

## Census in Brief

# Dwellings in Canada

## Census of Population, 2016

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- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| .              | not available for any reference period   |
| ..             | not available for a specific reference period  |
| ...            | not applicable   |
| 0              | true zero or a value rounded to zero   |
| 0 <sup>s</sup> | value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded |
| <sup>p</sup>   | preliminary  |
| <sup>r</sup>   | revised  |
| x              | suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the <i>Statistics Act</i>                                   |
| <sup>E</sup>   | use with caution   |
| F              | too unreliable to be published   |
| *              | significantly different from reference category ( $p < 0.05$ )   |

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## Highlights

- The majority of occupied private dwellings in Canada in 2016 were single-detached houses. Single-detached houses represented 53.6% of all dwelling types in 2016. This share has been declining over the past three decades.
- The share of dwellings that were apartments was highest in the census metropolitan areas (CMAs) of Montréal, Vancouver and Québec.
- Toronto was the CMA with the largest share of dwellings in high-rise buildings (those with five or more storeys). Nearly 3 in 10 dwellings in Toronto were in high-rise apartment buildings.
- In the Montréal CMA, 4 in 10 dwellings were in apartment buildings that have fewer than five storeys.
- In Calgary and Edmonton, two of the fastest-growing CMAs, apartment dwellings accounted for a smaller share of all dwellings, at 25.4% and 26.5%, respectively.

## Introduction

Our homes are where we live out our childhood, relax after work, and enjoy our retirement. Our needs and preferences for housing change over time, and they differ from region to region.

This Census in Brief article is the first of two releases from the 2016 Census to look at housing. This release presents information on the types of dwellings in which we live. The second release, scheduled for October 2017, will examine housing characteristics, such as homeownership, condominiums and shelter costs, including utility costs and affordability.

Dwellings are divided broadly into two types: **private** (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements005-eng.cfm>) and **collective** (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements002-eng.cfm>). Private dwellings are classified according to their **structural type** (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements013-eng.cfm>), such as single-detached, apartment or mobile home. Collective dwellings refer to dwellings of commercial, institutional or communal nature.

The 2016 Census enumerated 35.2 million people. Among those living in Canada in 2016, 98% resided in a private dwelling and 2% lived in a collective dwelling.

## The majority of private dwellings in Canada are single-detached houses

The single-detached house represents, to some, a symbol of traditional, middle-class living—a dream to which many may aspire. However, a number of factors have placed pressure on Canadians' ability, and even desire, to live in this type of dwelling. Higher house prices, the pressures of a long commute to work and an aging population are three of the many factors that may lead Canadians to live in different dwelling types.

In 2016, the most common dwelling type in Canada was still the single-detached house, representing 53.6%, or 7.5 million, of the 14.1 million **occupied private dwellings** (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements006-eng.cfm>) in Canada. As for the remaining proportion, 18.0% of dwellings were in apartment buildings that have fewer than five storeys, 9.9% were in apartment buildings that have five or more storeys, 5.6% were apartments in a duplex and 12.9% were other types of dwellings.

The share of dwellings that were single-detached houses was down slightly from 2011 (55.0%). The proportion of single-detached houses has been declining over the past three decades. This decline is especially prominent in British Columbia, where the share of single-detached houses fell from more than 60% in the 1980s to 44.1% in 2016.

## Dwellings in Canada

In two provinces, Quebec and British Columbia, single-detached houses represented less than half of occupied private dwellings in 2016. Differences in the dwelling distribution at the provincial level are largely driven by the distribution in large urban centres ([census metropolitan areas](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm>), or CMAs).

