Your Canada Road Trip Packing List is Here!

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Visiting Canada is an amazing adventure for families, but packing for such a trip can be daunting. With 4 distinct seasons and many different climates, you want to be prepared with the right gear and supplies. A well-planned packing list for Canada can make all the difference in a family trip.

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Your Canada Road Trip Packing List

🐻 **Bear Spray:** Canada (especially the Canadian Rockies, is **home to black bears and grizzly bears**. You'll probably never need it, but for safety reasons, you should never leave without your bear spray in the bear country.

I recommend buying a bear spray holster, such as the **Counter Assault Bear Spray Holster**. It will allow you to keep the bear spray within reach when hiking.

But, it's not enough to carry the bear spray, **you need to know how to use it**. There are many tutorials online, so look at a few before leaving for your trip (and it could be good to have a reminder when you get to the bear country). Parks Canada has a good informational video on YouTube to teach you how to use your bear spray safely.

👕 **Weather-Appropriate Clothing Layer-Up:** It's essential to dress in layers to stay comfortable throughout the day. Warm daytime temperatures can quickly cool down at higher elevations or during the evenings. Plus, it can be windy at high elevations, such as the Logan Pass.

Packing lightweight, moisture-wicking layers is key. Include items like:

- Short (I love my **Kuhl FreeFlex shorts**)
- long-sleeved shirts,
- breathable pants or leggings, and
- additional layers such as **fleece jackets** or sweaters to keep everyone cozy when the temperature drops.

🌧️ **Waterproof Essentials:** Summer in Canada often brings unexpected rain showers, so it's crucial to be prepared with waterproof gear. Pack **waterproof jackets or ponchos for each family member**, ensuring they are lightweight and easily packable. Also, include **quick-drying or rain pants** to keep everyone's legs dry and comfortable.

🚗 Basic car repair tools

Though you should always hope for the best, cars are prone to needing repairs for longer road trips. We recommend bringing the following items:

- [ ] Spare tire,
- [ ] car jack,
- [ ] AAA or CAA card (for roadside assistance),

- [ ] handheld battery charger,
- [ ] muffler tape

🩹 **Parks Canada Discovery Card:** During your road trip, you'll probably want to visit a few national parks and national historic sites. It may be a good investment to purchase the **Family Discovery Card** in advance, especially if you think you'll spend around 7 days on Parks Canada grounds. The Family Discovery Pass costs 139$ and is valid for one year.

🩹 **Ontario Parks Summer Pass:** Ontario Provincial Parks require a vehicle pass to enter. If your itinerary includes Ontario Provincial Parks, it may be interesting to look at the Summer Pass valid from April to the end of November at $75.00. It may save you money and time. For more information, visit Ontario Parks website.

🥾 **Sturdy Footwear or Hiking Shoes:** Comfortable and sturdy footwear is necessary when exploring. Choose **water-resistant hiking shoes or boots** with good ankle support and traction for safe and enjoyable trail adventures.

🎒 **Day Backpacks:** A day backpack is essential for hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. You'll want a comfortable and lightweight day backpack to hold the necessary supplies for a day's adventure, including water, food, a first-aid kit, and extra clothing. It should also have multiple compartments for organized storage and easy access to items.

☀️ **Sun Protection:** The sun can be intense at higher elevations, so protect your family from harmful rays. Pack a high-SPF sunscreen and reapply it throughout the day, especially after swimming or sweating. Sunglasses with UV protection will shield your eyes from the sun, while wide-brimmed hats offer additional protection for your face and neck

👒 **Hat:** A sun hat is also important in summer afternoons. The sun is strong at high elevations, and a hat shields the face and neck from its harmful rays, reducing the risk of sunburn and heatstroke.

🧦 **Extra Socks:** Packing extra socks is a simple yet impactful step in hiking preparation. **Ensure you have a dry, comfortable pair to change into,** especially if the initial pair becomes wet or sweaty. Pack preferably **moisture-wicking or wool ones** to keep everyone's feet dry and comfortable during your hikes.

🚰 **Hydration (Water):** Staying hydrated is vital for any outdoor adventure, especially during the warm summer. **Bring reusable water bottles** or **hydration packs** for each family member, and encourage everyone to drink water regularly. You could also bring a **portable water filtration system, like LifeStraw**.

🥒 **Snacks and Picnic Kit:** Snacks are vital to any outdoor adventure, especially hiking with kids. They provide the necessary fuel to keep energy levels high and sustain physical activity. Ideal hiking snacks are lightweight, non-perishable, and nutrient-dense. **Trail mix, energy bars, dried fruits, and nuts offer** a balanced mix of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats.

Don't forget your reusable snack bags.

