

EXCERPT

# The Eh List

## Katherine Barber's 11 Favourite Regionalisms Within Canada

As editor-in-chief of the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, Katherine Barber is one of the country's pre-eminent experts on the development of Canadian English. Along the way, she's come across many regionalisms. Here is a list of her favourites.

### 1. BANGBELLY

An evocative Newfoundland word for a rib-sticking dessert made from molasses, flour, raisins and salt pork.

### 2. BUNNY HUG

The Saskatchewan term for a kangaroo jacket, which is in turn a Canadianism for what is also known as a hoodie.

### 3. DAINTRIES

When I first moved to Ottawa from Winnipeg, I caused some consternation by telling an Ontarian that I was going to take my dainties to a shower I had been invited to. Any prairie dweller would know I meant an assortment of cookies and squares, but he thought I was talking about my underwear.

### 4. GOTCH/GONCH

The great linguistic dividing line in Canada is not between French and English, but between these two variants of a word, derived from Ukrainian, for underwear. It seems to fall somewhere in the middle of Lloydminster, with Albertans inserting the n, for reasons that are unclear.

### 5. JAMBUSTER

This is the name we Manitobans use for what Albertans call a bismarck and other Canadians (prosaically, so it seems to us) call a jelly doughnut (though some Haligonians may call it a Burlington bun).

### 6. KUBIE

An affectionate Edmontonian shortening of kubasa, a Ukrainian name for garlic sausage.

### 7. NICKY NICKY NINE DOORS/KNOCK ON GINGER

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary team took it into their heads to ask Canadians the crucial question of what they called the activity of knocking on someone's door and running away before the door is opened. It seems that mischievous young Ontarians call this "nicky nicky nine doors" whereas western pranksters call it "knock on (or down, or a-door) ginger." Each group thinks the other's name is ridiculous.

### 8. SHAG

This is the delightful term used in Thunder Bay to designate a combined shower and stag, which no doubt would cause considerable confusion to a visitor from Britain, for whom "shag" has a quite different meaning.


### 9. SMITHEREEN

What else could a resident of Smithers, British Columbia, be called?

### 10. STORM-STAYED

A term used in Scotland and in areas of Scottish settlement in Canada, such as the Maritimes, southwestern Ontario and parts of the Prairies, to mean "snowed in."

### 11. WRECKHOUSE WINDS

Another evocative term used in southwestern Newfoundland to designate extremely strong winds that, legend has it, can knock a train off the rails. 

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