

My name is Andrej Ivanov (Budapest University of Technology and Economics), and I studied in Winnipeg for 4 months from January 2009. The flight from Budapest to Winnipeg was pleasant, although it took more than 16 hours. The only complication occurred was the Canadian officer checking visas, passports etc, who did not want to believe that I'm going to study at the University of Manitoba. Never forget the documents necessary to prove your purpose you are entering the country. It was Sunday and it would have been very complicated to get in contact with anyone at the university to confirm my situation. Fortunately the other Hungarian student (József Nitsch) was with me, and he could show the acceptance letter couriered earlier by the university. The officer trusted us and let us enter the country. When we arrived at Winnipeg intl. Airport, J.P. Burak was waiting for us, and let us get to our accommodation. It took only a couple of days to get used to the different time zone, but we were very tired in the evenings for at least a week. When I woke up on the first day, and took a look through my window, I saw that everything is covered with ice and snow.



From the scene I guessed that it was very cold outside :). Fortunately Canadians also use the SI units, and I could interpret the scale of the thermometer: it was -28°C at this time. I rented a room not very far from the campus, what I benefited from in many aspects. First of all, the other renter was a Canadian, who helped us a lot in the first days by means of transportation, where to buy things and which canteen to select on the campus for having lunch. Also, I learnt a lot about the Canadian culture, everyday life, general Canadian thoughts about the world, and of course, the language.



Depending on the residence you live in on the campus, you can easily become isolated from people (everybody has his own room in the UoM residences). I would strongly recommend to others to select an environment for living where foreigners can be involved in Canadian life, with Canadian people. By the way, my room was cheaper than any of the residences on the campus, especially because I did not have to pay for food service, which is obligatory with your room in many cases on the campus (check the on-campus and off-campus links on the official UoM website for information. I also found my sublet [here](#)).

It is also important to select a place that is not very far from the university, it should not take more than 15 minutes to get to the university by bus. The following pictures shows the typical buses for public transportation, but only those types seen on the left are typically used by students.



There is a heated room made of glass at the most important bus-stops, so waiting for the bus is not very demanding.



People in Canada are very-very kind. This was also the opinion of every European students that we met. By the way, You should contact the ICS (International Center for Students) in the first week, to meet other foreigners. I joined a group organized by ICS, which was mainly about learning leadership skills and dealing with cultural differences. You can talk to anyone on the streets, in a shop, on the bus without problem, this is natural in Canada and they are pleased to answer your questions or simply to start a conversation. This guy for example just came to us and started to make jokes on the street.

Naturally, there were differences we had to cope with. Maybe the biggest problem was to get used to the different food. In Canada, many fruits, vegetables are genetically modified, meat has to be consumed in one, max. 2 days because they easily perish, they have different seasoning etc. For example, these enormous onions are larger than a cup. We had quite good lunches at Pembina Hall, which is an all-you-can-eat restaurant on the campus.



My Canadian room-mate showed me some of the typical Canadian meals, the best ones were the cheese-cake and many styles of stir-fry. I also showed some meals of the Hungarian cuisine, and he liked the Lángos, Hungarian stew, dödölle, garlic-sauce etc. very much.

The legislation building was the biggest attraction in the city:



In this picture a monument of Louis Riel can be observed, located in the back yard of the building. We went for snowshoeing organized by the ICS, it was a lot of fun:)





My room-mate invited us to several leisure occasions, e.g. we made a bonfire at his parents' place, where we roasted meat, tried his elbow.

Another important point was that we could take part in a real Aboriginal healing ceremony by his contribution, which was very exciting.

It is not surprising if someone sees animals inside the city. I lived next to the river and we had rabbits, squirrels, crows, ducks, Canadian geese, etc living freely in the nature.



The snow started melting in March and in April we went for a canuing many times.



On the way home, we stopped in Toronto for a couple of days. It is beneficial considering to reserve a few days to rest in Toronto before travelling home. Toronto is very beautiful and has a lot more attraction for tourists than Winnipeg. We visited the Niagara falls, which is about 170 kms far from the downtown.



The scene here is very beautiful and we took a lot of pictures. I also tried the boat that goes to the center of oval of the falls:



The second most important attraction here is the CN tower, which is commonly referred to as „the highest self-standing manmade structure in the world”.



Overall we enjoyed the exchange program a lot, and we learnt a lot about Canadians, Americans, Europeans, Hungarians from a different point of view. Canadian people were the most important making the whole trip very unique.