

2017 • 2018

**GUIDE TO INDIGENOUS
TOURISM IN CANADA**



INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 British Columbia
- 12 Alberta
- 16 Saskatchewan
- 18 Manitoba
- 22 Ontario
- 30 Quebec
- 36 Newfoundland and Labrador
- 40 New Brunswick
- 42 Nova Scotia
- 46 Prince Edward Island
- 48 Yukon
- 50 Northwest Territories
- 54 Nunavut
- 56 Additional Member Listings
- 57 ITAC Board Members

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

300-3665 Kingsway
Vancouver, BC, V5R 5W2

604-639-4408
www.indigenoustourism.ca
info@indigenoustourism.ca

PUBLISHED BY //
*Indigenous Tourism Association
of Canada*

PROJECT LEAD //
*Dené Sinclair, Director of Marketing
ITAC, with Toque & Canoe Inc.*

DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY //
Andrea Richards Design

CONTRIBUTORS //
*Jennifer Allford, Valerie Berenyi,
Shelley Boettcher, Kim Gray,
Margo Pfeiff, Frankie Thornhill*

PHOTO CREDIT //
*Cover: Torngat Mountains National
Park, Newfoundland and Labrador
Photo by Barrett & MacKay courtesy
Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism*

*Inside front cover: Photo of a traditional
Mi'kmaw jingle dress dancer taken
on Wood Islands, Epekwitk (Prince
Edward Island) courtesy Patricia
Bourque Photography*

PHOTO CREDIT //
*Back cover photos courtesy: Squamish
Lil'wat Cultural Centre; B. Dene
Adventures; Cael Cook, Spirit Bear
Lodge; Tourism Manawan; Wanuskewin
Heritage Park; Pirate's Haven ATV
Friendly RV Park & Chalets*

PRINTED BY //
Hemlock Printers Ltd.



GREETINGS FROM THE
INDIGENOUS TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

Here at the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), we are entering the second year of an ambitious five-year plan.

We are very excited to launch this new guide to Indigenous tourism in Canada for industry, media and visitors who want to share in the energy and power of Indigenous tourism. As you will see, the number of Indigenous tourism businesses in Canada is larger than ever, and this guide is filled with rich stories and images of our communities and relatives.

Indigenous tourism has the power to change perspectives, preserve culture, language and community and provide our relatives with a platform to be the leading voice in reclaiming our space in history— both ancient and modern.

Our ancestors have been sharing with and welcoming visitors to our traditional territories since time immemorial. Our communities are guided by values of respect, honour and integrity. The experiences listed in this guide demonstrate how Indigenous communities, both urban and rural, welcome visitors to learn, share and celebrate together.

Through a unified industry voice, ITAC focuses on creating partnerships between associations, organizations, government departments and industry leaders from across Canada to support the growth of Indigenous tourism.

We are happy to share these experiences with you over the next pages and invite you to experience the power of Indigenous tourism for yourself one day soon.



**Wela'lin, ekosi, merci
and thank you,**

*Robert Bernard, ITAC Chair
Keith Henry, ITAC President & CEO
The ITAC Board & Team*

HFN Hospitality LP, Port Alberni BC

Just north of Pacific Rim National Park on Vancouver Island's west coast, pristine sandy beaches mingle with uninhabited islands and waters teem with halibut, cod and tyee (salmon). Paddle in a canoe or travel by kayak along the peaceful waters of Pachena Bay. Hike through an old-growth rainforest. Explore the ancient site of Kiix?in (pronounced "kee-hin"), where the remnants of 5,000-year-old longhouses can still be found, or make a plan to conquer the legendary West Coast Trail nearby.

"It is a paradise," says Gary Wilson, CEO of HFN Group of Businesses, which owns and operates several companies, including HFN Hospitality LP, for Huu-ay-aht First Nation. "When people come here, they appreciate the quiet and the beauty and they discover what we have to offer." Wilson, a Heiltsuk from Bella Bella, B.C., speaks of the riches to be found in and around the remote community of Bamfield, near the north head of the West Coast Trail.

HFN Hospitality's offerings — which are nestled in Huu-ay-aht First Nation traditional territory — include a motel, a lodge, camping facilities and a general store and cafe. Guided tours on the water and to the Kixx?in National Historic Site are joined by song-and-dance performances from members of Huu-ay-aht First Nation. "This is a place where visitors can learn about the rich history and culture of the people here," says Wilson, "and also truly relax, far from the noise of urban life."

HFN HOSPITALITY LP

Unit B, 4644 Adelaide Street
Port Alberni, BC V9Y 5M5
778-421-2663
www.hfndevelopmentlp.org
garyw@huuayaht.com

Haida Enterprise Corp., Skidegate BC

Travel to one of Canada's wildest places and experience cultural ecotourism like never before when you stay at the Haida House at Tllaal and explore the rugged archipelago of Haida Gwaii off B.C.'s northwest coast. Spend time with cultural ambassadors and nature enthusiasts — Haida people eager to share their venerable yet modern culture with you. Let them escort you into a magical world inhabited by whales, eagles, ravens and black bears.

"Haida House is part of the Haida Enterprise Corp. which is owned by the Haida people and the Haida Nation. The company is designed to create meaningful employment of Haida citizens and non-Haida people who live on Haida Gwaii," says marketing manager Dana Schoahs. "Our mandate is to attain financial independence while improving the lives of the citizens who live here."

Along with Haida House, the company is poised to launch Ocean House at Stads K'uns GawGa in 2018. Modelled after the Haida House, it will be a floating experiential lodge, based on the west coast of Haida Gwaii.

Haida Enterprise Corp. also owns Westcoast Resorts and a fishing and processing operation called Haida Wild Seafoods. "Our seafood comes from the most pristine waters in B.C. One of our signature products is razor clams that can only be commercially fished and gathered by the Haida," says Schoahs. "My favourite product is our smoked sable fish. It's so good!"

HAIDA ENTERPRISE CORP.

PO Box 1384 Unit 1,
Commercial Centre
Skidegate, BC VoT 1S1
250-559-6809
www.haico.ca
info@haico.ca

“B.C. markets itself as ‘Super, Natural British Columbia,’ which is fitting. There’s a pull towards the energies that live in our territories. We even have a name for supernatural in my language, in Kwa k’wala, which is ‘Nawala.’ We have so much wilderness: old-growth trees, wolves, grizzlies, humpbacks and orcas. As diverse First Nations peoples, we are connected to these life forms. They are reflected in our art and our culture. I invite you to come and experience Nawala for yourself.”

— Mike Willie, ITAC Board Member for British Columbia



1



2



3

PHOTO CREDIT //

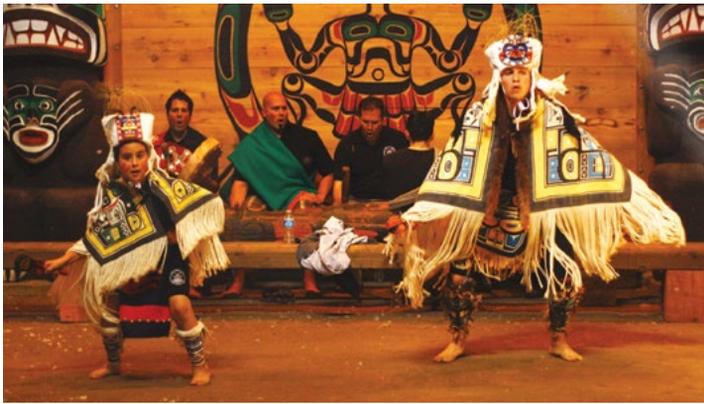
1 Photo courtesy HFN Hospitality LP

2 Photo courtesy Haida Enterprise Corp.

3 Photo courtesy Haida Enterprise Corp.



1



2



3

PHOTO CREDIT //
1 Photo courtesy Haida Style Expeditions
2 Photo courtesy I-Hos Gallery
3 Photo courtesy Haida Style Expeditions

Haida Style Expeditions, Skidegate BC

Drift slowly at high tide into Hlk'yah GawGa (Windy Bay). Observe the 12.8-metre, ornately carved “Legacy Pole” that appears near the shoreline, set against a rainforest backdrop. Listen to a Haida woman on board as she drums a rhythm that echoes across the bay.