In 10 of Canada's 35 CMAs, single-detached houses represented less than half of occupied private dwellings in 2016—that is, in Vancouver, Montréal, Victoria, Toronto, Québec, Sherbrooke, Ottawa–Gatineau, Abbotsford–Mission, Trois-Rivières and Halifax. In these large urban centres, apartments in low- and high-rise buildings, as well as duplexes, account for a large share of dwellings. Leading the way in 2016 was the CMA of Montréal, where apartments made up 58.4% of all dwellings, followed by Vancouver (58.1%) and Québec (49.4%). In fact, all five CMAs in the province of Quebec ranked highly among CMAs with the largest share of apartment dwellings.

But not all CMAs have a large share of apartments. In Edmonton and Calgary, two of the fastest-growing CMAs, apartment dwellings accounted for a smaller share of all dwellings, at 26.5% and 25.4%, respectively.

Outside CMAs, single-detached houses represented the clear majority of dwellings in 2016, comprising 72.7% of all occupied private dwellings.

**Table 1**  
**Occupied private dwellings and types of dwelling, by region, 2016**

	Occupied private dwellings	Single-detached houses	Apartments in a building that has five or more storeys	Apartments in a building that has fewer than five storeys	Apartments or flats in a duplex	Other dwellings <sup>1</sup>
	number			percent		
Canada	14,072,080	53.6	9.9	18.0	5.6	12.9
Newfoundland and Labrador	218,670	73.3	0.3	5.3	11.5	9.5
Prince Edward Island	59,470	69.2	0.1	15.2	1.7	13.7
Nova Scotia	401,990	65.5	5.3	14.5	3.1	11.5
New Brunswick	319,775	69.3	1.2	13.8	4.2	11.4
Quebec	3,531,660	45.4	5.3	32.7	7.5	9.1
Ontario	5,169,175	54.3	17.2	10.1	3.4	15.0
Manitoba	489,050	67.8	8.0	13.7	1.4	9.1
Saskatchewan	432,625	72.7	2.4	13.2	2.2	9.5
Alberta	1,527,680	61.9	4.1	14.6	2.8	16.5
British Columbia	1,881,970	44.1	9.4	20.5	12.2	13.7
Yukon	15,215	62.0	0.3	11.6	4.0	22.1
Northwest Territories	14,980	57.6	3.0	15.9	2.6	20.9
Nunavut	9,815	44.3	1.1	13.3	1.8	39.5
Census metropolitan areas (CMAs)	9,835,655	45.4	13.8	20.7	6.5	13.7
Outside CMAs	4,236,425	72.7	0.9	11.8	3.5	11.0

1. Refers to semi-detached houses, row houses, other single-attached houses, mobile homes and other movable dwellings.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

## High-rises stand tall in Toronto and Vancouver

The previous census release found in *The Daily* (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170208/dq170208a-eng.htm>) of February 8, 2017 emphasized the high concentration of Canadians in Canada's 35 CMAs. The high-rise apartment building (five or more storeys) is perhaps the most noticeable symbol of this urban intensification.

In 2016, the CMA of Toronto was the urban centre with the largest share of dwellings in high-rise buildings. In that CMA, nearly 3 in 10 dwellings were in buildings of this size. London was second on this list, with 16.8% of dwellings in buildings that have five or more storeys, followed by Vancouver, with 16.7%.

Montréal, the second-largest CMA in Canada, ranked 12th in the same list. In this CMA, 8.8% of dwellings were in high-rises; apartment buildings that have fewer than five storeys were the most common, with 4 in 10 dwellings being in low-rise apartments.

Construction trends of single-detached houses and apartments seem to follow population and business cycles. Trends in building permits<sup>1</sup> indicate that the construction pace of apartments, and especially condominium units, has accelerated since the early 2000s, and that this has surpassed the number of single-detached houses constructed since 2012. Further information on condominiums and on the value of dwellings from the 2016 Census will be released on October 25, 2017.

