



Alberta

The population of Alberta is approximately 3 066 257. Over the past five years, Alberta's population has grown the fastest among the provinces. It is 661,190 sq. km (6.6% of national total, roughly twice the area of Japan) The Rocky Mountains are perhaps Alberta's most recognizable geographic feature. Much of Alberta's oil and gas are found beneath the foothills that lie along the base of the Rockies. The rest of the province is housed on a great plain, or prairie, which Alberta shares with Saskatchewan on the east, and with the state of Montana to the south. Alberta has a vital and diverse business community. It includes not only oil and gas, but several other thriving industries like forestry, telecommunications and agriculture. Temperatures in January range from -8°C in the south to -24°C in the north, and in July from 20°C in the south to 16°C in the north.

Over the past decade, Alberta had the highest rate of economic growth rate in Canada at 3.8%. In 2005, Alberta's economy grew by an estimated 4.9% (Conference Board of Canada) and experts predict Alberta will have one of Canada's top performing economies in the future.

Average yearly earnings in Alberta are CDN \$41424.76. The average weekly wage rate in April 2005 was \$ 796.63.

Alberta's capital is the city of Edmonton, located just south of the centre of the province. The most populous city and metropolitan area is Calgary. Calgary is also the province's busiest transportation hub (road, air, and rail) and is one of Canada's major commerce centres. Edmonton is the transportation centre for passenger rail and access to Canada's north. According to recent population estimates, these two metropolitan areas have now both exceeded 1 million people, Calgary slightly ahead of Edmonton. Other major but much smaller municipalities include Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Camrose, Lloydminster, Wetaskiwin, Banff, and Jasper

Health Plan: The Ministry of Health and Wellness provides residents of Alberta with full coverage for medically necessary physician and hospital services, as well as specific oral surgical services provided by oral surgeons. Coverage is offered through the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan. Albertans enrolled in the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan must pay premiums unless they qualify for full premium assistance. Premiums are paid directly by the individual or may be submitted by an employer or union as part of a group plan. There are two regular premium rates: \$44 per month for single coverage and \$88 per month for family coverage (two or more persons)

Driving: The province of Alberta and United Kingdom have a reciprocal agreement for class 5 licences which allow a person to drive a two axle single motor vehicle, excluding a motorcycle. In order to obtain a class 5 licence, one must show their United Kingdom driver's licence, provide adequate identification, present their work permit, and pass a vision test.

Cost of Living in Alberta

Sales taxes: There is no provincial sales tax in Alberta. There is a 6% federal tax called the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which is added to the price of items and services purchased in the province.

Telephone: Local telephone services in Alberta are provided by a number of providers. If you choose Bell, Canada's oldest telephone service provider, the cost for a basic residential line ranges from \$20.00 to \$28.00 monthly, depending on your location. There is a connection charge of \$55.00 per line for residential customers. If jack work is required, additional charges will apply.

Electricity: Alberta is deregulated and privatized and therefore there is more than one provider of energy services. The provider of your energy services will depend on whether you choose regulated service or a contract from a competitive retailer.

Housing: The average rent for a one bedroom apartment in Edmonton is \$597 per month. Housing affordability in Alberta is the best among the provinces, as home ownership costs taking up only 25.5% of a typical pre-tax household income. The average house price in Edmonton in June 2005 was \$199,409 and in Calgary were 245,803.

Average Cost For Standard Homes Summer 2004

City, Province	Executive	Bungalow	Townhouse	Condo
Penticton, BC	\$330,000	\$230,000	\$159,000	\$140,000
Kelowna, BC	\$335,000	\$240,000	\$180,000	\$140,000
Victoria, BC	\$390,000	\$286,000	\$230,000	\$160,000
Surrey, BC	\$400,000	\$289,000	\$235,000	\$126,000
Richmond, BC	\$415,000	\$344,000	\$257,000	\$177,000
West Vancouver, BC	\$1,000,000	\$675,000	\$475,000	\$375,000
Calgary – NW, Alberta	\$285,000	\$223,000	\$173,900	\$143,000
Edmonton – Sherwood Park, Alberta	\$260,000	\$175,000	\$135,000	\$165,000
Regina, Saskatchewan	\$190,000	\$130,000	\$121,000	\$82,000

