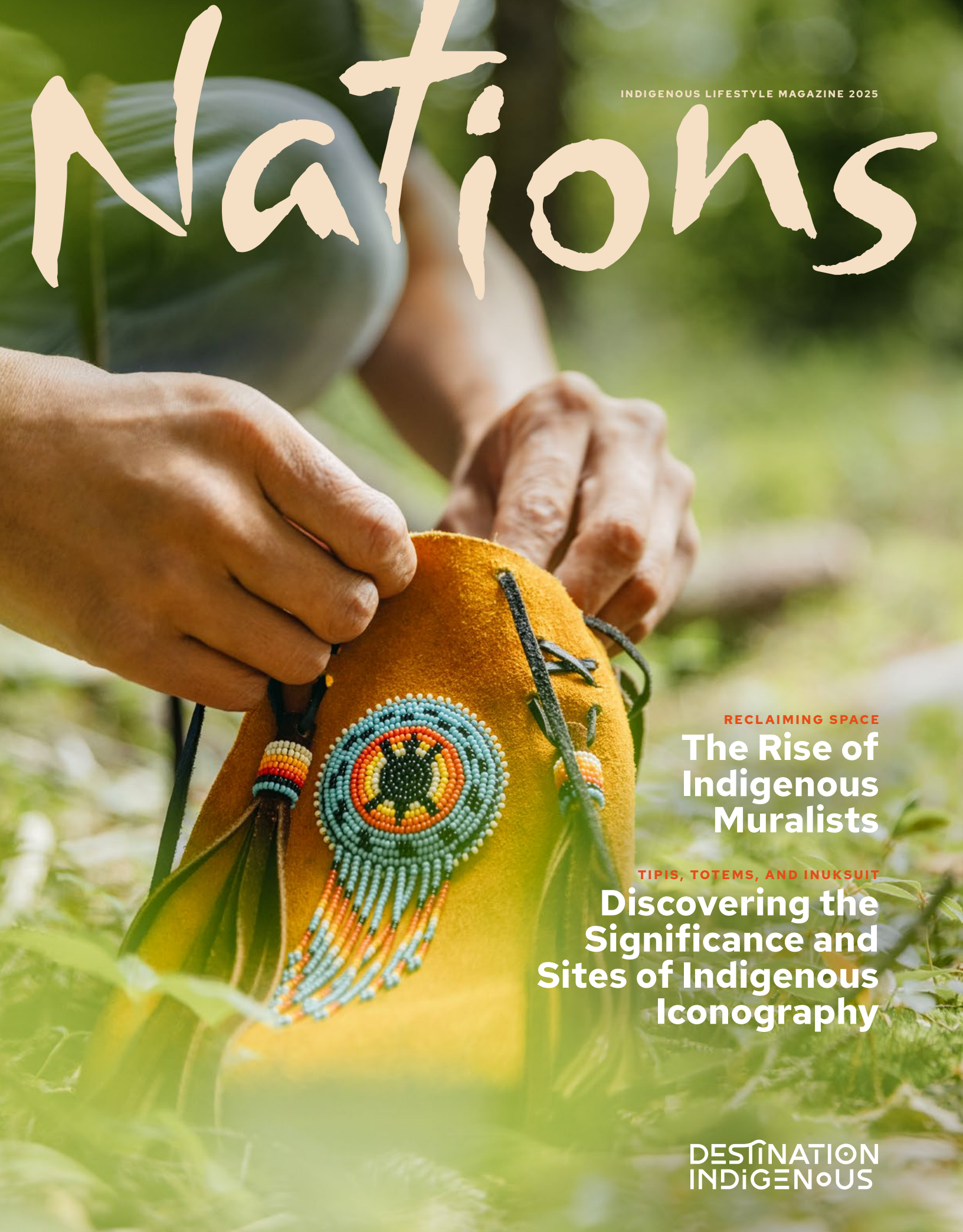


Nations

INDIGENOUS LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE 2025



RECLAIMING SPACE

**The Rise of
Indigenous
Muralists**

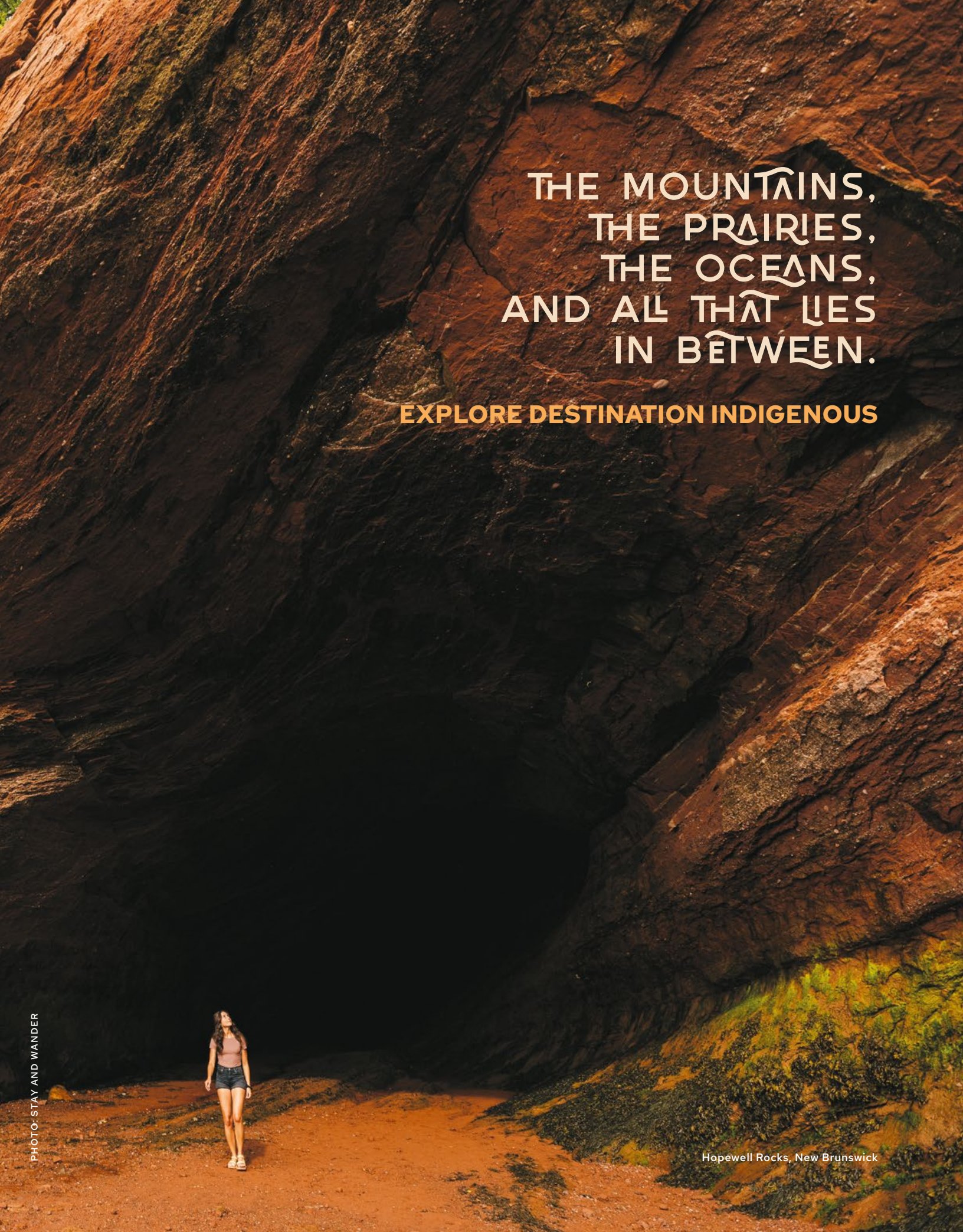
TIPIS, TOTEMS, AND INUKSUIT

**Discovering the
Significance and
Sites of Indigenous
Iconography**

DESTINATION
INDIGENOUS



THE ORIGINAL ORIGINAL

A woman in a purple top and denim shorts stands on a dirt path at the base of a massive, layered rock overhang. The rock face is dark and textured, with some green moss or lichen visible on the right side. The scene is illuminated by warm, golden light, likely from the setting or rising sun.

THE MOUNTAINS,
THE PRAIRIES,
THE OCEANS,
AND ALL THAT LIES
IN BETWEEN.

EXPLORE DESTINATION INDIGENOUS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

10 - 23

HONOUR THE PAST

Tipis, Totems, and Inuksuit: Discovering the Significance and Sites of Indigenous Iconography	12
Fiddles, Florals, and Fur: A Celebration of Métis Culture and Experiences	20

24 - 39

CELEBRATE THE PRESENT

Pow Wow 101: A Comprehensive Guide to Cultural Respect and Celebration	26
Reclaiming Space: The Rise of Indigenous Muralists	32
A Journey of Discovery—Who I am and Where I am Meant to be	36



40 - 79

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHTS

British Columbia	42
The Prairies	48
Ontario	54
Quebec	60
The Atlantic	68
The North	74

80 - 97

EMPOWER THE FUTURE

From Grassroots to Global: The Expanding Reach of the International Indigenous Tourism Conference	82
Stewards of the Land: The Intersection of Indigenous Tourism and Sustainability	86
Rising from the Ashes: Indigenous Tourism in Jasper Post-Wildfire	92



Métis Crossing, Alberta

Ekosi, miigwech, tiawenhk, merci and thank you!

As President and CEO of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and on behalf of our Board of Directors, I am pleased to share our sixth edition of Nations Magazine.

Since 2014, ITAC has been a non-profit dedicated to growing and developing Indigenous tourism across Canada. By connecting associations, organisations, government bodies, and industry leaders nationwide, ITAC helps to meet the rising demand for authentic Indigenous experiences in Canada and beyond. ITAC's national and international reputation is built upon its successes and by the strength of its membership and partnerships, including the federal, provincial, and territorial levels and non-Indigenous partners. Through its national Indigenous voice, ITAC plays a crucial role in supporting the growth of Indigenous-owned tourism businesses in Canada, empowering them to share their territories, cultures, and stories with travellers.

ITAC is proud to see Indigenous tourism experiences across our beautiful country featured in this edition of Nations Magazine. Indigenous tourism in Canada continues to be on the rise, presenting an incredible opportunity for economic reconciliation and cultural preservation. Indigenous tourism is reconciliation in action. Indigenous tourism includes attractions, food and beverage, accommodations, and outdoor adventure experiences, to name just a few, that meet ITAC's Indigenous tourism criteria under The Original Original Mark of Excellence, demonstrating that a business offers an authentic, high-quality experience.

Moreover, Indigenous tourism provides the opportunity to make destinations more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by providing important economic opportunities, jobs, and pride of place. With growing support from travellers, the sector has become a significant economic force. By continuing to promote and invest in these initiatives, ITAC can ensure that Indigenous tourism thrives, making Canada the world leader in tourism by 2030.

ITAC remains committed to supporting its more than 1,900 business members while focusing on a growing Indigenous tourism industry nationwide. We encourage you to stay curious, and on behalf of ITAC, I extend my gratitude as you turn the pages of our annual Indigenous Lifestyle magazine, a celebration of Indigenous tourism experiences in Canada.



Keith Henry

President & CEO
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada



Welcome to the Home of The Original Original

BY ITAC'S MARKETING TEAM

If you look up the word 'Indigenous', you'll find it has many synonyms, including 'original.'

Many lay claim to being the 'original.' When someone makes that claim—to have been the first at something—we feel like we have something in common. We say to ourselves: this is a person who cares about roots. Someone who wants to know where things genuinely begin.

We value those things too.

In fact, with over 14,000 years of knowledge and 1,900 unique Indigenous experiences across Canada, we offer the most authentic and diverse experiences.

And we know, with a knowing smile, we've been at it longer than anyone else. We Indigenous People, on this our home and native land.

So when we decided to define who we are and what we represent, we dug deeply into our own story, what defines us and makes our experiences truly special.

Or, more succinctly:
The Original Original.

To find out more visit
OriginalOriginal.ca





A key component of The Original Original is a new brand mark that will help travellers better identify and book experiences from Indigenous owned tourism businesses across Canada.

The Original Original mark identifies that businesses have been vetted by ITAC including four key criteria: the business is at least 51 per cent Indigenous owned, it's a business that embraces the values of Indigenous tourism, it offers a market of expert ready experience, and is an ITAC member.

The Original Original logo artwork aims to explore the ethos of this very concept by placing two letter Os within each other, representing the world, as well as the cycle of life. At the centre of these circles is a fire symbol that possesses a single flame, but is divided into three parts. This distinction represents each of the three groups of Indigenous Peoples in Canada; First Nation, Métis and Inuit.

Through this branded seal, we aim to further develop wide-spread recognition of authentic Indigenous experiences across the country.

PHOTO: BEN GLASSCO

LEARN MORE



INDIGENOUS

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We thank our precious partners





HONOUR THE PAST

PHOTO: LOGAN SWAYZE

Squamish Lil'wat Culture Centre,
British Columbia



Tipis, Totems, and Inuksuit:

Discovering the Significance and Sites of Indigenous Iconography

BY DEBBIE OLSEN

Seven beautiful totem poles stand outside Haa Shagóon Hídi, the Carcross Tagish First Nation Cultural Centre in Carcross, Yukon. The first time I saw them, I thought they were remarkable works of art created by master carvers, but in reality, they are so much more. It wasn't until I went on a guided tour with Gary Sidney Johnson, a young Tagish and Inland Tlingit man from the Carcross area, that I began to understand the cultural significance of the totems and what they mean to the Carcross Tagish First Nation.

Johnson explained that totem poles are more than just remarkable works of art. The totem poles proudly display the history of the nation and its culture. "There are many kinds of totem poles," he said. "We have story poles, welcoming poles, decorative poles, house poles and memorial poles. The seven totem poles here include a totem pole for each of the six clans in the First Nation as well as a story pole."

Johnson talked about the totem poles individually explaining the symbolism behind each one and how it tied into the history and culture of his people. "The raven is on top of this totem pole because it is part of our creation story," he explained. "Raven built North America. We find our own characteristics in stories about raven."

I was mesmerized and amazed by all the symbolism and culture that was on display in the totem poles outside the cultural centre. I knew that I would never again look at a totem pole and see it only as a work of art.

Totem poles are just one of the iconic Indigenous structures that have come to symbolize the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. The tipi and inuksuk are other icons of Indigenous culture that are also deeply symbolic. Learning more about the symbolism and cultural significance of these Indigenous icons is a fascinating way to delve deeper into Indigenous culture.



Carcross Tagish First Nation Cultural Centre, Yukon

TOTEMS

There is a long history of totem pole making in the Pacific Northwest of what is now Canada. The first European explorers were astonished by the remarkable carving that Indigenous Peoples did using stones, shells, animal bones and teeth. The introduction of metal tools through European trade enabled carvers to work faster and create more intricate designs. Today totem poles are one of the most recognizable cultural symbols of the Pacific Northwest. There are many different totem pole styles and designs and this reflects the diversity of the First Nations groups that produce them. Here are a few suggestions for places where you can view totem poles and possibly take a tour with an Indigenous guide who can better explain what you see.

🌟 **Haida House at Tlaal**, British Columbia: Haida House at Tlaal makes a great base for exploring the totem poles and other wonders of Haida Gwaii. Haida House Lodge has 10 rooms and there are also 12 cabins. There's a dining room, a bar and patio, a guest den, and complimentary WiFi. All-inclusive packages that include food and drinks as well as tours and entrance fees are also available. One of the best totem sites is SGang Gwaay UNESCO World Heritage Site, a 19th-century Haida village where the ruins of houses and memorial or mortuary poles illustrate the power and artistry of Haida society.

🌟 **I-Hos Gallery**, British Columbia: Art is an expression of culture. This gallery is owned by the K'ómoks Band and located on the site of the original K'ómoks Village between Courtney and Comox on Vancouver Island. The shop contains a collection of traditional and contemporary Northwest Coast artwork designed and made by Indigenous artists—including totem poles and other Indigenous carvings. At this gallery, you'll find the legends and stories behind the designs and details about the artists who created them. Be sure to take note of the exterior design of the shop and the elaborate entrance pole.



