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# A TRANS- CANADIAN EXPEDITION

For the  
Consideration of  
the Royal  
Geographic  
Society's  
*Journey of A  
Lifetime*

March 4, 2013

## The Expedition at a Glance

Canada ranges from primitive and vast unorganized territories to major urban hubs in the provinces bordering the U.S. Moreover, each region has a very unique heritage unto itself that often gets downplayed with preference for their European forbearers. A Trans-Canadian expedition is precisely the fresh, different, and original Journey of a Lifetime that the Royal Geographic Society is looking for. Three companions will accompany me on this 17,000-kilometer trek across the largest country in the Americas. My team and I will endeavor to document this great journey to introduce the world to the unique people and places of Canada.

## Description

### Introduction

My team and I will be embarking on the Journey of a Lifetime on a trans-Canadian expedition. In the six months of travel, we will touch down as far north as the Arctic Circle, work our way to the Atlantic isles, venture overland and north again before descending back down the Pacific coast and reentering the United States through Washington.

The Royal Geographic Society is looking for something original. Past recipients have seemed to go to conventional, exotic, bucket-list destinations with cultures that frequent the programming of the Discovery Channel and Travel Channel. The people and places of Canada have retained a diverse array of heritages. My experiences with Canadians that inevitably descend into the U.S. states bordering their country have always been enjoyable and fascinating. Only after many such encounters did it occur to me that Canada's *territories* account for more of the country's surface area than its *provinces*.

For how little I know of the quirky culture of those Canadians closest to us, I really know nothing about the Nunavut, Yukon, and Northwest territories. As it turns out, remote settlements are up there, but much of the nation is still authentically uncharted, even inaccessible via overland travel. Our aim as a funded expedition is to turn the world on to Canada—from the developed, urban hubs with European heritages to the enigmatic, unorganized territories. We've determined a route covering over 17,000 kilometers of the second largest country on the globe by way of plane, ferry, train, and van. Along the way, we will be engaging with the character and *characters* of the land as we immerse ourselves in the culture of each province and territory. The whole journey will be documented using various media by my team and myself for retelling on BBC radio programming before an international audience.

## Rationale and Significance

This is an opportunity to make people rethink their preconceived notions of Canada. I fear all too often, Canada gets flagged as the ugly stepsister of North America because it's not known for its interventionist foreign policy like the United States. On the other hand, it doesn't boast all the crime-ridden excitement and hospitable climate we associate with Mexico. I wonder if it's even misleading to consider Canada a developed country. The lifestyle of the nomad is not altogether extinct in Canada. How much do Canadians even know about their fellow countrymen of the north, separated from them by snow and a mountain range or two?

It's also a striking paradox that though this is the second largest country on the globe, it has one of the lowest population densities in the world. Canada is off the beaten path as far as world destinations go (undoubtedly due in part to not having the most hospitable climate for sustaining life). People know very little about Canada, and our findings and experiences might pique the curiosity of curious adventurers and learners worldwide to carry out a Canadian investigation of their own to uncover the thrills of places there that are still untouched.

## Plan of Work

### Coverage

Any potential stops along the line of travel outlined by our checkpoints under [The Route](#) heading are fair game. As such, the [third leg](#) of the journey that goes through four provinces will still entail stops in each province along the way, although there are not designated checkpoints in New Brunswick and Quebec.

Group members will be responsible for documenting the journey by conducting interviews, engaging with the Canadian people in their home setting, and recording with their respective media equipment. We reserve the right to update personal blogs and social media outlets with the fruits of our labor before drafting our "findings" in the final report to the RGS, or airing anything on the BBC.

Documentation will be concerned with aspects of cultural immersion:

- people
- places
- industry
- business
- settlement (urban, rural, and nomadic)
- government
- landscape
- native species

### Limitations

The checkpoints outlined on [The Route](#) are the only binding factors. Those are to be regarded as checkpoints because they have been researched and handpicked ahead of time to ensure sufficient immersion in each province, and territory. Hard and fast checkpoints with flexibility in between allows us to be mindful of the six months (February through July) reserved for exploration, while minimizing expenses.