- ☐ Cooler and ice pack,
- ☐ Cutlery kit,
- ☐ Pocket knife,
- ☐ Tablecloth or picnic cloth to put on the grass or on a picnic table,
- ☐ Plates and glasses,
- ☐ Reusable sandwich bags,
- ☐ Plastic container,
- ☐ Bottle opener (a can opener and peeler always come in handy),
- ☐ Dish soap and scrub,
- ☐ Reusable food pouches

🪰 **Bug Repellent:** Mosquitoes and other insects can be a nuisance during summer, particularly near water sources. To keep those pesky bugs away, pack insect repellent for your family. You can choose a repellent and apply it as directed to exposed skin and clothing. We like the **OFF! Botanical insect repellent.**

⛑️ **First Aid Kit:** Although premade store-bought first aid kits are a good start, some important items will be missing (and sadly, don't offer the Paw Patrol or the Frozen-themed band-aids). Here is a list to help you create your first-aid kit to bring with you:

- Band-aids,
- Hand Sanitizer,
- Disinfectant wipes,
- Kleenex,
- Baby wipes,

- Benadryl,
- Epi-Pen,
- Tylenol and Advil,
- Thermometer (and vaseline),
- Polysporin,
- Sunblock,
- Bug spray,
- Tweezers,
- Chapstick

💧 **Microfiber Towel:** A **microfiber towel** is a really useful thing to have on your trips. It **dries fast and doesn't take up much space in your bag**. Whether going for a swim, wiping off sweat, or cleaning up a spill, this towel does the job.

🩱 **Bathing Suits:** Packing **bathing suits** means you're ready for fun in the water! Whether there's a lake, a river, or a pool, you'll be all set to jump in and cool off. Bathing suits are easy to pack and dry quickly, so you can enjoy the water whenever you find a good spot.

🩴 **Sandals:** Bringing sandals is great **for staying comfy and cool**. They're perfect for walking around on hot days, hanging out at the beach, or using shared showers. Sandals are easy to slip on and off, and they let your feet breathe.

📷 **Camera:** A camera lets you capture and keep all the cool and pretty things you see in the park. You can take pictures of sunrises, lakes, and animals and show them to your friends and family later. Every time you look at your photos, you'll remember the fun times you had!

😎 **Binoculars:** Wildlife watching is one of the best things to do on a road trip, so bring your binoculars. **Binoculars are essential** for wildlife watching, bringing distant creatures and landscapes into sharp focus.

📓 **Notebook and Pen:** You can **bring a notebook and pen** to document your experiences and reflections. It's even a better idea for children. It can be their little journal where they write what they liked most and what they saw.

➡️ Get our Road Trip Activity Book for Kids

📱 **Portable Charger:** A **portable charger is a practical accessory** for hikers relying on electronic devices such as smartphones, GPS, and cameras. It ensures that devices remain powered throughout the adventure. A small USB portable charger is easy to carry and usually allows one extra full charge for your smartphone.

🥾 **AllTrails:** **AllTrails** is a super handy app that helps you find the best trails for hiking, biking, or running. It shows you maps, photos, and reviews from other people so you can pick the perfect trail for your adventure. You can see if a trail is easy or hard, how long it is, and what cool stuff you might see. With AllTrails, you'll always know where to go to have fun in the outdoors!

➡️ **Download the All Trails app for trail maps and trail reports**

🥾 **Trekking Poles:** **Trekking poles** can be good for trail stability. Hiking poles can provide support on uneven terrain, reduce the impact on joints, and assist in ascending and descending hills.

- [ ] Cooler and ice pack,
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- [ ] Reusable sandwich bags,
- [ ] Plastic container,
- [ ] Bottle opener (a can opener and peeler always come in handy),
- [ ] Dish soap and scrub,
- [ ] Reusable food pouches
- [ ] Spare tire,
- [ ] Car jack,
- [ ] AAA or CAA card (for roadside assistance),
- [ ] Handheld battery charger,
- [ ] Muffler tape
- [ ] Parks Canada Discovery Pass
- [ ] Ontario Parks Pass
- [ ] Bear Spray
- [ ] Short

- [ ] Long-sleeved shirts,
- [ ] Breathable pants or leggings, and
- [ ] Additional layers, such as fleece jackets or sweaters
- [ ] Waterproof Essentials
- [ ] Sturdy Footwear or Hiking Shoes
- [ ] Day Backpacks
- [ ] Sun Protection
- [ ] Hat (Beanie) and Gloves
- [ ] Extra Socks
- [ ] Hydration (Water)
- [ ] Hiking Snacks
- [ ] Bug Repellent
- [ ] First Aid Kit
- [ ] Microfiber Towel
- [ ] Bathing Suits
- [ ] Sandals:
- [ ] Camera
- [ ] Binoculars
- [ ] Notebook and Pen
- [ ] Portable Charger
- [ ] AllTrails app
- [ ] Trekking Poles