



July 2011 – Proud to be a Canadian

I hope you feel the same thing about your nationality.

The first few days of July are a time of celebration and patriotism for Canadians and Americans. July 1st saw Canadian's 144th birthday and July 4th is the 235th Independence Day in the USA. When I lived in Canada the best part of the Canada Day celebration was a day off work. This year was extra special for those still there as it fell on a Friday which meant a long weekend – many Canadians would have enjoyed the weekend at a cottage with a BBQ and maybe some fireworks.

In Switzerland, I gathered with many Canadians (and some wanna be Canadians) as close to the day as possible for a BBQ, food specialties from home, Canadian trivia and lots of red and white trimmings. This year in London I spent the day with thousands of Canadians (and many more wanna be Canadians) in Trafalgar Square wearing a felt Canadian top hat, watching a road hockey tournament and listening to Canadian bands like Blue Rodeo.

I have become more patriotic since leaving Canada and living abroad. Maybe not more patriotic, rather more heart-felt or overt. I am a prouder Canadian, cherishing my nationality even more than when I lived there. Having lived in different countries I have grown to appreciate what I left behind – the friendliness, the fairness, the humour, the acceptance, the peacefulness, the respect the country has in other nations, and lastly, sports I understand. The biggest thing I appreciate though is the diversity of the country – diverse in so many ways – culture, ethnicity, geography, seasons of the year, beliefs, talents and resources.

I know it's not perfect. Canada is a country with no pledge and no national dish (no one says "let's go out for Canadian tonight" like they would for Italian, Chinese or Indian) and the closest thing to a Canadian Institution is Hockey Night in Canada. So even in what could be described as its neutrality, Canada makes me fiercely proud. And I get to confirm it often here in London as people ask me where my accent is from (*I don't have an accent, they have the accent*).

What makes you proud about your nationality? How do you celebrate that pride? Please share your stories with me of what makes your nationality special to you. I'd love to hear from fellow Canadians as well, both expats and residents, eh?

Live your potential

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