

This month's newsletter, in timing with National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21), is about **the power of Indigenous Tourism and how it can support Truth and Reconciliation.**

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## The Power of Indigenous Tourism

As Canada continues on its path of Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism partners have a role to play in supporting cultural re-appropriation.

Indigenous tourism provides economic diversification and stability to communities while enabling Indigenous peoples to share Indigenous stories through an Indigenous voice, and providing meaningful opportunities to keep these important cultures alive and enabling them to flourish.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY](#)

## How Can Tourism Partners Support Indigenous Tourism?

According to Destination Canada's 2021 [Tourism's Big Shift: Key Trends Shaping the Future of Canada's Tourism Industry](#), 1 in 3 Canadians and 37% of international visitors are interested in Indigenous experiences. Working directly with Indigenous businesses, associations, and partners to ensure that Indigenous cultures are being shared in an authentic and responsible manner that supports local Indigenous communities is an important part of supporting Indigenous tourism in Canada. In an effort to ease this process, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) has developed The Original brand mark to make it easier to identify ITAC vetted businesses that are Indigenous owned and lead, as opposed to those who might seek to appropriate the culture for profit.

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## Benefits to Working with Indigenous Partners

- Strengthens destination experience offerings
- Provides increased access to cultures, oral histories, and traditional knowledge keepers
- Supports an increased visitor and destination diversity, equity and inclusion
- Contributes to sustainable development goals (SDGs) and regenerative tourism
- Provides increased access to potential employees with cultural knowledge and experiences

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## Become A Member!

Both the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and Indigenous Tourism Ontario welcome members interested in advancing Indigenous tourism. Members have access to marketing and sales partnerships, training and business development programs, and provide valuable networking and learning opportunities. [Click here to find out more about current members and potential partnerships.](#)

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# RTO9 News

## Celebrate, Rejuvenate, Thrive!

We're happy to announce that the RTO 9 Tourism Summit and AGM will be back and in-person this year!

**Date: Friday, September 9th 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

Hear about the exciting strategic changes under way at RTO 9. We're going to weigh in on the tourism scene over the past year as we focus on rebuilding tourism to be even bigger and better than before! So, to get a head start, save your seat below.

[SAVE YOUR SEAT](#)



## Hospitality Connex: FREE Hospitality Readiness Workshops

**Date: June 13th - 16th 2022**

Hospitality Workers Training Centre (HWTC), will offer three free online training workshops for prospective South Eastern Ontario hospitality workers. These workshops will cover the important non-technical skills needed for success in hospitality, including soft skills training, customer service expectations, and workplace safety.

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## Tips For Operating Safe Events in 2022

RTO 9 partnered with Marnie Lapierre of Northern Events and Tourism Consulting to review key points of every event's planning process, and how they have changed how organizers move forward.

[VIEW THE RECORDING](#)

We also monitor and share key market trends to help you respond strategically on our [COVID-19 resource page on our website.](#)

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## Market Insights



## US Sentiment for Travel to Canada

[Destination Canada's US Sentiment Report](#) reveals how US residents feel about travelling to Canada (March 15-23, 2022). Here are the highlights:

- As Canada and the US continue to move beyond COVID, US sentiment towards travel to Canada has mirrored that trend with a relative increase since December 2021, with 56% of respondents indicating confidence in travel to Canada.
- Similarly, 56% of respondents indicated that they consider Canada to be easy and safe to travel to.
- Despite this confidence, likelihood to travel remains low with 62% indicating that they are not likely to take a trip to Canada in the next 9 months (April – December 2022).
- For those who were likely to travel to Canada, 28% are likely to travel to visit Ontario, with only slightly more (21% respectively) likelihood to travel to BC and Quebec.

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## South Eastern Ontario Consumer Insight Research Wave 2

The April 2022 (RTO9) survey of travel consumers in Ontario and Quebec provides insights into changes in travel behaviours for these key RTO9 markets. Here are some of the highlights:

- Travel intentions have evolved slightly in the context of ongoing COVID-related travel restrictions in early 2022. The numbers who say they plan to take their next leisure trip within their own province is stable, but there has been a significant increase in those planning to travel outside their province, and a corresponding decrease in the proportions looking to go abroad for their next trip.
- The profile of Ontario's main destinations remains consistent from 2021—Toronto, Ottawa and the Niagara region remain well ahead in terms of familiarity, but two South Eastern Ontario destinations, Kingston and the 1000 Islands, continue to be better known than important destinations outside the region such as Muskoka and Algonquin Park.
- The proportion of respondents indicating they are likely to consider the region for their next leisure trip has fallen from 42% to 36% in the last year. This may reflect latent demand for out-of-province travel caused by the pandemic.
- The profile of South Eastern Ontario remains consistent – they are much more likely to have children in their household, and somewhat more likely to be middle to high earners, more highly educated and more concentrated in Eastern Ontario.
- Spontaneous associations with the South Eastern Ontario brand often link it with natural beauty and relaxation. Promotions and other initiatives to reduce the cost of a trip appear most likely to incentivize travel to the region, though events and festivals in the region would also be appealing for some.
- The value of word of mouth is apparent when it comes to selecting South Eastern Ontario as a destination. Referrals and recommendations from family and friends are well ahead of other channels when it comes to destination inspiration and trip planning. When it comes to booking travel, accommodation or attractions, Expedia emerges as the top channel.
- Gastronomy continues to be the most popular itinerary type for leisure travel to South Eastern Ontario, with nearly two-thirds interested. However, around half are also interested in wildlife viewing, river cruising and history.

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# Workforce Development

## **ON-Ramp: New Horizons in Cultural Tourism Symposium**

As part of Ontario Culture Days, Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund and Destination Northern Ontario will host the second annual symposium investigating the state of reopening for the arts, culture and tourism sectors on June 8 & 9.

Taking place both in-person in Toronto, and online, the symposium will focus on arts and cultural destinations in the context of regenerative tourism, diversity and inclusion, and offer industry expert advice on rebuilding better.

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## **Travel and Tourism Research Association International Conference**

The 52nd annual Travel and Tourism Research Association's International conference is being hosted in-person in Victoria, BC, and virtually, June 13-16. This year's conference theme is Regenerative Tourism: Building Resilience, focusing on recovering efforts of the global tourism industry and communities to regenerate tourism in the post pandemic era.

Discussions will include topics such as increasing resiliency to crises, sustaining resources, and equitable distribution of tourism benefits.

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## **Skift Tourism Sustainability Summit**

On June 29, join Skift editors and research analysts online as they speak with leaders from across the tourism sector to explore going beyond the PR of sustainability and explore different approaches to reaching sustainability goals, and what we can all learn from their experiences to help create a more equitable industry for the future.

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## **The Original Original Series (ITAC)**

This series, launched in April of this year by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) follows Angela Code of the Sayisi Dene First Nation as she embarks on a journey of Indigenous culture by sharing stories and experiences from coast to coast to coast.

[WATCH THE SERIES](#)

## **Tourism Entrepreneur Podcast**

This weekly podcast is relatively new to the growing list of tourism sector podcasts and is quickly gaining popularity. It tackles the most pressing industry challenges including the on-going impacts of COVID-19, regenerative tourism and diversity equity and inclusion while providing important and relevant insights and business advice for global tourism industry members. Available on Spotify, Listen on > Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Listen Notes

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

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## **Featured Operators/ Destinations**



## Métis Crossing - Smoky Lake, Alberta

Métis Crossing is the premier destination for Alberta Métis cultural interpretation, education, gatherings and Métis business development in Alberta. Located in Smoky Lake, Métis Crossing is owned and lead by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), and incorporates a fully immersive Indigenous tourism experience, including a recently completed cultural gathering centre and a 40-room boutique lodge, wildlife park, and year-round seasonal hands-on programming rooted in the traditional relationship that Métis people have with the land.

With a focus on experiential learning, Métis Crossing shares the story of the Métis people in their own voice to increase awareness and understanding of the culture and people while providing a place for family reconnection and reconciliation, sacredness of place, empathy and acknowledgement.

From cross-country skiing, trap lines, camping, paddling, to traditional workshops, and much more, Métis Crossing is one of the many Indigenous tourism destinations across Canada that are playing a significant role in moving Canada towards truth and reconciliation through Indigenous tourism.

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# Media Spotlight

## Rising Gas Prices Impacts on Spring/Summer Travel Season

As gas prices across Canada continue to rise, reaching nearly \$2.00 per litre in Ontario, the tourism sector faces yet another bump on the road to recovery. While the rise in prices is likely to have impacts on longer-haul drive markets, it may also result in more people sticking closer to home for yet another year and exploring more of their own back yard – once again underscoring the continued importance of the domestic and short-haul international markets.

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## ACTA Calls for Help to Address Travel Delays

The Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA) is calling on the Government of Canada to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens as travellers across Canada are experiencing significant delays at airport security, customs and immigration points. ACTA claims that the additional delays are causing cancellations or deferral of travel and further hampering recovery efforts.

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## Virtuoso Lists Canada in the Top 10 Destinations for US Travellers in 2022

Pent-up travel demand for international destinations for US travellers including Canada, which was off limits to American travellers last summer, is translating into a positive outlook according to bookings.

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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.

[LEARN MORE](#)

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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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