**Table 2**  
**Occupied private dwellings and types of dwelling, by census metropolitan area, 2016**

	Occupied private dwellings	Single-detached houses	Apartments in a building that has five or more storeys	Apartments in a building that has fewer than five storeys	Apartments or flats in a duplex	Other dwellings <sup>1</sup>
	number			percent		
Toronto, Ont.	2,135,910	39.6	29.4	10.0	4.2	16.8
Montréal, Que.	1,727,310	32.7	8.8	41.2	8.5	8.9
Vancouver, B.C.	960,890	29.4	16.7	25.2	16.3	12.5
Ottawa–Gatineau, (Ont. and Que.)	535,500	44.8	14.0	14.1	2.9	24.1
Calgary, Alta.	519,695	58.3	6.3	14.8	4.2	16.4
Edmonton, Alta.	502,145	57.3	5.4	19.1	2.1	16.2
Québec, Que.	361,890	41.2	6.1	37.1	6.2	9.4
Winnipeg, Man.	306,550	62.0	12.0	16.8	1.7	7.5
Hamilton, Ont.	293,345	56.3	15.5	8.3	2.6	17.3
London, Ont.	206,450	55.9	16.8	10.1	2.5	14.7
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo, Ont.	200,495	55.2	11.0	13.1	3.0	17.8
Halifax, N.S.	173,460	49.9	12.1	21.3	3.6	13.1
St. Catharines–Niagara, Ont.	168,485	66.7	5.8	11.4	3.7	12.3
Victoria, B.C.	162,715	39.5	6.4	27.2	15.7	11.2
Oshawa, Ont.	138,960	65.6	7.6	7.4	3.7	15.7
Windsor, Ont.	132,910	68.4	9.8	8.6	3.0	10.1

1. *The Canadian Megatrends* article [Evolution of housing in Canada, 1957 to 2014](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2015007-eng.htm) (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2015007-eng.htm>), Catalogue no. 11-630-X, provides additional information on changes in housing in Canada, based on building permit data.

# Dwellings in Canada

**Table 2 (end)**

**Occupied private dwellings and types of dwelling, by census metropolitan area, 2016**

	Occupied private dwellings	Single-detached houses	Apartments in a building that has five or more storeys	Apartments in a building that has fewer than five storeys	Apartments or flats in a duplex	Other dwellings <sup>1</sup>
	number		percent			
Saskatoon, Sask.	115,285	60.5	3.7	19.9	4.8	11.1
Sherbrooke, Que.	95,575	44.6	2.1	39.2	6.1	8.0
Regina, Sask.	94,955	66.7	4.5	18.3	1.8	8.9
St. John's, N.L.	85,015	54.6	0.6	7.9	24.6	12.3
Kelowna, B.C.	81,380	52.1	2.1	21.2	9.2	15.4
Barrie, Ont.	72,535	69.1	5.5	8.4	5.1	11.8
Trois-Rivières, Que.	72,500	46.5	1.5	34.7	7.3	10.0
Saguenay, Que.	72,480	50.9	1.6	23.9	12.9	10.7
Greater Sudbury, Ont.	70,445	62.1	6.3	15.9	6.0	9.7
Kingston, Ont.	67,915	57.7	12.8	13.1	3.1	13.3
Abbotsford–Mission, B.C.	62,630	45.4	1.7	21.6	20.5	10.9
Moncton, N.B.	61,770	55.5	2.2	19.5	5.1	17.6
Guelph, Ont.	59,280	55.7	9.3	11.9	5.9	17.1
Saint John, N.B.	52,870	60.3	3.4	18.8	7.2	10.2
Thunder Bay, Ont.	52,545	69.0	4.9	14.1	4.5	7.6
Brantford, Ont.	52,530	66.9	7.4	8.8	3.1	13.8
Peterborough, Ont.	50,530	69.1	5.0	12.3	5.4	8.1
Lethbridge, Alta.	45,695	66.9	1.7	11.6	6.3	13.5
Belleville, Ont.	43,000	68.9	5.9	13.6	2.3	9.3

1. Refers to semi-detached houses, row houses, other single-attached houses, mobile homes and other movable dwellings.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

## Approximately 1% of Canadians live in nursing homes or seniors' residences

Collective dwellings geared towards older Canadians, such as nursing homes or residences for senior citizens, are an important part of how society supports the housing needs of seniors.