“This is where the line was drawn in the sand,” says James Cowpar, pointing to a hillside ravaged by clear-cut logging on Athlii Gwaay (Lyell Island), “where Haida people finally stopped the logging after 15 years of effort.” On shore, guests meet Haida Gwaii Watchmen, some of whom participated in the 1985 blockade that shut down the destruction of old-growth forest.

Identical twins James and William Cowpar run Haida Style Expeditions, Haida Gwaii’s first Haida owned and operated tour company introducing visitors to B.C.’s Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. Their motto is “Welcome to our backyard.” Their ethos is reciprocity, giving back to the community by engaging youth, hiring drummers and elder storytellers and promoting local B&Bs. “We include the community wherever possible,” says James. “And everyone treats visitors like family.”

Cultural day trips via Zodiac go to four ancient village sites, including SGang Gwaay Llnagaay (Ninstints) on SGang Gwaay (Anthony Island), a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Walk through old-growth forest, spot wildlife on land and sea and savour a traditional wild salmon beach barbecue. Join a fishing trip or stay for several days at a cultural immersion camp where fees fund Haida youth camps. “We’re building understanding, not with politics,” says James, “but by getting people out on the land.”

I-Hos Gallery, Courtenay BC

Swaying to the beat of the slow and steady drum, their colourful, beaded capes shimmer as they perform a traditional dance. While their feet are bare, they wear various styles of cedar bark hats, a few adorned with fur. In the Big House on the K’ómocks First Nation near Courtenay, B.C., the ancient songs and dances of the K’ómocks and Kwakwaka’wakw peoples are alive and well, thanks to the Kumugwe Dancers.

Located next to the Big House, where many of its dance and other cultural activities take place, I-Hos Gallery provides visitors with a continued education in the culture, both traditional and contemporary, of First Nations artists of the Northwest Coast. “More and more, people are looking for connection,” says Ramona Johnson, who has managed I-Hos Gallery since it opened in 1995. “They want artwork that is meaningful to them.”

Johnson, who is from the K’ómocks First Nation, says that in recent years she’s seen “an explosion” in interest and appreciation for Indigenous art and artists. “People do their research ahead of time,” she says of her clientele, both local and international.

Still, she’s happy to share her knowledge with those who ask, along with promoting the more than 50 First Nations artists featured in her gallery. “I can hardly afford to buy from them anymore,” she says of those artists who have gone on to great renown. “Luckily, new artists are emerging all the time.”

HAIDA STYLE EXPEDITIONS

Second Beach Road, #606
Skidegate, BC V0T 1S1
250-637-1151
www.haidastyle.com
haidastyle@gmail.com

I-HOS GALLERY

3310 Comox Road
Courtenay, BC V9N 3P8
250-339-7702
ihosgallery.com
sales@ihosgallery.com

Kispiox Band Council, Kispiox BC

They are towering, silent sentinels, reflecting both past and present clan connections. In this 3,000-year-old village, the Kispiox totem poles still stand. They inspired legendary early 20th-century artists such as Emily Carr and A.Y. Jackson to put paintbrush to canvas and share their beauty and majesty with the world.

At the junction of the Kispiox and Skeena Rivers, a 90-minute drive southeast of Terrace, B.C., another world awaits the lover of adventure — nature at its purest. Take a raft trip with local guides, camp under the stars or end your day in a luxury lodge.

Fly-fish on the Kispiox. Then catch a chinook on the Skeena and learn how to process and smoke salmon. Take the less-traversed hiking trails, routes travelled thousands of years earlier by the original human inhabitants, in this Gitksan territory that seven First Nations call home.

“Kispiox is truly for visitors who want to experience the wildest of nature,” says Blanka Jecminkova, finance manager of the Kispiox Band Administration and Kispiox Village. “It is one of the most beautiful places you’ll ever see.” Visitors from across Canada, the U.S., Japan and Europe come to experience the area’s quiet, untouched wilderness, and the Kispiox Band is ready to assist them with a wide variety of activities and excursions. “Come see the northern lights,” she says, “and learn about the fascinating history of this strong nation.”

Musqueam Cultural Centre, Vancouver BC

It was a city before the modern-day city, a collection of more than 40 villages spread across some of the most breathtaking scenery on Canada’s West Coast. The landscape was brightened by red peonies, pink cherry blossoms and opulent magnolia trees. Local people launched intricately carved canoes into the mighty Fraser River, where plentiful fish sustained their community. The bark of cedar trees provided material to weave everything from baskets to ceremonial hats. Since the first sunrise, children learned the songs and dances that celebrated their culture and history.

Today, Mary Point is proud to share with visitors stories about the practices and lives of her ancestors, the Musqueam people. At the Musqueam Cultural Centre in Vancouver, B.C., Point is part of a team passionate about teaching visitors from across Canada and around the world about the Musqueam First Nation, which first inhabited the land known to most today as Vancouver.

“People come from everywhere to learn about us,” says Point. “We help them to connect to the land, the people, the culture. When they leave, they say they want to come back and learn even more.”

The Musqueam Cultural Centre is home to an on-site gallery and offers a wide variety of programs that include everything from sharing knowledge about traditional kinship systems to retreats and cultural tours.

Fittingly, visitors travelling through the Vancouver International Airport are greeted by a magnificent collection of carvings and weavings produced by Musqueam artists and artisans.

KISPIOX BAND COUNCIL

1336 Kispiox Valley Road
Kispiox, BC V0J 1Y4
250-842-5248 and 1-877-842-5911
www.kispioxband.com
financemanager@kispioxband.ca

MUSQUEAM CULTURAL CENTRE

4000 Musqueam Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6N 3S2
778-238-1452
www.musqueam.bc.ca
facilities@musqueam.bc.ca



1



2



3

Quaaout Lodge & Spa at Talking Rock Golf Course, Chase BC

The resort's long, sandy beach is lively with families. Some guests tee off at the property's scenic golf course, its greens etched into the wilderness. You dip your paddle into clear waters and canoe across Little Shuswap Lake in B.C.'s interior. Then, you head ashore for a delicious bannock and salmon picnic.

"Water was vital for our migratory ancestors' transportation and for supplying salmon," says Tanner Quanstrom, a member of the Little Shuswap Lake Indian Band (LSLIB) and a guide at the band's waterfront Quaaout Lodge & Spa at Talking Rock Golf Course.

Over 25 years ago, Quaaout Lodge was the dream of the local LSLIB chief who saw a resort as a way for band members to learn trades and crafts and introduce guests to their culture. The lodge now offers interpretive tours of a kekuli (traditional underground accommodations) and berry-picking excursions. And, for the first time in almost four decades, the band is handcrafting a wooden canoe in a public space so local youth can learn traditional carving techniques.

The airy, bright hotel with its carvings is a serene retreat. Jack Sam's Restaurant features First Nations fusion cuisine with the signature dish of clay-baked local salmon that follows an ancient regional cooking style. "Quaaout is about sustainability, sharing traditional heritage, supporting the community economically and keeping culture alive," says manager Jesse Ziercke. "And, of course, good old-fashioned relaxation."

