NEWS LESSON

Why Some Canadians Are Choosing a Different Holiday



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Would a political disagreement change where you went on holiday?
2. How much do you think about a country's reputation before visiting?
3. Would you rather return to a favourite place or try somewhere new?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**proximity**	☐	A refusing to buy or use something as a protest
2	**boycott**	☐	B a regular journey from one place to another
3	**diplomatic**	☐	C angry and unfriendly feeling
4	**hostility**	☐	D being close to something in distance
5	**interdependence**	☐	E a situation where each side needs the other
6	**urgency**	☐	F connected with the work of governments dealing with other countries
7	**ethical**	☐	G the feeling that something must be done quickly
8	**migration**	☐	H connected with what is right and wrong

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Some Canadians have changed their travel plans, and US tourism organisations are offering deals to win them back. The effects fall on ordinary businesses on both sides of the border.

1 Political friction has changed some Canadians' travel plans. A familiar destination can feel different once a visitor begins to wonder whether they are welcome. Cross-border tourism between Canada and the United States has historically rested on more than attractive destinations: geographic proximity, family connections and a deep sense of familiarity made an American holiday the default choice for millions of Canadians.

2 In September 2026, reporting described US tourism organisations launching promotions aimed at coaxing Canadian visitors back after a substantial decline in travel. Destinations long accustomed to Canadian spending found hotels, restaurants and retailers under pressure. The impact was most conspicuous in businesses for which a large northern customer base had been taken for granted rather than actively courted.

3 Few journeys are as deeply embedded in routine as the winter migration of older Canadians heading south, or the weekend shopping run that barely registers as travel at all. Precisely because such trips were habitual rather than deliberate, they proved unusually vulnerable. A decision that was never really made in the first place can be abandoned without much soul-searching.

4 The motives behind the shift were varied. Some Canadians objected to political statements and trade measures; others cited discomfort, uncertainty or straightforward financial calculation. It would be inaccurate to put every cancelled trip down to a single political cause, given that exchange rates, costs and personal circumstances have always shaped international travel. What changed was less the arithmetic than the atmosphere surrounding it.

5 Nevertheless, the trend has the character of a consumer boycott, even in the absence of any organised campaign. Travellers can register dissatisfaction through their spending without attending a single demonstration, and such a protest is notably easy to sustain, since it consists of doing nothing. The difficulty is that the immediate consequences fall on workers and small firms with negligible influence over national policy.

6 Border communities illustrate the point with uncomfortable clarity. Families, employers and small traders on either side have spent generations building ties that national politics barely acknowledges, and it is these relationships, not those between governments, that absorb the first shock of a dispute. Seen from a quiet hotel reception or a half-empty restaurant, a trade argument conducted in capital cities looks less like policy than weather.

7 The episode also challenges a comfortable assumption: that tourism naturally improves relations between neighbouring countries. Personal contact may well build trust, yet diplomatic hostility can prevent that contact from happening at all. Economic interdependence, far from guaranteeing stability, simply raises the cost of a quarrel once public sentiment is drawn into it.

8 Nor is the damage easily reversed. Habits broken over two seasons are not necessarily picked up again when the headlines move on, and travellers who have found alternatives elsewhere may feel no particular urgency about returning. Promotional discounts can address price, but they work less well against the sense of having been made to feel like an unwanted guest.

9 The Canadian response raises a broader ethical question. Individuals are entitled to choose destinations that reflect their values, yet those choices inevitably affect people who may share their objections to their own government. That there is no straightforward answer is precisely what makes consumer choice such a complicated form of political expression.

Sources: Associated Press. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The writer suggests that habit made Canadian holidays in the United States easy to abandon. (T) (F) (NG)
2. The writer claims that one political cause explains every cancelled trip. (T) (F) (NG)
3. Most Canadians who changed their plans chose Mexico. (T) (F) (NG)
4. Discounts may deal with price but not with the feeling of being unwelcome. (T) (F) (NG)
5. The text says close economic ties make a quarrel between neighbours less costly. (T) (F) (NG)

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

backlash	coaxing	conspicuous	embedded	exposure	friction	sentiment	vulnerable

1. The council spent weeks _____ wary tourists back with cut-price offers.
2. Empty tables made the drop in guests all the more _____ .
3. Hospitality jobs in small towns are _____ to any sudden drop in tourism.
4. Habits of travel are so deeply _____ in family routine that changing them takes a real shock.
5. Years of _____ between the two governments have soured the mood.
6. Public _____ turned sharply against travelling to the United States.

6 Word forms

Use the word in brackets to make a word that fits the gap.

1. Hoteliers were surprised by the _____ of the dispute. **(ESCALATE)**
2. Hoteliers found the sudden drop in bookings largely _____ . **(EXPLAIN)**
3. A fair _____ of the damage must consider rising costs as well. **(ASSESS)**
4. Some visitors saw the offers as a rather _____ attempt to buy back goodwill. **(CYNIC)**
5. Rebuilding trust is likely to prove _____ for the industry. **(PROBLEM)**

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Albeit, thereby, hence and whereby are formal. Albeit softens a point, thereby shows a result of an action, hence gives a reason and takes a noun, and whereby explains how something works.

albeit hence nonetheless notwithstanding thereby whereas whereby

1. The discounts were generous, _____ too late for many businesses.
2. _____ the genuine warmth of local residents, many Canadians felt unwelcome.
3. Visitors have stayed away, _____ depriving small firms of their busiest weeks.
4. Canadians resent being taken for granted; _____ the sharp fall in bookings.
5. A boycott is a protest _____ consumers express opinions simply by staying at home.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Can choosing where to travel be an effective way to make a point?
2. Who feels the effect when visitors stay away?
3. What would persuade you to return to a destination you had stopped visiting?

9 Role-play: winning back a regular guest

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the hotel manager

You run a hotel in an American border town. Your Canadian guests have stopped coming. Phone a regular guest. Offer a deal and ask what would bring them back.

Student B · the Canadian guest

You stayed at this hotel every winter. This year you went to Mexico. Explain why, listen to the offer, then decide if you will go back.

Useful phrases

We've missed you at the hotel.
I'd like to offer you a special price.
It's not only about the price, to be honest.
We're thinking about trying somewhere new.
What would make you change your mind?
I'll think about it and let you know.

Afterwards, tell the class: did the guest agree to return, and what finally decided it?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 D · 2 A · 3 F · 4 C · 5 E · 6 G · 7 H · 8 B

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 coaxing · 2 conspicuous · 3 vulnerable · 4 embedded · 5 friction · 6 sentiment

6 Word forms

1 escalation · 2 inexplicable · 3 assessment · 4 cynical · 5 problematic

7 Language focus

1 albeit · 2 Notwithstanding · 3 thereby · 4 hence · 5 whereby

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