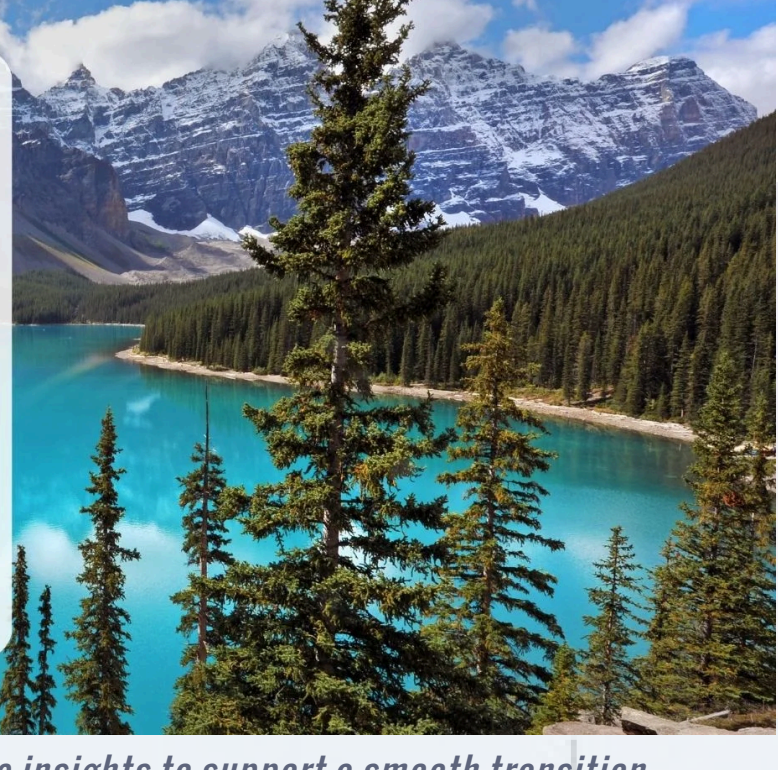




CANADA & FRENCH CANADIAN



A brief cultural overview paired with language insights to support a smooth transition.

Canada at a Glance

Cultural Duality

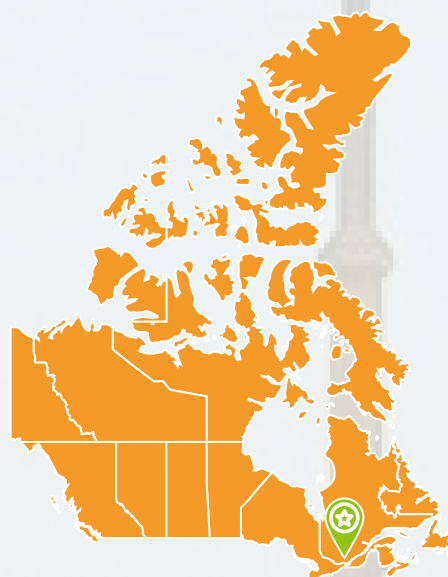
Huge regional range: While Canada is the second largest country in the world, covering 6 time zones, the country's entire population is comparable with the city of Tokyo!

Unique

Le Québec est la seule province canadienne où le français est l'unique langue officielle. Québec is the only Canadian province where French is the only official language.

International & Diverse

Canada remains a top destination for highly skilled workers, with largest groups of employees coming from India, China, Philippines, Nigeria and Pakistan.



Ottawa, the Capital of Canada



Quick Wins for Working Well in Canada & A Deeper Dive, Below



Initiative matters:

Come with a point of view, not just questions. (Then invite input.)



Collaborative tone:

Offer options, co-create next steps, and signal you're aligned.



Regional awareness:

Workplace norms can differ across provinces, so it helps to stay curious rather than assume consistency.

One thing to avoid, and why!

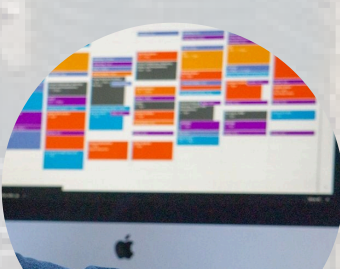
Watch-out: Avoid "Canada = U.S., but colder." Canadians are proud of a distinct identity and comparisons to the U.S. may feel dismissive.

Why it matters: Overlooking Canada's unique norms can unintentionally affect trust and working relationships

What to do instead: Frame Canada on its own terms. Ask Canadians how they describe their work culture or regional differences, without anchoring the conversation to the U.S.