QUAAOUT LODGE & SPA AT TALKING ROCK GOLF COURSE

1663 Little Shuswap Lake Road
Chase, BC V0E 1M2
250-679-3090 or 1-800-663-4303
www.quaaoutlodge.com
info@quaaoutlodge.com

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo by George Jecminek courtesy Kispiox Band Council

2 Photo courtesy Musqueam Cultural Centre

3 Photo courtesy Quaaout Lodge & Spa at Talking Rock Golf Course



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo by Sherry Moon courtesy Sea Wolf Adventures

2 Photo courtesy Sidney Whale Watching

Sea Wolf Adventures, Port McNeill BC

Dolphins too numerous to count jump on either side of the boat as you head across the waters from northeastern Vancouver Island toward the Great Bear Rainforest on B.C.'s mainland. They're feeding on herring at the end of the inlet and your boat is on its way to see grizzly bears "where the salmon gather" at *Xaḱwikaḱan* (Thompson Sound).

Along the way, whales emerge from the shimmering water; eagles soar overhead. Listen to Mike Willie's gentle voice as he tells stories and explains what wildlife means to his *Musḡamakw Dzawada' enuxw* (Four tribes of Kingcome) people. "There is a lot of travel time so we talk about First Nations — the past and the present, and where we want to go in the future," says Willie, who started Sea Wolf Adventures in 2013. "I love it when people ask a thousand questions."

Sea Wolf Adventures takes small tours of people out on the water and into a number of First Nations communities in the Broughton Archipelago. At Alert Bay, you'll visit the site of a residential school, go into a longhouse and see potlatch masks in the U'mista Cultural Centre. "I feel lucky having grown up in a small community that really never lost our language or our history or traditions," says Willie. "I just share who I am."

Sidney Whale Watching, Sidney BC

Two orcas glide silently through the water, their shiny black dorsal fins framed by an azure sky. In a thrilling display of acrobatic synchronicity, they explode out of the sea and into the air, a glorious spray rising from the water. Such awe-inspiring sights are regular occurrences in the calm waters of the Salish Sea, where humpback whales, grey whales, dolphins and sea lions join the more than 80 resident orcas that swim in these waters throughout the year.

For more than a decade, Michael Child of Sidney Whale Watching has been at the helm of his family-run company — taking visitors out from March to October in open hull boats, a ride combining the comforts of a full-size craft with the speed of a Zodiac. A member of the Kwakiutl First Nation, Child's been plying these waters for as long as he can remember. "There are few places in the world like this," he says. "Every time I take visitors out, I get to relive the wonder of seeing it for the first time."

Along with tours and private charters, Sidney Whale Watching, located in the town of Sidney, B.C., offers kayak and standup paddle board rentals for those wanting a self-guided tour of the seabird roosting sites and the foraging grounds of porpoises that also call this spectacular setting home.

"We're so fortunate to have such beauty here," says the passionate educator and conservation advocate. "We all get so busy in our lives, we sometimes forget there is a natural world we all depend upon."

SEA WOLF ADVENTURES

PO Box 126
Port McNeill, BC V0N 2R0
250.902.9653 or 250.230.2388 (text)
www.seawolfadventures.ca
info@SeaWolfAdventures.ca

SIDNEY WHALE WATCHING

250-656-7599 or 1-888-656-7599
#105 2537 Beacon Avenue
Sidney, BC V8L 1Y3
www.sidneywhalewatching.com
info@sidneywhalewatching.com

Spirit Bear Lodge, Klemtu BC

Visit the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world — the traditional territory of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation. With a guide by your side, explore a landscape teeming with wildlife that includes grizzlies, sea wolves and the legendary spirit bear, a rare, genetic variation of the black bear. Observe orcas, sea lions, white-sided dolphins and humpback whales as, together, you glide through the misty waters off Canada's wild West Coast. Listen to locals as they tenderly share stories about an ancient and still very much alive culture.

"This region is a rare and special gem," says Spirit Bear Lodge spokesman Doug Neasloss of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation. "I often refer to our part of the world as Canada's Galapagos." The operation offers ecotourism packages that range from four to seven days in length. Guests are surrounded by wilderness, staying in stunning, waterfront accommodations that pay homage to traditional longhouses and travelling by motorboat into even more remote locations.

"By visiting Spirit Bear Lodge, travellers are choosing to support local employment and community. We are very much a family environment," Neasloss says. "When people leave, I hope they walk away understanding both our culture, and the environmental stewardship that has gone into protecting one of the most special places in Canada."

SPIRIT BEAR LODGE

300 Spirit Bear Drive
Klemtu, BC V0T 1L0
250-339-5644
www.spiritbear.com
explore@spiritbear.com

Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, Whistler BC

Step into the Great Hall and instantly feel amazed by towering spindles, longhouse posts and grand canoes as your heart beats in time to drumming and a traditional welcome song performed by the Coastal Mountain Squamish (Sḵw̓x̓u7mesh Úxumixw) and Lil'wat (Lil'wat7úl) people in Whistler, B.C. Explore the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre's (SLCC) museum treasures: exquisitely crafted masks, tools, instruments and clothing, both ancient and contemporary. Hear elders' myths and legends. Take a guided forest walk. Explore a Squamish longhouse and a Lil'wat pit house. Create your own cedar rope bracelet.

The stylish SLCC is the long-time dream of both the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations whose territory overlaps in the Whistler region. "They signed a historic protocol in 2001 to work together in peace and harmony, and the joint project opened in 2008," says Mixalhitsu7 (Alison Pascal), the centre's junior curator and a Lil'wat band member.

Browse the gift shop for authentic Indigenous artwork. Savour the Thunderbird Cafe's First Nations fusion cuisine, which includes salmon chowder, venison chili and bannock. Throughout summer, celebrate weekly traditional dinner feasts with colourful cultural performances. Sign up for crafting workshops with a First Nations ambassador to make drums or weave baskets. Get to know the original inhabitants of what is now Vancouver and its surrounding territory. "The centre makes us happy to be able to celebrate and share being First Nations every day — our history, our culture and why we love this land," says Mixalhitsu7.

SQUAMISH LIL'WAT CULTURAL CENTRE

4584 Blackcomb Way
Whistler, BC V0N 1B4
866-441-7522
www.slcc.ca
kimberley.stanger@slcc.ca



1



2



3

Takaya Tours, North Vancouver BC

Paddle back in time in a 10-metre replica of an ocean-going First Nations canoe. Sing traditional Coast Salish songs and spot centuries-old pictographs on the surrounding cliffs. Leave the skyline of Vancouver and cell coverage behind and head into a lush rainforest fjord that is the North Shore's Indian Arm. Experience drumming in the wilderness, storytelling of myths and legends and a traditional picnic of baked salmon, wild rice and bannock on a remote beach.

Takaya Tours grew out of this entrepreneurial band's desire to create an economically and environmentally sustainable adventure company to develop youth leadership skills and provide greater understanding of little-known First Nations history in the Vancouver area. "We are especially engaged with elementary, high school and international students as well as youth and social support programs. They make up 60 per cent of our clientele," says Dennis Thomas, a member of the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation. "We're excited that local students are stepping out of their classrooms and are learning about reconciliation in an authentic way."

Tsleil-Waututh means "people of the inlet," and the company's cultural canoe and kayak expeditions are centred around Burrard Inlet, which is explored on mostly half-day tours. The operator offers team-building canoe activities and multi-day camping trips that take in the full 29-kilometre length of Indian Arm, passing pictographs and Granite Falls — a spiritual bathing site. "We teach paddling as well as living in sync," says Dennis, "We say naut'sa mawt, 'One heart, one mind, one spirit.'"

TAKAYA TOURS

700 Apex Avenue
North Vancouver, BC V7H 2R5
604-904-7410
www.takayatours.com
groups@takayatours.com

PHOTOCREDIT //

- 1 Photo by Phil Charles courtesy Spirit Bear Lodge
- 2 Photo courtesy Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre
- 3 Photo courtesy Takaya Tours

Grey Eagle Resort & Casino, Calgary AB

Stay at a Vegas-style resort and casino that hosts world-class acts such as Diana Ross and Jay Leno and enjoy a getaway that's right on the doorstep of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, with all of the hiking, skiing and biking found there. You're also right next to one of North America's most dynamic cities.