Winnipeg - St. James, Manitoba	\$228,000	\$155,000	\$87,750	\$73,000
Ottawa – Kanata, Ontario	\$425,000	\$265,000	\$198,000	\$151,000
Toronto – Markham, Ontario	\$435,000	\$350,000	\$240,000	\$260,000
Montreal - St. Laurent, Quebec	\$550,000	\$237,000	\$183,000	\$178,000

Education: In Alberta, public education in elementary and secondary school is provided free of charge to students. Students are legally required to attend school from ages 6 to 16. Alberta’s public education system is tuition free. When it comes to selecting a school, parents and students can choose from a wide range of options. They can select from public schools, Catholic schools, francophone schools, private schools, and charter schools.

There are forty-two public school jurisdictions in Alberta, and seventeen operating separate school jurisdictions. Sixteen of the operating separate school jurisdictions have a Roman Catholic electorate, and one (St. Albert) has a Protestant electorate. In addition, one Protestant separate school district, Glen Avon, survives as a ward of the St. Paul Education Region. The City of Lloydminster straddles the Alberta/Saskatchewan border, and both the public and separate school systems in that city are counted in the above numbers: both of them operate according to Saskatchewan law.

For many years the provincial government has funded the greater part of the cost of providing K-12 education. Prior to 1994 public and separate school boards in Alberta had the legislative authority to levy a local tax on property, as supplementary support for local education. In 1994 the government of the province eliminated this right for public school boards, but not for separate school boards. Since 1994 there has continued to be a tax on property in support of Kindergarten through to grade 12 educations; the difference is that the mill rate is now set by the provincial government; the money is collected by the local municipal authority and remitted to the provincial government. The relevant legislation requires that all the money raised by this property tax must go to the support of K - 12 education provided by school boards. The provincial government pools the property tax funds from across the province and distributes them, according to a formula, to public and separate school jurisdictions and francophone authorities.

Public and separate school boards, charter schools, private schools, and home schoolers’ all follow the Program of Studies and the curriculum approved by the provincial department of education (Alberta Education). Public and separate schools, charter schools, and approved private schools all employ teachers who are certificated by Alberta Education, they administer Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations set by Alberta Education, and they may grant high school graduation certificates endorsed by Alberta Education.

The province is home to four universities, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the University of Lethbridge and Athabasca University. The University of Alberta and the University of Calgary have earned reputations as some of the best universities in Canada.

Property taxes: In Edmonton, the average property tax for all single detached houses was \$1990 Edmonton's combined cost of total property tax and utility charges for a single detached house was \$3808 per year in 2005. In Calgary, the average property tax for all single detached houses was \$2048. Calgary's combined cost of total property tax and utility charges for a single detached house was \$3752 per year in 2005. (See:

<http://www.edmonton.ca/infraplan/Economic%20Information/property%20tax%20and%20utility%20charges%20survey/tax%20report%202005.pdf> for more info)

i. Edmonton, Alberta

www.edmonton.ca

Metro Area	2001 Population Estimate
Edmonton Metro Area	937,845

Major Municipalities

Edmonton City Proper	666,104
Strathcona	71,986
St. Albert	53,081
Parkland County	27,252

Located on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, Edmonton is a sophisticated city noted for its easygoing friendliness.

Edmonton grew in spurts, following a boom-and-bust pattern as exciting as it was unreliable. During World War II, the boom came in the form of the Alaska Highway, with Edmonton as the material base and temporary home of 50,000 American troops and construction workers.

