

## TIMELINE: Canada's National Flag

Canada's National Flag is instantly recognizable as a proud symbol of our country. But it may surprise you to learn that the National Flag is relatively young, and a few different flags were flown before it was adopted. Follow this timeline for a brief history of the flags used in Canada, and to learn about some of the major moments in the creation of our National Flag.

**1871**

The Canadian Red Ensign, which includes the Union Jack and Canada's coat of arms, is used unofficially as a national flag. It is recognized as one of the main flags of Canada (along with the Union Jack) until 1965.



*The Canadian Red Ensign from 1871 to 1921 © His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the Canadian Heraldic Authority*

**1892**

The Canadian Red Ensign is made official for use on Canadian ships, but also continues to be used on land as an unofficial national flag.

**1921**

King George V grants Canada a new official coat of arms, which takes its place on the Canadian Red Ensign.



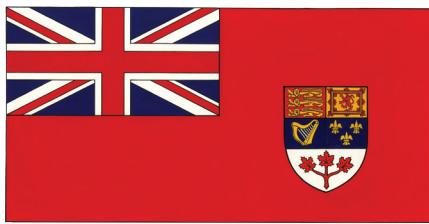
*The Canadian Red Ensign from 1921 to 1957 © His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the Canadian Heraldic Authority*

**1925**

Parliament establishes a committee to design a new national flag for the Dominion of Canada, but the project is quickly shelved.

**1946**

A second parliamentary committee is formed to consider a design for a new national flag, without result. Prime Minister Mackenzie King cancels the project. The Union Jack remains the national flag, and the Canadian Red Ensign is flown on government buildings.



The Canadian Red Ensign from 1957 to 1965 © His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the Canadian Heraldic Authority

**1964**

The Great Flag Debate. After much debate in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson creates a new parliamentary committee to select a national flag before the 1967 Centennial year. In 1964, after reviewing many proposals, the committee selects the concept that would inspire the graphic design of Canada's current National Flag.

**1996**

To commemorate the first raising of the National Flag, February 15 is officially declared National Flag of Canada Day.

**1957**

The leaves on the shield of Canada's coat of arms are changed from green to red, and the Canadian Red Ensign is modified.

**1965**

Canada adopts its new National Flag, with its iconic and singular graphic design. A royal proclamation is signed by Queen Elizabeth II on January 28, and the new flag is raised on Parliament Hill on February 15.