Diving into Workplace Behaviors



Main takeaway: High individualism, with collaboration baked in. **Initiative = Respect.**

Canada scores high on individualism, meaning employees are expected to be self-reliant and assume personal responsibility. However, recent workplace culture research shows that Canadian organizations increasingly emphasize inclusive collaboration, where individual initiative is balanced with collective input and psychological safety.

Punctuality is a strong cultural norm. Meetings start on time, deadlines matter, and lateness is interpreted as unprofessional. Canadian workplaces tend to be egalitarian, with flatter structures and accessible leaders. Canadians are moderately comfortable with ambiguous situations; entrepreneurs are admired and thoughtful change is viewed as progress

Mini challenge: Give some French Canadian a try this week!



Bonjour! / Salut!

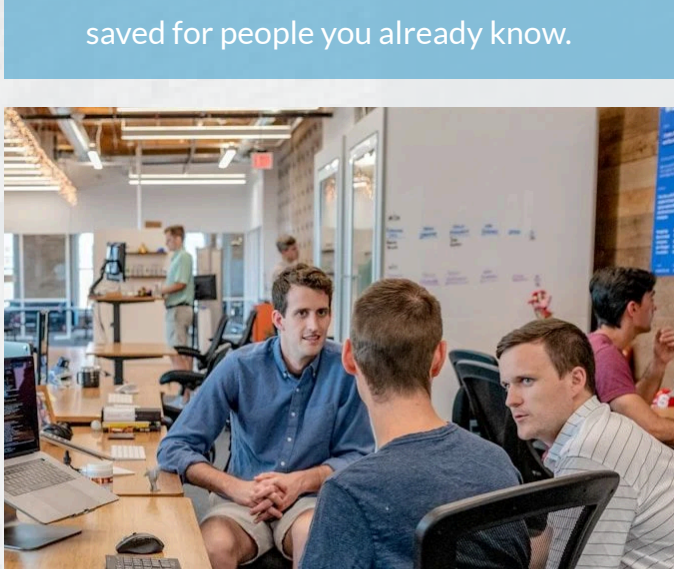
A simple greeting that sets a warm tone.

- Québec note:**
- Bonjour is the default greeting in shops, offices, and emails.
 - Salut is friendly but informal. It's best saved for people you already know.

S'il vous plaît

Great for requests; softens the ask.

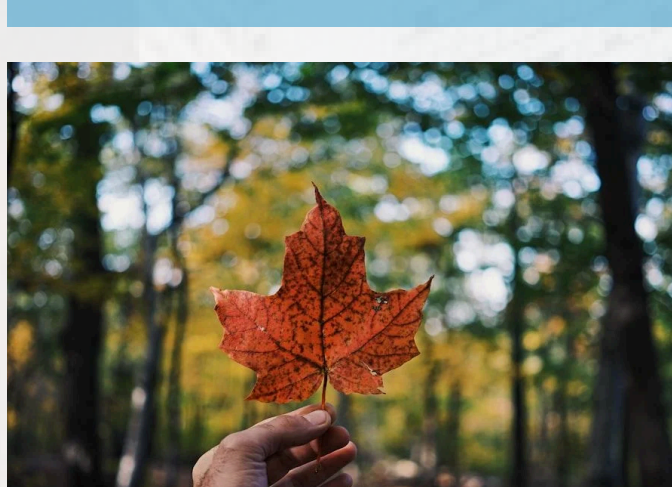
- Québec note:**
- If you don't speak French, a simple "Anglais, s'il vous plaît?" goes a long way. (English, please?)



Merci!

Expresses gratitude and appreciation.

- Québec note:**
- Use it generously; it's small but powerful.



The Culture-Language Bridge

Making even a small effort in French can signal respect and partnership, especially in Québec contexts where French is central to identity.



"Bonjour-Hi" is commonly used in Québec as a friendly way to welcome both French- and English-speakers. Starting in French and allowing the other person to switch languages shows respect and flexibility. This welcoming phrase reflects Québec's linguistic reality with French as the official language and everyday bilingualism in many settings.

"C'est correct" is a common workplace phrase that can communicate something like, "I don't have objections" or "we're aligned enough to proceed". They're not necessarily saying "I'm thrilled" or "I strongly agree". For managers and global teams, it is important to listen for tone and intent, not just agreeable wording, especially when working with Francophone Canadians who may be expressive in tone, yet still prefer measured, nonconfrontational agreement in workplace settings.

