

Historical Timeline: Changes to Canada's Immigration Policies

- ◆ **1869:** Canada's first immigration act reflects an "open door" policy to encourage settlement of the Western provinces, and the growth of Canada's economy. There are few restrictions.
- ◆ **1885:** *Chinese Immigration Act* establishes a [head tax](#) of \$50 on Chinese immigrants to deter immigration from China.
- ◆ **1903:** Despite racist policies, the Chinese community in Western Canada continues to grow—and so does the head tax. By 1903, the Chinese head tax has increased to \$500.
- ◆ **1906:** A new *Immigration Act* enacts widespread **restrictions on "undesirable" immigrants**. The government's powers to deport or deny entry to those they deem "undesirable" are expanded.
- ◆ **1907:** Canada insists that Japan limit the migration of males to Canada to **400 per year**.
- ◆ **1908:** [The Continuous Journey Regulation](#) bans immigrants who do not come to Canada directly from their country of origin. Japan and India, among others, have no direct routes to Canada.
- ◆ **1914:** [The Naturalization Act](#) creates **stricter requirements for becoming a citizen**, including "good moral character." The secretary of state holds absolute power to grant, deny or revoke citizenship.
- ◆ **1919:** Further immigration restrictions are put in place after the First World War. **Fears of communism and "enemy aliens"** breed suspicion and discriminatory attitudes against many.
- ◆ **1923:** With the [Chinese Immigration Act of 1923](#), **immigration of Chinese to Canada is restricted almost entirely** until it is repealed in 1947.
- ◆ **1947:** [Canadian citizenship](#) is created. Under the Act, people who were previously classed as British subjects become Canadians, while those who were not naturalized remain **"aliens."**
- ◆ **1962:** Changes to immigration policy **eliminate significant racial, religious or ethnic barriers** to Canadian immigration. Applicants are assessed on skill, regardless of race, ethnicity or origin.
- ◆ **1962:** A clause in the new regulations maintains that only immigrants from listed "desirable" countries can sponsor adult relatives, perpetuating discrimination against people of Asian descent, among others.
- ◆ **1967:** New regulations ensure that the immigration process stays objective by developing a points system. This **protects applicants from racial discrimination** in the assessment of their desirability.
- ◆ **1971:** The Government of Canada introduces an **official [multiculturalism policy](#)** for Canada, recognizing the plurality of ethno-cultural groups that coexist and contribute to culture in Canada.
- ◆ **1976:** A new *Immigration Act* reflects **progressive attitudes toward immigration**, confirming Canada's commitment to accepting refugees, as well as defining Canada's immigration goals. Non-discrimination is stated as one of these goals.
- ◆ **1977:** The *Citizenship Act* is reformed, declaring that naturalized and native-born Canadian citizens have equal citizenship rights and obligations.
- ◆ **1988:** The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* reinforces and expands the 1971 policy. Canada becomes **the first country to pass a national law on multiculturalism**.
- ◆ **2002:** The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* comes into effect, emphasizing the importance of immigration to improving Canadian society and economy.

Did you know: China, India and the Philippines were the top three sources for Canadian immigrants in 2011.