"It's the best of both worlds," says Matt Squires, director of sales and marketing for Grey Eagle Resort & Casino in Calgary, Alberta. Located in the beautiful, rolling foothills of the Tsuut'ina First Nation, this entertainment destination has a state-of-the-art events centre, hotel and conference facilities. Its casino features 40 live table games, 900 slot machines, a 24/7 poker room and an active, not-for-profit bingo schedule.

Grey Eagle draws a range of guests, about 30 per cent of whom are Indigenous people from B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan. International visitors are increasingly arriving from China, Taiwan, Japan and Germany. "People are very curious about First Nations history," says Squires. "We've started offering a blessing and smudging services to groups who want to incorporate that." The resort's two restaurants and two bars also add Indigenous touches to their menus, such as cheeses with house-made bannock and saskatoon berry jam. Squires says that Chef Bill Alexander, who is part Iroquois and Mohawk from Ottawa, loves to include game meat on the menu. "His bison meatball sandwich is to die for."

GREY EAGLE RESORT & CASINO

3777 Grey Eagle Drive S.W.
Calgary AB T3E 3X8
403-385-3777
or 1-844-719-8777 (hotel)
www.greyeagleresortandcasino.ca
info@greyeaglecasino.ca

Horseback Adventures Ltd., Brule AB

Ride into the pristine backcountry of the stunning Canadian Rockies on your gentle, sure-footed mountain trail horse. At the end of the day, enjoy a warm shower, tuck into hot, fresh homestyle fare prepared by an experienced trail cook and then settle into your cosy cabin or warm, dry tent — delicious creature comforts in the midst of wilderness.

"Europeans are fascinated with what we have here. They can't believe you can ride for two weeks without seeing anyone. It's beyond their realm," says Tom Vinson, owner of Horseback Adventures, a second-generation outfitter and guiding operation in Brule, Alberta, located right on the edge of Jasper National Park. From mid-May to mid-October, he takes novice and experienced riders on adventures that range from one-hour rides to epic 18-day camping trips-of-a-lifetime into spectacular areas such as Jasper, Rock Lake-Solomon Creek Wildland Provincial Park and Willmore Wilderness Park. The four-day Real West Cabin Vacation is the most popular overnight option.

Vinson's father worked for the legendary Brewster family before he bought its Brule operation in 1955. Vinson acquired the operation from his dad 38 years ago. A card-carrying Metis, with Iroquois, Cree and Cherokee ancestry, he's proud of the rugged, "big-boned and low-maintenance" horses he's bred from Percheron stallions and quarter horse mares, as well as the historic brand they bear. "It was registered by Fred Brewster in 1908. That's 109 years old."

HORSEBACK ADVENTURES LTD.

Box 73
Brule, AB T0E 0C0
780-865-4777
780-817-0656 (cell)
www.horseback-adventures.com
info@horseback-adventures.com

“I’m excited to see Indigenous operators celebrating and sharing their unique cultures through tourism in Alberta. This province’s extraordinary landscape — which includes mountains, badlands, prairies and boreal forests — is as diverse as the peoples who live here. We hope you come visit soon.”

— *Brenda Holder, ITAC Board Member for Alberta*



1



2



3

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Grey Eagle Resort & Casino

2 Photo courtesy Grey Eagle Resort & Casino

3 Photo by a past guest, courtesy Horseback Adventures Ltd.,

Mahikan Trails, Canmore AB

Engage all of your senses as you touch, taste, smell and hear stories of traditional plant medicines while walking or snowshoeing through the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Learn about how First Nations people use spruce, poplar and aspen trees to ward off winter colds and flu, and why plants have a role in first aid in the backcountry.

“People think of plant medicine as wonderful for chronic health problems, which it is,” says Brenda Holder, owner of Mahikan Trails, based in Canmore, Alberta. “But it’s also effective for emergencies such as wounds or broken bones.” Holder is of Cree-Iroquois-Metis descent and learned many of her traditional skills from her grandmother, a medicine woman. Now she, her husband Dave and their son Jordan offer a wide range of guided hikes, medicine walks and bushcraft training. They also teach people how to tan hides and make traditional items such as moccasins. These half-day programs for visitors are flexible, as are the company’s new overnight trips to Sundre, Alberta, in the Rockies’ front country.

“We love to include elements of surprise and delight in our guided walks and snowshoe trips,” says Holder, whose company also trains people to become interpretive guides and runs first aid courses, including advanced wilderness and remote first aid. “For example, when we take people animal tracking, the guide will often get down on hands and knees and blow on the tracks, which can tell you how long ago the animal was there. It’s a very traditional approach.”

MAHIKAN TRAILS

82 Grotto Way
Canmore, AB T1W 1J9
403-679-8379
www.mahikan.ca
brenda@mahikan.ca

Sawridge Inns and Conference Centres, Four locations AB

Fresh-baked “Welcome Home Cookies” studded with nuts and berries greet guests in the lobby. Peppermint-sage amenities from Mother Earth Essentials — made by a descendant from a long line of Cree medicine women — await in the spacious guest rooms. Meeting rooms have talking sticks.

The Sawridge Inns and Conference Centres pay tribute to their Cree First Nation roots with natural yet modern decor featuring wood and stone, accented with fireplaces and Indigenous art. “We’re proud of our Indigenous values, which are reflected in everything we do. From our dining to our collection of dream catchers in our Edmonton hotel to our super-comfy Dreamers Wanted™ signature line of beds and bedding,” says marketing manager Jessica Bernat. “We’re a local, eco-friendly company with warm, real people who are passionate about providing amazing service.”

Founded in Slave Lake by the Sawridge Cree First Nation, the company has more than 40 years’ experience in hospitality, and operates four full-service, pet-friendly hotels. The Best Western PLUS Sawridge Suites in Fort McMurray and the Sawridge Inns Peace River serve business travellers. The Edmonton hotel draws leisure and corporate clients, and the Jasper National Park-based resort attracts international visitors.

“We’ve featured hoop dancing, smudging ceremonies and throat singers at our hotels,” says Bernat.

“It’s a wonderful way to showcase our heritage and educate people about our culture.”

SAWRIDGE INNS AND CONFERENCE CENTRES

17416 111th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5S 0A2
780-428-3330
www.sawridge.com
horeception@sawridge.com



1



2



3

Stoney Nakoda Resort & Casino, Kananaskis AB

The mountain peaks of Banff National Park serve as a rugged, awe-inspiring and natural welcome gate. The road to Kananaskis Country, a parks area renowned for its hiking, skiing and breathtaking mountain scenery, is a stone's throw away. And Calgary, a city bursting with culture, history and some of Canada's best restaurants, is less than an hour's drive east.

"We are the base camp of the Rockies," says Chris Grimes, marketing manager for Stoney Nakoda Resort & Casino. "Anything you want to see and do in the parks, we can arrange it for you here, for a great value."

The resort's 110 rooms are spacious and luxurious, with a wide range of amenities. Soak in the hot tub after a day of exploring, while the kids take the speedy waterslide route into the indoor swimming pool. Try your hand at a game of chance before falling into a king-size bed.

The operation on Stoney Nakoda First Nation land offers 250 slot machines, a range of table games, a poker room and off-track betting. Younger family members can play in a VIP games room and practise their putts on a golf simulator, before joining the family for one of the resort's acclaimed buffets.

"Stoney Nakoda Resort is the best value in the Rockies," says Grimes, "in one of the best locations around."

