



November's newsletter focuses on the impact of digitalization on the tourism industry and what local tourism partners should utilize in order to take advantage of this trend.

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## The Digital Revolution

According to [UNWTO](#), the world is entering a so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution, marked by rapid technological advancements that are shaping societies in unexpected ways. One of the prominent areas seeing these changes is tourism. Tourism, an early adopter of digital solutions like online flight and hotel bookings, stands out as a testament to this digital shift. As the sector evolves, it is crucial to foster innovation and discover fresh business avenues. Technologies like the 'Internet of Things', location-based services, artificial intelligence, augmented/virtual reality, and blockchain are making travel more efficient, inclusive, and sustainable. These technologies are redefining tourism, offering solutions to challenges like overcrowding and uneven seasonal visitor flows.

The future of tourism is characterized by "smart" innovations. Smart travel means a seamless, digitized journey for travellers, from booking to boarding. Meanwhile, smart destinations leveraging technology to ensure visitors have a rich, inclusive experience while also managing local resources efficiently. However, this digital shift will also reshape the sector's employment landscape. While some roles may become redundant due to automation, new tech-driven

job opportunities are set to emerge. To harness this potential, emphasis on tech-oriented education and support for startups and SMEs in the sector is vital.

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## Impact of Digitalization on Tourism Jobs

According to [Tourism HR Canada](#), the tourism industry's changes are closely tied to the swift rise of digital technology across sectors. The COVID pandemic especially accelerated this digital shift. Facing unique challenges, businesses have been prompted to re-evaluate traditional ways of operating, particularly those involving direct human contact.

Historically, tourism embraced technology for efficiency and improved customer experience. But today, it's a survival imperative, driven by rapidly changing consumer demands and unpredictable business environments. However, this integration has dual implications. On one hand, automation threatens low-skilled jobs; on the other, it paves the way for specialized roles that cater to the industry's evolving needs. As highlighted by Tourism HR Canada, emerging demands encompass skills in business innovation, digital marketing, financial management, community engagement, and sustainability.

In essence, while digitalization may redefine roles within the tourism sector, it also unveils new opportunities. The interplay of technology and human skills will shape the industry's resilient and adaptive future.

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## Market Insights



### **Tourism SkillsNet Ontario: Workforce Issues, Opportunities & Impact**

[TIAO](#) and [OTEC](#)'s recent inaugural "Tourism SkillsNet Ontario: Workforce Issues, Opportunities & Impact" report underscores that there has been a positive shift in the perception of the Ontario tourism industry over the past three years. The industry plays a significant role in the province's economy, contributing to social cohesion, employment, and cultural preservation.

#### **Here are the key highlights:**

- Tourism accounts for 9.3% of the workforce and offers valuable work experience to half of Canadians. By 2025, tourism revenues in Ontario

are expected to reach over \$87 billion, a 16% growth from pre-pandemic levels.

- The sector is projected to provide over 726,000 jobs by 2025.
- The industry grapples with issues such as inflation, debt, interest rates, and a prolonged labor crisis. There are pronounced shortages in the labor market, with smaller businesses facing the brunt of the impact. Despite recruitment strategies, many operators face challenges due to worker shortages, inflation, and retention issues.
- There's a growing interest in diversifying the workforce, but support is needed for successful integration.
- The report stresses the need for industry-specific workforce programs, collaboration with government entities, and immigration reform tailored to the industry's needs.

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

## TOURISM LABOUR FORCE

The number of individuals  
employed or unemployed  
(actively seeking work for < 1 year)

SEPTEMBER 2023

**2,147,700**

AUGUST 2023

**2,302,600**

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SEPTEMBER 2019

**2,202,100**

## TOURISM EMPLOYMENT

The number of  
individuals in jobs

SEPTEMBER 2023

**2,045,300**

AUGUST 2023

**2,178,500**

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SEPTEMBER 2019

**2,088,400**

## Canadian Tourism Labour Market Snapshot: September 2023

[Tourism HR Canada's](#) latest Canadian Tourism Labour Market Snapshot for September 2023 indicates a contraction in the tourism sector, with both labour force and employment falling by over 5% following the end of the summer



season. While the sector showed improvements compared to the previous year, it remains below its pre-pandemic baseline of September 2019.