## Methods

### Our Means of Documentation

Each leg of the journey is delineated segment by segment under the section heading, [The Route: On the Map](#). Moreover, the means of transport corresponding to each leg is included in that section. All overland travel will be via an old-school Volkswagen van specially designed to get top-of-the-line mileage (17 km per liter, to be precise). Fuel costs will take precedent over all other expenses in disbursing the 7,726 Canadian dollars in grant funding (trade-in equivalent to 5,000 British pounds in award monies). Leg-by-leg cost estimates can be found in the [RGS Funding](#) section under the [Budget](#) heading. Any and all expenses in excess of the grant funding will be funded out-of-pocket to ensure compliance with the requirement of financial autonomy we agree to abide by in applying for RGS funding. We assume the responsibility for sufficient personal saving and fundraising ahead of time to ensure that we are able to finish out the journey to bring the BBC a complete experience and immersion, no matter how early we exhaust our RGS funding. Meals, lodging, and incidental transportation-related expenses are subordinate priorities that will also be eligible for the disbursement of our RGS funding.

My team will be comprised of a photo specialist, a video specialist, and a companion to double as our envoy. I will serve as the writing specialist, and we'll all work collaboratively for interviews. The media roles are fairly self-explanatory, while the envoy requires a bit more explanation. The envoy is kind of like our agent. They will be responsible for communicating with various local agencies down the road to network with volunteers—where practical—who are willing to lodge us, as well as provide us with meals and basic accommodations. Though we can't offer them compensation, host families will offer us more subject material for documenting. They will have the satisfaction of patronizing the exploration and advertisement of their country.

### Precautions, Ethical Stipulations, Unanticipated Conflict

We will warn interviewees of the possibility that they will be featured on BBC programming and obtain their consent before publishing material to the web about them. Our aim is not to publish anything defaming or offensive; however, we wish to be transparent and respectful of the diverse needs and concerns of the people of our host country. Moreover, our default system of identifying people for published media will be first names only. Last names may be relevant in some circumstances, but we will not release those without clear consent or insistence from our subjects.

We also agree to abide by Canadian law, and will take special care to avoid needless conflict along the way. Such causes for conflict may be determined and confronted along the way in regular team meetings to recap, preview, and periodically draw up and sign agreements as we encounter things that elicit our concern along the way. Although their culture and concept of justice is probably not a far cry from ours, we'll take care to not pass judgment on differences. We aren't there to elicit social reform, we're there to learn and experience a different culture. We're anticipating differences and culture shock, and our aim is to understand it before defaulting to reaction.

## Facilities and Equipment

Media and documentary devices and equipment will be our own personal property. The Volkswagen van is already insured and registered under my name. We will also be outfitted with a basic amount of overnight backcountry gear (i.e. tents, backpacks, sleeping bags, basic cookware, lights, liquid repellants like bear-spray and DEET depending on location, and first aid supplies).

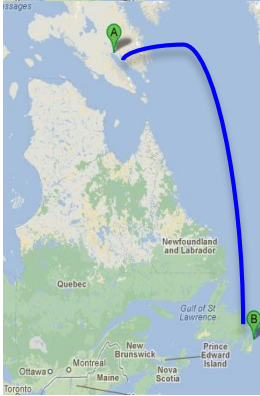
## Personnel

As already noted above, my team will be comprised of four including myself. Our specializations are listed under the [Means of Documentation](#) subsection under the [Methods](#) section. Other personnel will be determined/delegated as we go along and better identify our needs along the journey.

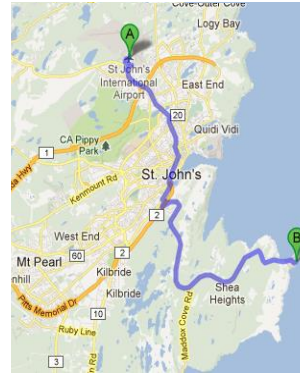
## The Route: On the Map

Means of transport between destinations are noted. Abbreviations following location denote change of province or territory. This is considered a rough itinerary because these destinations aren't necessarily where we will spend the most time or devote the most attention. Thus, they should be regarded more as checkpoints than destinations. The purpose of routing through them allows us to stay on track and on task, getting through all the provinces and territories, while also ensuring that we are routed toward destinations off the beaten path that the world is unlikely to know much about. A van for overland travel has already been furnished by generous supporters in St. John's, NL and Whitehorse, YT. In general, airfare will be funded out of our pockets, while we'll budget the Royal Geographic funding for fuel expenses and public transit fares.