STONEY NAKODA RESORT & CASINO

888 Nakoda Way
Kananaskis, AB T0L1N0
403-881-2830 or 1-888-8NAKODA
www.stoneynakodaresort.com
info@stoneynakodaresort.com

PHOTO CREDIT //

- 1 Photo courtesy Mahikan Trails
- 2 Photo courtesy Sawridge Inns and Conference Centres
- 3 Photo courtesy Stoney Nakoda Resort & Casino

Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Saskatoon SK

From the Wanuskewin Heritage Park centre, cross the grassy plain and peer over the cliff into the lush Opimihaw Creek Valley below. Close your eyes, feel the wind. It's not hard to imagine this rich ecosystem as a magnet for nomadic Indigenous peoples of the Northern Plains who, for over 6,000 years, came here to hunt bison, collect food and medicinal plants and escape that prairie wind. The site, which holds spiritual significance, is also home to an ancient medicine wheel.

"This was a gathering place," says Dana Soonias, CEO of the non-profit cultural centre and national historic site located five kilometres from Saskatoon. "It was an ideal area to hunt bison, with a 100-foot (30-metre) drop straight into the valley. Natural springs provided clean drinking water. People tanned hides, made tools, pottery and clothes, and preserved pemmican."

Today, people come from around the world to visit Wanuskewin's archeological sites, home to Canada's longest-running dig, with the University of Saskatchewan doing research here for the past 35 years. Go on a medicine walk, sleep in a tipi, dine on bison stew, take in art and dance performances. The unique cultural experience will only deepen as the park undergoes a \$40-million renewal (thunderingahead.ca), seeks UNESCO World Heritage Site designation and brings in a small herd of bison. "Our long-term vision is to become an international centre of excellence in education, science and culture," says Soonias, "as well as a beloved urban park."

WANUSKEWIN HERITAGE PARK

RR #4, Penner Road
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J7
(306) 931-6767
www.wanuskewin.com
info@wanuskewin.com

WHAT IS INDIGENOUS TOURISM ?

Indigenous Tourism is defined as all tourism businesses majority owned, operated and/or controlled by First Nations, Métis or Inuit peoples that can demonstrate a connection and responsibility to the local Indigenous community and traditional territory where the operation resides. These businesses can represent any part of the tourism economy; there are more than 1,500 Indigenous-owned tourism businesses across Canada.



“When people think of Saskatchewan, they think of flat, agricultural land. But the province and the people who live here are diverse. We’ve got everything from sand dunes to boreal forests, from lakes to extraordinary parks. Aboriginal people have had to endure harsh climates and cultural changes through European contact. We have survived by our resilience. And we have stories to share. I believe Indigenous tourism can help heal this country and improve the well-being of everyone it touches.”

— Dana Soonias, ITAC Board Member for Saskatchewan



PHOTO CREDIT //
Photo courtesy Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Eastside Aboriginal Sustainable Tourism Inc., Eastern MB

Walk along a floating wetland interpretive trail and discover the ways of the Ojibway. Discover rare orchids and learn how they were used in traditional medicine. Paddle and fish the Bloodvein River, designated a Canadian Heritage River in 1987 for the rich Indigenous culture found along its banks. Or, simply sit on the porch of a beautiful lodge, watching bald eagles wheel overhead. Mostly, breathe deeply of the fresh, pine-scented air on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

“Manitoba is the lungs of Mother Earth,” says Jeff Provost of Eastside Aboriginal Sustainable Tourism (EAST) Inc., a non-profit that supports the development of Indigenous tourism in what is the largest intact boreal forest in the world — all the while preserving Pimachiowin Aki, “the land that gives life.” This is an untouched region of lakes, rivers, forests and wetlands little known by visitors but beloved by its Indigenous peoples. EAST Inc. helps connect guests with opportunities to experience Indigenous culture, explore the land and water with local guides, taste traditional foods and enjoy Indigenous dance and music.

“We give visitors ways to live like the locals do, to see Manitoba in its natural element,” says Provost. “And when they leave, we hope they leave with a sense of what Indigenous people naturally feel — a strong, sustainable connection to the land.”

**EASTSIDE ABORIGINAL
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INC.**
Unit 1 625 Marion Street
Winnipeg, MB R2J 0K3
204-949-1041 or 1-888-949-1041
www.eastinc.ca
eastinc@mymts.net

More than 1.4 million people in Canada identify themselves as an Indigenous person.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ARE:

- the fastest growing population in Canada — grew by 20 per cent between 2006 and 2011 compared to 5 per cent for non-Aboriginal people
- the youngest population in Canada — 46 per cent are under the age of 25
- increasingly urban — 56 per cent live in urban areas

Source: Statistics Canada (2011)

www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1304467449155



“Manitoba often flies under the radar but it’s a diverse province offering vast natural settings and local, authentic culture. Sixty-three First Nations and numerous Métis and Inuit communities call Manitoba home. We are the centre of Canada, the heart of Turtle Island (our word for North America) and the homeland of the Métis Nation. From our perspective, Indigenous people are the Manitoba story.”

— Jeff Provost, ITAC Board Member for Manitoba



PHOTO CREDIT //
Photo courtesy Eastside Aboriginal
Sustainable Tourism Inc.



1



2



3

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo by Matt Duboff courtesy Manito Ahbee Festival Inc.

2 Photo by Alex de Vries courtesy Wapusk Adventures

3 Photo courtesy Wapusk Adventures

Manito Ahbee Festival, Winnipeg MB

With hundreds of dancers clad in full regalia and dancing to bone-stirring drumming, there's an explosion of colour and sound at the International Powwow, part of the Manito Ahbee Festival which is held annually in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

"It's quite the scene with all the dancers and drummers under one roof," says Jacquie Black, manager of the festival's Indigenous Music Awards and Arts Program. At the two-day powwow, you can watch a hair-braiding competition, nosh on berries, wild rice pudding and bison stew and watch a square-dancing exhibition. Or, you can "get jiggy with it" by stepping to traditional Red River fiddle music at the Jigging Competition. Anyone can join in. "So many come onto the dance floor and they go faster and faster," says Black. "It's awesome, one of our most popular events."

Manito Ahbee — Ojibway for "where the Creator sits" — runs for five days and is one of the most significant Indigenous gatherings in North America. Art is a big component, with a live-art painting challenge and an expo with artists who create ribbon shirts, beadwork, quillwork, star blankets and jingle dresses. Indigenous music awards recognize and celebrate musicians from Canada and around the world, while a conference allows Indigenous musicians to network with peers and professionals. "We get lots of locals, plus tourists from North and South America," says Black. "It's a unique festival that includes all First Nations music, culture, arts and heritage."

Wapusk Adventures, Churchill MB

The din of howling, barking dogs getting hooked to your sled is deafening, but once they're pulling you through the wondrous winter landscape, all you hear is the sound of their feet quietly pattering on the trail. Pure bliss, for both you and these canine athletes, the tough but affectionate Alaskan and Northern huskies at the heart of Wapusk Adventures in Churchill, Manitoba.

"We raise our dogs on love and respect, not fear, and we nurture their love of running," says David Daley, who's been operating the dogsledding company and gift shop with his wife Valerie since 1999. Everything — time, money, resources — goes to their 39 dogs, who each burn 12,000 to 15,000 calories a day. Daley feeds them chicken and a professional fish-based dog food imported by the tonne from New Brunswick "because they need the best fuel to run." Wapusk Adventures goes year-round, with dogsled tours in winter, and kennel visits and dogcart trips in summer.

"I've always had a connection with dogs," says Daley, who loves to tell stories of his adventures racing in the Hudson Bay Quest — the Arctic dogsled survival race he founded — and his Indigenous ancestry, which he traces to a Métis community in the Red River Valley in the 1500s. "It's very cultural for me, working with animals. Dogs are really good at lots of jobs, from consoling people in hospital to rescuing people from avalanches. They're a gift from the Creator."

MANITO AHBEE FESTIVAL INC.