Talaysay Tours,
British Columbia

✿ **Talaysay Tours**, British Columbia: One of the most popular tours offered by this company is called Talking Totems. It explores the totem poles in Vancouver's Stanley Park digging deeper into the art, culture and protocols of the Coast Salish People and the neighbouring Northwest Coast Peoples. For more than 20 years, Talaysay Tours has been providing cultural experiences in the Vancouver, Whistler and the Sunshine Coast areas of British Columbia. The business is owned and operated by Candace and Larry Campo, Shíshálh (Sechelt) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) Nation members.

✿ **Haida Heritage Centre**, British Columbia: Located on Haida Gwaii, the Haida Heritage Centre celebrates the living culture of the Haida People. There is a totem pole tour that explains the symbolism and artistry of the six monumental poles that face the ocean outside the centre. It provides an in-depth explanation of each pole and the crests and clans that are represented. You'll also learn about Haida culture and the efforts that have been made to raise new poles and repatriate historical poles. In addition to the six outdoor poles, there are seven poles in the museum inside the centre along with other fascinating artefacts.

✿ **Best Western Tin Wis Resort**, British Columbia: This resort on Vancouver Island near Tofino is owned and operated by the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in their traditional territory. You'll find a beautiful totem pole on the property called Tiičswina, We Survived! that was carved by Joe Martin, a Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation master carver. It is a pole in honour of residential school survivors and it sits at the start of the 7-km-long Multi-Use Path (MUP) Art Walk. Another remarkable totem pole on the MUP in Anchor Park depicts a Thunderbird perched above a humpback whale. Both elements represent hereditary chiefs or Ha'wiih. That totem pole was carved and donated by Joe David, another Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation master carver.

✿ **Carcross Tagish First Nation Cultural Centre**, Yukon: Haa Shagóon Hídi sits in the heart of the village of Carcross, Yukon. There are seven totem poles outside the cultural centre—one for each of the clans in the First Nation and a story pole. At the cultural centre, you can arrange a totem pole tour to explain the significance and symbolism of the totem poles and you can also arrange to visit the workshop where carving is done. You'll find a hand carved canoe and other artefacts inside the centre. More totem poles are nearby in the main shopping area of the community.



TIPIS

Tipis were commonly used by Indigenous Peoples of the Plains and Great Lakes regions. They provide shelter, warmth, and a place where gatherings, rituals and ceremonies take place. Families and communities are connected by the tipi and it is deeply symbolic. The tipi's entrance always faces East toward the rising sun. The poles stretch to the sky as a connection with the creator and are firmly planted in the ground as a connection to Mother Earth. Each pole has a special meaning that may vary between Nations and groups. Tipi artwork such as decorative paintings are also symbolic. Today, the tipi is one of the most recognizable symbols of Indigenous culture in North America. Here are some places where you can see a tipi, have an experience in a tipi or possibly even stay overnight in one.

- ✦ **Wanuskewin Heritage Park**, Saskatchewan: Just outside Saskatoon, Wanuskewin Heritage Park has been a gathering place for Northern Plains Indigenous Peoples for more than 6,400 years. It's an excellent place to learn about the importance of the tipi in First Nations culture. The Tipi Teachings Program is a hands-on experience for students and teachers. There's also a tipi sleepover program that allows guests to stay in one of the 18 tipis in the onsite tipi village and enjoy interpretive programming.
- ✦ **Cree North Adventures**, Saskatchewan: Located on Flying Dust First Nation Reserve, Cree North Adventures offers the chance to connect with authentic Cree culture and with nature through programming and with a unique glamping experience. Stay overnight in an 18-foot traditional Cree tipi with an insulated liner, -30 sleeping bags, a wood stove, camping cots, a rubber floor, power and Wi-Fi. Guests can learn to make pemmican, pick berries and enjoy a guided snowshoe or nature walk.
- ✦ **Dakota Dunes Resort**, Saskatchewan: This 155-room resort about 20-minutes south of Saskatoon honours the Indigenous heritage of the Whitecap Dakota People in its design. Round fireplaces in the lobby, angular window trims and exterior wood panels all echo the traditional tipi. There is also an authentic tipi on the grounds where cultural experiences are shared—including stargazing, storytelling, Indigenous games, Powwow dancing and bannock and bonfire experiences.



- ✦ **Wildhorse Ranch**, Alberta: This ranch west of Red Deer is all about connecting with yourself and with nature through activities like horseback riding, wellness experiences, snowshoeing and Indigenous learning experiences. There are nine fully equipped hunter tipis with canvas floors as well as cabins for overnight stays. There's a cookhouse, firepits, and a gathering area and guests can choose to prepare their own meals or have meals included. The new Spiritland Nordic Spa has a wood-fired sauna, a wood-fired hot tub, a cold plunge tub and a gathering area.
- ✦ **Aurora Borealis Indigenous Village**, Alberta: A two-hour drive northwest of Fort McMurray and a 20-minute ATV ride or a 10-minute snowmobile ride brings you to this wonderful tipi village. It's one of the only places in Canada where you can enjoy an all-inclusive overnight tipi stay focused on aurora watching. The tipis are winterized with wooden floors, wood-burning fireplaces, beds and bedding and all meals are included. Other activities include storytelling, smudging, dry meat making, bannock making, berry picking, wildlife watching, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, wilderness survival, ice fishing and dogsledding.

INUKSUIT

The inuksuk is one of the iconic symbols of Indigenous Peoples who make their home in the far north of Canada. The word "inuksuk" comes from the Inuktitut language and it means "in the likeness of a human." The plural of inuksuk is inuksuit. For generations, Inuit People have created these stone markers for a variety of purposes. Inuksuit were used for navigation—to help guide people across the tundra. They were also used as markers—to mark food caches, good hunting or fishing spots, and sacred places. An Inuksuk might also be used to communicate with others and might even warn of danger. The inuksuk has become an iconic symbol of Arctic Canada and the peoples who live there. Here are some places and tour companies that can help you see them.



Nunatsiavut, Labrador

🌟 **Inuit Adventures**, Quebec: This tour company leads guided tours to explore the ways of the Inuit in Nunavik, a vast territory stretching above the 55th parallel in the northern third of the province of Quebec. This region is almost as big as France and yet there are only about 13,000 people that live there—spread out in 14 villages hundreds of kilometres apart. The Inuit have long built inuksuit and you will find them scattered across Nunavik as you tour this region—including a large one in the village of Kuujuaq where tours typically begin.

🌟 **Croisières Essipit**, Quebec: Essipit is the home of the Innue Essipit First Nation and it is located in the Côte-Nord region of Quebec. While the Innu People did not traditionally make inuksuit, you will find them there in abundance—built by visitors to the area on the rocks at the edge of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. It makes a fun photo op. Book whale watching tours, camping or accommodations in Essipit area with Croisières Essipit.

🌟 **Nunatsiavut**, Newfoundland and Labrador: The Inuit of Labrador chose a flag with a picture of an inuksuk coloured in white, blue, and green, to represent the Inuit of Labrador and their land claims settlement area called Nunatsiavut. Nunatsiavut Tourism can help you find inuksiat in the region—including the commemorative inuksuk at Torngat Mountains National Park that celebrates and honours the connection between Inuit of Nunavik and Nunatsiavut. You can get there on a boat tour of Saglek Fjord. 🌟

DEBBIE OLSEN IS AN AWARD-WINNING MÉTIS WRITER AND A NATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR. FOLLOW HER ADVENTURES AT WANDERWOMAN.CA.



Jasper Tour Company,
Alberta

Fiddles, Florals, and Fur:

A Celebration of Métis Culture and Experiences

BY TRAVIS KLEMP

Born from the unions of European fur traders and First Nations women in the 18th century, the Métis people are so much more than ancestry and bloodlines. However, it was the descendants of these marriages, the Métis, that would form a distinct culture, collective consciousness, and strong Nationhood in the Northwest. Métis communities developed along fur trade routes that made the Métis Nation Homeland. Today, the Homeland includes Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, parts of

British Columbia and Ontario, the Northwest Territories, and the northern United States.

From art, music, and teachings to food, trapping, and farming, the Métis people have a distinct and beautiful culture that has spanned centuries. Today, across the country, there are many specific and immersive experiences each one exploring a specific aspect, or aspects, of Métis culture—one that is alive and thriving.

In Northern Manitoba, for example, the **Wapusk Adventures company** led by Dave Daley offers a dog sledding experience like no other. Started in 1997 when Dave Daley built a log home as well as the attached Wapusk General Store. Dave's love of dogs put him on the path to becoming a dog musher and he soon started the tour company Wapusk Adventures in 2001. Shortly after, in 2004, Daley started the first Hudson's Bay Quest dog sled race. Visitors can take part in dog sledding tours and culture talks as well as unforgettable Northern Lights viewings.

Connection and an understanding of the land we are grateful to share is an essential part of Métis culture. Michela Carriere, an herbalist, beadwork artist, adventure guide and author, offers these teachings through **Aski Holistic Adventures** in Saskatchewan. Carriere's guided tours take visitors deep into the Canadian wilderness to connect with the natural world, and her traditional teachings delve into the practices of Indigenous herbalists to heal your spirit. Visitors are accompanied on adventures that explore the wonders of the natural world and create a meaningful connection to the area, its history, and people.

From one province to the next, Métis culture is distinct and unique in each area of the country. **Talking Rock Tours** in Alberta take visitors on educational small group tours of the geological wonders of Alberta, including both natural and cultural history storytelling components. Along with guided hikes through beautiful natural areas, participants also hear mini-talks (5 to 10 minutes) during each journey to provide even more educational background to your experience. Talking Rock offers a blend of earth sciences and Indigenous knowledge to provide awareness of the region as a whole and those who have been here for millennia. Guides have a particular focus on environmental stewardship, giving back to the land and education.



In addition to connecting with the natural world, Métis people's unique artistic identity is a vital component to who we are as a people. Métis beadwork developed patterns that combined First Nations beadwork with the floral embroidered patterns introduced by French-Canadian nuns working in the Roman Catholic mission schools. The techniques and patterns of floral silk embroidery traditions from France were incorporated into traditional Indigenous porcupine quill work designs, which progressively began to reflect their own distinctive style.

Borealis Beading is stewarded by Melanie Gamache, a Manitoba Francophone Métis beadwork artisan. Borealis offers interactive hands-on creative experiences where visitors are graciously provided with stories about the cultural and historical significance of beadwork to the Métis people, also known as The Flower Beadwork People. Cultural teachings are gifted in a style reflective of the traditional beading circle format where friends and family would meet to share stories and talk about their day while passing on the traditional art of beadwork.



Talking Rock Tours, Alberta



Métis Crossing, Alberta

Offering a little taste of Métis culture as a whole is **Métis Crossing** in Alberta. Built on the original river lots of Métis settlers to this region in the late 1800s, Métis Crossing is home to Alberta's first Métis cultural interpretive centre. Located in Smoky Lake it's only an hour and a half drive northeast of Edmonton. The massive 512-acre area offers and engages visitors with experiences that promote an appreciation of Métis people's, customs, and celebrations. From unique culinary experiences, educational workshops, traditional accommodations, and wildlife tours, visitors can book multi-night stays and take part in the all-inclusive packages for summer and winter. Gaze up at the Northern Lights from the comfort of your Dome lodge and share a hot traditional breakfast in the morning.

Bordering the Rocky Mountains, the **Jasper Tour Company**, led by Joe Urie, takes visitors into the wilderness to learn about the land watched protected by the mountainous giants. Urie guides with the teaching of Wahkohtowin, a Cree and Michif word that translates to "kinship". There is connection to all things around us, including each other

and those experiencing Urie's beautiful teachings and immense knowledge of the land. The area itself holds incredible cultural and historical significance with the Rocky Mountains being traversed by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. They created routes used to trade between the different communities living on either side of the divide. The advent of the Fur Trade saw the birth of the Métis people who continued to do so, with many of them acting as guides to the European traders. The Jasper Tour Company will take you out in search of experiences generally only found on the periphery of most of our daily lives. Memorable experiences that help us reconnect to the natural world.

Métis people have a long and storied history that is distinct and unique across the whole country. Each area of the Métis homeland encompasses a way of being special to them a born from their historical experiences. Now, there are multiple opportunities for visitors to experience a taste of that rich culture. Visit today! 🍁

CELEBRATE THE PRESENT



PHOTO: ENTRE DESTINATIONS

Manito Ahbee Festival, Manitoba



Spirit of a Nation
Pow Wow, Quebec

Pow Wow 101:

A Comprehensive Guide to Cultural Respect and Celebration

BY ZANE BUCHANAN

As I recall my first encounter with the Pow Wow scene, the memories remain as vivid as if they were yesterday. Stepping onto the Madahoki Farms Pow Wow grounds on the sacred day of the Solstice, the enduring sun's warm embrace heightened my anticipation, setting the stage for an unforgettable experience. Despite my excitement, I approached with a sense of reverence and trepidation, mindful of my role as a guest and witness to these age-old practices. The atmosphere crackled with energy, a symphony of sights, sounds, and scents that enveloped me in a sensory whirlwind. From the colourful artist market offering exquisite beadwork to the rhythmic pulse of the drum group, every moment seemed to speak to the rich tapestry of diverse nations represented in the competition.

While proud of my own Indigenous identity, I'm keenly aware that Pow Wows aren't deeply ingrained in my Métis culture. Residing in Vancouver, I've also grown accustomed to the diverse ceremonial practices upheld by the Pacific Coastal Nations, which often

diverge from the more familiar Pow Wow traditions. That said, my extensive travels along the Pow Wow trail since this inaugural visit have afforded me invaluable insights into the vibrant landscapes of both competition and traditional /social Pow Wows, particularly as a welcomed guest into these communities. Guided by my work as a writer and filmmaker in the blossoming Indigenous Tourism industry, I've been warmly embraced as a guest by these lively assemblies, forging connections that transcend cultural bounds.

An aspect often overlooked is the palpable inclusivity of Pow Wows, which welcome participants from all walks of life. Attending with respect and adherence to protocol not only grants entry but also holds deep value for both participants and observers alike. In the following guide, I'll share the etiquette and insights I've gleaned from my immersive experiences on the Pow Wow trail, shedding light on the profound cultural significance of these timeless gatherings.

SO, WHAT IS A POW WOW?

A Pow Wow is a vibrant cultural gathering deeply rooted in the traditions of various Indigenous communities across North America.

It serves as a celebration of Indigenous heritage, spirituality, and unity, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to honor their ancestors and connect with their cultural identity. Practiced by numerous Indigenous groups, including but not limited to the Plains, Woodland, and Pacific Coastal Nations, Pow Wows vary in style and purpose depending on the region and community. The most common types include traditional Pow Wows, which focus on preserving and showcasing traditional dances, regalia, and customs; competitive Pow Wows, where dancers compete in various categories for prizes and recognition; and social Pow Wows, which emphasize community bonding, sharing, and healing through music, dance, and storytelling. Each Pow Wow is a unique expression of Indigenous culture, characterized by vibrant regalia, rhythmic drumming, and spirited dancing that captivate participants and spectators alike.

Spirit of a Nation
Pow Wow, Quebec

The atmosphere crackled with energy, a symphony of sights, sounds, and scents that enveloped me in a sensory whirlwind. From the colourful artist market offering exquisite beadwork to the rhythmic pulse of the drum group, every moment seemed to speak to the rich tapestry of diverse nations represented in the competition.

KEY TERMS

With the understanding that Pow Wows are meant as a source of recreational entertainment for spectators, I aim to keep the discussion accessible without delving too deeply into the tedious technicalities of etymology and terminology. That said, here are just a few key terms to acquaint yourself with, enriching your understanding and enjoyment of the festivities:

Pow Wow

In alignment with “The Elements of Indigenous Style,” a guide written by and about Indigenous Peoples, Destination Indigenous follows the convention of spelling it as “Pow Wow,” with both words capitalized. Alternatively, you may encounter it spelled as “Powwow” or “Pow-wow.” This term originates from the Algonquian language, particularly the Narragansett dialect, where it originally denoted a gathering or council.

Regalia

“Regalia” refers to the traditional clothing, accessories, and adornments worn by participants in ceremonies, celebrations, or cultural events. In the context of Pow Wows, regalia often includes items such as elaborate beadwork, feathers, leatherwork, jewelry, and headdresses. Each piece of regalia is typically handcrafted and holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for the wearer and their community. Regalia is not only worn for aesthetic purposes but also serves as a representation of Indigenous identity, heritage, and pride.

Grand Entry

Pow Wows traditionally begin with The Grand Entry. The Grand Entry is the ceremonial commencement of a Pow Wow, where participants, including dancers, drum groups, veterans, elders, and dignitaries, enter the central dance arena or arbor in procession. Traditionally led by flag bearers carrying flags representing Indigenous nations and sometimes nations like the United States or Canada, the procession is set to the rhythmic beat of a traditional Grand Entry song played by the drum groups. The Grand Entry symbolizes the gathering of Indigenous Peoples and marks the official start of the Pow Wow festivities, embodying unity, pride, and cultural reverence.



Spirit of a Nation
Pow Wow, Quebec



Dakota Dunes,
Saskatchewan

DANCE STYLES

Traditionally, Pow Wow programs are meticulously organized by styles of dance, each representing a distinct aspect of Indigenous culture and heritage. Each dance style is commonly further categorized by age groups filtering participants into either Tiny Tots (3–5), Junior (6–12), Teen (13–17), Adult (18–34), Senior (35–53), Golden Age (54–64), or Platinum categories (65+).

Common dance styles include:

- ✦ **Men's Traditional Dance:** This dance reflects the movements of warriors or hunters, often characterized by deliberate, grounded steps. Dancers typically wear traditional regalia adorned with feathers, beadwork, and animal motifs.
- ✦ **Women's Traditional Dance:** Similar to the Men's Traditional Dance, but with softer, more graceful movements. Women often wear traditional dresses or skirts adorned with intricate beadwork and other embellishments.
- ✦ **Fancy Dance (Men's and Women's):** A high-energy, acrobatic dance characterized by fast footwork, spins, and jumps. Fancy dancers wear vibrant, elaborate regalia adorned with fringe, sequins, and bright colors.
- ✦ **Grass Dance:** Originating from the Northern Plains tribes, this dance mimics the movement of grass swaying in the wind. Dancers wear regalia adorned with long, swaying fringe to emphasize the motion of the dance.
- ✦ **Jingle Dance:** A healing dance originating from the Ojibwe (Chippewa) and other Great Lakes tribes. Dancers wear dresses adorned with metal cones that create a jingling sound as they move, symbolizing the sound of rain bringing healing to the community.
- ✦ **Chicken Dance:** Originating from the Blackfoot Nation, this dance mimics the movements of a prairie chicken during mating rituals. Dancers wear regalia featuring feathers and fringe, and the dance is often accompanied by humorous movements and gestures.
- ✦ **Round Dance:** A social dance that involves participants holding hands and moving in a circular formation. It is often performed to honor special occasions or to bring people together in celebration and unity.



ETIQUETTE ESSENTIALS

Check the Door Policy

While most Pow Wow celebrations welcome the public with open arms, it's wise to confirm beforehand. Occasionally, some gatherings are private, reserved exclusively for members of the hosting nation or community. These events might not be publicly advertised, so a quick check can save you from any surprises.

Punctuality is Key

Respect the efforts of the organizing committee by arriving promptly. Being on time not only ensures you don't miss any significant moments but also helps maintain the event's smooth flow.

Reserved Seating for Dancers and Elders

Be mindful of seating arrangements in the arena, where benches are reserved for dancers and honoured guests such as elders. Dancers and dignitaries usually mark their spots with blankets, so avoid sitting on unclaimed blankets and respect designated seating areas.

Listen to the Master of Ceremonies

The Master of Ceremonies plays a crucial role in guiding attendees through the event. Pay close attention to their announcements to stay informed about dance schedules and other important details. They will also often let audience members know when it is or isn't appropriate to photograph the festivities.

Respect the Lead Dancers

Honor the Head Man and Head Woman Dancers, who hold the privilege of starting each song or set of songs. Wait for their cue before joining in, acknowledging their pivotal role in the proceedings.

Be Considerate of Others' Views

Be considerate of fellow attendees by avoiding obstructing their view. If someone, particularly an elder, is sitting behind you and unable to stand for the entire program, ensure that you're not blocking their view. Make room or adjust your position to allow everyone an unobstructed view of the event.

Bring Your Own Seating

Come prepared with your own lawn-chair, as seating for the public may be limited. Remember, benches in the arena are reserved for dancers only.

Maintain a Sober Environment

Pow Wows are spiritual gatherings, not social events. Alcohol, drugs, and firearms are strictly prohibited on the premises, preserving the sacred atmosphere of the occasion.

Seek Permission for Photography

Exercise courtesy by seeking permission before capturing photographs, especially of dancers. Be mindful of sensitive moments, such as ceremonies and prayers, which should not be photographed without consent. As previously mentioned, the Master of Ceremonies will often address when photography is prohibited.

Respect the Significance of Regalia

A dancer's regalia holds profound spiritual significance and is not to be treated as a costume. Always ask before touching or photographing regalia, respecting its cultural and personal significance.

Support Indigenous Artisans

Explore the marketplace to support Indigenous families and communities. Your purchases contribute to their livelihood and promote their entrepreneurial efforts.

Plus, sharing your experience by recommending the vendor to others enhances their visibility and strengthens community connections. So, take note of the vendor's name to offer sincere recommendations when asked.

Family-Friendly Environment

Pow Wows extend a warm invitation to families, promising an immersive cultural journey suitable for all generations. Bring your children along to indulge in the vibrant festivities and timeless traditions. However, as you revel in the experience, remember to maintain respect and appropriateness, mindful of the diverse environment that encompasses dancers and guests of all ages. Your consideration ensures that everyone can cherish the event's magic together.

Curiosity is Encouraged

Don't hesitate to ask questions if you're new to Pow Wows. Members of the community are usually eager to share their knowledge and help you understand the significance of the events.

While this guide may seem detailed at first glance, I assure you it's designed to empower rather than overwhelm. Like many, I once hesitated to explore Pow Wows due to a lack of understanding. However, diving into these festivities revealed a world of enrichment and joy beyond measure. Despite the perceived complexity, the core principles are simple. Embracing Pow Wows with genuine respect and curiosity naturally aligns with the majority of the points mentioned. As you step onto the Pow Wow grounds with this mindset, you'll find yourself warmly welcomed by the community, enriching both your own experience and theirs.

Want to find a Pow Wow near you? Check out our Pow Wow calendar at CanadianPowWows.ca. 🌸



Wanuskewin Heritage Park,
Saskatchewan



Reclaiming Space: The Rise of Indigenous Muralists

When Kyle Joedicke began creating art years ago, he made his mark by tagging buildings and painting graffiti on canvases. Over time, his style evolved, and now the artist from Six Nations is celebrated for his large, striking Woodland-style murals that adorn spaces in Hamilton, ON, and beyond. "I kind of came into the professional side of things in 2020," said Joedicke, who is entirely self-taught. "I started experimenting with different Indigenous forms of art ... and that's where I came across my first Norval Morrisseau piece. From there, I've really used his guide in shaping my art."

BY CARA MCKENNA

Joedicke is one of many Indigenous muralists across what's been briefly known as Canada who are increasingly bringing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artwork into urban spaces—both indoors and out. In Vancouver, Coast Salish designs based on weavings and stories decorate buildings across East Van, Granville Island, and downtown. Meanwhile, in Toronto, 28 portraits of Indigenous leaders embellish the underside of the Lower Simcoe Street underpass, situated in the city's core. Alberta, too, has its share of vibrant Indigenous murals, with artist Mackenzie Brown painting contemporary Cree designs around Calgary and other areas for about five years. Her brilliantly colorful style, stemming from Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, is inspired by “the land, my language, and my culture.”

This past summer, Brown partnered with Zuc'min Guiding to host a two-hour Indigenous mural tour around Calgary, walking guests through public artworks in various neighborhoods. “People can see Calgary through a different light,” she said. “Whenever we have people come on our mural walk ... they just see Calgary from such a different point of view, through this cool, contemporary experience of muralism.” Brown has observed the increasing presence of Indigenous-made murals in cities, reflecting the growing urban Indigenous population. As of 2021, more than one million Indigenous people lived in urban centers, according to Statistics Canada, an 11.5% increase since 2016.

“I think that when you look at painting murals, it's such an easy way of changing entire areas and revitalizing them,” Brown explained. “Indigenous

people ... were kind of the first mural painters. Like we painted petroglyphs on walls. We painted our teepees and our dwellings. You know, we've always been practicing this big-scale artwork, and now the way that we do it is to reclaim space for ourselves.”

“When you're creating a piece, one of my favorite things is that I always have people stop and talk to me and ask me things, and so it really becomes like a community event.”

In Hamilton, Joedicke has about 10 murals accessible to the public and even more in private offices and spaces. In October 2024, he unveiled his most recent mural at the University of Waterloo's Tatham Centre, titled *The Great Law of Peace*. The mural depicts leaders and the Great Peacemaker centered around a large pine tree, narrating the story of the joining of the five nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. “I was given the freedom to create what I felt would be meaningful for the space,” he said in a press release. “I'm also in a position of re-educating myself on my culture, so it involved a lot of detailed research on the subject matter. I'd never want to come towards any of these murals in a disingenuous way.”

Joedicke hopes the mural brings a feeling of inclusion for Indigenous people entering the historically colonial institution of university and speaks to a broader sense

of community and reconciliation. He sees such cultural depictions as vital educational tools and reminders that Indigenous people have always been here. “I really just wanted it to be a piece that stands for the community and the university's goals towards reconciliation going forward,” he said. “(Creating art) is a small piece adding to the larger picture of Land Back.”

Brown echoed Joedicke's sentiments, sharing how creating murals fosters a sense of community from the moment the process begins. “When you're creating a piece, one of my favorite things is that I always have people stop and talk to me and ask me things,” she said. “And so it really becomes like a community event.” Earlier in 2024, Brown worked on a mural in Jasper, Alta., depicting a Cree story involving *Moth and Butterfly*. Positioned on a wall facing a school, she enlisted young students to help with the project. “They helped me paint little bugs all over my mural, on some of the flowers and stuff,” she said. “So that changes how even those kids see that mural now, right? Because now they have been involved in it. And they can say, like, oh, I painted that ant. Or like, I know the creation story of the moth and the butterfly.”

For Brown, the experience of creating murals is more than artistic expression; it's a way to foster generational learning and share cultural stories. “Now there's a generational learning that can happen too, and here are stories that span outside of just you and the wall, and the impact that murals have,” she said. Through these vibrant works, Indigenous muralists like Joedicke and Brown are reclaiming spaces, sharing culture, and inspiring communities. 🌸



Kyle Joedicke works on his mural 'The Great Law of Peace' at the University of Waterloo.



The UpLift!
Jasper Mural Festival
Mackenzie Brown
(a.k.a. Kamamak)



A Journey of Discovery

Who I am and Where I am Meant to be

A conversation with Chef Tammy Maki, Red Seal Pastry Chef and founder of Raven Rising – Global Indigenous Chocolates, a global Indigenous e-commerce-based chocolate and confectionary company. Raven Rising was previously located in Sudbury, Ontario, and is now proudly located on White Bear First Nation in the southeast corner of the Moose Mountain area of Saskatchewan.

BY DEBBIE OLSEN

In February 2024, Chef Tammy Maki was recognized with the Extraordinary Female Entrepreneur award at the 2024 Indigenous Tourism Awards. This award recognizes an empowered and strong Indigenous female entrepreneur who demonstrates a commitment to uplifting other women in her industry and embodies leadership within her business and community.

As a Red Seal Pastry Chef and a leader in the industry, Maki had received awards in the past, but she was overwhelmed and humbled to receive this particular award. Her journey to become a Chef and an entrepreneur is reflected in her business and the remarkable products she creates. It has been a journey of discovery as a 60s scoop survivor still connecting with her Indigenous roots.

What is the concept behind your business?

My business represents an invitation to my customers to journey with me. Personal and business combine; I've always had a foot in two different worlds. The products reflect who I am, and that's where the idea of combining the world of fine chocolates with Indigenous flair comes from. Chocolate is one of the oldest and most recognizable Indigenous ingredients in the world, and using other Indigenous ingredients sourced globally creates unexpected flavours. When I see an ingredient, I see it as it is, but I always wonder how to make it something it wouldn't normally become.

What are some of your favourite products that your company produces and why?

I love the nature-inspired hand-painted bar. I think it's representative of who I am as an Indigenous person. I'm passionate about the bonbons, as this is where my Indigenous ingredient focus is. The one I love the most is my cedar bonbon. The traditional cedar tea inside pairs so nicely with the chocolate. It's simply beautiful.

Can you tell me about your journey to become a Chef and a small business owner?

Some of my earliest memories are tied to the kitchen. I have fond memories of making Finnish pulla and doughboys with my mother. I was adopted into a wonderful Finnish family who cared for me, but I was separated from my Indigenous family, culture, language, and ceremonies. I was still relatively young when I started making birthday, anniversary, and wedding cakes for everyone. When I got into my teens, I worked for my father and his company as an electrician's helper and continued working in the trades for many years.

My business represents an invitation to my customers to journey with me. Personal and business combine; I've always had a foot in two different worlds. The products reflect who I am, and that's where the idea of combining the world of fine chocolates with Indigenous flair comes from.

In my forties, I decided to change careers, went back to college, and took Baking and Pastry Arts, intending to become a pastry chef. I honed my skills at many different restaurants, hotels, resorts, and bakeries before deciding to work for myself as a business owner. I opened Raven Rising, mid-pandemic in Sudbury, in October 2020, and I've never looked back.

How has your personal journey affected your business?

I didn't understand that I was part of the 60s scoop until I was much older. Although I am of Sioux, Ojibwe, and German descent, I lost the connection to my Indigenous self and to my Indigenous family. I lost my stories and traditions. Using Indigenous ingredients in my chocolates and pastries connect me to who I am.

My daughter Kirsten was an important part of my life and business. We had plans for her to come with me to White Bear First Nation to meet my newly discovered blood relatives I'd met the previous year. Before we could take our trip, Kirsten passed away. I struggled without her and decided to move my business and myself onto our First Nation. I felt like I could breathe again. I want to help build the community and share what I've learned. I love making people happy with my creations, but I want to do more. This is where I'm meant to be. 🌸



REGIoNAL SPoTLIGHTS



PHOTO: ITAC

Klahoose Wilderness Resort,
British Columbia

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHTS

British Columbia

The lands now known as British Columbia have been lovingly cared for by Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years. Today, they warmly invite you and your family to embark on a transformative and awe-inspiring journey through their home territories as honored guests.

BY KATHERINE STRONGWIND

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Ahous Adventures,
British Columbia

PHOTO: BEN GLASSCO

Much of this remote and pristine terrain remains undisturbed, safeguarded by the guardianship of ancestors and the stories of thriving villages passed down through generations. Towering cedars and lush forests, the untamed wildlife of the majestic Rocky Mountains, and exquisite Indigenous-inspired cuisine and hospitality await those who seek a truly life-changing adventure. Immerse yourself in the rich cultures and enduring languages through authentic, wild, and beautifully crafted Indigenous experiences.

Start your travel planning with Indigenous Tourism BC, Hello BC, and Destination BC. They can guide you in curating an epic and memory-filled trip, featuring authentic Indigenous accommodations, dining, and unforgettable experiences that highlight the best of Canada's West Coast.

Klahoose Wilderness Resort

Accessible only by boat or seaplane, Klahoose Wilderness Resort is an all-inclusive eco-retreat in Desolation Sound. Indigenous guides share Salish stories and traditional foraging skills, while guests enjoy luxury cabins, ocean views, and custom heli-adventures. Breathe in the Pacific air and connect deeply with nature in the Great Bear Rainforest.

Rugged Adventures in Northern Vancouver Island

Guests seeking thrilling, off-grid adventures with modern comforts will relish this fully guided two-day tour through the magical seascape of northern Vancouver Island. Embark on a boat safari to spot grizzly bears, sea lions, otters, and the iconic killer whales of the West Coast. Nourish your spirit with Indigenous-inspired lunch and warm beverages aboard the covered vessel. End your day with a peaceful stay at the water's edge in Port Hardy at Kwa'lilas Hotel, a First Nations-owned retreat that epitomizes luxurious Indigenous eco-tourism.



Great River Fishing Adventures,
British Columbia

Bear & Bone Burger Co.

Nestled among BC’s six most stunning national parks—Yoho, Glacier, Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Mount Revelstoke—Bear & Bone Burger Co. offers a casual dining experience that shouldn’t be missed. Specializing in locally sourced ingredients, this Indigenous-owned eatery serves hearty signature burgers, steak, tacos, and cocktails. Warm up with Canadian Coffee and share delicious appetizers while enjoying unbeatable views of the snow-capped Rockies.

Great River Fishing Adventures

Experience a journey back in time with Great River Fishing Adventures, where Stó:lō Coast Salish peoples once fished for sturgeon, salmon, and steelhead. Traverse the mighty Fraser River canyon, camp under the stars, and share fish tales around a fire on this wilderness fishing experience. Just an hour’s drive from Vancouver, this adventure promises memories that will last a lifetime.

Haida House at Tlell River

Haida House offers a serene getaway on Haida Gwaii, where modern cedar cabins and luxurious amenities await guests. Discover the wild East coast of Graham Island with guided cultural tours led by Haida interpreters, dine on tide-to-table cuisine, and explore ancient rainforests. This experience promises to be transformative, set against the backdrop of Haida heritage and pristine natural beauty.

Homalco Wildlife Tours

Join the Xwémalkwu (Homalco) First Nation, “the people of the fast-running waters,” on a breathtaking tour of Bute and Toba Inlets. Spot bears, whales, and other wildlife from a warm, comfortable vessel as Homalco guides share traditional ecological knowledge. Departing daily from Campbell River, this adventure offers an unforgettable glimpse into the history and natural splendor of the Salish Sea.

Kwa’lilas Hotel in Port Hardy

Kwa’lilas Hotel, a contemporary escape in Kwakiutl territory, offers tranquility and Indigenous culture in the gateway to Vancouver Island’s wild beauty. From eco-adventures to fishing excursions with K’awat’si Tours, this hotel combines modern amenities with Salish art, providing a memorable experience.



Haida House,
British Columbia

Moccasin Trails

Moccasin Trails offers transformative journeys through BC's interior. Paddle peaceful waters with Shuswap songs and stories or explore the Sncewips Heritage Museum in Syilx territory. These cultural tours promise authentic and enlightening experiences.

Nk'Mip Cellars

Nk'Mip Cellars, North America's first Indigenous-owned winery, invites wine enthusiasts to indulge in award-winning wines and luxury experiences. Explore the scenic vineyards of Osoyoos, savor rich cuisine, and celebrate the Okanagan culture.

West Coast Expeditions in Kyuquot Sound

Venture to the "Sea Otter Coast" for unforgettable kayak tours with West Coast Expeditions. Explore Spring Island's pristine waters, teeming with wildlife, and rejuvenate with the sounds of the ocean in a serene wilderness retreat.

Paddle peaceful waters with Shuswap songs and stories or explore the Sncewips Heritage Museum in Syilx territory. These cultural tours promise authentic and enlightening experiences.



Moccasin Trails,
British Columbia

Quaaout Lodge & Talking Rock Golf Course

Quaaout Lodge, located near Kamloops on Little Shuswap Lake, offers luxury inspired by local First Nations culture. Enjoy a round of golf, hearty dining at Jack Sam Restaurant, or relaxation at the Le7ke Spa, surrounded by breathtaking views.

Takaya Tours

Operated by the Tseil-Waututh Nation, Takaya Tours offers guided canoe excursions through Burrard Inlet. Follow ancient trade routes, hear spiritual songs, and immerse yourself in Coast Salish traditions on this unique adventure.

Skidegate Inlet Retreat

Located in Haida Gwaii, Skidegate Inlet Retreat invites guests to experience Haida culture and the natural beauty of the archipelago. Visit the Haida Heritage Centre, explore lush rainforests, and enjoy oceanfront accommodations.

Salmon n' Bannock Bistro

Vancouver's only Indigenous-owned restaurant, Salmon n' Bannock, serves modern dishes with traditional roots. Savor wild game, fresh fish, and bannock in a cozy setting, or let them cater your next event for a meal to remember.



Kekuli Cafe

Kekuli Cafe, with locations in BC's interior, reimagines the traditional coffee shop with modern Indigenous flair. Enjoy fresh bannock, organic teas, and meals inspired by the bounty of Mother Earth, honoring the region's culinary heritage.

Ay Lelum—The Good House of Design

Ay Lelum, located in Nanaimo, is a family-run art and fashion design house blending traditional Coast Salish motifs with modern couture. Shop for bold, statement pieces or everyday wear that celebrates Indigenous artistry.

Ahoust Adventures

Discover the natural wonders of Clayoquot Sound with Ahoust Eco-Tours. Explore Hot Springs Cove, hike the Lone Cone trail, or take a sea route to view whales. Connect with Ahoust culture and enjoy eco-friendly adventures on Vancouver Island.

Interior Whitewater Expeditions

Experience the thrill of whitewater rafting in Shuswap territory near Clearwater, BC. Navigate canyons and waterfalls, spot wildlife, and enjoy family-friendly tours led by skilled guides, creating memories of adventure and wonder.

Gordie's Restaurant & Suites in Alert Bay

Enjoy rustic oceanfront accommodations at Gordie's in Alert Bay. Immerse yourself in 'Namgis culture at the U'mista Cultural Centre, or explore whale-watching and ecological parks. Unwind with fresh seafood and a stunning view of the Pacific.

Great Bear Rainforest Essential Oils

Support conservation with Great Bear Rainforest Essential Oils, a social enterprise that produces sustainable, steam-distilled aromatherapy products from traditional medicines. Every purchase helps protect the Great Bear Rainforest.



Nk'Mip Cellars, Osoyoos,
British Columbia



Takaya Tours,
British Columbia

Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks

Visit Tofino's Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks for a transformative experience rooted in cultural preservation. Enjoy a West Coast meal, explore old-growth forests, and take the pledge to protect this sacred land in a step toward reconciliation.

Fraser Valley Fishing Tours

Cast a line for white sturgeon or salmon on the Fraser River with guided tours in Stó:lō territory. Enjoy a heated boat ride through stunning landscapes and create a fish story to share for years to come. 🌿

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHTS

The Prairies

For centuries, Indigenous Peoples have lived on and cared for the prairies, foothills, and mountainous regions in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Ancient life was connected to bison that provided food, shelter, tools and formed a central part of spiritual beliefs. Indigenous Peoples hold a deep respect for the land and animals in this region and most of the Indigenous tourism experiences reflect that. It is a region with stunning scenic landscapes, fascinating historical sites and remarkable cultural experiences.

One of the best ways to explore the prairie region and truly appreciate what it has to offer is with the help of an Indigenous guide who is deeply connected to the land. Whether you're savouring authentic Indigenous cuisine, riding horseback along ancestral trails, enjoying outdoor adventures or browsing handmade beaded goods at an Indigenous shop, these experiences provide meaningful ways to learn about the history and culture of the region and feel connected with the land.

BY KELSEY OLSEN



Painted Warriors,
Alberta

PHOTO: HOOKE

ALBERTA

Drift Out West Fly Fishing

The Bow River is one of the top trout streams in the world and it has long been tied to Indigenous Peoples. Its current name reflects the original Cree name for the river, which means “river where bow reeds grow.” One of the best ways to experience a day of fly fishing on this world class river is with Quinn Soonias of Drift Out West Fly Fishing. A tour with Soonias is a chance to fish one of the top rivers in the world while also experiencing the beauty of the land and water. On guided tours, he shares his knowledge of the sport and the area where his ancestors thrived since time immemorial.

Girth Hitch Guiding

One of the best ways to experience the Rockies is through getting out and challenging yourself on an outdoor adventure. Girth Hitch Guiding offers tours for all abilities. Whether you’re looking to get out for a guided hike or wanting to challenge yourself on an outdoor rock climbing tour or Via Ferrata experience there is something for everyone. The team at Girth Hitch Guiding follows the belief that adventure is transformational and aims for guests to leave with not only new skills, but a connection to the stunning landscape and sense of accomplishment.

Grey Eagle Resort & Casino

Located on and owned by the Tsuut’ina Nation, the Grey Eagle Resort & Casino is much more than a regular casino. It’s a top class entertainment venue with multiple weekly shows and concerts, a luxury hotel with excellent restaurants and bars, and a lively casino. The resort honours the Tsuut’ina Nation through various Indigenous artworks throughout the property. Plus, you can visit the gift shop where local Indigenous artisans showcase their crafts.



Drift Out West Fly
Fishing, Alberta



Mahikan Trails, Alberta

Mahikan Trails

Many of the plants that you can find in Alberta have been used medicinally by Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years. Mahikan Trails provides medicine walks and workshops where guests learn the rich history of the Sunde and Banff areas. Knowledgeable Indigenous guides help guests foster a deeper connection to the land and its healing properties. You can experience a medicine walk or book a workshop where you will learn how to make a variety of Indigenous products such as soaps, salves, lotions and medicines.

Moonstone Creation

For authentic, beautiful Indigenous artwork and products, Moonstone Creation in Calgary is a great shop to browse. From moccasins to gorgeous beaded jewelry, each item is crafted with care by Indigenous artisans showcasing traditional techniques and preserving cultural art forms. Guests can also take workshops such as moccasin making or traditional beadwork, offering a hands-on way to connect with Indigenous culture and create something beautiful in the process.

Painted Warriors

Painted Warriors is all about having guests experience Indigenous culture through connection to the land. There are a variety of experiences offered at Painted Warriors Ranch near Cremona, Alberta. Archery, horseback riding, wildlife tracking, snowshoeing, and even glamping can all be experienced on site. The passionate owners, with Cree, Mohawk, and Saulteaux background, share their knowledge and love of nature with every guest fostering meaningful relationships that celebrate their culture and respect for the land.

Wildhorse Ranch

With a mission to improve the lives of both people and horses, Wildhorse Ranch is the perfect place for animal lovers. The ranch offers wellness retreats, horse camps, trail rides, snowshoeing and more. Situated on 480 acres of land in Central Alberta, it's a place where people can experience the healing bond between humans and horses, reconnect with nature, and learn about Indigenous culture. The wellness ranch has a special focus on personal growth and healing grief, offering a supportive environment for guests to find peace.

Western Wilderness Adventure

Sometimes the best way to connect with nature is through disconnecting and spending quality time outdoors with no distractions. Western Wilderness Adventure is the perfect place to do so. This group camping resort is located near Nordegg, on the east side of the Rocky Mountains. There are 11 cozy cabins on the site as well as unserviced camping sites. With no cell service, power, or running water, the rustic appeal of the campground takes guests back to simpler times to truly immerse themselves in nature.

Rainy Creek Ranch

This Guest Ranch located near Sylvan Lake Alberta, offers many different experiences for all kinds of visitors. The knowledgeable guides infuse Indigenous stories and culture into every experience, passionately preserving traditional knowledge. You can embark on a trail ride, attend a camp, listen to stories from an Indigenous Elder, or just enjoy time at the ranch surrounded by the beautiful prairie landscape.



Manito Ahbee Festival Inc., Manitoba



Stoney Nakoda Resort & Casino, Alberta

Best Western Plus Sawridge

One of the top hotels in Fort McMurray, this Indigenous-owned property is subtly infused with touches of Indigenous decor and artwork. The successful hospitality brand has several other hotels throughout the province, with the Fort McMurray property being the newest. Guests can enjoy spacious rooms and top class service as well as delicious Indigenous-inspired dishes at the onsite restaurant.

Stoney Nakoda Resort & Casino

This newly renovated resort in Kananaskis, Alberta, is perfectly located for adventures in the Canadian Rockies. With towering mountains as a backdrop, the spacious rooms are perfect for a cozy place to rest after exploring the area. The large rooms are decorated with Indigenous photographs and artwork and the casino boasts "Las Vegas" style games for the ultimate entertainment on your Rocky Mountain getaway.

MANITOBA

Aurora Inn

Churchill, Manitoba is a remote northern town that is known for polar bear viewing in the autumn, beluga whale and bird watching in the summer, and dog sledding and northern lights viewing in the winter. The remote town also possesses a rich cultural history with Chipewyan and Cree peoples occupying the land long before European settlers arrived in the 1600's. The Indigenous-owned Aurora Inn, is an excellent accommodation option with a warm and welcoming atmosphere for guests to unwind after exploring the area.

Manito Ahbee Festival Inc.

This cultural celebration is a vibrant event that celebrates Indigenous Peoples in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The festival, named after one of the most sacred and important Indigenous sites in North America, welcomes everyone to participate and learn. With a busy schedule full of invigorating Indigenous dancing, authentic food, tipi

raising ceremonies, and many other special events, it's a beautiful celebration of culture that encourages community engagement and connection. Attendees have the opportunity to listen to powerful storytelling, learn about various Indigenous cultures around North America, and enjoy a weekend with family and friends.

Feast Café Bistro

Successful owner and executive chef, Christa Bruneau-Guenther takes inspiration for the menu at Feast Café Bistro from her Peguis First Nation background. All of her dishes centre around the changing seasons and the local flavours of the surrounding area. Serving Breakfast, lunch, and dinner, Feast Café Bistro is a wonderful Winnipeg restaurant that showcases the diverse flavours and dishes in Indigenous cuisine. Each meal tells a story and dining here is a beautiful way to experience Indigenous culture.

SASKATCHEWAN

Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Wanuskewin Heritage Park sits on land that has been a sacred gathering site for Indigenous people for more than 6,400 years. The National Historic Site is full of rich history. Long before European settlers arrived in Saskatchewan, the area was a thriving home for the Plains Cree who survived on and cared for the land. Now, Wanuskewin honours their legacy through education and preservation of this beautiful culture. Guests can take part in guided tours, explore the trails, stay overnight in a tipi, and participate in cultural events, workshops, and performances.

Dakota Dunes Resort

A beautiful resort and golf course located just outside of Saskatoon, Dakota Dunes Resort, is a wonderful getaway in the Prairies. Situated on Whitecap Dakota Territory, the resort emphasizes the surrounding natural beauty of the land through gorgeous floor to ceiling windows and stunning patio views. The modern decor takes inspiration from Indigenous culture and the beauty of the surrounding landscapes. Guests can golf at the award winning golf course, unwind at the beautiful spa, dine at the onsite restaurant or participate in a variety of Indigenous cultural experiences. Dakota Dunes Resort is a great place to reconnect with nature. 🌿



Wanuskewin Heritage Park,
Saskatchewan

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHTS

Ontario

From the shining waters of its rivers, lakes and ponds to so many rugged, glacier-carved landscapes, to the streets of big-city Toronto, Ontario's Indigenous People have lived amongst bounty and beauty for many generations. And they bring their knowledge and experience to the present day, offering everything from gourmet cooking with a First Nations twist, to luxurious accommodations with a good story, to the capacity and talent help you land the catch of a lifetime. Here are some of Ontario's best tourism experiences.

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND



Lil Crow Cabin

This get-away indulges the senses in the most subtle of ways finding excellence in simplicity. This idyllic destination, provides everything you need and nothing that you don't. Featured as a top 10 romantic staycation close to Toronto, the property is tucked along the stunning shores of the Bay of Quinte, which is also recognized as a Walleye capital of the world. It is an ideal vacation for small intimate groups, couples, writers, nature lovers, and solo travelers alike. Located on the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, this First Nations experience destination also provides access to the beautiful Prince Edward County and the Sandbanks Provincial park.

Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre

Weaving together a smart combination of modern and traditional First Nations design, guests are welcomed into contemporary and inviting accommodations that combine natural elements of wood and stone with sophisticated touches to the décor. Enjoy a magnificent view of the LaCloche Mountain range and the North Channel on Lake Huron while you dine, and both the outdoor patio and glass indoor dining area provide stunning views of the lake and mountains. Owned by six First Nation communities—Sagamok, Whitefish River, Aundeck Omni Kaning, M'Chigeeng, Sheshegwaning, and Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory—the property is a symbol of unity of spirit and meaningful collaboration.

Oceah Oceah SUP & KAYAK

Don't just disconnect, reconnect. Oceah Oceah SUP X YOGA is inspired by a mission to bring people of all nations together through water. First Nations sisters Jenifer, Sharon and Lana believe women have a responsibility to the water, and they have found their passion and purpose in sharing paddling with guests and strengthening each visitor's ties and relationship to water. Classes run all summer, and Oceah Oceah also hosts special events, workshops, retreats and even surf sessions on Lake Ontario. Be assured of a quality experience, as all instructors are Paddle Canada Certified SUP instructors and paddle yoga classes are taught by Yoga Alliance Certified teachers.



Raven Rising Enterprises Ltd.

This is where the world of fine chocolates comes into a delicious collision with the rich traditions of Indigenous cultures, and your taste buds will celebrate. Raven Rising Global Indigenous Chocolates, located on White Bear First Nation in Saskatchewan, not only offers delectable treasures but also provides menu and kitchen consulting services, speaking engagements and workshops. The business is committed to traceable, sustainable, and fair trade practices, collaborating with Indigenous businesses and individuals, wherever possible, to create a positive impact globally. A portion of Raven Rising's proceeds are donated to various societies supporting 60's Scoop, MMIWg2s, and residential school survivor organizations.

Point Grondine Park

Immerse yourself in an old growth pine forest and soak in stunning river vistas nestled between the Killarney and French River Provincial Parks. Point Grondine Park is an expansive 18,000 acres of spectacular natural wilderness. The A-Mik-Zii-Bi Interpretive Trail provides an opportunity to learn about the rich history and medicines that connect the Anishnaabek to the land. The Merv's Landing loop hike culminates in a summit that overlooks the white quartzite Mountains of the Killarney Mountain range. Paddle Wemtagoosh Falls (Frenchman Falls) to the Tri-Lakes or spend a serene morning fishing on the Mahzenazing Lake.

Silver Muskie Lodge

Perch atop rocky cliffs, sink your toes into sandy beaches, breathe in the mist of waterfalls and lose yourself in the darkest night skies you'll ever experience at Silver Muskie Lodge at Rainy Lake. The lake was carved out by glaciers thousands of years ago creating breathtaking sheer cliffs and waterfalls, and the bay is home to bald eagles and loons, as well as moose, whitetail deer, black bear and migratory waterfowl. Redgut Bay is an angler's paradise, and the historic Silver Muskie Lodge has been home-base for all kinds of adventurers from around the world since 1955.

Tea Horse Ltd.

Few simple pleasures in life compare to sipping a mug of piping hot, freshly-brewed tea steeped with beautiful, thoughtful ingredients. Tea Horse is an Indigenous-owned artisanal tea company located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg Peoples in northwestern Ontario, and through its proprietary roasting process, produces a selection of custom roasted wild rice (Ojibwe: manoomin) and tea blends. Wild Rice is rich in protein with nutrients such as riboflavin, which is a B vitamin that promotes healthy vision as well as boosting energy levels, and immune system function. Manoomin translates to "good berry" and was a spiritual and cultural staple as well as a culinary one to the Anishinaabeg Peoples.



Point Grondine Park,
Killarney, Ontario

Wikwemikong Tourism

Experience nature in a whole new way taking it into your body and spirit through cultural tourism from an Indigenous perspective on Manitoulin Island and Killarney. Embark on a hike along the Bebamikawe Memorial Trail to forage for edibles and natural ingredients, learn how to use them with respect and appreciation, and then prepare your culinary treasures over an open fire, while developing an understanding of traditional ways from a local Indigenous guide. The Odawa Interpretive experience explores the Warriors Trail and one of the most intricate and diverse plant ecosystems in North America.

Wasse-Giizhik Tours and Accommodations

If fishing is what floats your boat, then a go-to should be Wasse Tours, the Georgian Bay fishing charter that will take you to some of the best fishing locations around Manitoulin Island and Killarney. Specializing in spring rainbow trout, summer salmon and ice fishing charters, they offer scenic and historic boat cruises of Manitoulin Island and Killarney where you can learn from an Indigenous Guide and manoeuvre through the canoe routes of the Anishnaabe people surrounded by the spectacular Canadian Shield and Lacloche Mountains. Don't leave without taking an exhilarating dip in the brilliant waters of Georgian Bay.

Manitoulin Island Ice Fishing Charters

Bundle up and get ready for an adventure on the ice that will remind you of just how beautiful a crisp and clear winter day outdoors can be. This hard water fishing adventure with Manitoulin Island Fishing Charters on Lake Huron and Manitoulin in-land lakes will allow you to test your skills in tempting rainbow trout, lake trout, whitefish, jumbo perch, walleye and northern pike out of the ice and onto your line. The fully-guided trip includes on-ice transportation via snowmobile and provides portable ice huts, fish finders/cameras, heaters, rods, bait and tackle ensuring you have everything you need for a safe, enjoyable and unforgettable angling experience.

Bayside Resort

There is a reason so many of us long to be tucked away in a cozy log cabin surrounded by towering trees with a lake lapping at the doorstep. Bayside Resort provides this serene and soulful experience in a pristine environment. Enjoy full access to a private beach via extensive tiered waterfront decks to admire the long view. A paddle boat and canoes are available to guests, and a boat launch is located not far from the accommodations. The Rainbow Ridge Golf Course provides an 18-hole experience, while another nearby course also offers glow-ball golfing opportunities at select times of the year. During the winter, try ice fishing or rent a pair of skis or snowshoes.



Wikwemikong Tourism,
Ontario



Wikwemikoong Traditional
Pow Wow, Ontario

Thunderbird Mountain Tours

Tim Yearington, a registered citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) with Métis voyageur, French-Canadian, Algonquin and Wendat/Huron ancestry, is a Métis wilderness guide and a traditional Indigenous knowledge keeper and educator who teaches practices outdoors in nature through his guided tours storytelling and presentations. He is a pipe carrier, a sweat lodge conductor and a vision quest guide and helper. Guided by Indigenous Elders and his own ancestors, he learned the traditional teachings of the manitous (spirits), the four directions and the powerful medicine of the thunderbirds. Through his tours, he shares traditional wisdom and teaches bird shamanism practices.

Island Sunrise Cottages, Fishing and Hunting Outfitters

Take the long view and soak in a sunset or be energized by a sunrise stroll along Lake Mindemoya. A private lakeside cottage awaits you on your adventure with your own dock, fire pit, and beautifully appointed accommodations on Manitoulin Island—the largest fresh water island in the world. Island Sunrise offers fishing charters, paddling packages and sight seeing trips, as well as proximity to hiking trails, art galleries and many other local amenities. Great respect is given to the land and management of the respective fish populations, so future generations can enjoy fishing and swimming the clear waters around the Island.

Cape Croker Park

Set among the spectacular limestone bluffs on the eastern shore of Bruce Peninsula, Cape Croker Park features 315 campsites, with incredible hiking among scenic vistas and waterways. Learn how Anishinaabek use plants for food, medicine and in ceremony. Hear traditional Anishinaabe storytelling and craft a dream catcher out of Red Osier Dogwood and sinew. Throughout the onsite programs, you will hear the Anishinaabemowin language, and possibly even learn a few words and phrases. Cape Croker Park features some of the Peninsula's most beautiful geography and wildlife, and paddle the 4 km of shoreline to spot Great Blue Heron, Kingfisher and Bald Eagles.



Chiefswood Park

Immerse yourself in authentic Haudenosaunee culture at the Chiefswood Park—a world class cultural heritage destination. Surrounded by the Carolinian Forest along the banks of the Grand River, Chiefswood National Historic Site (CNHS) is the birthplace and childhood home of renowned Mohawk and English poetess, E. Pauline Johnson. Cozy cottage accommodations are inspired by 1860s architecture. Tour along the Grand River by canoe or kayak, while listening to stories of Haudenosaunee culture. The park is situated on 20 acres along the Grand River. Leave with a deeper understanding of the history of the Six Nations and their relationships to the land and Peoples.

Naagan by Chef Zach Keeshig

Taste what Indigenous cultures have known and celebrated since the beginning of time. Fresh, local food harvested and gathered with respect and care makes all the difference. Naagan, which in Ojibwa means “dish”, is an intimate, 17-seat restaurant serving elegant 12-course dinners in the heart of Owen Sound. This Indigenous culinary experience begins in the local fields, forests and water bodies, and ingredients that are not foraged or grown by the restaurant are sourced from local farmers, fishers or hunters. Far-away ingredients and seasonings that often fill our own cupboards are replaced by local flavours such as sweetgrass and sea buckthorn that elevate authenticity. 🌿

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHTS

Quebec

Canada's largest province has been shaped by a unique blend of cultures and history. Though it has often been called "the Europe of North America," the history of Quebec stretches long before the first European explorers arrived. Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples thrived in the region of Canada that is now known as Quebec.

Today there are 11 different Indigenous nations in the province—each with their own distinct history, language and culture. Ten First Nations and the Inuit Nation live in 41 communities scattered across the province as well as in urban areas.

BY KELSEY OLSEN



PHOTO: ROAM CREATIVE

Pourvoires Essipit, Quebec

Many travelers come to Quebec City to experience the Historic District of Old Québec, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Others find their zen place in Old Montreal with its historical architecture, hiking trails in national and provincial parks or on the slopes of Mont Tremblant. There are many attractions in this diverse and remarkable province, but to properly explore it, you must get to know the people who have been there the longest—the stewards of the land.

Indigenous tourism experiences are as diverse as the Indigenous People who call the province home. There are fantastic restaurants that showcase authentic Indigenous cuisine, outdoor adventures, cultural events and experiences, museums, shops selling traditional goods and handicrafts, accommodations and more. Each of these experiences showcase culture and knowledge that has been passed down through many generations. An Indigenous travel experience is essential if you want to really get to know Quebec.



Atelier-Boutique
Atikuss, Quebec

Atelier-Boutique Atikuss

With each careful placement of colourful beads on a pair of handmade mukluks or a brush stroke of paint on a thoughtful piece of Indigenous artwork, the traditional craftsmanship of the Indigenous People of Quebec is brought to life. Atelier-Boutique Atikuss not only sells beautiful handcrafted products, it supports Indigenous women and offers them a fair wage for their craftsmanship. The business was founded by Josée Shushei Leblanc, a member of the Innu First Nation of Uashat mak Mani Utenambut. Atelier-Boutique Atikuss is a place to purchase beautiful and well-made mukluks, art, and other items. Visitors can also book a guided tour or participate in a workshop to learn these traditional art forms from knowledgeable Indigenous guides. Visitors can make a dreamcatcher, try their hand at traditional beading methods, or even sample some authentic Indigenous foods after touring the boutique. There are also several hotels associated with the brand. The "Boots of Hope" initiative, allows guests to design their own mukluks, choosing the leathers, patterns, furs, and embroidery to make their own unique boots.

Aventures Arctiques— Camp de pêche de Tunulik II

Nunavik is the traditional territory of the Inuit, a vast region that occupies the northern third of the province stretching from the treeline across the vast treeless tundra all the way to Ungava Bay. This region is sparsely populated and largely undeveloped, making it a great place for wildlife watching, viewing northern species like polar bears, caribou, and muskoxen and outdoor adventures like fishing. Nunavik is home to some of the best Arctic char and brook trout fishing in North America. The Inuit People of this region have a deep understanding of fish behavior and migration patterns that has been passed down through generations of time. At Aventures Arctiques guests get the opportunity to fish pristine waters with experienced Inuit guides. The company offers multi-day fishing trips out of two camps, the Payne River camp and the Tunulik II camp. Guests spend their days out on the water and return to a comfortable cabin and a delicious home-cooked meal by the camp chef. It's a fantastic way to connect with the land and the people who call it home.



Aventures Arctiques, Quebec

Camping Tadoussac et Camping Tipi

There's no better way to connect with nature than a good old camping trip. Indigenous owned, Camping Tadoussac and Camping Tipi are two unique campgrounds located near Tadoussac and the St. Lawrence River. At Camping Tadoussac, one of the standouts is the stunning location overlooking the river and the Saguenay Fjord. Guests who stay overnight wake up to an incredible view that may even include the sighting of a whale or two. The various campsites offer something for every type of camper, from non-serviced remote sites to fully serviced RV sites and even cozy cabins. Camping Le Tipi is located a little further out from Tadoussac, about a thirty-minute drive to be exact. This campground offers a more secluded experience directly in the Innu community. There are unserviced to fully serviced sites and comfortable amenities such as toilets, showers, and Wi-Fi. While you're in the area, be sure to book a whale watching tour. This region is home to some of the best whale watching in the world.

Bastien Industries

The history of Bastien Industries and their quality crafted moccasins dates back to the late 1800's with Maurice Sébastien Agniolen, founding the manufacturing company and employing 80 percent of the Wendat families. It was the beginning of modern commerce in the Wendat nation and Agniolen went on to become Grand Chief of the Wendat Nation between 1883 and 1896. Over the years, the company has maintained the traditional quality and craftsmanship of its products. Bastien Industries has kept up its top tier reputation since its inception in the 1800's and continues to be a place that preserves the traditional craft while offering the best quality of leather and suede moccasins. In 2022, Jason Picard-Binet, a proud member of the Huron-Wendat Nation took over the leadership of Bastien Industries—eager to carry on the work of the Bastien family while modernizing the company. The history alone at Bastien Industries is fascinating enough to warrant a visit, and the idea of purchasing moccasins from such a storied establishment makes the experience even more special. Each pair of moccasins carries not only extraordinary craftsmanship, but the legacy of the Wendat community.



Bastien Industries, Quebec



Corporation Nibiischii,
Quebec

Chalets de l'Anse Ste-Hélène

The cozy chalets at Chalets de l'Anse Ste-Hélène are steps away from the Chaleur Bay and the perfect place to relax after days spent exploring this beautiful maritime area. Owned by the Micmacs of Gesgapegiag, a Mi'gmaq First Nation in Quebec, the chalets offer one of the most unique accommodations in the province. One of the cabins is a replica of La Grande Hermine, the ship that Jacques Cartier took to Saint-Pierre in 1535 and used to explore the St. Lawrence River. It's the ideal accommodation for families or those who love the idea of staying in an accommodation that is completely unique. Guests can sleep in the ship and imagine themselves being transported back in time. The property also has several lovely one room and two room chalets with beautiful mountain views and barbecues. Whether you stay in the La Grande Hermine replica or in one of the cedar chalets, Chalets de l'Anse Ste-Hélène will surely leave you with an appreciation for the stunning surroundings and the fascinating history of these lands.



Corporation Nibiischii,
Quebec

Corporation Nibiischii

Nibiischii Corporation manages two of the largest wildlife reserves in Quebec, the Albanel-Mistassini-and-Waconichi lakes wildlife reserve and Assinica Wildlife Reserve. Nibiischii, meaning, "land of water," aptly describes the protected wildlife reserves that have many lakes and several rivers running through them. The largely untouched areas are perfect for outdoor lovers, especially anglers, campers, and canoers. Through the Indigenous-owned corporation, visitors can purchase passes for rustic camping on the shores of the wildlife reserves or canoe camping. As well, visitors can purchase daily fishing passes and hopefully hook one of the four species of fish found in the territory-walleye, lake trout, brook trout and northern pike. In addition to camping, there's a cozy cabin at Waconichi Lake that can be rented and some new floating cabins in Cliff Bay. The floating cabins are very unique and they offer beautiful views of Waconichi Lake and the cliffs. They are fully equipped cabins and include a full bathroom. Access to the floating cabins is possible by rowboat, canoe or kayak from the Waconichi site or from the gazebo trail.



Hébergement Aux
Cinq Sens, Quebec

Festival du conte et de la légende de l'Innuadie

Innuadie is a meeting place of two peoples on the same shore—the Innu and the Acadians. In Natashquan territory a special friendship blossomed between the two groups and the Innuadie Stories and Legends Festival sprang from that special relationship. In Indigenous cultures, storytelling is an art. Stories pass on history, teach lessons, inspire dreams, and entertain. The Innuadie Stories and Legends Festival in Nutashquan territory attracts well-known Inuit, Innu and Acadian storytellers and musicians to share their oral traditions. Festival attendees can listen to Indigenous myths and legends, enjoy songs and music made with drums, violins, guitars and the accordion. The festival celebrates both cultures and is enjoyable for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous guests. It runs over multiple days and takes place on the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the ancestral lands of the Innu, serving as a stunning backdrop for cultural exchange, community connection, and celebration. It's a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages participants to engage with the stories shared and create lasting impressions and memories.

Hébergement Aux Cinq Sens

The 20-acres of pristine wilderness at Hébergement Aux Cinq Sens offers visitors an ideal escape on the traditional lands of the Waban-Aki and Huron-Wendat nations. Guests can stay in a Yurt with a central wood stove, a mini house or chalet, a studio with a kitchen, or even wild nature camping at one of the tent sites. The secluded accommodations give guests the amazing opportunity to truly experience the beautiful land and there are many activities to enjoy during a stay at Hébergement Aux Cinq Sens. Located on an International Dark Sky Reserve, stargazing is a definite highlight here. Guests can join a guided evening tour under the stars, enjoy storytelling, a medicinal plant trail, or take part in a walk through the forest while they learn some of the Indigenous stories passed down about the area. There's also an infrared sauna onsite. Whatever way you decide to experience it, Hébergement Aux Cinq Sens allows for a deep connection and relationship to be built around the land and Indigenous culture.

Hotel-Musée Premières Nations

Located in Wendake, just 15-minutes from Quebec City, the Hotel-Musée Premières Nations is a luxury boutique hotel with an onsite museum, a remarkable Indigenous restaurant and a reconstructed Huron-Wendat longhouse known as the Ekionkiestha' National Longhouse. Hotel rooms are modern with Indigenous accents and decor such as furs and artwork. The lobby has fireplaces for gathering and the beautiful Akiawenrahk River is directly behind the hotel, making it feel far from civilization, despite being right in the middle of it. Guests can explore the Huron-Wendat Museum and the Ekionkiestha' National Longhouse on a guided tour to learn about the culture and history of the Huron-Wendat people. Experiences such as storytelling, a talking stick or necklace making workshop allow for a deeper look into the culture. After guests work up an appetite from touring the museum, they can dine at La Traite restaurant, which serves up Indigenous-inspired cuisine with contemporary touches. The restaurant has a special focus on local, seasonal ingredients found in Quebec. Hotel-Musée Premières Nations is a perfect place to immerse yourself in Huron-Wendat culture.

Located in the village of Odanak, guests can also view a replica of a traditional dwelling space that an Abenaki family would have lived in. It really helps to paint a picture of what life would have looked like for an Indigenous family in the 19th century.



Musée des Abénakis,
Quebec

Musée des Abénakis

Opened in 1965, this museum was the very first Indigenous museum in Quebec. The Musée des Abénakis beautifully shares the Abenaki Nation's culture through a variety of immersive exhibits. Their new permanent exhibit, W8banakiak, carries many unique Indigenous artifacts to educate and celebrate the unique history of these people. Located in the village of Odanak, guests can also view a replica of a traditional dwelling space that an Abenaki family would have lived in. It really helps to paint a picture of what life would have looked like for an Indigenous family in the 19th century. The museum hosts a variety of seasonal events for guests to take part in that continue to educate and celebrate the culture and history of the Abenaki people. One of the best times to visit is in the spring during maple syrup season when you can learn more about how Indigenous Peoples processed maple sap long before European contact and shared their knowledge with the first visitors. Concentrating the sweet sap was even more impressive when they did it without metal pots. You can also learn the Abenaki legends about maple syrup.



Site Traditionnel Huron,
Quebec

Sagamité Wendake Restaurant

This restaurant is named for sagamité soup, a traditional Indigenous soup made with the three sisters—corn, squash and beans. Sagamité is a restaurant that celebrates Huron-Wendat culture through a multi-sensory dining experience. One of the signature menu items is called Yatista. It mimics the traditional Indigenous experience of eating around a fire by featuring a flambé meal in the centre of the table. Guests can enjoy deer, elk, beef and shrimp cooked in a flame. Fire was a means of cooking food, but it also has great cultural significance as well. It symbolizes safety and warmth and is a gift from the Creator. Traditionally, meals would all be eaten around the fire which brings the restaurant's use of fire full circle, allowing for an educational and unique dining experience. This restaurant has locations in Wendake and Quebec City. They also operate a food truck in Quebec City called Saga Nomade Food Truck and have several accommodations.

Site d'interprétation Micmac de Gespeg

For an insightful exploration of the culture and history of the Mi'gmaq People, visit the Site d'interprétation Micmac de Gespeg in Gaspé, Quebec. In this beautiful place between the ocean and the mountains, the museum tells the story of the Micmacs of Gesgapegiag, a Mi'gmaq First Nation in Quebec from 1675 to present day. The museum offers tours in both English and French and knowledgeable guides bring to life the traditional lifestyle of these Indigenous People.

Tour guides explain the traditional residences, work tools, customs and ancestral beliefs of the Mi'gmaq People, highlighting not only significant events but the ways of life and the close relationship that the Mi'gmaq have with the land and waters. The reconstructed traditional village with wigwams, fire rings, and traditional hunting traps gives visitors a glimpse into how the Mi'gmaq people would have lived long ago. All of these aspects come together to illustrate a special way of life that allowed these people to live in harmony with nature.

Site Traditionnel Huron

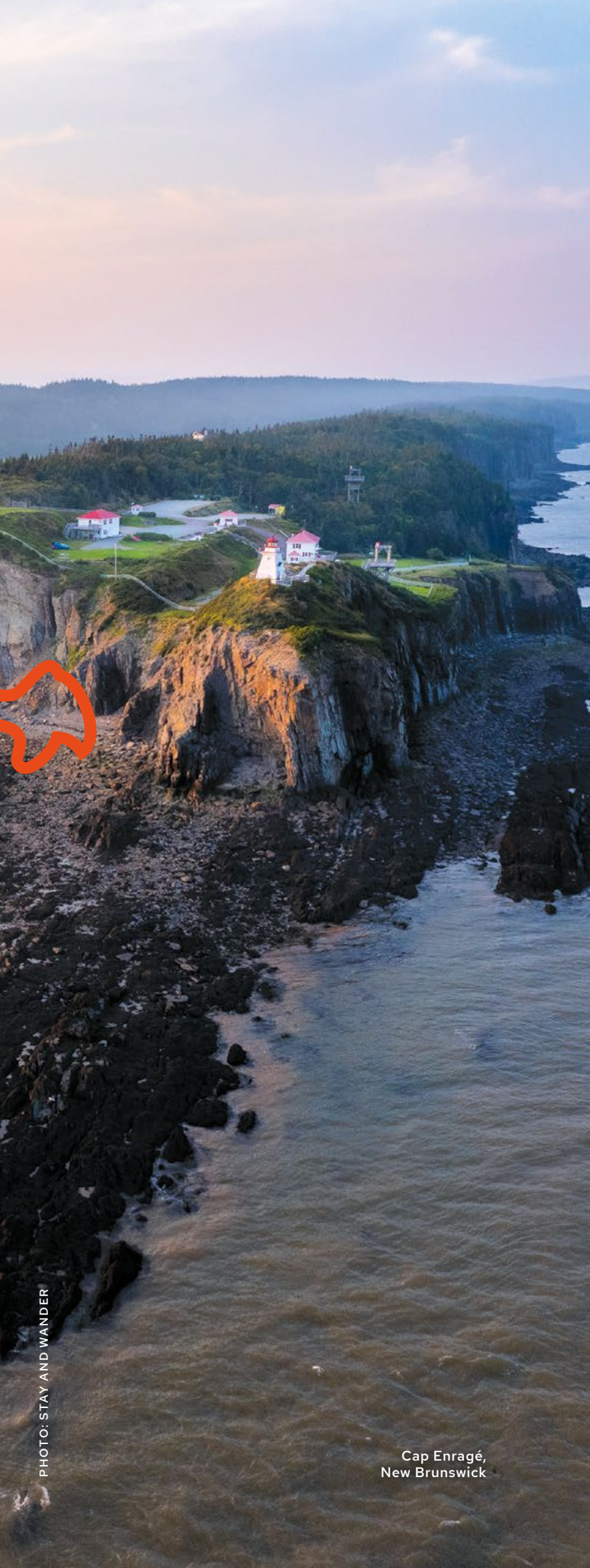
You can visit a reconstructed Wendat Village just 15 minutes from downtown Quebec City at Site Traditionnel Huron. Guides dressed in traditional clothing bring Wendat history to life sharing the stories, traditions, and knowledge that has been passed down from generations. The traditional longhouse replica gives a fascinating insight into the day-to-day life of the Wendat people and their various skills such as cooking, woodworking, and crafting. Knowledgeable guides also discuss the complicated history between the Canadian government and Indigenous communities, shedding light on the resilience of Wendat People. There's an onsite Indigenous restaurant and a gift shop that sells traditional handicrafts. The overall experience celebrates Wendat culture while educating visitors about the historical struggles and ongoing contributions of Indigenous Peoples. 🌿

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHTS

The Atlantic

With its rugged coastlines, red sand beaches and dense Acadian forests, the Atlantic region is an epic destination with majestic beauty around every corner. The Indigenous people who have called the east coast home for millennia—the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Peskotomuhkati Nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy, Inuit and Innu—know these territories inside and out and are ideal hosts for guests seeking an authentic and sustainable tourism experience.

BY CARA MCKENNA



Cap Enragé,
New Brunswick

Whether it's a fishing excursion along the misty saltwater coast, spending time with ancient cultural items or tasting Indigenous foods such as maple syrup and traditionally-prepared seafood—your time on these territories is sure to be memorable.

Visit the **Elsipogtog Mi'kmaq Cultural Center** for an educational tour with guides who immerse guests into the past and present of Mi'kmaq life on the lands briefly known as New Brunswick. Visitors will leave with a renewed understanding about the land and its people, after learning Indigenous plants and their uses, exploring traditional lodging and listening to stories while enjoying fresh bannock with maple syrup. Make sure to explore the gift shop before you leave, which features the work of many artisans from Elsipogtog First Nation and beyond.

On the banks overlooking the Miramichi River, the **Red Bank Lodge** is a sanctuary located on the lands of the Metepenagiag Mi'kmaq Nation in New Brunswick. Visitors to the hotel can connect with nature in all seasons, with salmon fishing excursions from spring until fall, and snowshoe experiences in the wintertime. At the end of the day, unwind in a hot tub or curl up by the fireside before going to sleep in a cedar log-walled room while listening to the soothing sounds of the river outside.



Gros Morne National Park,
Newfoundland

Located beside the Red Bank Lodge is the **Metepenagiag Heritage Park**, the site of two archaeological sites that date back thousands of years. It was the 1970s when development on a proposed gravel pit was halted after Elder Joe Augustine flagged an ancient burial site on the same grounds. Now, the Augustine Mound and Oxbow Site are preserved and visitors can learn about them through exhibits delving into the Mi'kmaq of Metepenagiag history of the site. The heritage park also offers camping rates for those who want to stay overnight—including the option to stay in a teepee.

For centuries, Indigenous Peoples have valued maple syrup as a nourishing and delicious staple food. **Wabanaki Maple** produces this Canadian classic on the lands of Neqotkuk (Tobique First Nation). Its founder Jolene Laskey is from Wolastoqi, and describes the process of aging and tending

to maple syrup as “like the nurturing of a mother—you have to let it grow on its own and change as it matures.” The company offers many gourmet flavours beyond the traditional maple syrup, including a barrel-aged toasted oak and an elderberry infusion.

With access to hundreds of kilometres of trails, **Appalachian Chalets & RV** in Newfoundland and Labrador is an ideal destination for those who love outdoor adventures. Visitors can book a chalet or bring their RV and enjoy a short- or long-term stay with many experiences at their fingertips. Spend the day exploring the wilderness on a snowmobile, ATV, or by foot or enjoy nearby skiing, golfing or ziplining experiences. The site’s highly-rated restaurant, Wayward Spruce, also offers comfort food such as poutine, seafood chowder and fish and chips.

Mi'kmaw woman Daphne March was inspired by her parents to start **ShaMaSha**, a wellness retreat in Newfoundland and Labrador. For decades, her mother and father ran a store that became a community gathering space—so March wanted to create a space of her own for people to connect and feel at home in. ShaMaSha hosts gatherings focused on yoga, nutrition, mindfulness and more—as well as healing retreats—that weave in Indigenous ways of knowing. Guests are sure to leave feeling restored and connected to nature.

Travelling by boat to an isolated cove where Indigenous guides share stories from the land is one of the experiences offered by **Gros Morne Adventures**. Visitors will explore the territories and learn to use traditional stone tools to build a fire and cook Lu'skinikin (bannock)—or can choose to take to the sea in a 10-person canoe. Gros Morne Adventures also offers a variety of other tours in Newfoundland and Labrador, including multi-day hiking tours, kayaking adventures and stand-up paddleboard excursions.

In southwestern Newfoundland, **Pirates Haven ATV Friendly Park & Chalets Adventure** is an unforgettable destination. Visitors who don't have an RV but still want to get close to nature can book one of the four-star chalets or glamping units, equipped with comforts such as kitchenettes, showers and wifi. Guests can book a fly fishing or ATV adventure in the daytime, and come back to enjoy a meal at the site's Longhouse Restaurant—serving dishes like fresh lobster, pasta and moose pie—and unwind by a crackling fire.

Visitors can adventure comfortably into the backcountry of Gros Morne National Park with **Under the Stump**. The company is run by a Mi'kmaw family who specialize in accessibility and sustainability—offering a variety of tours including cultural excursions and trips by ATV or by foot. Visitors learn about the history of the site while taking in the beauty of the countryside as they travel alongside misty fjords, sprawling lookouts and local plantlife—all while hearing multigenerational stories from knowledgeable Indigenous guides.



Pirates Haven ATV Friendly Park & Chalets Adventure, Newfoundland



Appalachian Chalets & RV, Newfoundland

Guests are invited to visit the island and take part in a variety of authentic cultural experiences, including drummaking, creating quillwork on birchbark and enjoying Indigenous foods prepared traditionally on the beach.



Experience Lennox Island,
Prince Edward Island

For those who prefer to explore Gros Morne via the waters that surrounds it, **Wild Gros Morne** offers a variety of marine-focused tours. Book a fishing charter and reel in fish like cod, mackerel and halibut, or rip around the area on a kayak or zodiac. Meanwhile, the more culinary-focused traveller can join their beach boil-up tour, where visitors are treated to an epic food experience with fresh seafood, foraged ingredients and wild game. The company also offers oceanside camping, where guests are ideally positioned to spot whales.

With multiple days worth of attractions, the Labrador Coastal Drive is one of the most popular ways to take in the rugged glory of the east coast. Located about halfway through is the **Alexis Hotel** in Port Hope Simpson, where guests can spend restorative time beside the Labrador Sea. This family-run hotel offers stunning views of the bay, where visitors can observe northern lights, passing icebergs and stunning sunrises. The adjoining restaurant offers comfort meals such as fish and chips, fried chicken and hot turkey sandwiches.

In the inuktitut language, the word mamattuk means “delicious”—which is why it was chosen as a name for the restaurant at **Royal Inn and Suites** in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. With dishes inspired by traditional foods, the menu includes arctic char tartare, south coast chowder and Labrador scallops. Both the hotel and restaurant are owned by Nunacor, the business development arm of the NunatuKavut Community Council. Mamattuk opened in early 2024, with NCC president Todd Russell calling it “a great reflection of our people and communities.”

The guides at **Big Land Fishing Lodge and Tours** are experts in angling—whether for Atlantic salmon, speckled trout or Arctic char. Staying by the Big Land Lodge on the southern coast of Labrador, minke and humpback whales are known to play among icebergs out in the water, while other wildlife such as eagles and foxes can be often seen. The accommodations are rustic-style cabins with an attached lounge—ideal for sitting with friends and sharing stories at the end of a long day reeling in salmon out on a rushing river.

About half of the membership of Lennox Island First Nation live at L’nui Mnikuk, a 540-hectare island connected to Prince Edward Island by a short causeway bridge. The community was isolated prior to the 1970s, when the causeway was built, and has since built a thriving tourism destination, **Experience Lennox Island**. Guests are invited to visit the island and take part in a variety of authentic cultural experiences, including drummaking, creating quillwork on birchbark and enjoying Indigenous foods prepared traditionally on the beach.

At the **Millbrook Culture & Heritage Centre** on Millbrook First Nation, visitors are greeted by a 12-metre tall statue of Glooscap—a legendary figure in Indigenous creation stories in the Atlantic—who holds a glowing torch. Inside, watch a short film about Mi’kmaq history and spend time with ancient artifacts dating back as far as 7,500 years. The centre’s manager Heather Stevens is passionate about preserving Mi’kmaq culture and recently led the repatriation of several pieces of regalia that were being kept in an Australian museum. 🌸



REGIONAL SPOTLIGHTS

The North

Travel to the north for the trip of a lifetime. Be captivated by the land, the people, the wildlife and the hospitality. While there, you can experience either 24 hour sunlight or darkness and be fully immersed in the northern way of life.

During the warmer months, you'll catch yourself experiencing the midnight sun. In the cooler months, you'll be hugged by your parka as you search for the aurora and become mesmerized by the bright colours as they take over the night sky.

As we travel through the Territories, we will show you some of the most unique places with incredible people to guide you along the way.

BY ANGELA RYDER

YUKON TERRITORY

Located near Champagne, Yukon, **Long Ago Peoples Place** (Dank'e Adventures) is a meticulously recreated traditional village that showcases the traditional way of life, living structures, hunting tools and hunting recreations. Since 1995, they have been educating and entertaining visitors from around the world. They offer rich educational experiences for school groups, visitors and government organizations that are eager to deepen their understanding of the Indigenous culture and people that have inhabited these lands for thousands of years.

When you arrive in Dawson City, you will be surrounded by a community that is welcoming and rich with culture. Join Tommy Taylor, a proud local resident as he takes you on an informative Yukon River Adventure. Tommy, the owner of **Fishwheel Charters**, takes you on a two-hour tour that celebrates the Hän traditions and deep connections to the river's natural splendour. With breathtaking scenery, this tour will have you listening to stories and learning about the cultural practices that predate the Gold Rush Days.

North Star Adventures,
Northwest Territories



Bucket List Tours, Yellowknife,
Northwest Territories

Shakat Tun Adventures is a family-run wilderness camp in the Yukon. They offer an immersive experience into the traditions of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Originally a family trapline, the camp has been passed down through generations of the Allen family. Located three hours from Whitehorse and nestled beside Kluane Lake, you'll meet knowledge-keepers James and Barbara Allen who will welcome you into a world of cultural richness and tradition, with storytelling by the fire, medicine walks, moosehide tanning (and so much more).

Embark on a journey with **Tutchone Tours**, while viewing history and nature along the Yukon River. Led by owner Teri-Lee Isaac, select a full day river boat tour from Minto

Landing to Fort Selkirk where you will learn the history of the Yukon Gold Rush, the learn the history of the Indigenous People in the territory. As you glide along the river, keep an eye out for Dall sheep, moose and take in the scenery that will make time stand still.

Feel like a local, while being guided by locals. At **Whitehorse Who What Where Tours/Dickson Outfitters**, they will take you all around Whitehorse and the surround areas. Dickson Outfitters has been providing tours for over 100 years! Whether you are looking for a city tour, a trip to Carcross, head to Haines Junction or even a day trip to Alaska, their friendly team is here to help you through the entire way.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Discover the warmth and tradition of **Aurora Heat's** handcrafted hand and foot warmers. All of their products are made in the Northwest Territories using sustainably harvested sheared beaver fur. These luxurious hand, foot, head and body warmers blend exceptional warmth with durability and softness. Each piece reflects a deep commitment to environmental responsibility, using reusable, biodegradable materials for a cozy and sustainable solution to keeping warm during the colder months. All of their products are hypoallergenic, and provide a comfortable, natural way to stay warm, while showcasing Indigenous craftsmanship.

B. Dene Adventures, located near Yellowknife, offers unforgettable Aurora viewing and immersive Indigenous cultural experiences. Guests can enjoy cozy cabins or teepees while experiencing Dene storytelling, traditional drumming, hands-on demonstrations, and authentic Northern cuisine with the Yellowknives Dene People. Their accommodations can host up to 20 people overnight and they have a sauna for people to enjoy. Committed to safety, B. Dene Adventures features also comprehensive bear and wildlife monitoring led by their experienced guides.

Bucket List Tours embraces the meaning of Northern Hospitality and owner Tracy Therrien makes you feel like you're at home. Stop by the Cozy Cabin, enjoy listening to stories, eating tasty Bannock and soup and hopefully catch a glimpse of the northern lights. During their day tours, you can visit some of the locals and learn about the city of Yellowknife or even hike up to the Cameron Falls. They promise to keep yours small to ensure that you will have a personal experience with memories to last a lifetime.

Castaways Cabins & Campground is a 100% locally-owned Indigenous business, sits on the scenic southern coast of Great Slave Lake, just 10 minutes from Hay River, Northwest Territories. Their lakefront cottages, suites, and campsites offer private escapes surrounded by the North's breathtaking beauty. Relax by the water, hike on the trails, or witness the Northern Lights dancing across a winter sky. Each cottage reflects traditional Indigenous culture through art and furnishings, enriching your experience.



Aurora Heat, Fort Smith, Northwest Territories

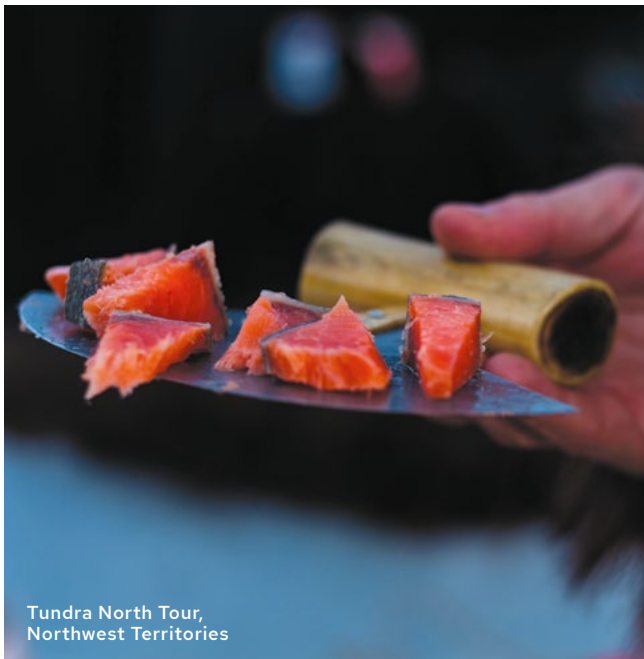


Shakat Tun Adventures, Yukon

Frontier Lodge is a world class fishing destination. Guests will be flown in and greeted by local fishing guides. They will be captivated by the endless water and land that surrounds the lodge. Located on the Great Slave Lake, you can fish for arctic grayling and northern pike. This serene destination will have you experience the Frontier like never before. You'll want to stay longer than planned and wanting to go back for another trip.

North of 60 Aurora Adventures is a proudly-owned family business. Sharing the cultural traditions and teaches that have been passed down through generations. Located just outside of Yellowknife, they offer tours such as lakeside aurora viewing, dog sledding experiences, ice fishing, and so much more. For the more adventurous folk, you can also view the aurora from a dog sled racing through the snowy trails!

Tundra North Tours, an Inuit-owned company in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, offers an experience to learn about the authentic culture and take in the breathtaking beauty of Canada's Arctic. Whether you're seeking a guided tour of Inuvik, a scenic boat or flight to Tuktoyaktuk, or an adventure down the legendary Dempster Highway to the Arctic Circle, each experience can be tailored to your needs. They have one goal, and it's that you leave Canada's North with unforgettable memories.



Tundra North Tour,
Northwest Territories



Arctic Bay Adventures,
Arctic Bay, Nunavut

Whether your seeking a guided tour of Inuvik, a scenic boat or flight to Tuktoyaktuk, or an adventure down the legendary Dempster Highway to the Arctic Circle, each experience can be tailored to your needs.

NUNAVUT

Visit one of the world's most unique destinations with **Arctic Bay Adventures**. The small community of Arctic Bay is located on Baffin Island, NU. They are community owned and tours are run by local Inuit guides. They offer several packages year round that can have you exploring the land. Summer tours include touring the Arctic Ocean and seeing some of the local wildlife. Other tours can include a trip to the floe edge, where you can take in the 24 hour sunlight while taking in a once in a lifetime arctic adventure. ❄️



EMPOWER THE FUTURE







From Grassroots to Global:

The Expanding Reach of the International Indigenous Tourism Conference

Beneath ancient skies and around sacred fires, Indigenous peoples have long gathered in places of cultural convergence—natural amphitheaters carved by rivers, open plains kissed by the wind, and forest clearings alive with song. These spaces were sanctuaries of storytelling, where wisdom flowed freely, traditions were celebrated, and bonds between nations were forged in the spirit of unity. Today, this enduring practice is reimagined through organized events like the International Indigenous Tourism Conference (IITC), a contemporary gathering that transcends borders while honouring age-old customs. Though these meetings now unfold in conventional conference centers rather than the warm embrace of a traditional longhouse, IITC transforms corporate event spaces into vibrant hubs of connection, culture, and collaboration. Rooted in the art of storytelling and celebration, this annual event has cultivated a loyal following, drawing over a thousand international delegates each year to engage in a dialogue that bridges past, present, and future.

BY ZANE BUCHANAN

That said, while celebrated as an annual cornerstone for attendees from Indigenous communities and the global destination marketing and development industries, the IITC has undeniably modest origins.

In its early days, the IITC—formerly known as the National Aboriginal Tourism Opportunities Conference (NATOC)—was a meager gathering of fewer than 50 passionate individuals in a hotel conference space, united by a shared and powerful vision. As it does today, these early meetings sought to connect Indigenous tourism leaders, empower local communities, and create sustainable economic opportunities while celebrating and preserving Indigenous cultures—though on a much smaller scale. From those grassroots beginnings, the IITC has grown into the world’s largest Indigenous tourism conference, now filling some of Canada’s largest conference centers.

The Birth of the IITC

The inaugural National Aboriginal Tourism Opportunities Conference, now known as the International Indigenous Tourism Conference (IITC), was held in 2012 in Osoyoos, British Columbia. With fewer than 50 delegates, it was a modest beginning compared to the large-scale events it would later become. Yet its significance was undeniable. The gathering brought together Indigenous tourism operators, entrepreneurs, cultural leaders, and advocates from across Canada and beyond, united by a shared vision: to position Indigenous tourism as a thriving and respected sector within the global tourism industry.

The conference focused on developing strategies to empower Indigenous communities, foster cultural exchange, and create opportunities for economic self-sufficiency through tourism.

“We knew it would be a small gathering,” reflected Keith Henry, CEO of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC). “But the energy in the room was unlike anything we had experienced before. There was a sense of pride, a sense of purpose, and most importantly, a shared belief that this conference could change the future of Indigenous tourism.”

What began as a grassroots effort to share best practices and amplify Indigenous voices quickly evolved into something much larger. The conference’s influence extended beyond Canada, laying the groundwork for a global movement in Indigenous tourism.



Drew Hayden Taylor
IITC 2024, Ottawa, Ontario

Early Growth and International Expansion

The early years of the IITC were defined by growing momentum and a deep sense of shared purpose. In 2013, the conference returned to Osoyoos, held at Spirit Ridge, fostering discussions on expanding Indigenous tourism, establishing cultural protocols, and addressing the challenges of marketing globally. These conversations emphasized the importance of preserving and celebrating Indigenous cultures while ensuring the benefits of tourism remained within Indigenous communities.

By 2014, the IITC made a significant leap forward, relocating to Whistler, British Columbia, a globally renowned tourist destination. This event attracted over 200 delegates and introduced an expanded program of workshops, panel discussions, and networking opportunities.

“Whistler was a turning point for us,” Henry recalled. “It was the first time we saw real potential for scaling the conference to a larger, international level. People from across Canada began to show up, and the conversations became more global.”

This shift solidified the IITC’s role as a platform for Indigenous voices, enabling participants to exchange experiences, celebrate successes, and confront shared challenges.

A Platform for Advocacy

In 2015, the IITC embraced a truly international presence with its conference in Quebec City, welcoming delegates from Europe and Africa for the first time. With over 500 attendees, the event broadened its focus to explore Indigenous tourism's critical role in reconciliation, sustainability, and the global travel economy.

The momentum carried forward in 2016 with the conference hosted at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. This gathering marked the IITC's transition from a niche event into a cornerstone for sustainable tourism and cultural preservation. It showcased the growing influence of Indigenous tourism as a driver for cultural empowerment and economic development.

In 2017, the Grey Eagle Resort and Casino in Calgary, Alberta, hosted a landmark gathering that brought together over 700 delegates from across Canada and beyond. This milestone edition of the IITC served as a vibrant platform for advocacy, policy development, and global collaboration, fostering connections between Indigenous tourism operators, investors, government representatives, and industry leaders.

Reaching New Heights

The IITC's global influence expanded further in 2018 when Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, hosted a conference focused on reconciliation, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation. This event attracted a diverse group of Indigenous tourism operators, academics, researchers, and policymakers, reflecting the sector's growing importance in addressing global challenges.

In 2019, Kelowna, British Columbia, hosted a landmark conference that set records for attendance and launched initiatives to amplify Indigenous tourism on the world stage. By this time, the IITC had become a powerful symbol of the resilience, strength, and innovation of Indigenous peoples, inspiring collaboration across borders.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily paused international gatherings, the IITC returned in 2022 as a national conference in Calgary, Alberta. The event reaffirmed its essential role as a platform for collaboration, cultural exchange, and economic opportunity.

The Present and Beyond: A Global Force

In 2023, the IITC celebrated its 10th anniversary in Winnipeg, Manitoba, with a record-breaking 1,000 delegates—the largest attendance in its history. Participants from around the globe gathered to honor Indigenous tourism's achievements, exchange insights, and address emerging challenges. Beyond business discussions, the event carried a profound mission: amplifying the voices of Indigenous peoples and driving meaningful change on a global scale.

In February 2024, the IITC convened in Ottawa, Ontario, on the unceded Algonquin Anishinaabeg Territory under the theme "Where Nations Meet." This milestone event epitomized connection and collaboration, uniting Indigenous nations and cultures through dialogue, cultural exchange, and a shared vision for the future of Indigenous tourism.

Notably, this year's conference marked the launch of Destination Original Indigenous Tourism, a groundbreaking initiative formed by three leading global Indigenous tourism organizations: Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA), and the Pacific Indigenous Tourism & Trade Organization (PITTO). This initiative aims to strengthen global Indigenous tourism by promoting ethical practices, cultural preservation, and international partnerships, setting a new benchmark for collaborative growth in the sector.

Looking ahead, the 2025 IITC in Montreal, Quebec, promises to build on this legacy of empowerment, cultural preservation, and global collaboration. Its striking logo—a symbol of soaring, freedom, and travel—captures the event's spirit. Designed by Leilani Shaw, a Kanien'kehá:ka and Paiute artist from Kahnawà:ke, the abstract flying goose represents unity among Indigenous Nations across Quebec and Canada. The geese, soaring over communities and urban centers, embody solidarity and togetherness.

The logo's abstract design invites personal interpretation, encouraging attendees to connect it to their own cultural values and stories. It serves as a unifying thread, celebrating the resilience and shared experiences of Indigenous peoples worldwide.

As the IITC enters its second decade, it remains a beacon of hope, resilience, and unity for Indigenous peoples. By championing cultural strength and innovation, the conference continues to inspire Indigenous communities and the world with its vision for a brighter, more inclusive future. 🌿



Stewards of the Land:

The Intersection of Indigenous Tourism and Sustainability

Long before sustainability became a global priority, Indigenous Peoples maintained a harmonious relationship with the land, guided by principles that respected the natural balance of ecosystems. Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have cared for and stewarded this land we now call Canada. With considerations given to the impact of seven future generations, these deep-rooted sustainable practices are at the heart of Indigenous tourism experiences today, where every visit supports environmental conservation and cultural preservation in places as diverse as the rainforests of British Columbia and the prairies of Saskatchewan. Let's take a journey through these remarkable sites, each embodying the ethos of sustainability, through Indigenous-led tourism.

BY RYAN ROGERS



Wanuskewin, the nēhiyawēwin (Plains Cree) word roughly translated as ‘seeking peace of mind’ has been a sacred site and gathering place for more than 6,400 years. This National Heritage Site preserves the rich history and traditions of the Northern Plains Indigenous Peoples. A key highlight of the **Wanuskewin Heritage Park** is the reintroduction of plains bison, a species that once played a vital role in the lives of Indigenous communities and was hunted to near extinction in the late 1800s. The reintroduction of plains bison at Wanuskewin symbolizes the deep spiritual connection that Indigenous Peoples from across the Great Plains have with these important animals. Visitors can explore interpretive trails that wind through archaeological sites and witness the cultural significance of these sacred spaces.

Métis Crossing, located in Smokey Lake, Alberta is more than a cultural destination; it’s a living example of the Métis principles of sustainability and community. The Visions, Hopes, and Dreams at Métis Crossing Wildlife Park is home to culturally significant heritage species like white bison, symbolizing both resilience and the deep-rooted Métis connection to the land. Visitors can also stay overnight in the eco-conscious guest lodge, designed with input from Métis architects and artists to incorporate sustainable building materials and showcase Métis art and heritage. As night falls, the Sky Watching Domes provide an unparalleled view of the stars, inviting guests to connect with the land and skies.

Set within the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest, **Spirit Bear Lodge** is dedicated to sustainable tourism that protects and celebrates this rare ecosystem. Owned and operated by the Kitasoo Xai’xais Nation, the lodge supports local conservation organizations and community-based stewardship efforts, ensuring that every guest experience contributes to the preservation of this sacred land. Visitors have the opportunity to witness the awe-inspiring Spirit Bear, a rare white-furred black bear unique to this region while hearing stories and learning about the Kitasoo Xai’xais connection to the land and waters. Through guided wildlife tours and visits to the Klemtu Big House, led by knowledgeable community members, guests gain a deeper understanding of Kitasoo Xai’xais Peoples’ language, art, values, traditions, and ceremonial practices.

The five partner First Nations who own **Knight Inlet Lodge**—Da’naxda’xw Awaetlala, Mamalilikulla, Tlowitsis, Wei Wai Kum and K’ómoks—have been stewards of their traditional territories, including the region of Knight Inlet, for thousands of years. Located in a remote fjord in the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest accessible only by floatplane, this lodge offers a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see grizzly bears in their natural habitat while emphasizing sustainable tourism practices and cultural preservation. Supporting research and conservation efforts, this lodge’s eco-sensitive operations and minimal footprint reflect a strong commitment to preserving this remote ecosystem for future generations.

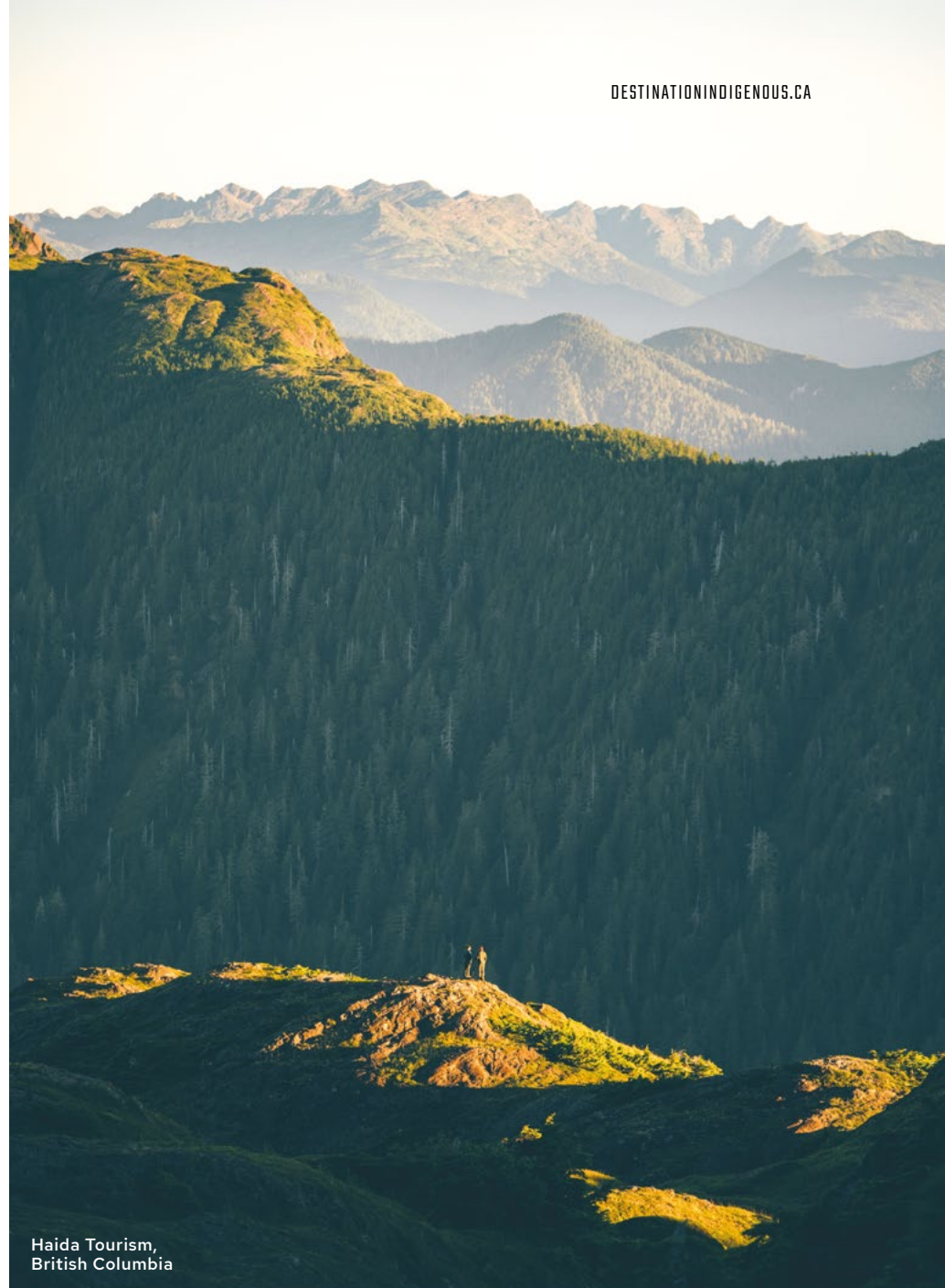


Knight Inlet Lodge, Black Creek,
British Columbia

On the waters of Bute Inlet, **Homalco Wildlife & Cultural Tours** provides a respectful gateway to witness one of nature's most awe-inspiring spectacles: the annual salmon run and the bears it attracts. Guided by members of the Homalco Nation, visitors learn about the salmon's lifecycle and its role in sustaining local wildlife, including grizzly bears. The Homalco Nation's deep commitment to conservation is evident through its sustainable practices, which include careful visitor management to minimize environmental impact and ongoing habitat protection efforts. Knowledgeable Homalco guides share stories, language, and traditional ecological knowledge, allowing visitors to gain insight into the Homalco way of life and their deep connection to the land.

Klahoose Wilderness Resort

in Desolation Sound offers an eco-luxury escape that celebrates the heritage and natural beauty of the Klahoose First Nation. Nestled between lush forests and pristine waters, the resort prioritizes sustainability through innovative practices, including hydroelectric power sourced from a nearby mountain stream, which significantly reduces its environmental footprint. Guided by Klahoose Knowledge Keepers, visitors embark on wildlife tours in Toba Inlet, where they may encounter killer whales, grizzly bears, humpback whales, sea lions, porpoises, eagles and more in their natural habitat. Guests to the resort learn about the toq qaymıx™ (Klahoose) People: their culture, traditions, stories, and land stewardship.



Haida Tourism,
British Columbia

On Haida Gwaii, **Haida Tourism** combines cultural authenticity with sustainable hospitality. Haida Tourism properties, Haida House at Tllaal and Ocean House, are Sustainable Tourism Gold Certified and managed to the highest environmental standards. Guided by the Haida principle of Yahguudang, or "respect for all living things and the interdependence that binds us," Haida Tourism ensures that every

adventure supports environmental stewardship and cultural preservation. From exploring the lush rainforests and dramatic coastlines to learning about Haida traditions and art forms, visitors are immersed in the deep cultural significance of this region. Before arriving, travellers are invited to take the Haida Gwaii Pledge, a commitment to respect the land, community, and heritage of the Haida People.



Thrive Tours, Ontario

Thrive Tours offers culturally immersive and eco-friendly adventures across Northern Ontario, led by Indigenous guides who share their deep-rooted connection to the land. Thrive Tours prioritizes respectful, low-impact travel that fosters a meaningful relationship between guests and nature. Through experiences such as guided hikes, canoe or kayak journeys, art workshops, and snowshoeing, visitors gain insights into Traditional Knowledge, land stewardship, and the spiritual significance of local ecosystems. Thrive also supports community initiatives, with a portion of tour proceeds reinvested into environmental and cultural projects.

Managed by the Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, **Point Grondine Park** spans over 18,000 acres of rugged natural beauty along Georgian Bay. The park invites visitors to explore dense old growth pine forests, serene inland lakes, challenging trails, and

stunning river vistas all while learning about traditional land-use practices and the cultural heritage of the Anishnaabek People. The park emphasizes conservation and sustainable tourism, offering eco-friendly camping, kayaking, canoeing and hiking experiences along the traditional routes of the Anishnaabek People.

At the International Indigenous Tourism Conference, **Indigenous Tourism Québec** was presented with the Provincial/Territorial Association of the Year Award, which recognizes excellence in leadership, partnership, development and marketing to build a resilient Indigenous tourism industry. Representing all eleven Nations in Québec and fifty-five Indigenous communities, Indigenous Tourism Québec proudly launched *Shipeku: Toward Sustainable Indigenous Tourism* in 2022, an eighteen-month program aimed to support Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs in their transition to

sustainability. The program, which skilfully combines scientific and Traditional Knowledge, guided a selection of Indigenous tourism businesses to become more resilient in the face of climate change improving their visitor experience and benefiting their entire community.

In a world increasingly conscious of sustainability, Indigenous tourism in Canada offers a powerful reminder of the deep connection between cultural heritage and environmental stewardship. Indigenous communities across the country are not only revitalizing their traditions but also leading by example, showcasing sustainable practices that honour both their ancestors and future generations. From the awe-inspiring Spirit Bear Lodge in the Great Bear Rainforest to the culturally rich experiences at Métis Crossing and Wanuskewin Heritage Park, each destination embodies the principles of respect, conservation, and intergenerational responsibility. 🌿



Rising from the Ashes: Indigenous Tourism in Jasper Post-Wildfire

In July of 2024, a devastating wildfire ripped through the Rocky Mountain municipality of Jasper in Alberta. The fire, which burned down one-third of the buildings in Jasper, was the largest in the national park in over 100 years. The fire consumed more than 33,000 hectares before it was classified as being held. The impact was catastrophic for the many that lost their homes and belongings and as of November 2024, many are still waiting on a return to normalcy and an opportunity to rebuild.

BY TRAVIS KLEMP



Joe Urie
Jasper Tour Company,
Alberta

“This rebuild is not my rebuild, my time has already come. These stories will not always be mine to share. This is the next generations rebuild, their stories to share and carry forward”

“I have shared this with visitors for a long time,” say Urie, “and now they will see the results. But this is how nature works and I will help retool the visitors idea of what beautiful is. This is the first step of beautiful.”

Ultimately, Urie knows that Indigenous tourism will look different in the area but it will always be a story and experience that needs to be shared. Additionally, there are opportunities for connecting with the Indigenous community in new ways.

“This is an opportunity for economic reconciliation as we rebuild. We can bring people home who have been here for a very long time,” Urie shares.

Matrica Bauer and the 100% Indigenous and Women owned Warrior Women offers education to all levels, as well as Indigenous tourism experiences, arts and craft workshops, and a variety of Indigenous products including, art, beading, and leatherwork.

Originally from Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, Bauer is a leader of the Indigenous tourism industry in Jasper. From weekly fireside chats in Jasper, to artistic experiences led across Turtle Island, Warrior Women host a number of Indigenous cultural experiences. All of which have been impacted significantly by the wildfire. The Wapakwanis Plant Walk in particular may look different and need to reflect a new beauty.

With the damage, tourism in the area has undoubtedly been impacted. Indigenous tourism in particular, however, in a slightly different way. Two organizations in particular, Jasper Tour Company, co-owned and operated by Joe Urie, and Warrior Women, led by Matricia Bauer, are incredible leaders in the Jasper area tourism landscape.

Urie comes from a Métis family who have lived and guided along the Athabasca River for centuries. The first of his people arrived there from the Métis Homeland, in what is now called Manitoba, during the 1860’s. His connection to the river is so deep that he considers the Athabasca to be the blood in his veins and it is this connection that he hopes to help visitors connect with it as well. Urie’s aim is to show every person who adventures out into this place with him that they have a fundamental connection to the land. Jasper Tour Company is an invitation to experience the Asiniwaciya (Rocky Mountains) through his eyes.

Much of Urie’s teachings and guiding principles that he offers to visitors are based around Wahkohtowin—a Cree and Michif word meaning “kinship”. It is something that points to the interconnectedness of everything and everyone. In some Indigenous cultures, it translates to something resembling the “circle of life”. And nothing could be more prevalent than the circle of life in the case of wildfire destruction and a vision for rebirth of Indigenous tourism in Jasper.

“It will be a continuation of the same story I have been telling for years,” says Urie, “Indigenous burning practices were abandoned and this is what we got.”

While a combination of extreme heat, drought, and an abundance of flammable materials certainly were a part of the fire getting out of control, Urie has been vocal about how fire suppression initiatives and policies have altered the resilience of these forests.



Jasper Tour Company, Alberta

Urie and Bauer share a unique perspective from their time as guides. One that perhaps may go against what visitors are seeing and experiencing in a sense. With many international visitors taking part in their tours, they see the huge swaths of old growth forests. Endless, dense, and beautiful land tucked against and around the Rocky Mountains—visitors are astonished and amazed. And it makes sense, its natural and mystical wilderness that they may not experience at home. However, for Urie, that isn't the case.

"I see why they feel that way and I can appreciate that. But this is not natural. Indigenous burning practices would

have never let things get to this point. And we need to continue telling that story—of how we got to here and what steps forward look like," says Urie.

The rebirth and restoration of Indigenous tourism in Jasper may be exactly that, telling stories. As so much of Indigenous culture and tradition is based around storytelling and sharing truth that has been taken or ignored, the Jasper wildfire and the future will need to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into the next chapter. Leaders like Urie and Bauer have been sharing these stories and perspectives for many years and while the devastation that

took place in the summer of 2024 was significant, there is an opportunity for reconciliation in many areas of rebuilding.

"This rebuild is not my rebuild, my time has already come. These stories will not always be mine to share. This is the next generations rebuild, their stories to share and carry forward," shares Urie.

Urie, Bauer, and others can hold these stories and be leaders in starting the rebuild in a good way, but it is up to future generations, decision-makers, and citizens to carry these stories and learn from them. 🍁



Thanks for Reading

From oral traditions to pictographs to time-honoured songs, Storytelling is synonymous with the Indigenous way. Following in the sacred footsteps of our Elders and Knowledgekeepers, *Nations* aims to harness our culture's reverence for community and story, while making it accessible to all. With that, you may have noticed *Nations'* gradual evolution from a travel-trade publication to a narrative-driven editorial journal. One that both uplifts ITAC's cherished members while striving to engage a wide audience through thought-provoking words and dazzling imagery. Ultimately, we aim to curate something that subverts the expectations of conventional print/digital media and becomes something of an heirloom-echoing the sharing ethos that is so intrinsic to our people.

As we conclude this literary journey through our traditional lands, I want to personally thank the readers for their indelible support of *Nations* and the Indigenous Tourism Industry at large. While *Nations*, as a publication, predates my tenure at the organization, I take great pride in innovating and elevating every edition. Encapsulating the industry's unparalleled spirit in a tangible format is an undeniably daunting but incredibly enriching task that I'm endlessly grateful to take part in every year.

To support our small but mighty publication and the operators it so proudly represents, please share the FREE digital version of *Nations* Magazine on social media.



Maarsii,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zane Buchanan".

Zane Buchanan
Editor, *Nations* Magazine



INDIGENOUS TOURISM IS RECONCILIATION IN ACTION

EXPLORE INDIGENOUS CANADA





PHOTO: STAY AND WANDER

First Nation Storytellers,
New Brunswick

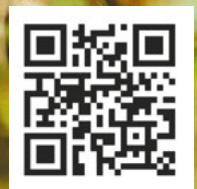


CANADA  FOR GLOWING HEARTS

DESTINATION
INDIGENOUS



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