

The Things I Miss

I made up a quick list of the things I miss from Canada while living in Switzerland. These are in no particular order, and I didn't put a lot of thought into making sure they were the absolute most missed things. Rather, these are just a list off the top of my head.

1. Skating on the Rideau Canal. Well skating anywhere really. It just doesn't get cold enough here to freeze the ponds and lakes. I've put on the skates only once since being here, and I kind of miss sitting on a log freezing while strapping on the blades and then skating down a windswept pond. Or on Thursday mornings, before the sun comes up playing GeoHockey in an arena so cold the ice squeaks when you skate on it.
2. Good, cheap restaurants. Places like [The New Hong Shing](#), [Moe's Newport Restaurant](#), [The Works](#) and [The Colonnade](#) don't exist here. Out of them all, I miss the thick crust pizza the most. Maybe thin crust pizzas are better for you diet-wise, but it's like living on Weight Watchers food. Jackie misses the Chinese food. The ethnic mix here is very different and doesn't support the variety of meats and vegetables we're used to.
3. Camping in provincial parks. I'm not talking about the 'primitive' sites in the vast uncharted Algonquin Park, but just the civilized parks like [Presqu'île](#), [Bon Echo](#), or [Murphys Point](#), where there's still a chance that if you pick the right week your nearest neighbours are in sector 'G' so it feels like you have the whole park to yourself.
4. NHL on TV, every night. They do have hockey on TV, but games are normally pay-per-view, and if you know me at all, you'll know that's not an option. From what I hear, the Senators haven't been doing very well lately, so maybe it's no biggie anyway.
5. Fat English newspapers on a Saturday morning. Not that I read all the sections, but the words were in English and I could have read them if I wanted to. Come to think of it, I mostly miss the comics.
6. Long weekends. Well, not the parties really, I'm too old for that, but the one weekend a month that was either a Friday or Monday holiday was really appreciated. They only have four such weekends here per year.
7. (this one's from Jackie) The right to vote. Obviously our engagement level in local politics is zero. We differ in opinion on this topic though. I think that if you vote, it just encourages them. But it would be nice to be able to register your discontent somewhere.
8. Trees. It may be that I'm living in an urban setting here, but the trees in Switzerland tend to be gnarly, mossy and covered in vines - Niagara Falls trees I call them. I miss the giant spruce and pines that are ubiquitous in Canada - the ones too big to wrap your arms around, that rise straight as an arrow into the clouds.