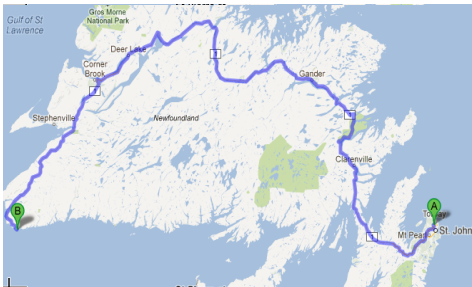
## 1. Nunavut Territories (NU) to Newfoundland and Labrador (NL)



A.) Plane: Iqaluit Airport, NU to St. John's Airport, NL

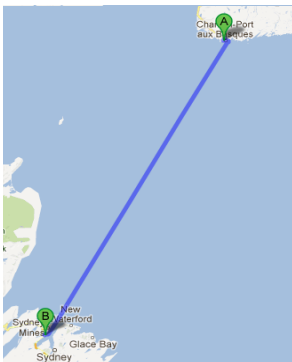


B.) Van: St. John's to Cape Spear



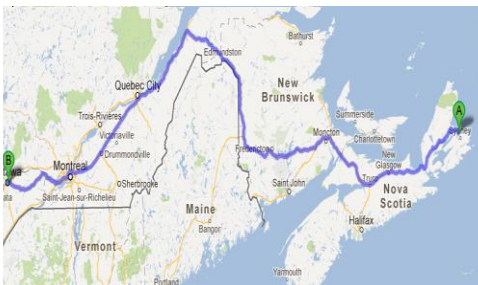
C.) Cape Spear to Port aux-Basques

## 2. Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) to Nova Scotia (NS)



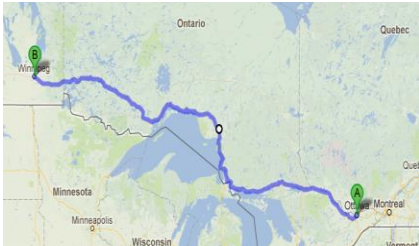
A.) Ferry: Port aux-Basques to North Sydney, NS

## 3. Nova Scotia (NS), New Brunswick (NB), Quebec (QC), to Ontario (ON)



A.) Van: North Sydney to Ottawa, ON

## 4. Ontario (ON) to Manitoba (MB)

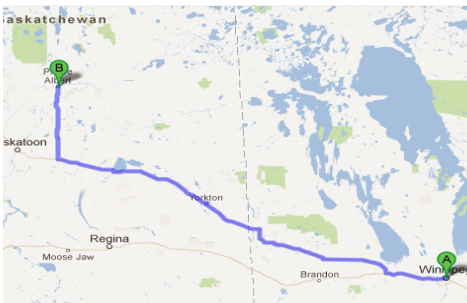


A.) Van: Ottawa to Winnipeg, MB



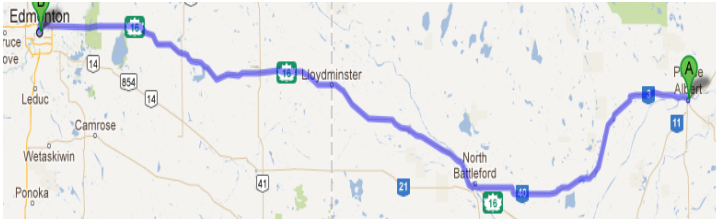
B.) Train: Winnipeg to Churchill, MB (roundtrip)

## 5. Manitoba (MB) to Saskatchewan (SK)



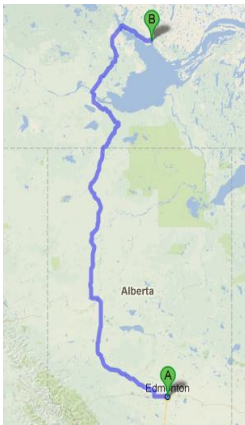
A.) Van: Winnipeg to Prince Albert, SK

## 6. Saskatchewan (SK) to Alberta (AB)



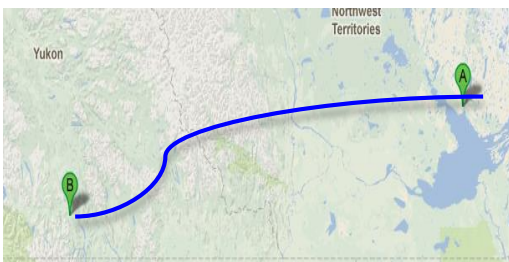
A.) Van: Prince Albert to Edmonton, AB

## 7. Alberta (AB) to Northwest Territories (NT)



A.) Van: Edmonton to Yellowknife, NT

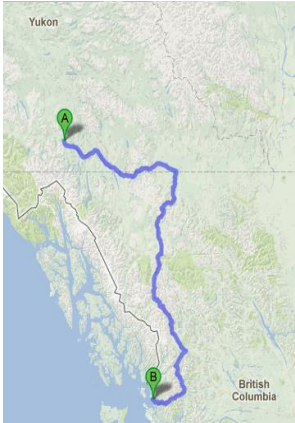
## 8. Northwest Territories (NT) to Yukon Territories (YT)