In 2016, 425,750 Canadians, or 1.2%, lived in nursing homes or residences for senior citizens. This share varied modestly by province and typically exceeded 1% of the provincial population. Within the provinces, the share of the population living in collective dwellings targeted to seniors was highest in Quebec, at 1.8%. In the territories, these types of collective dwellings were much less common, with 0.3% of residents in the territories living in a nursing home or residence for senior citizens.

The share of the population living in nursing homes or residences for senior citizens also exceeded 1% both inside and outside CMAs.

Given population aging, this type of living arrangement can be expected to continue to grow in the future.

For more information on seniors living in collective dwellings, see the Census in Brief article entitled [A portrait of the population aged 85 and older in 2016 in Canada](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016004/98-200-x2016004-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016004/98-200-x2016004-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-200-X2016004.

**Table 3**  
**Total population in nursing homes or residences for senior citizens and as a percentage of the total population in dwellings, by region, 2016**

	Population in dwellings	Population in nursing homes or residences for senior citizens <sup>1</sup>	Population in nursing homes or residences for senior citizens <sup>1</sup> as a percentage of the total population in dwellings
		number	percent
Canada	35,145,545	425,750	1.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	519,625	5,295	1.0
Prince Edward Island	142,825	1,945	1.4
Nova Scotia	923,370	9,795	1.1
New Brunswick	747,000	9,970	1.3
Quebec	8,163,485	146,405	1.8
Ontario	13,444,510	133,470	1.0
Manitoba	1,278,240	15,970	1.2
Saskatchewan	1,098,280	13,350	1.2
Alberta	4,066,970	41,705	1.0
British Columbia	4,647,815	47,510	1.0
Yukon	35,815	175	0.5
Northwest Territories	41,700	135	0.3
Nunavut	35,920	35	0.1
Census metropolitan areas (CMAs)	24,939,815	280,495	1.1
Outside CMAs	10,205,730	145,255	1.4

1. Also includes population in collective dwellings that are a mix of both a nursing home and a residence for senior citizens.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.



## Data sources, methods and definitions

### Data sources

The data in this analysis are from the 2016 Census of Population. Further information on the census can be found in the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-304 X.

Information on census data quality and comparability for types of dwellings can be found in the [Structural Type of Dwelling and Collectives Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/001/98-500-x2016001-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/001/98-500-x2016001-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-500-X2016002.

### Methods

**Random rounding and percentage distributions:** To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2016 Census, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values, since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Because of random rounding, counts and percentages may vary slightly between different census products, such as the analytical documents, highlight tables and data tables.

### Definitions

**Building permit:** Refers to the final authorization to start work on a building project. It is granted by public authorities in response to an application by a principal and based on a specific building plan.

Please refer to the [Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-301-X, for additional information on the census variables.

## Additional information

Additional information on types of dwellings can be found in the [Highlight tables](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hltfst/tl/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hltfst/tl/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016003; the [Data tables](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Lp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=0&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2016&THEME=116&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Lp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=0&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2016&THEME=116&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=>), Catalogue nos. 98-400-X20160012 to 98-400-X20160021; the [Census Profile](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>), Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001; and the [Focus on Geography Series](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001.

An infographic entitled [Dwellings in Canada, 2016 Census of Population](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017017-eng.htm) (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017017-eng.htm>) illustrates the structural types of private dwellings in Canada.

For details on the concepts, definitions and variables used in the 2016 Census of Population, please consult the [Dictionary, Census of Population](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm>), 2016, Catalogue no. 98-301 X.

In addition to response rates and other data quality information, the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-304-X,



provides an overview of the various phases of the census, including content determination, sampling design, collection, data processing, data quality assessment, confidentiality guidelines and dissemination.

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