472 Madison Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 1J1
204-956-1849
www.manitoahbee.com
info@manitoahbee.com

WAPUSK ADVENTURES

321 Kelsey Boulevard, PO Box 728
Churchill, MB RoB 0E0
204-675-2887
www.wapuskadventures.com
wapusk@mymts.net

Aboriginal Experiences, Ottawa ON

Sign up for a tour with Aboriginal Experiences, and you'll get a taste of many First Nations cultures from across Canada. You'll be welcomed by someone playing a hand drum and you'll watch demonstrations by Indigenous dancers from around the country — a jingle dance, perhaps, or a hoop dance. Try a meal, maybe venison sausage, three-sisters soup (beans, squash and corn) or wild rice. There's even a voyageur option, where you paddle down the historic Ottawa River and arrive at the Aboriginal Experiences grounds by canoe, an experience which is a member of the noteworthy Canadian Signature Experiences collection.

"We give people an introduction to Aboriginal people in Canada," says Linda Sarazin, director of operations. "And we explain that Canada is immense, and that First Nations culture is not just one culture."

The location, however, is important for myriad people in the country, as it's on sacred land between Ottawa, Ontario and Gatineau, Quebec, at an ancient trading stop on the Ottawa River. From one side of the facility, you can see Canada's Parliament Buildings; from another, the province of Quebec.

Aboriginal Experiences is open from May to mid-October for guided tours with a minimum of 25 people per group. All tours must be booked in advance. (In winter, Aboriginal Experiences focuses on outreach to regional schools.)

"People arrive as guests and they leave as friends," Sarazin says. "We give people the hunger to know more, because they learn about how diverse our country is."

The Great Spirit Circle Trail, M'Chigeeng ON

It's a misty morning, and your paddle dips into the water as you retrace an old-time canoe route. Later that day, you make a traditional First Nations rattle while listening to ancient legends and stories about what it's like to grow up on Manitoulin Island. Or, you go on a medicine walk to learn about local plants and their uses.

You're experiencing just some of the authentic Indigenous experiences offered by The Great Spirit Circle Trail, a tour operator located on Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron, about a 165-kilometre drive from Sudbury, Ontario. "The Great Spirit Circle Trail was established in the late 1990s as a way to share stories of the Anishinaabe with visitors to the area, so they get a true reflection of the history, culture and traditions of the region," says CEO Kevin Eshkawkogan.

Part of the First Nations community of M'Chigeeng, The Great Spirit Circle Trail acts as a one-stop shop for visitors of all abilities, offering guided workshops, educational tours and wilderness eco-adventures. Guides are all certified, and groups are kept small to allow for intimacy and maximum enjoyment. "We treat each day like a series of building blocks. You need something to eat, transportation, somewhere to stay and something to do," Eshkawkogan says. "People can just pick and choose what they want to do."

ABORIGINAL EXPERIENCES

100 Middle Street
Ottawa, ON K1R 6K
613-838-5558 or 1-877-811-3233
aboriginalexperiences.com
info@aboriginalexperiences.com

THE GREAT SPIRIT CIRCLE TRAIL

5905 Hwy 540, PO Box 469
M'Chigeeng, ON PoP1Go
705-377-4404 or 1-877-710-3211
www.circletrail.com
circletrail@circletrail.com

“I know through ceremony that my role in life is to be a helper. In my language, my name is Giigidoo Nini. It means “helper of the people.” I’m honoured to represent Indigenous tourism in Ontario, which is home to many different tribes, from Cree to Mohawk to Anishawbek, which I am. Each of these cultures offers something unique to the world. I invite you to come and hear our stories. They are stories — like Indigenous stories and knowledge everywhere — that will benefit humanity.”

— Kevin Eshkawkogan, ITAC Board Member for Ontario



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Aboriginal Experiences

2 Photo courtesy The Great Spirit Circle Trail

Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, M'Chigeeng ON

Walk through the door of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation and extend your hands to connect with a life-sized sculpture in front of you.

“When you stand in the middle of the sculpture, you can touch the hands of the figures on either side,” says Anong Migwans Beam, the foundation's art director and curator. “You represent the present generation, linking generations past and generations to come.”

It's an apt symbol for the foundation, which was started in 1974 as a way to protect and revitalize the traditions, culture and language of the Ojibwe people.

Located on Lake Huron's Manitoulin Island, the foundation is a 165-kilometre drive from Sudbury, Ontario. It is located in the community of M'Chigeeng, on the central part of the island overlooking the North Channel and West Bay. It is home to an art gallery, gift shop, museum, Canada's first 100 per cent Ojibwe radio station, a community gathering space and healing lodge, a residential school exhibit and an Ojibwe immersion school.

Come for a visit, says Migwans Beam. “And you'll leave with an accurate idea of who the Anishinaabe people are in this region,” she says. “You'll learn about our history and our contemporary activities.” Bonus? You'll also experience one of the prettiest places on earth. “It's extravagantly beautiful here.”

OJIBWE CULTURAL FOUNDATION

15 Hwy 551
PO Box 278
M'Chigeeng, ON PoP 1Go
705-377-4902
www.ojibweculture.ca
info@ojibweculture.ca

Ritchie Falls Resort, Massey ON

Hook a big one in summer or try your luck ice fishing in winter. Hunters can opt for moose, bear and wolf excursions, both guided and unguided. Or, explore the area at your own pace.

There are no fancy shops or big-city traffic at Ritchie Falls Resort. Just clean air, nature and an opportunity to learn about the Sagamok First Nation's way of life. “Ritchie Falls Resort is everything we have to offer in terms of who we are as people,” says Matthew Owl, the resort's general manager. “We recognize that we are stewards of the land. Conservation and preservation are key elements to a sustainable operation.”

Located near Massey, Ontario, about 70 kilometres west of Sudbury, the resort began as a hunting and fishing lodge but recently expanded to include year-round corporate retreats and family getaways. Guests come from as far away as China and Finland. While visitors can enjoy traditional foods such as wild rice, local trout and bannock during their stay, the resort's team can accommodate most food requests.

The Sagamok First Nation bought the resort in 2012 to create economic opportunities for its community. Owl, who joined the resort at that time, had guided as a teenager, leading groups from the U.K. wanting to learn about his culture.

After high school, he travelled the globe promoting Ontario tourism, but he always planned to come home. “Being at the resort is filling a need to share our culture and our environment.”

RITCHIE FALLS RESORT

Highway 810
Massey, ON PoP 1Po
705-865-2221 or 705-863-0335
www.ritchiefalls.com
matthew@sagamokdc.ca



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //
1 Photo courtesy Ojibwe Cultural Foundation
2 Photo courtesy Ritchie Falls Resort



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo by Artie Martin courtesy Six Nations Tourism

2 Photo courtesy Spirit Island Adventures

Six Nations Tourism, Ohsweken ON

Six Nations of the Grand River — situated along a Canadian Heritage River — is a fascinating place to learn about the Haudenosaunee. You'll find lacrosse arenas, language immersion schools, community attractions and more. "We're not a culture that's under glass in a museum," says Janis Monture, director of tourism and cultural initiatives. "A lot of our traditions have stayed with us and continue to be practised today."

Six Nations is also home to two historic sites, one being the beautiful Her Majesty's Royal Mohawk Chapel dating back to 1785, one of the first buildings on the historic Mohawk Village site. The other is Chiefswood National Historic Site, childhood home of legendary Mohawk poet Pauline Johnson; you can still see the desk where she wrote.

Events and sites typically run from the May long weekend through to Labour Day, but special requests from groups are accommodated year-round; programming varies, depending on your interests and the time of year. And educational experiences for schools includes a discussion about Haudenosaunee history and contemporary culture in Canada. Students get to participate in Haudenosaunee dancing and try cornbread and strawberry juice.

"We address the stereotypes," says tourism manager Constance Jamieson, also known as Kanien'kehaka. "And we talk about who we are as a people."

Spirit Island Adventures, M'Chigeeng ON

There must be millions of stars hanging in the sky over your head, more than you'll ever see in the city. You watch as a falling star shoots by. And then, another.

