



**This month's newsletter is about cultural tourism and how to harness the segment for recovery.**

## **RTO9 News**



### **Google My Business 102 Recording**

In this webinar, you'll learn the value of optimizing your Google My Business listing to help your business rank higher on Google Maps and on the first page of Google Search results.

[\*\*WATCH THE WEBINAR\*\*](#)

# Google Search Console

**Tuesday, September 19th, 11AM – 12 PM EST**

Make your site shine in Google Search results. Understand how Google Search sees your pages and learn how to optimize your search appearance on Google to increase organic traffic to your website.

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## Media Coverage

We are thrilled to share some recent media coverage as a result of pitching and ongoing media conversations managed by Beattie Tartan.

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## Market Insights



## 1. Resident Sentiment

Destination Canada's resident sentiment report reveals how safe residents feel about travelling to different places in Canada. Here are the highlights for the week of August 10:

- 77% of Ontarians said they feel safe about travel to communities in their province and 61% said they feel safe about travel to other provinces/territories within Canada. Only 24% said the same about travelling to the United States and internationally.
- Ontario residents' overall level of welcome toward visitors has continued its downward trend with little difference in opinion between residents in urban and rural areas. The level of welcome toward visitors from nearby communities and within their province – though lower than last month – is highest compared to other traveller groups.

Although pre-summer excitement levels were high, mindsets have since shifted back towards feelings of safety and community concern with the rise of the Delta variant. Coverage of international destinations (such as the U.S., U.K. and Australia) grappling with surging COVID-19 is likely an influencing factor.

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## 2. Americans' Perceptions of Travelling to Canada

The Canada-U.S. border has reopened, and many Ontario businesses are excited and ready to welcome American tourists. Destination Canada commissioned new research to understand perceptions of safety and ease of travelling to Canada. The insights collected can help guide marketing messages and identify influence points to alleviate concerns and perceived barriers to travel. Survey data captures the views of 1,005 people across the United States during July 2021.

Here are some of the key takeaways from the research:

- More than half (56%) of respondents believe there are COVID-19 related barriers impacting travel to Canada.
- Border closure, travel ban, and COVID-19 restrictions are the most common reasons mentioned, followed by the requirement of proof of vaccination/vaccination passport to enter Canada.
- Despite barriers, 52% believe Canada is safe for travel.
- COVID-19 and Delta variant, overall lack of global safety for travelling, and low vaccination rates are the most common reasons mentioned.
- 46% believe Canada is easy to travel to.
- Border closure, travel bans, and COVID-19 restrictions are the most common reasons mentioned.

Higher-income households (\$100k+), those living in the Northeast, the under 35 audience, and those with kids have a more positive perception of safety and ease of travel to Canada. They are more likely to perceive most Canadians are vaccinated and the majority of COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The research highlights the continuing need to educate travellers on travel protocols and best practices so that everyone can enjoy a safe and high-quality experience.

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### **3. UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide – Sociocultural Impacts of COVID-19: Indigenous Communities**

As interest in responsible travel grows, the desire for travellers to experience Indigenous cultures and interact with local communities in unique natural settings does too. This traveller trend will require multiple changes as tourism rebounds, including adopting responsible visitor behaviour practices and inclusive management systems and fair benefit-sharing.

The UNWTO, in collaboration with expert voices and Indigenous leaders from the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA), developed a guideline to help the industry respond to recovery issues like these. The UNWTO Inclusive

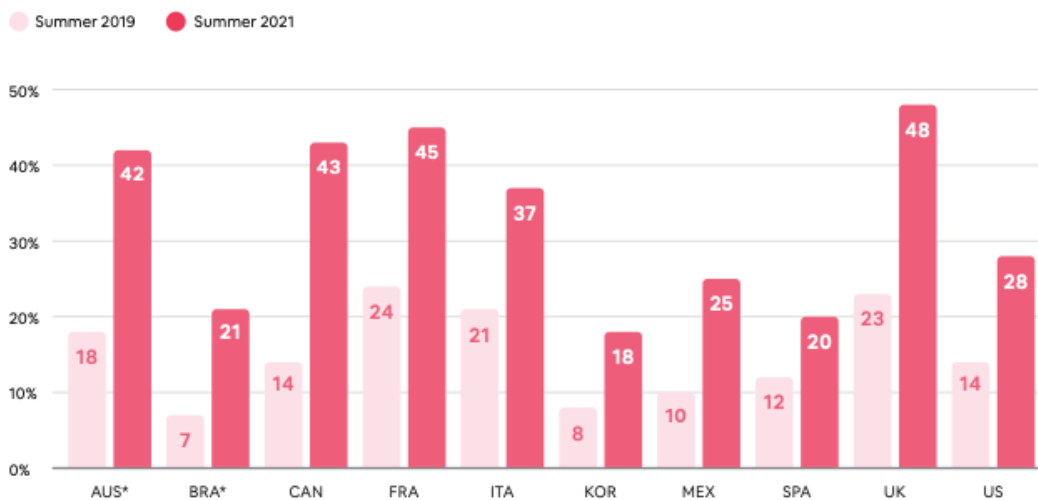
Recovery Guide contains a set of recommendations for consideration, specifically in Indigenous tourism. Here are four insights from the source:

1. Placing Indigenous communities at the centre of recovery plans. Plans need to emerge from intercultural dialogue with communities to ensure free, prior and informed consent.
2. Engaging Indigenous leaders now for the better tourism of tomorrow. Equitable partnerships and intercultural understanding are the basis of strong bonds.
3. Setting participatory data collection systems to support informed decision-making. Data design and gathering should involve Indigenous communities, leveraging all knowledge and skills.

Creating an enabling policy environment for Indigenous-led tourism. Support packages should be focussed on enabling entrepreneurship rather than assisting.

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#### Rural nights gaining share



\* Dates are June 1 through August 31 (which is not summertime in Australia or Brazil).

## 4. Airbnb Report on Travel and Living

According to the Airbnb Report on Travel and Living, sustainable tourism and visits to destinations far from traditional tourist corridors are priorities in travel decision-making. Rural travel has grown on Airbnb every year for the past five years. In 2015, it accounted for less than 10% of nights booked, and in 2021 so

far, it accounts for 22% of nights booked. Families in search of remote destinations and an escape from big city living is the group driving this trend.

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## Workforce Development



### **VIRTUAL SUMMIT: The FoodTreX Innovation Summit**

**October 28, 2021**

**About:** This year's event will be held 100% online. The aim is to connect destinations, entrepreneurs and key stakeholders from around the world to focus on the business of culinary tourism development and promotion. Topics include wine tourism in unexpected places and the role of food and drink in cultural destinations.

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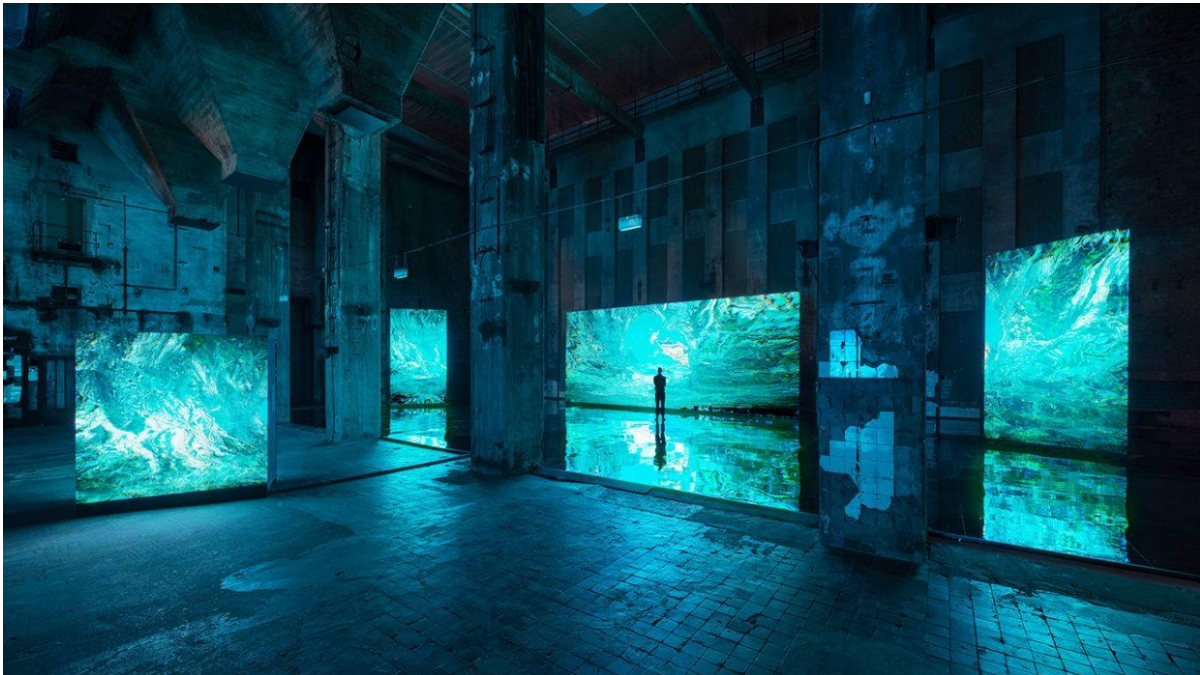
## **COURSE: Transformation Design Principles in Travel Experiences**

