

What Happened to the Canadian Vacation?



Canada is a beautiful country. According to a 2010 Ipsos Ried survey titled '**Canadians Take Advantage of Summer Vacation by Enjoying Some Down Time**', 24% of Canadians say their favourite summer vacation involves staying home and enjoying their own city (a staycation). 23% of Canadians prefer to stay at a cottage by the 'lake'. Travelling around Canada is the next preferred option, as 17% take trips to another city in Canada, and 18% head out to a provincial park or into the wilderness. That leaves 18% of Canadians seeking to vacation in the world beyond Canadian borders.

There are many reasons why **82% of Canadians vacation within Canada**. It can certainly be easier, convenient and less expensive to 'stay home', especially if you have a family and some pets. Not only is Canada beautiful, it is vast with many places to explore. Heading out with family and friends to a provincial park or even driving across the country can be easy ways to change your surroundings and refresh your senses.



The often-cited 2011 Mercer 'Employee Holiday Entitlements Around the World' report ranked Canada 47th out of 62 countries in terms of our statutory allotment of paid holidays. All vacation days combined Canadians receive an average of 19 days of mandatory paid vacation per year. That was lower in comparison to many countries in Africa and Europe where vacation allotment ranged between 25-30 days and worse than countries like China, Thailand and the Philippines (who provide between 20-22). Canada has 5 Federal stat holidays and Provincial holidays range from 0 to 7 with 4-5 being the average.

In addition to statutory holidays, each province has rules governing mandatory minimum vacation entitlements provided by employers (Ontario for example mandates 10 days) with employers providing between the minimum and up to 6 weeks in rare cases for long-standing employees. All of this is based on full-time employment so those working less or self-employed generally get less.

In 2005 the 4th annual Vacation Deprivation Survey from Expedia.ca and Ipsos Reid revealed that average employer vacation allotment in Canada had been shrinking steadily from 21 days in 2002 to 19 in 2005. Fast-forward to 2012 and 10th annual Vacation Deprivation Study (this time Expedia.ca partnered with Harris Interactive for the survey) revealed that number has gone down to 15 days.

Over the last decade we learned that Canadians were among the most unlucky people in the vacation day lottery. Many Canadians did not even take a full allotment. A decade ago, 33% of Canadians did not take the vacation days they were entitled to. This trend has continued for many years, though it recently dipped to 19% in 2012 (across the Prairies the number was higher at 25%). In congruence with these statistics, many Canadians reported that they highly valued vacation days and 20% said they would even take less salary for more vacation days.

According to the '2013 Work Stress Survey' by Harris Interactive, 8 in 10 workers said they were stressed out on the job as a result of workloads and less wages.