

### Canadian Thanksgiving in the Antelope Valley

Thanksgiving in October. An event that's rarely understood by the general American population. While shopping for foods and supplies, several people curiously looked into my cart and kindly made conversation by stating *Looks like someones having a gathering this weekend!* I excitedly responded that we were having friends over for Thanksgiving. Confused, they would look at me and think *Thanksgiving? It's a little early for that, no?!* Followed by my kindly explaining that I was Canadian. For us, harvest is sooner and we celebrate Thanksgiving in October seeing the ground quickly freezes over for the winter months. The nod of understanding quickly followed.

Here, in the Antelope Valley of California, the ground freezing over for the winter months is of little to no concern. Quite honestly, for most people living in this area, it's probably never even crossed their minds, and for good reason. The Antelope Valley is located in the Mojave Desert.

This area is a hub for Aerospace Research, Development, and Testing. It's where the US government has facilities to do testing on their aircraft for the USAF, the USN, and NASA. In the same area, we find several civilian companies such as Virgin Galactic and Scaled Composite, to name a few. As of summer 2018, our family is newly posted to Edwards AFB on exchange.

On Thanksgiving weekend, we, along with 4 other Canadian families posted to this area, happily got together to celebrate our Canadian heritage. Seeing it was a sunny 25C (sorry to rub it in), we decided on a BBQ rather than the traditional turkey and fixing. Among the Canadian families was also one American family who'd spent their last three years on exchange at the same unit as us, the Aerospace Evaluation and Testing Establishment (AETE) at CFB Cold Lake, and subsequently got posted to the same base as us, here in the Antelope Valley.

We were able to spend time with friends, meet fellow Canadian who are new to the area, speak French. The boys excitedly talked about airplanes, while the spouses were able to network, find support and talk about upcoming events, options for employment, social groups and kid's activities. The kids organized a treasure hunt in the back yard while the adults got to catch up with each other. The afternoon was festive, filled with delicious BBQ'd foods and we finished off the meal with Canada-coloured red and white M&M chocolates that were provided by our American friends!

The foods and non-alcoholic drinks were sponsored by the generosity of the MFS. Thank you to the MFS not only for their generosity and making this event affordable, but also for their fast email responses, clear and concise communication in the process of getting this event approved. I urge fellow CAF members and their families to get in touch with the MFS to see what programs are available. They are kind, quick to respond and provide wonderful support to CAF members on their OUTCAN posting.

MFSUS Sponsored Event 2018