**Key takeaways include:**

- In September, transportation was the only sector to see a monthly employment growth, albeit with a slight decrease in its labour force from August. Unemployment rose in accommodations and recreation sectors but fell in food, beverage services, and transportation. Compared to September 2022, most sectors improved, except travel services.
- In August 2023, the tourism sector lost 155,000 people from its labour force, with major losses in recreation and entertainment, food and beverage services, travel services, and accommodations, largely influenced by the end of summer and ongoing industry conditions. Comparatively, by September 2023, the sector showed improvement from the previous year, with travel services continuing to decline, but other industries witnessing growth.
- While the total hours worked within the tourism sector in September 2023 shadows the patterns of 2019, it remains higher than 2022. Notably, transportation outperformed all other industries in this metric, exceeding its September 2019 hours by almost 15%.
- Unemployment within the tourism sector for September 2023 stood at 4.8%, which is marginally below the national average of 5.2%. This is an improvement from both August 2023 and September 2019, but slightly higher than September 2022.
- The substantial decline in the travel services sector remains a matter of concern. This decline poses questions on whether this is a temporary post-pandemic effect or indicative of a permanent shift due to increased online consumer self-management.
- The data underscores the persistent volatility within industry groups, signaling continued instability in the tourism sector, despite year-on-year improvements.

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## **August 2023 Overnight Arrivals to Canada**

According to [Destination Canada's](#) August 2023 Overnight Arrivals Infographic, in August 2023, Canada experienced a 34% rise in overnight arrivals compared to the same month in the previous year, amounting to 2.4 million visitors for the month. This increase brought August arrivals to 73% of the numbers observed before the pandemic. The United States led the recovery in visitation for August,

reaching 75% of the 2019 figures with 1.7 million visitors, marking a significant 32% growth compared to the previous year.

[VIEW THE FULL INFOGRAPHIC](#)

## Opportunities



### TIAC's Annual Tourism Congress

The [Tourism Industry Association of Canada \(TIAC\)](#) is gearing up for its Annual Tourism Congress, scheduled to be held in Ottawa on November 21-22, 2023, with registrations now open for the event. An integral highlight of the congress is the Canadian Tourism Awards, which will be celebrated on November 22. This annual congregation orchestrated by TIAC is a significant platform that invites industry luminaries and peers from across Canada. Attendees can anticipate an innovative program enriched with motivational speakers, expert panel discussions, and a balanced mix of networking sessions.

**Date:** November 21-22, 2023

**Location:** The Westin Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr, Ottawa, ON K1N 9H4

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## 2024 International Indigenous Tourism Conference

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada is inviting everyone to Ottawa, Ontario, on the unceded Algonquin Anishinaabeg Territory from February 26 to 28, 2024, for a large Indigenous Tourism Conference. The conference aims to provide a space for people to share knowledge, network, and work together to help grow the Indigenous tourism sector.

**Date:** February 26-28, 2023

**Location:** 55 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1N, Ottawa, ON K1N 9J2, Canada

[REGISTER](#)





Are you a local [grower/producer](#) and have products that you package and produce? Would you like to reach a wider audience? The [Great Lakes Cruise Association](#) is interested in supplying your products to cruise ships that tour through South Eastern Ontario.

**Please contact:**

Stephen Burnett, Executive Director, The Great Lakes Cruise Association

sburnett934@gmail.com Cell: 613 331 4027

Deadline: Friday, November 24, 2023

## Workforce Development



## An Opportunity to Share Your Labour Challenges

[Tourism HR Canada](#), in collaboration with the [Conference Board of Canada](#), is initiating a series of in-person focus groups as a part of their effort to understand the labour challenges in the tourism sector. Their goal is to pinpoint the current employment concerns and anticipate potential problems in the coming years. The focus group sessions are scheduled to be held in various cities from October 31 to November 23. For those unable to attend in person, online sessions will be available later in November and early December. Alongside these discussions, there's an online survey specifically targeting business owners and operators. The results from this survey will be presented to different stakeholders, encompassing various government levels, to address and resolve the issues identified. Participants can opt to receive a summary of the survey's results.

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## Making Your Business Accessible

November 8th 12PM EDT

### Making Your Business Accessible

In the tourism industry, attractions play a crucial role in providing enjoyable experiences to visitors. These businesses often encompass cultural, heritage, or natural aspects. A crucial aspect of making sure these experiences are enjoyable for all is ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Enhancing accessibility not only opens doors to a wider range of customers but also enriches the overall service offering of such businesses.

The upcoming [Tourism Industry Association of Ontario](#) (TIAO) webinar, "Making Your Business Accessible," seeks to address this vital issue. Attendees can expect an in-depth look into the importance of accessibility in the tourism sector, discussions on the potential positive impacts of enhancing accessibility, and practical tips and strategies from a diverse panel of experts on how businesses can ensure their attractions are welcoming to all. Join this free webinar event and explore ways to make your business more inclusive.

