

The Things I Don't Miss

My note on what I missed from Canada sparked a comment asking about what I didn't miss. Here's a quick list of the most obvious ones.

I don't miss the car culture very much at all. I don't miss the long lines of gas guzzling SUVs idling and waiting for coffee and doughnuts in the Tims drive-through, or the queue driving around the IKEA parking lot looking for a parking spot, or everyone nipping out to Walmart for incidentals. I certainly don't miss traffic. And I don't miss waiting for the 120 second traffic light cycle at Hunt Club and Woodroffe. I don't miss remote car starters – in fact it's just an embarrassment having to explain the concept to anyone here. What? you use a liter of gas and don't go anywhere? You just heat your car to save your furry ass from a cold car seat? How North American.

I don't miss the GST & PST on every purchase. It's so much nicer, easier and less subject to error when what you see on the price sticker is what you pay. Going back to Ontario would be a shocker. Is there tax on a donut? Yes, but not on a box of six. How much tax is there on these items? Will it come to more than the \$20 that I took out of my wallet? Did she give me the correct change? Gimme a break. If shopping needs a skill testing question, I'll take the Mesopotamian ancient history category for 400 Alex.

I've also gotten used to single digit prices for beer and wine. I explain it to people here that Canadian provinces charge a *sin* tax, and that's why the beer, alcohol and tobacco is triple what it is everywhere else in the world. We have wine with dinner now. Even if it's Cuvée COOP, I can't imagine affording that in Canada. Jackie says it's bad for me of course, but she says that about everything I do.

Following on that tax theme, I also don't miss the 40+% personal tax rate. Sure, there isn't any medical insurance that's equivalent to OHIP; but is having such a system worth 15% of your income? In general, I guess it comes down to whether I miss all the levels of government. I have to admit I'm less of a small 'L' liberal and more of a small 'C' conservative – bordering on libertarian, so less government is better in my view. The unusually large, inefficient and profligate Canadian form of government is something I don't miss any more.

I sure don't miss American nuts and bolts in inch sizes, and those spiteful Phillips (butter-head) screws – hex cap screws are way better. I don't miss parts that don't fit, from items that are made from two competing manufacturers. I think they have a standard for appliances here and it make things a lot easier.

I don't miss commercials on TV; you only see them here occasionally. I don't miss the CBC – because I get that here, at least via podcasts or internet radio.

I don't miss having to trim the green monster hedge in the back yard, even though I miss a lot of the other little chores around the house.

I don't miss Canadian banks and insurance companies, or telecommunications monopolies. I'm getting

all-you-can-eat data on my Android for 20 Francs a month – I think it's because of the competition.

I don't miss junk mail. Stuff like the Lee Valley catalog was good, but the trashy leaflets and crap was too much.

And finally, I don't miss the cold of course. I don't miss the way plastic parts of your car snap off when you try to use them, or spilled coffee forms a coffee-sicle on the floor with the stir stick, or coming around the corner of the house into the teeth of a North wind. I get shivers just thinking about it.