

**Rebecca: "My Journey to Canada"**



***Where to Start Your Journey When Moving to Canada.***

In January 2020, myself and my boyfriend decided to move to Canada on the IEC Visa.

After we had committed to the idea of Canada, we were left trying to figure out "ok, but what now?".

Figuring out the logistics of moving across the Atlantic can be daunting. To add some additional complexity to the situation, the Covid-19 pandemic hit before we moved to Canada, delaying some of our plans. After some delays and complications, we were on a plane to our new life in Toronto in August, 2020.

In this article, I will walk through the steps we took to organize our move to Canada. As the world begins to emerge from this pandemic, I am confident that you won't face as many of the same challenges we did, so this article is intended to help anyone moving to Canada on an IEC Visa - after the lifting of most of the Covid-19 restrictions.

***Step 1: Google, Google, Google***

I started off by searching "moving to Canada from Ireland" on Google. This article is definitely not the first, and won't be the last, guide to moving-to-Canada.

There are many great blog-posts, articles and how-to-guides out there. I learned a lot from reading about other people's experiences, challenges and "hacks". Google is your friend and definitely the first place to start.

**I thoroughly recommend that you check-out the full suite of I/CAN's Essential Guides – [available here](#).**

They cover everything you need to know from Work Permits to useful contact numbers and from understanding what you might feel on arrival to getting your head around Canadian taxes.

Some more tips I have for navigating Google;

- Focus on resources specific to Irish moving abroad, as the immigration rules change depending on where you're coming from and it can get confusing,
- Search for posts that you can relate to e.g., singles, couples, families, careers, industry, level of experience well-travelled, first-timers,
- Try different searches on Google, sometime a slight variation on the phrase "moving to Canada from Ireland" can bring up different results.

### ***Step 2: Make a To-Do List***

I started a simple to-do list on Excel that grew into a pretty long to-do list as I started to work through what needed to be done at the various stages of the process.

Break your to-do list down to make it more manageable and less intimidating.

Continue to add to your to-do list as you move through the process and cross each item off as you go.

- *Visa Application* – creating an Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) account to complete your application, police certificate, digital photos, completing your Family Information, booking your biometrics,
- *Pre-Flight* – renewing your passport, unlocking your phone from an Irish network, organizing travel insurance, notifying your bank of your plans, ceasing some direct debit payments,
- *After Landing* – finding a phone service provider, applying for your SIN number, opening a bank account, looking for places to live.

If you happen to be undertaking this journey under Covid-19 restrictions, don't forget to check the Covid-19 requirements e.g., obtaining negative tests before flying, quarantine plans, job offers etc.

### ***Step 4: Apply for your Visa***

I won't get into the details of this step too much because there are more detailed and accurate guides out there - check out this link - [IEC – How To Apply](#).

My biggest piece of advice when it comes to your visa application is;

- *Get ahead of it* – organize as much as you can in advance, don't wait until you get to the next step of the application process to get your documents together
- *Everything takes longer than you think* – related to the first point, don't leave it to the last minute because you'll be surprised at all the little delays you might run into – booking an appointment in the biometrics office, organizing police certificates etc.

### ***Step 5: Get Networking***

Build your network in Canada before you land. Whether it's professional or personal contacts you want to make, the Irish community in Canada is super friendly and helpful, so put yourself out there and connect with people over Facebook, LinkedIn, Zoom, E-mail etc.

I learned so much from reading through posts on Facebook, adding people on people on Facebook who were in a similar position, and asking my network in Ireland if they had any contacts in Canada that I could contact.

My top tips for networking before you land in Canada are;

- *Don't be shy* – everyone I contacted was more than happy to help with any questions I had, there's a reason Irish people are known for being so friendly!
- *Make it easy for people to connect with you* - this is particularly relevant for professional networking via LinkedIn or similar. Make sure you're asking strong questions, providing your follow-up contact information and being respectful of people's time. Check out [I/CAN's Employment Mentorship group on LinkedIn](#) to kick-start your networking in Canada.
- *Pay it forward* – when you get over here & get settled, make sure to pay the kindness of strangers forward and make time to help others out when the opportunity arises.

### ***Step 6: Tie Up Any Loose Ends***

This definitely isn't the most exciting step, it involves quite a lot of boring administrative tasks, but I guarantee this step is only stressful if you leave it to the last minute.

I would recommend checking out this article for a great checklist of things you probably haven't considered yet! - [Moving2Canada - Wrap Up Your Life Back Home](#)

My top tips for tying up loose ends before you leave for Canada are;

- *Book some temporary accommodation* – ask around and get some recommendations on places to stay when you first land. Book something on Airbnb or similar for a week or so, to spend some time getting to know your new city before committing to a lease.
- *Leave yourself enough time* – try and avoid a last-minute rush by leaving yourself a few days or admin time before you go. I would recommend finishing up in your current job at least two weeks before you fly, if possible. Definitely a good use of any holidays you have built up.
- *Set aside time for your goodbyes* - related to the point above, but you will definitely underestimate the time you'll want to have to say goodbye to family and friends. You're only a hop across the Atlantic, but any extra quality time you can build in catching a last pint is well worth it.

### ***Step 7: Get Set-Up Early***

The temptation is to get out there and start exploring your new city, but I would definitely recommend spending some time getting yourself set-up in Canada directly after you land. I promise you that this will help avoid any issues or hassle down the line.

The first three things I did after landing were;

- *Select a phone network provider* – this is a little more complicated than it needs to be in Canada, so definitely do some research before you come over,
- *Get a SIN number* – you'll need this before you open a bank, for your employer and for organizing most other important aspects of Canadian life,
- *Open a Canadian bank account* – again, more excitement in your first week!

These are also the top three tasks I/CAN list in their Essentials Guide - [I/CAN - What To Do When You Arrive](#) - so definitely check that out.

***Step 8: Start Your Life in Canada!***

Finally, you made it! This is why you made the decision, to up sticks and move half way across the world – to enjoy all Canada has to offer.