**Date:** Wed, 8 November 2023, 12:00pm - 1:00pm EDT

**Location:** Online

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## Featured Operator



## **Indigenous Tourism Ontario Partners with Sport Tourism Canada to Boost Indigenous Sport Tourism in Ontario**

[Indigenous Tourism Ontario](#) (ITO) has entered into an official partnership with [Sport Tourism Canada](#) (STC) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This agreement recognizes STC as a national supporting partner for ITO's mission to strategize Indigenous sport tourism at the provincial level in Ontario. The formalization of this collaboration occurred during the 2023 Ontario Tourism Summit, which was situated on The Traditional Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Earlier in August 2023, ITO had signed a similar MOU with Golf Ontario related to the Indigenous Ontario Golf Championship, marking their second significant step in the current fiscal year to bridge Indigenous communities with the sport tourism sector. These collaborations aim to foster a robust framework for genuine partnerships, mutual support, and resource exchange, all of which will augment the Indigenous sport tourism strategy in Ontario.

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## **Media Spotlight**





## **Expedia Group Contributes to the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund**

Destination Canada and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) have secured a \$100,000 USD investment from Expedia Group to enhance Indigenous tourism in Canada. This investment aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #92, urging the corporate sector to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The fund will channel into the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (ITDF), launched on September 7th, targeting infrastructure, product development, workforce, and marketing.

Keith Henry, ITAC's CEO, expressed gratitude for the commitment of Destination Canada and Expedia Group, emphasizing the potential for reconciliation. Aditi Mohapatra of Expedia Group echoed this sentiment, highlighting Expedia's dedication to promoting underrepresented communities in the travel sector. ITAC's goals include establishing Canada as a global leader in Indigenous tourism, accumulating \$2.6 billion over seven years, and fostering the growth of Indigenous tourism to \$6 billion by 2030. They also aim to create 800 new Indigenous tourism businesses and produce 21,000 additional jobs.

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## Successful Wrap-Up of Ontario Tourism Summit 2023

The 2023 Ontario Tourism Summit (OTS23) was held on October 24 and 25 at the Hilton Toronto Airport Hotel in Mississauga. Organized by the [Tourism Industry Association of Ontario](#) and presented by [Destination Ontario](#), the event was a resounding success, drawing over 550 attendees. The summit revolved around the theme of "Knowledge, Learning, and Confidence," emphasizing the importance of industry leaders coming together to share insights and work towards building a sustainable future for tourism in Ontario.

It provided attendees with an enriching program, including insightful keynotes, informative sessions, and ample networking opportunities. Participants from various sectors like accommodation, food service, recreation, transportation, and travel trade left the summit reinvigorated with new knowledge and professional contacts.

A big congratulations to the following South Eastern Ontario destinations on their awards and achievements.

### Tourism Kingston

- Winner - Marketing Campaign over 50K - "Closer" Campaign
- Finalist - Culinary Tourism Leadership Award - Kingston Cooks Up Comfort
- Finalist - Culinary Tourism Event of the Year - Kingstonlicious "Caribbean meets Asian Soul Food"

## Visit The County

- Finalist - Culinary Tourism Event of the Year - Countylicious
- Finalist - Tourism Event of the Year Award - Countylicious

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**Sea to Sky communities will benefit from over \$1.9M to revitalize public spaces and enhance tourism experiences**



## Sea to Sky Communities Receive Over \$1.9 million

The Government of Canada is investing over \$1.9 million in Sea to Sky communities in British Columbia to upgrade community spaces and enhance tourism, thereby stimulating local economies. Public spaces that are safe and inclusive, along with attractive tourism sites, play a crucial role in community vibrancy, promoting local businesses and economic growth. Patrick Weiler, the Member of Parliament for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, announced this funding for 11 projects, on behalf of the Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan. The funding includes nearly \$1.4 million for four projects from the Canada Community Revitalization Fund and over \$500,000 for seven projects from the Tourism Relief Fund. One such project is the establishment of an off-grid yoga retreat in Squamish by KIND Yoga Incorporated, which received \$25,526. The investment targets communities like Whistler, Squamish, Brackendale, Pemberton, and Sloquet Hot Springs, aiming to improve wellness, create jobs, and boost the economy.

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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 Lesley McDougall [lmcdougall@region9tourism.ca](mailto:lmcdougall@region9tourism.ca) with your ideas.

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