**Date: On-demand**

**About:** Transformational travel is any travel experience that empowers people to make meaningful, lasting changes in their life and a positive impact on the world around them. If you're looking to develop a cultural and heritage experience that's built on transformational travel principles then join this course to gain the knowledge, tools, and skills that you need to guide travellers on a journey to deeper meaning.

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## **Media Spotlight**



### **Around the globe: SENSORY ENCOUNTERS**

Berl-Berl, a newly launched exhibition by art foundation Light Art Space, opened at the Berlin club Halle am Berghain in early August. The show immerses

visitors in an ancient wetland landscape as it was 10,000 years ago. It harnesses cutting-edge technology and pairs 3D renderings with a dynamic soundscape for a sensory encounter with the now-extinct swamp ecosystem. The aim is to improve visitor awareness around sustainability and the importance of protecting the natural environment. Featuring new visual languages and new formats, the creators hope to support a shift in exhibitions from exclusive to a broader more inclusive audience.

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## **Around the globe: WIIKWEMKOONG CULTURAL FESTIVAL ON TIKTOK**

Wiikwemkoong First Nation cancelled its annual cultural festival again due to COVID-19 restrictions. To make up for the loss, a community member launched a virtual TikTok all-ages virtual dance competition for Wiikwemkoong band members as an alternative. The platform has become popular with Indigenous content creators who use it to celebrate cultures and share stories, experiences and history passed down by elders and communities. Those participating in the event were asked to wear regalia and record their video with family-friendly background sound or music and then upload clips to TikTok and the event's Facebook page.

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## **Around the globe: INDIGENOUS KOKODA COFFEE INITIATIVE**

Indigenous Kokoda Adventures (IKA), a Papua New Guinea tour operator that supports local and Indigenous, is in the beginning stages of an initiative that is expected to boost demand for local coffee farmers and create positive impacts for village residents. Jesse Leta, the founder of IKA, is acting on his vision to develop a coffee mill that builds on local ways of life and grows jobs and revenue from onsite coffee shop sales and branded packaged coffee sold through one of the local distributors. Leta hopes that this initiative can inspire and provide the impetus for others to know that they too can stand and take their place in the world.



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## Opportunities



### 'Safe Travels' Stamp Application

The specially designed stamp will allow travellers and other Travel & Tourism stakeholders to recognise destination authorities and companies around the world that have implemented health and hygiene protocols that are aligned with WTTC's Global Safe Travels Protocols.

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### Safe Travels Stamp Awards

The Safe Travels Stamp Award is a way for your customers and local residents to recognize your business's outstanding efforts in adopting the World Travel & Tourism Council's health and hygiene global standardized protocols for the hospitality and tourism sector.

There are 13 Safe Travels Stamp Awards to be won: one for each tourism region in Ontario. Voting runs from September 7 - October 11, 2021. Top finalists and winners will be announced on October 26 at the 2021 Ontario Tourism Summit

### **Step 1**

Ensure you are Safe Travels Stamp approved. You can check the list of approved Safe Travel Stamp applicants [here](#).

### **Step 2**

Get the word out! Use your digital Safe Travels Stamp logo on social media and proudly proclaim your Safe Travels Stamp approval. Don't forget to place your Safe Travels Stamp sticker in a prominent location in your business. (If you haven't received your sticker yet, it is in the mail and you will have it soon!) Be sure that your team understands and can explain what it means to be Safe Travels Stamp approved. If you need more information, please check out the [Safe Travels Stamp Training Guideline](#).

### **Step 3**

Get votes! The top vote-getter within each of the thirteen tourism regions of Ontario will win the Safe Travels Stamp Award. Public voting is now open. Use social media and in-person conversations to let your customers and local residents know about the Safe Travels Award campaign. [The voting link can be found here](#).

Every month, we'll be sending you the latest insights, research and thoughtful perspectives on the issues that matter most to tourism businesses and operators in RTO 9.

If there are any topics you want to read about in a future newsletter, please email [imedeiros@region9tourism.com](mailto:imedeiros@region9tourism.com) with your ideas.

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