Soon it's time for bed. A fluffy, warm duvet on a comfortable mattress awaits. Unlike your bed at home, however, you're sleeping in a cosy canvas teepee tonight. You're "glamping" — camping, in comfort and style — with thanks to the team at Spirit Island Adventures.

"You'll get one of the best sleeps you'll ever have when you're sleeping outdoors," says Kevin Eshkawkogan, a partner in Spirit Island Adventures. "You're still camping but we try to make everything as comfortable as possible." Located on Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron, in the town of M'Chigeeng, Ontario, Spirit Island Adventures was started by Eshkawkogan and his wife Melissa Biedermann after they realized more accommodation was needed in their region.

Biedermann grew up sleeping in tents in the summer with her family and saw the importance of offering a similar experience to non-Indigenous travellers. Open fires in the teepees aren't possible for safety reasons, but tent-safe fireplaces are being added for chilly nights and winter camping. Those looking to try First Nations crafts, canoeing or more on their vacation should contact The Great Spirit Circle Trail (see page 22). "People come from all over — southern Ontario, Europe, you name it," says Eshkawkogan. "It's a neat experience, for sure."

SIX NATIONS TOURISM

2498 Chiefswood Road, PO Box 569
Ohsweken, ON N0A 1M0
866-393-3001 or 519-758-5444
www.sixnationstourism.ca
alongboat@sntourism.ca

SPIRIT ISLAND ADVENTURES

M'Chigeeng Location
5905 Highway 540
M'Chigeeng, ON PoP 1Go
1-877-710-3211
(The Great Spirit Circle Trail)
www.spiritislandadventures.com
info@spiritislandadventures.com



PHOTO CREDIT //

Photo by Louise Bilodeau for Tourism Wendake / Maison longue en hiver / Wendake, Québec



“Aboriginal tourism in Canada is changing lives from coast to coast to coast. Visitors who spend time with Aboriginal peoples are changed, impacted and moved to learn more. These unforgettable experiences teach people, no matter where they are from, about the Aboriginal cultural renaissance happening right here, right now, in this country.”

— *Keith Henry, ITAC President & CEO*

Eeyou Istchee Tourism, Ouje-Bougoumou QC

Nestled in northern Quebec and flanked by James Bay, this ancient land is covered with immense boreal and taiga forests. With abundant wildlife and pristine lakes and rivers, Eeyou Istchee Baie-James continues to delight visitors as an emerging travel destination.

These traditional Cree lands offer visitors an authentic experience. Explore the land with a local Cree guide, stay overnight in a traditional dwelling, meet with local elders, artists and storytellers. In summer, experience the beauty of the wilderness; paddle a canoe on a tranquil river and enjoy world-class fishing for speckled and brook trout, pike and walleye. In winter, go snowshoeing on quiet trails and admire the northern lights.

“Visitors come from all over the world. It’s very exciting to see so many people interested in experiencing authentic Cree culture,” says Victoria Crowe, marketing agent for Eeyou Istchee Tourism. “They also want to see the beauty of the land. We call our destination the best-kept adventure travel secret in North America.”

A 90-minute direct flight from Montreal, the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James region offers a bounty of Indigenous experiences, from culture camps to canoeing and museums. The region is also road accessible.

“Historically, we’ve been in this territory for more than 5,000 years,” says Crowe. “We have so much to show the world, in a place so few people know about.”

EEYOU ISTCHEE TOURISM

205 Opemiska Meskino
PO Box 1167
Ouje-Bougoumou, QC G0W 3C0
1-888-268-2682
www.escapelikeneverbefore.com
reservations@eeyouistcheebaie-james.com

Native Museum of Mashteuatsh, Mashteuatsh QC

Built on the shore of Pekuakami (Lac Saint-Jean) in 1977, the mission of the Native Museum of Mashteuatsh (Musée Amérindien de Mashteuatsh, in French) is to protect, develop and promote Innu cultural heritage and transmit it to future generations.

When visiting the museum, located less than 300 kilometres north of Quebec City, you are transported to a time when the Innu/Innu people of this region — living today on the Mashteuatsh reserve — traversed the waters in their canoes and enjoyed a nomadic lifestyle governed by the seasons.

Some 6,000 years ago, following the melting of the glaciers, the Tshishennuatsh (ancestors of the Innuatsh) penetrated the heart of the Canadian Shield. The first humans to set foot there, they gradually occupied the entire watershed that drains into the Saguenay and Pekuakami. Their fur coats and boots protected them from harsh winter winds. Intricately beaded jackets and dresses spoke of a creative outlook. And feathered headdresses reflected a love of ceremony.

Today, near the museum — which features temporary exhibits, a boutique souvenir store and a permanent installation called “The Spirit of Pekuakamiulnu” — one can paddle the well-travelled rivers by canoe or walk the Nuhtshimitsh interpretation trail and learn about traditional shelter, travel, food and medicine in the boreal forest.

NATIVE MUSEUM OF MASHTEUATSH

1787 Rue Amishk
Mashteuatsh, QC G0W 2H0
888-875-4842
www.cultureilnu.ca
reservation@cultureilnu.ca

“In Quebec, we have more than 200 diverse Aboriginal tourism businesses — everything from high-end hotels to remote cultural and wilderness experiences. Indigenous tourism, which has huge momentum in this province, has value beyond jobs, business and money. Tourism is a beautiful tool for us to use so we can share stories and moments with people that illustrate who we were, who we are and who we will be.”

— Dave Laveau, ITAC Board Member for Quebec



1



2



3

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo by Mathieu Dupuis courtesy Eeyou Istchee Tourism

2 Photo courtesy Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Mashteuiatsh

3 Photo courtesy Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Mashteuiatsh



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo by Mathieu Dupuis courtesy Quebec Aboriginal Tourism

2 Photo courtesy Onhoua Chetek8e Huron Traditional Site

Quebec Aboriginal Tourism, Wendake QC

Watch whales frolic, observe the wonder of a caribou migration and be wowed by powerful, lumbering polar bears. See the northern lights, hear stories and legends passed on orally from generation to generation and feel the land under your feet as you hike forests filled with towering trees. Canoe, fish, join a powwow and learn about ancient traditions, guided by those who know them best.

For more than 25 years, Quebec Aboriginal Tourism (Tourism Autochtone Quebec, in French) has been helping tourism operators in the province develop and promote all they have to offer visitors from across Canada and around the world. The organization contributes “to the reinforcement, preservation and promotion of the cultures and traditions that are specific to each of the 55 First Nation and Inuit communities living in Quebec,” says Dave Laveau, executive director.

In addition to supporting tourism operators, the organization’s annual tourism magazine Origni(e) is also a great tool for visitors. “Aboriginal tourism certainly has more than one arrow in the quiver to make you live the dream,” Laveau says. “Our ancestral lands will especially delight nature lovers.”

QUEBEC ABORIGINAL TOURISM

Suite 510, 50 Boulevard
Maurice-Bastien
Wendake, QC G0A 4V0
418-843-5030
www.quebecaboriginal.com
info@tourismeautochtone.com

Onhoüa Chetek8e Huron Traditional Site, Wendake QC

Kwe! Travel the path of the Huron-Wendat people and discover their history, from past to present. Enjoy the Onhoüa Chetek8e Huron Traditional Site’s guided tours, canoe rides, tales and legends, dance shows, arts and crafts workshops and much more.

Take a trip into the heart of Huron-Wendat history and an ancient way of life by visiting Yänonchia’, the Huron longhouse. Enjoy a presentation on the Huron-Wendat’s traditional way of life and social organization depicting what their existence was like before the arrival of Europeans. Learn about traditional methods of transportation.