A.) Plane: Yellowknife to Whitehorse, YT

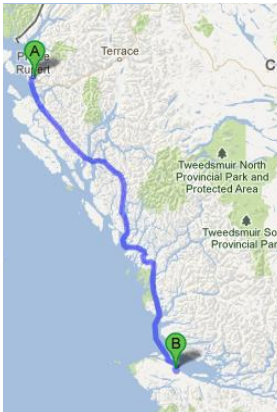


## 9. Yukon Territories (YT) to British Columbia (BC)

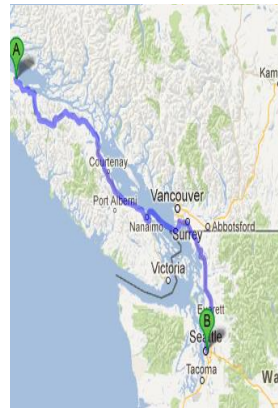


A.) Van: Whitehorse to Prince Rupert, BC

## 10. British Columbia (BC) to the United States



A.) Van: Prince Rupert to Port Hardy



B.) Van: Port Hardy to Seattle, WA, USA

## Budget

### Out-of-Pocket (Members assume these costs)

#### Flights

Leg of the Journey	Distance (km)	Fare (per passenger)
<a href="#">Iqaluit, NU</a>		\$1,000
<a href="#">Iqaluit to St. John's, NL</a>	2045	\$1,500
<a href="#">Yellowknife to Whitehorse, YT</a>	1105	\$1,000
<b>Totals</b>	3150	\$3,500.00

## RGS Funding

### Public Transit Fares

#### Journey distance by segment and estimated fuel cost

Based on two fuel estimates for a VW van with average 10 km/L fuel economy:

1. Highest fuel cost in Canada in the past year- \$1.53 per liter
2. Lowest fuel cost in Canada in the past year- \$1.33 per liter

Leg of the Journey	Means	Distance (km)	Cost (C\$)	
			\$1.53/L	\$1.33/L
<a href="#">1(B): St. John's Airport to Cape Spear, NL</a>	Van	23	\$2.07	\$1.80
<a href="#">1(C): Cape Spear to Port Aux-Basques</a>	Van	919	\$82.71	\$71.90
<a href="#">2(A): Port Aux-Basques to North Sydney, NS</a>	Ferry	181	\$77 (per vehicle)	
<a href="#">3(A): North Sydney to Ottawa, ON</a>	Van	1649	\$148.41	\$129.01
<a href="#">4(A): Ottawa to Winnipeg, MB</a>	Van	2172	\$195.48	\$169.93
<a href="#">4(B): Winnipeg to Churchill, MB</a>	Train	3400	\$360 (per passenger)	
<a href="#">5(A): Winnipeg to Prince Albert, SK</a>	Van	854	\$76.86	\$66.81
<a href="#">6(A): Prince Albert to Edmonton, AB</a>	Van	594	\$53.46	\$46.47
<a href="#">7(A): Edmonton to Yellowknife, NT</a>	Van	1497	\$134.73	\$117.12
<a href="#">9(A): Whitehorse, YT to Prince Rupert, BC</a>	Van	1363	\$122.67	\$106.63
<a href="#">10(A): Prince Rupert to Port Hardy</a>	Van	521	\$46.89	\$40.76
<a href="#">10(B): Port Hardy to Seattle, WA, USA</a>	Van	690	\$62.10	\$53.98
<b>Totals</b>		13863	\$2,802.38	\$2,681.42

All RGS funding will be tracked and accounted for meticulously. Non-essential shopping will be out-of-pocket for trip participants.

## Conclusion

### Summary and Benefits

Entrusted with the RGS funding for the Journey of a Lifetime, my team and I will offer BBC insight into a still mysterious place in the developed world. Canada is the last frontier of North America, and we seek an opportunity to get a Canadian full-disclosure in the books for the world's reference, enjoyment, and continued learning about the world.

## **Trans-Canada Expedition: The Next RGS Journey of a Lifetime**

As a 20-year-old with no radio broadcast experience, my team and I are precisely the young, green, and enthusiastic explorers for whom the RGS wants as patrons. This route and plan is entirely original, and started with a yearning to investigate exclusively British Columbia followed by iteration after iteration of Google searching. We thank our reviewers at the Royal Geographic Society for reviewing our vision, and for their investments past, present, and future in exploring a lively and vibrant planet.