The ultimate boom, however, gushed from the ground in 1947, when a drill at Leduc, 25 miles (40km) southwest of the city, sent a fountain of crude oil soaring skyward. Some 10,000 other wells followed, all within a 100-mile (161km) radius of the city. In their wake came the petrochemical industry and the major refining and supply conglomerates. In 20 years, the population of the city quadrupled, its skyline mushroomed with glass-and-concrete office towers, a rapid-transit system was created, and a C\$150-million (US\$943,800) civic center rose. Edmonton had become what it is today--the oil capital of Canada.

Edmonton is an economic leader, located at the center of the hottest economy in Canada. With a metropolitan population of more than one million, Greater Edmonton offers all the services of a major urban center while maintaining a friendly, clean and safe family-oriented environment to work and play. Greater Edmonton offers an excellent quality of life:

- Lowest average residential selling price among major centers across Canada and well below the national average.
- One of the lowest overall tax rates in Canada.
- Big city services without big city congestion – the average commute is under twenty minutes.

- Clean air and great outdoors with North America's largest urban green space (twelve times the larger than Central Park in New York).
- Over seventy golf courses.
- A pleasant morning drive from the spectacular Rocky Mountains.
- Access to the best health care in the country. The Capital Health Authority, Canada's largest integrated health care system, was ranked first in health care service among Canada's 57 major centers. (Maclean's Magazine, 2003)
- With stable 3 percent GDP growth forecast over the next three years (2006-2008) in Greater Edmonton, plus a remarkable \$85.7 billion in current or announced mega-projects within the Edmonton service area on the horizon, the Region is one of the most desirable areas in North America for workers and investors.

Residents of Greater Edmonton enjoy high personal incomes, and the lowest income taxes and sales tax in Canada (and zero provincial sales tax). Affordable housing and excellent government-funded health care and education keep the cost of living low.

Education: Edmonton Public Schools (EPS), the public school system of Edmonton, Alberta consists of 199 schools where 2600 non-teaching and 4400 teaching staff members provide instruction to 79,850 students.

Climate: Edmonton's climate varies considerably throughout the year. Summers are very pleasant with daytime high temperatures averaging around 20C and overnight lows around 10C. Occasionally the daytime high surpasses 30C. Due to the low humidity, the heat is dry and seldom oppressive. During June and much of July, daylight lasts about 17 hours. The sun rises around 5 am and sets around 10 pm.

Normally the first frost appears sometime near the end of September. Most trees change color in late September and shed their leaves in early October. This is a very pretty time of year. Daytime highs are usually around 15C, but evenings require a jacket or sweater. The first permanent snowfall usually occurs in early November, although this may vary by a week or two.

The first real taste of the colder winter temperatures usually occurs in November. January and early February are the coldest months of the year, and the overnight lows can reach -40C. Temperatures can vary considerably in winter, depending if the climate comes from the Pacific Ocean or Alaska. Daytime highs during these months can range from -30C on the coldest days to above 0C. Usually a cold spell lasts a week or so and then there is relief. Most of the colder days are usually sunny. During most of December and early January the days are short. The sun rises around 8:30 am and sets around 4:30 pm.

Spring can be quite unpredictable, although most of the winter snow has usually melted by the beginning of April. The leaves reappear on most trees near the middle of May.

Normal daily temperatures for Edmonton are 10°F (-12°C) in January and 64°F (18°C) in July, although over the course of a year, temperatures as high as 35 °C (95 °F) and as low as -43 °C (-45 °F) may occur.

On average, Edmonton's snowfall is 123.5 cm (48.6 in) per annum, which is much less than many other North American cities. Edmonton receives an average of 477 mm (18.8 in) of precipitation annually, but can vary from year to year, especially during droughts

Health: A survey by the national magazine Maclean's ranked Edmonton's Capital Health as No. 1 out of 57 regional health authorities it surveyed across Canada in 2003. Best of all, Edmonton's world-calibre hospital care is available to all residents through Alberta's universal health care system. Here are some details:

- Edmonton's Capital Health operates 14 hospitals in and around Edmonton, including two in partnership with the Caritas Health Group. Every year Capital Health and its 2,300 physicians handle 369,000 emergency visits, 100,000 hospital admissions and 400,000 health-related telephone calls.
- The University of Alberta Hospital is a pioneer of heart transplants and other advanced cardiac treatments in Western Canada. It will be the home of the new Alberta Heart Institute.
- Through the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan, all Albertans are covered for most of their hospital and doctor visits.

