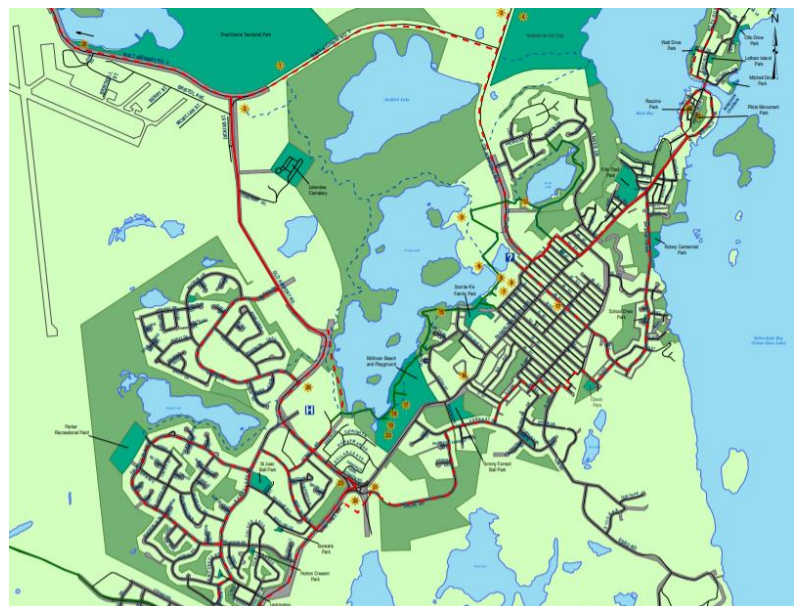
- [Aurora Taxi](#) 873-5050, or download their app on your cellphone
- [Yellowknife City Cab](#) 873-4444, or download their app on your cellphone

Airport

The [airport](#) (YZF), located in Yellowknife, is within a 5 minute drive from the City Centre.

Bike Routes

There are many bike trails and paths around our city. Check our [bicycle routes](#) for some easy ways to navigate your way around town. Cyclists are expected to obey the rules of the road and display proper cycling etiquette at all times.

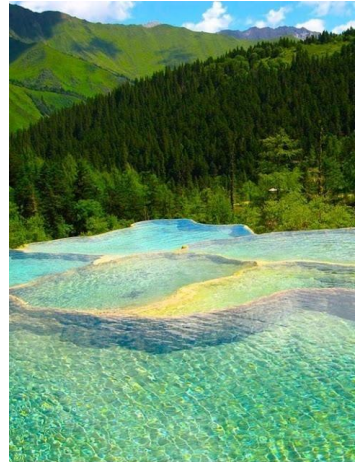


RECREATION

The Great Outdoors

The Northwest Territories of Canada include the regions of Dehcho, North Slave, Sahtu, South Slave and Inuvik. Their remote landscape encompasses forest, mountains, Arctic tundra and islands in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago.

[Dehcho's Nahanni National Park Reserve](#) centers around the canyons of the South Nahanni River and 90m-high Virginia Falls. The regional capital, Yellowknife, is on the north shore of [Great Slave Lake](#). [The Ingraham Trail](#), a scenic drive, crosses the Yellowknife River and heads east to lakes and trails. [Aulavik National Park](#), meaning “place where people travel” in Inuvialuktun, protects more than 12,000 square kilometres of arctic lowlands on the north end of Banks Island.



Nahanni National Park Reserve

Arts

Yellowknife is home to a thriving artistic community whose works span a multitude of different styles and traditions.

Culture and Museums

Yellowknife offers plenty of opportunity to experience the north's cultural heritage. Learn about the ancient aboriginal history of the north shore of Great Slave Lake, the fur trading empire that stretched along the waterways of the 19th century, and the settlers that came to Yellowknife Bay in the mid 1930s in search of precious metals.

- [Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre](#) - Acting as NWT's historical and cultural archive, this well-laid-out museum overlooks Frame Lake. Expertly assembled displays address natural history, European exploration, Northern aviation, diamond mining and, especially, Dene and Inuit history and culture.
- [NWT Diamond Centre](#) - interactive tour that takes you on a journey through the vast history of diamond mining in the Canadian North
- [Old Town Heritage Walking Tour of Yellowknife](#)



Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre