

CANADIANS' PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE U.S.

Canadians' travel experiences in the United States

Most Canadians have travelled to the U.S. in the past five years, mostly as tourists and, to a lesser extent, to visit family and friends, to shop or to work.

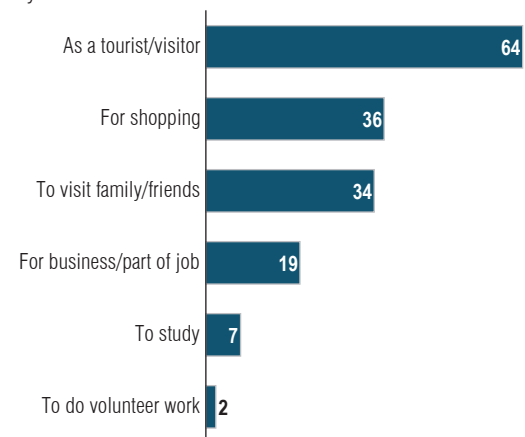
The foreign country closest to Canada is the United States, and it is perhaps the best well-known to most Canadians. Seven in ten Canadians report having travelled to the U.S. in the past five years. Almost two-thirds of Canadians (64%) have travelled to the U.S. as tourists over this time period, while somewhat fewer have made trips across the border for shopping (36%), or visits with friends and family (34%). One in five (19%) have travelled to the U.S. for business reasons or as part of a job, while smaller proportions have gone to study (7%) or to volunteer with an organization (2%).

Among those who have travelled to the U.S. in the past five years, a majority have done so no more than five times (with 28% reporting one or two visits and 29% reporting between three and five visits). One in six (16%) have made between 11 and 50 trips, while another four percent have done so more than 50 times over this time period.

Age cohort. Youth, aged 15 to 24, travel to the U.S. in a similar pattern to older cohorts, except for lower reporting of cross-border travel for work (7%) and higher levels of travel for shopping (46%).

Place of birth. Travel patterns to the U.S. among new Canadians compares closely with those of native-born, with respect to tourism, study and volunteer initiatives, but they are more likely to visit family and friends south of the border (45%), and marginally more likely to report trips for shopping (39%) and employment (22%).

Have travelled to U.S. in past five years



Q.19

Please tell me if you've traveled to the U.S. in the past five years for any of the following reasons ...

Region. Quebecers are less likely than average to report travel to the United States for any reason, although those that do so have done so as frequently as other Canadians in the past five years. Half of Quebecers (51%) say they have travelled to the U.S. as tourists over the past five years (compared with 72% of Ontarians and 71% of B.C. residents). They are also least apt to report U.S. trips for visiting family and friends (20%) and shopping (18%).

Focus on U.S. presidential race

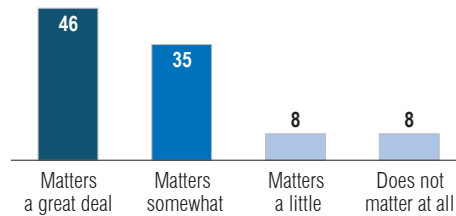
Many Canadians are paying close attention to the U.S. presidential race, and believe the outcome matters a great deal to Canada, and some would give up their right to vote in Canada to help elect the next president. At the same time, a surprising number do not favour one U.S. political party over the other.

The race for the U.S. presidency in 2008 is the most wide-open in decades, and with serious candidates threatening to break the race and gender barriers, it has attracted unprecedented media coverage around the world. And Canadians are paying close attention. Close to half (46%) say the outcome of this race “matters a great deal” to Canada, with most of the rest indicating it matters “somewhat” (35%); with few maintaining the choice of next U.S. president matters “a little” (8%) or “not at all” (8%) to Canada. The importance this race matters enough to one in six (15%) Canadians that, given the choice, they would opt to vote for U.S. president rather than for the party of the next Canadian prime minister (79%).

As much as the choice of next U.S. president may matter to Canadians, there is a surprising lack of partisanship in terms of the desired outcome. Canadians express a preference for a Democrat (34%) rather than a Republican (5%) as the next occupant of the White House, but a majority (56%) say the party affiliation does not matter either way or have no clear view (5%). This may reflect the large number of candidates running for both parties, and the view that almost any successor will represent an improvement over the current outgoing president (which FOCUS CANADA surveys has shown to be the least popular U.S. president since polling began in this country).

Age cohort. Canadian youth are as likely as others to say the outcome of the next U.S. presidential race matters a great deal (48%), and are the most likely to say they would rather vote for the next U.S. president (25%) than the next Canadian government (70%). Yet at the same time, this group is least apt to express a partisan preference for a Democrat or Republican.

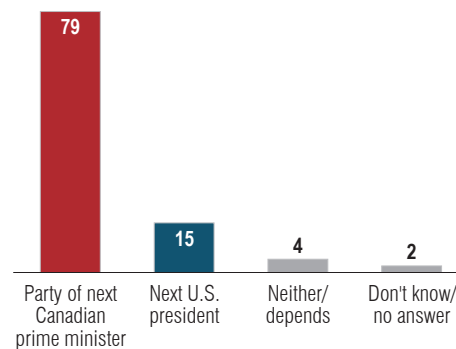
Does choice of next U.S. president matter to Canada?



Q.22

How much do you think it matters for Canada who ends up becoming the next U.S. president? Does this matter a great deal, matters somewhat, matters a little doesn't matter at all?

Which would you rather vote for?

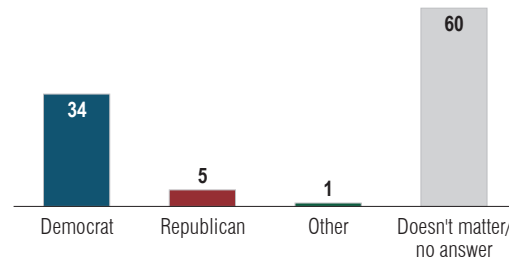


Q.23

If you were given a choice to vote for only one of the following, would you rather vote to elect ...?

Place of birth. Foreign-born Canadians are somewhat more likely than native-born to feel the outcome of the U.S. race matters a great deal to Canada (50%), and are more likely to say they would like to see a Democrat in the White House (43%, versus 7% who favour a Republican). Close to one in five (18%) would opt to vote for the next President than the next Canadian government (77%). Many of Canada's foreign-born residents come from countries where international polls show American foreign policy to be quite unpopular.

Preference for next U.S. president



Q.21

Would you like to see the next U.S. president be a Republican or a Democrat, or does it not matter either way to you?