Recreation

- Edmonton's downtown Arts District includes the fabulous Winspear Centre concert hall, the Citadel Theatre and the Edmonton Art Gallery. It is the heart of a glittering cultural scene that includes opera, ballet and symphony.
- Greater Edmonton has some of the finest theatres in North America and more theatre companies per capita than any other city in Canada.
- The Provincial Museum of Alberta is the flagship of over 20 museums in and around the city.
- There are more than 70 art galleries and dealers in Edmonton and area.
- Edmonton is an important stop for major musical acts, from the Rolling Stones to the Dixie Chicks, and for touring Broadway musicals.
- Enjoy the unique experience of visiting the world's largest entertainment and shopping centre, with more than 800 shops and services, an indoor water park, an amusement park and a skating rink.
- Sample the fun, the people watching and the theatre of Old Strathcona.
- Edmonton is Canada's Festival City with more than 35 festivals taking place all through the year.
- Experience life in the frontier days of the 1880s at Fort Edmonton Park.

Cost of Living

Edmonton 2004	Average Household Expenditures
Total Expenditure	68339
Total Current Consumption	48206
Food	7169
Shelter	12229
Household Operation	3255
Household furnishings and equipment	1814
Clothing	2866
Transportation	8892
Health care	2053
Personal Care	1038
Recreation	4049
Reading Materials and other printed matter	318
Education	1324
Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages	1699
games of Change	288
Miscellaneous expenditures	1213
Personal Income taxes	13605
Personal insurance payments and pension contributions	3669
Gifts of Money and contributions	2828

- 2002 Calgary was ranked as the cleanest city in the world
- 2004 Calgary ranks as the world's top city for health and sanitation
- 2005 Calgary ranks as one of the top five cities in the world for safety and security
- 2005 Calgary ranks as one of the five most liveable cities in the world Economic Intelligence Unit

In terms of employment prospects, Calgary presents enormous potential;

- Lowest 5-year average annual unemployment rate at 5.0% of all major Canadian cities
- Forecasted to be the location for well over one third of all new jobs in Alberta
- Forecasted to require approximately 90,000 new jobs over the next five years and 158,000 in the next 10 years - highest of any economic region in Canada

Education

Calgary's board of Education Includes:

- 96 931 total student enrollment in public schools
- 132 elementary schools
- 11 elementary/ junior high schools combined
- 35 junior high schools
- 3 junior/senior high schools combined
- 19 senior high schools
- 15 special programs

According to Alberta Learning, in a 2004 survey of school boards, elementary school sizes across the province averaged 19.5 students per class in kindergarten and 23.2 students per class in Grades 1 to 6.

Climate: Although Calgary's winters can be downright cold, Environment Canada still ranks the city as having the 3rd most temperate climate in the country (of major cities) after [Victoria](#) and [Vancouver](#). This is due in large part to the dry [Chinook winds](#) that routinely blow into the city from the Pacific Ocean during the winter months. These winds have been known to raise the winter temperature by up to 20°C in just a few hours, and may last several days or even weeks. The Chinooks are such a common feature of Calgary's winters that only one month (January 1950) has failed to witness a thaw over more than 100 years of weather observations.

Nevertheless, Calgary is a city of extremes, and temperatures have ranged anywhere from a record low of -45°C in 1893 to a record high of +36°C in 1919. Although summer daytime temperatures in the +30s are not all that uncommon, Calgary does not usually experience the high temperatures or extreme annual temperature ranges that are common to other prairie cities (such as [Regina](#) and [Winnipeg](#)). Temperatures rarely fall below -35°C, even in the dead of winter. On average, the temperature ranges from a daily minimum of -15°C in January to a daily maximum of 23°C in both July and August.

As a consequence of Calgary's high elevation, frosts can occur late in the spring and early in the fall and nights are generally cool year-round.

Calgary is ranked first out of Canada's 100 largest cities by Environment Canada for the sunniest days year-round and in the winter. Calgary has over 2,300 hours of sunshine annually.

Summer temperature (June - August)

- Daily average: 15.2C (59.4F)
- Daily maximum: 21.9C (71.4F)

Winter temperature (December - February)

- Daily average: -7.5C (18.5F)
- Daily maximum: -1.4C (29.5F)

Rainfall per year is 321mm (12.6 inches)

Snowfall per year is 127cm (50 inches)

Health: The Calgary Health Region oversees a large integrated system that includes nine acute care sites, long term care facilities and public community health services. In 2005/2006 it expects an operating budget of \$2.3billion and will employ approximately 22,000 full-time, part-time, temporary and casual staff.

Recreation: Calgary is the site of the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium, a 4 million cubic foot (113,000 m³) performing arts, culture and community facility. The auditorium is one of two "twin" facilities in the province, the other located in Edmonton. The 2,700-seat auditorium was opened in 1957 and has been host to hundreds of Broadway musical, theatrical, stage and local productions. Annually, over 850,000 visitors frequent the performance space. The "Jubes" as they are known, are the resident home of the Alberta Ballet, the Calgary opera, the Kiwanis Music Festival, and the annual Canadian Legion Remembrance Day Ceremonies. The two auditoria are run by community-based non-profit societies and operate 365 days a year. The two auditoria have recently completed a \$91 million renovation. They reopened on the Province's Centennial, September 1, 2005.

Calgary is home to a number of major annual festivals and events. These include the growing Calgary International Film Festival, the Calgary Folk Music Festival, Carifest, and Global Fest. Calgary's most well-known event is the Calgary Stampede, which occurs every July. It features an internationally recognized rodeo competition, a midway, stage shows, agricultural competitions, chuck wagon races, First Nations exhibitions, and pancake breakfasts around the city, among other attractions. It is

among the largest and most well known festivals in Canada. The event has a 93 year history. In 2005, attendance at the 10-day rodeo and exhibition totaled 1,242,928.

In large part due to its proximity to the Rocky Mountains, Calgary has traditionally been a popular destination for winter sports. Since hosting the 1988 Winter Olympics, the city has also been home to a number of major winter sporting facilities such as Canada Olympic Park (luge, cross-country skiing, ski jumping, downhill skiing, snowboarding, and some summer sports) and the Olympic Oval (speed skating and hockey). These facilities serve as the primary training venues for a number of competitive athletes. In the summer, the Bow River is very popular among fly-fishermen. Golfing is also an extremely popular activity for Calgarians and the region has a large number of courses.

The city also has a large number of urban parks including Fish Creek Provincial Park, Nose Hill Park, Bowness Park, Edworthy Park, the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Confederation Park, and Prince's Island Park. Nose Hill Park is the largest municipal park in Canada. Connecting these parks and most of the city's neighborhoods is one of the most extensive bike path systems in North America.

Calgary 2004	Average Household Expenditures (\$)
Total Expenditure	77949
Total Current Consumption	53226
Food	7665
Shelter	15098
Household Operation	3351
Household furnishings and equipment	2118
Clothing	3125
Transportation	8749
Health care	2187
Personal Care	1012
Recreation	4926
Reading Materials and other printed matter	370
Education	1380
Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages	1593
games of Change	246
Miscellaneous expenditures	1407
Personal Income taxes	18607
Personal insurance payments and pension contributions	1.23
Gifts of Money and contributions	1759

iii. Lethbridge, Alberta
www.lethbridge.ca

	2005 Population Estimate
Lethbridge	77529

The City of Lethbridge is located at the crossroads of four major highways. Calgary is only a two (2) hour drive or forty-five (45) minute flight from Calgary. Lethbridge is the commercial, distribution, financial and industrial centre of southern Alberta, and is the fourth largest city in the province.

Climate: Lethbridge has a moderate continental climate with warm winters and mild summers. This moderation is heavily influenced by Chinook winds which occur on average eleven (11) times throughout the year. The Chinook is a warm, dry wind that descends the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains in winter. The area also enjoys one of the highest amounts of sunshine in the country, approximately 2,370 hours per year. The average maximum temperature is 12.1°C and the average minimum temperature is -1.0°C. The average yearly snowfall is 160cm and the average yearly rainfall is 262mm.¹

Education: Within the Lethbridge public and Catholic school systems there are 17 elementary schools, five junior high schools, three high schools and one integrated occupational school. Another Christian school operates from ECS through grade 12 and a Francophone public community school serves Lethbridge and area from kindergarten to grade 9. Lethbridge also has private schools that meet a variety of needs including children with learning disabilities. All schools provide instruction in the core subjects (language arts, mathematics, social studies and science), physical education, and the fine arts, French language instruction is provided in grades 4 through 12 and a French Immersion program is offered for students from kindergarten through grade 12.

Health: Lethbridge offers exceptionally high-quality medical services. The Lethbridge Regional Hospital provides a 277-bed community and regional referral hospital. St. Michael's Health Centre operates a 210-bed residential care facility with specialized palliative care services. Edith Cavell provides 120 continuing care beds and Extendicare Lethbridge provides 120 beds, as well the Region partnered with the Good Samaritan Society and now has two Designated Assisted Living Facilities – Park Meadows Village and West Highlands. Lethbridge has approximately 165 resident physicians and surgeons, 0 dentists, 30 chiropractors, two orthodontists and around 15 optometrists. A full range of public health, mental health and rehabilitation services are also provided. A variety of non-governmental health organizations (e.g. Canadian Cancer Society) have local and/or regional offices in Lethbridge.

¹ <http://www.ecdevlethbridge.com/lifestyle/index.asp>

Recreation: Lethbridge offers a variety of high quality recreational facilities and amenities for all ages and interests. An extensive urban parks system of 1,740 hectares (4,300 acres) and more than 60 kilometers (38 miles) of trails provides beautiful areas for walking, jogging, cycling and picnicking. There are over 70 parks, playgrounds, sports fields and green strips dotted throughout the city.

The city has five indoor pools, including an Olympic-sized swimming and diving facility, two leisure centres and a free outdoor spray park. Six ice arenas (including the 5,000 seat ENMAX Centre), a curling club, an indoor soccer facility and the Ascent Climbing Centre are well-used, as are the many sports fields and ball diamonds. In the river valley is Softball Valley, a nine ball diamond complex and the Lethbridge Shooting Range (one of the largest ranges in Canada). Recent facilities include the Lloyd Nolan Yard Ball Park, Canola Harvest Field and a multi-purpose skateboard park at Dave Elton Park. There are private fitness clubs, as well as the YMCA, the YWCA, the University and the College, offering fun and fitness for the entire family. Within city limits there are five golf courses. Another eight courses can be reached within a half hour's drive. Spectators enjoy high-calibre junior hockey and baseball and inter-varsity sports, provided by the Lethbridge Community College Kodiaks, the University of Lethbridge Pronghorns, the Lethbridge Hurricanes of the Western Hockey League, and the Prairie Dawgs of the Prairie Baseball Academy.

Lethbridge is located less than 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the Rocky Mountains and provides unlimited opportunities for recreation in this area. You can fly fish on the blue ribbon trout streams or hunt for big game and game birds. For hiking and sightseeing the Waterton Glacier International Peace Park has spectacular alpine scenery. Take in the Rockies' excellent snow conditions for downhill and cross-country skiing at 12 ski resorts within a five-hour drive. The closest downhill ski facility is less than two hours from the city.

Lethbridge residents enjoy a choice of cosmopolitan cultural activities including those offered at the Bowman Arts Centre and Southern Alberta Art Gallery for visual and creative arts and at the 500-seat Yates Memorial Theatre, a centre for the performing arts. There are local theatre groups, a symphony orchestra, and art gallery and arts council. The Lethbridge Public Library also hosts art exhibits, public lectures, poetry readings, concerts and a variety of programs. The University of Lethbridge boasts a \$22 million Performing Arts Centre and is home to one of the country's finest Canadian and international art collections. Over 30 individual organizations promote and offer activities and services relating to historical or multicultural interests within the city. Included in this is the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association (Multicultural Heritage Centre), which promotes multiculturalism and ethnic heritage to the community and its members.

A full array of restaurants from fine dining to trendy eateries and fast food are found throughout the city. For nightlife, establishments offering pleasant, intimate surroundings, high-energy rock and roll, country and English-style neighbourhood pubs are all available. Three movie theatres offer a fine selection of films. The public library and university film groups provide special repertory showings. Lethbridge is truly southern Alberta's shopping Mecca, featuring three shopping malls, several power centres and a vibrant downtown.

Cost of Living: Total property tax and utility charges for a single family home in 2003 was \$3287.00. The sample house was a three bedroom bungalow with a main floor of 1200 square feet, a full finished basement and a two car garage on a 6000 square foot lot.

The average rent in November 2003 for a one bedroom apartment was \$533.00 and for a two bedroom was \$637.00.

The average household income in Lethbridge is approximately \$52,841.² The average yearly income in Lethbridge is \$28,748.00. The disposable income per household is approximately \$24865. In a study of fourteen American and Canadian cities, Lethbridge ranked No. 1 for lowest cost of living for people earning \$40,000 per annum. It rated second for those in the \$60,000 income level and fourth for those who earn over 80,000 per year.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES LETHBRIDGE, 2003

	Amount	%
Food	5,940	12.0
Shelter Costs	9,085	18.3
Clothing	2,082	4.2
Transportation	6,171	12.5
Health & Personal Care	1,921	3.9
Recreation/Reading & Education	3,570	7.2
Taxes & Securities	12,438	25.1
Other	8,327	16.9
Total Expenditures	49,537	100.0

² Statistics Canada, 2004 http://www.psac.ca/pdf/red_deer050316.pdf

iv. Medicine Hat, Alberta

<http://www.city.medicine-hat.ab.ca/>

2005 Population Estimate

Medicine Hat 51,249

Medicine Hat is located in Southeastern Alberta, approximately 300 km south east of Calgary. Medicine Hat has an area of 120 square kilometers with an elevation of 721 meters. The city is divided into four quadrants and fourteen diverse neighborhoods.

Manufacturing is one of the strongest sectors of the Medicine Hat economy, producing a variety of industrial and consumer goods for domestic and export markets including tires for automobiles and heavy equipment, anhydrous ammonia and granulated area for fertilizers, clay brick and refractories, thermal carbon black, catalyst compounds for gasoline production, solid waste handling equipment and tanks, compressors, pressure vessels, furniture, playground equipment, flour, cereals and feeds, business forms and commercial printing.

Climate: Medicine Hat's climate is semi-arid with dry, hot summers and mild winters. Rainfall averages 230mm per year. They have the longest growing season in Alberta (120+ days). In winter a Chinook wind can raise temperatures by as much as 34C. Mean Daily Temperature in July is 23C and in January is -13C.

Education: The Medicine Hat School District #76 has 13 elementary schools and 3 secondary schools (grade 7 - 12). All elementary schools offer a kindergarten program. Educational programs include a strong core academic program; a diverse practical arts program, broad fine arts, choral music, band programs, French Immersion program, special education and a comprehensive co-curricular program.

The Medicine Hat Catholic division offers instruction from kindergarten to senior high school with a full range of special education services including a successful program for gifted and talented students. The Division includes 6 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 1 high school.

Health: The Medicine Hat region is served by the Palliser Health Region, which provide acute care, continuing care and community health services. Medicine Hat has excellent health facilities, including the ultra-modern 325 bed Medicine Hat Regional Hospital. Approximately 31 family physicians and 47 specialists are practising in Medicine Hat. Specialists and facilities in Calgary and Edmonton are also readily accessible by the Palliser Health Region.

Recreation: Medicine Hat residents have more recreational facilities per capita than most other cities in Canada. We offer superior recreational facilities, more than 90 kilometres of hiking/biking trails and 250 hectares of parks. There are six first-class golf courses, three indoor and four outdoor pools, six indoor ice arenas, indoor and outdoor waterslides, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, Skateboard Park and BMX track. If you enjoy ice, water or sun, there's a sport for every season.

The Medicine Hat Family Leisure Centre is located on 23 hectares (57 acres) in the North West part of the city. The \$17.3 million state of the art facility includes a 50 metre multipurpose pool, a wave pool, swirl pool, children's pool, steam room and the "Rip-n-Rattler" water slide. Located in the same building is a 100' x 200' ice surface (hockey rink) along with a variety of meeting rooms, entertainment rooms and food concession. Outside activities have not been forgotten at the Centre as it boasts three regulation size soccer pitches, one premier (lighted) sports field for football/soccer/rugby and four high quality ball diamonds.

For the avid hockey sports fan, Medicine Hat is home to the Medicine Hat Tigers of the Western Canada Junior Hockey League.

Three private campgrounds and one municipally operated campground provide a full range of facilities (224 camping sites). All of the campgrounds offer access to the regional trail system, the Trans-Canada Highway and Highway #3 providing visitors with safe and easy access to many of the city's major parks, attractions and businesses.

Medicine Hat is 45 minutes from Cypress Hills Provincial Park. Cypress Hills is one of the few areas in the southeast untouched by the glacial period. The Park offers superb recreational amenities including boating, hiking and skiing. The park is a great place to spend a weekend camping!

Cost of Living: Medicine Hat enjoys the lowest cost of living in the province. Costs in 2003 of household expenditures were estimated to be 8% lower on average than the already low costs in Edmonton. The average household income in Medicine Hat is \$52,841.

The cost of housing in Medicine Hat compares very favorably with other cities in Alberta as well as other provinces. Medicine Hat offers a wide range of housing styles and prices, in established as well as new neighborhoods. A single family detached dwelling in Medicine Hat is an average of \$217,000. Average monthly rents for apartments for one bedroom is \$461.00, two bedroom \$568.00, and a three bedroom is \$663.00 and over.

The City of Red Deer's combined municipal property tax and utility rate consistently ranks among the lowest of comparable cities in the province. The average municipal tax and utility cost of 25 cities surveyed in Canada is \$3,179 while The City of Red Deer's average municipal tax and utility cost ranks third lowest at \$2,594.³

City	Municipal Property Tax (\$)	Average Utility Charges (\$)	Total (\$)	Rank
Medicine Hat	868	1,555	2,423	1
Calgary	780	1,704	2,484	2
Red Deer	990	1,604	2,594	3
Edmonton	1,095	1,818	2,913	8
Lethbridge	1,171	1,809	2,980	10

**Note:* Municipal property tax information is based on a 25 to 30 year old, single-detached, three-bedroom, bungalow with a main floor area of 111.5 Square meters (1,200 sq. ft.), having a double car garage and finished full basement, on a 557.4 square meters (6,000 sq. ft.) lot located in an average neighbourhood.

Average utility charge information is based on the total utility charge for telephones, power, water, sewer, and land drainage and garbage collection for the average single-detached house.

³ <http://www.city.red-deer.ab.ca/Connecting+with+Your+City/City+Services+and+Departments/Assessment+and+Taxation+Services/Comparison+of+Municipal+Property+Taxes+and+Utility+Charges.htm>