Be initiated into the spiritual life of the Huron Nation by entering the Endeonnsk8a (sweat lodge). Enjoy a presentation featuring a story about the creation of the world. Discover Indigenous traditional food-preservation techniques in the Etiesatraoa (smoke hut) and Eti8atsaoaoa (curing shed).

The onsite Nek8arre Restaurant features wild game and fish dishes and can accommodate 180 guests. You can also visit Le Huron shop, which offers an abundance of Native American arts and crafts. The facility, which is open year-round, is located 20 minutes north of downtown Quebec City.

ONHOÛA CHETEK8E HURON TRADITIONAL SITE

575 Rue Chef Stanislas Koska
Wendake, QC G0A 4V0
418-842-4308
www.huron-wendat.qc.ca
wendat@huron-wendat.qc.ca

Tourism Manawan, Manawan QC

The poplar and spruce-filled boreal forest served as their trapping and hunting grounds, the great animals providing sustenance through hard winters. Sap extracted from plentiful maple trees was boiled down to make a delicious syrup to accompany feasts of berries and moose.

Known as the Atikamekw, they were a peaceful people with a deep reverence for Mother Earth. They divided the year into six seasons, which included a pre-spring devoted to creating bark baskets for gathering maple sap, as well as a pre-winter, set aside for beaver trapping.

At the home of Manawan First Nation, the traditions of the Atikamekw people are still practised today by the descendants of those long-ago inhabitants of this picturesque region of Quebec, less than a four-hour drive from Montreal. Visitors can spend their nights at the Manawan Inn or sleep in a teepee. During the day, local guides lead canoe and hiking trips and teach guests how to make their own syrup from maple trees. Learn about traditional crafts and Atikamekw legends. Enjoy Indigenous cuisine.

A diverse offering of programs includes packages for accommodations at the Matakan traditional site, VIP stays on an island and visits to an annual powwow. "Meeting with Aboriginals in Canada was a dream come true," wrote one visitor from Germany, after bringing his family to this unique place in the heart of Quebec. "Our holidays in North America were great. The most interesting part was our stay at Manawan."

TOURISM MANAWAN

161 Simon-Ottawa
Manawan, QC J0K 1M0
819-971-1190
www.voyageamerindiens.com/en
info@voyageamerindiens.com

Tourism Wendake, Wendake QC

Daydream to an elder's storytelling in Onhoua Chetek8e, a reconstructed traditional Huron village. Cycle, stroll or snowshoe along the Akiawenrahk' River to the thundering Kabir Kouba Falls. Explore the contemporary Huron-Wendat Museum. Watch a dance circle in an amphitheatre. Dine on gourmet traditional meals featuring game meats, fish, seal, forest herbs and bannock. Then bed down in the chic luxury Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations, decorated with Indigenous arts and crafts, with ceremonial pipes available in the boutique. Or sleep in a longhouse, which a fire-keeper keeps toasty until morning. Hard to believe, this immersion in nature and First Nations' culture is less than 20 minutes from Quebec City.

Alongside Wendake Reserve and its historic town, the riverside museum, award-winning boutique hotel and La Traite Restaurant opened in 2008, supporting the longtime vision of the Huron-Wendat First Nations who first built the traditional village over 25 years ago. "They're an entrepreneurial band with a vast collection of artifacts they wanted to share with visitors," says Colombe Bourque, general manager of Wendake's tourism industry.

The complex can be visited for a day (by shuttle from Quebec City), or for several days to experience everything from an annual powwow competition to adventuring along Quebec's elaborate network of snowmobile trails (33,000 kilometres throughout the province). "The Huron-Wendat want to engage their people in sharing their culture. After all, they've been welcoming visitors since Jacques Cartier arrived in 1534," says Bourque.

TOURISM WENDAKE

10 Place de la Rencontre
Wendake, QC G0A 4V0
418-847-1835
www.tourismewendake.ca/en
info@tourismewendake.ca



1



2



3

Uashassihstsh Ilnu Cultural Learning Site, Mastheuiatsh QC

Uashassihstsh, which means “little bay,” began activities as a cultural learning site in 2012. Located in a picturesque setting on the shore of Pekuakami (Lac Saint-Jean), it is a popular meeting place in summer. Each year, the site hosts events such as the Grand Gathering of First Nations (a powwow in July), continuing a tradition of summer get-togethers.

Uashassihstsh Ilnu Cultural Learning Site has a dual function. It is a centre for the promotion of Ilnu culture, where knowledge and culture are shared between generations, and it offers visitors a privileged look at the way of life and traditions of the PekuakamiIlnuatsh.

In a relaxed and festive atmosphere during the summer, people get together at the site to chat and tell stories. Activities revolve around crafts, food, fishing, making canoes from birchbark or canvas, creating tools from wood and bone, tanning hides and making clothing.

Here at the edge of the Pekuakami, just under 300 kilometres from Quebec City, people recreate the life of its first inhabitants. The complex also boasts an arts pavilion and stage, and a general store.

The Uashassihstsh site is a fascinating journey into the lives of a nomadic people who once roamed these lands and rivers and who, today, proudly carry on the region's rich spiritual life and cultural history.

UASHASSIHTSH ILNU CULTURAL LEARNING SITE

1514 Rue Ouiatchouan
Mastheuiatsh, QC G0W 2H0
1-888-875-4842
www.cultilnu.ca
reservation@cultureilnu.ca

PHOTO CREDIT //

- 1 Photo courtesy Tourism Manawan
- 2 Photo by Richard Geoffrion courtesy Tourism Wendake
- 3 Photo courtesy Uashassihstsh Ilnu Cultural Learning Site

Abadak Wilderness Adventures Inc., Flat Bay NL

Before dawn breaks, walk with a small group to an open field to face east and greet the day with prayers and an offering of tobacco. The sunrise ceremony at a powwow field “welcomes the world each morning,” says Ivan White. After breakfast, spend the rest of the day welcoming the culture of the Mi’kmaq.

“I was born in a small village and, living in the woods, rabbit-snaring, fishing and hunting has been my lifestyle. Now I get a chance to offer this experience to others,” says White, the owner of Abadak Wilderness Adventures Inc., a family business located in the settlement of Flat Bay in southwest Newfoundland. “I am working at something that I love.”

Experienced guides take you to the waters to fish for salmon and into the woods to hunt for plentiful moose, caribou or bear. Every animal harvested is treated with care and respect in the Mi’kmaq way. Abadak partners with the nearby Flat Bay Indian Band to bring clients to No’kmaq Village for cultural events and experiences. Join a sweat lodge ceremony and listen to the stories of the Flat Bay Indian Band.

“Our culture is rich in traditions which we want and need to share with the world,” says White. “A walk in our shoes helps visitors see how we live, what we do and why we do it. Education helps dispel myths and negative opinions about our people.”

Miawpukek First Nation, Connie River NL

Every July, visitors join traditional dancers, drummers, spiritual leaders and elders from across the Mi’kmaq Nation at Miawpukek First Nation on the south coast of Newfoundland for an annual powwow. The gathering includes cultural demonstrations and medicinal walks with Saqamaw Mi’sel Joe, an author and well-known Mi’kmaq leader committed to preserving the language, culture and traditions of his people.

Miawpukek became a permanent community on the island of Newfoundland around 1822. Before that time, it was one of many semi-permanent camping sites used by the nomadic Mi’kmaq. People would travel over the vast lands that are now known as Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Maine. The Miawpukek First Nation — or Miawpukek Mi’kamawey Mawi’omi — is the only recognized reserve on the island of Newfoundland. It’s located at the mouth of the Connie River.

At the annual powwow, which has been running for more than 20 years, the more than 900 residents of Miawpukek welcome visitors to partake in traditional dancing and chanting, sacred ceremonies, traditional foods and to share in Mi’kmaq culture and traditions. There’s an evening feast open to all, with food vendors selling everything from traditional to fast food and Mi’kmaq artists displaying their talent at handmade arts and crafts. Visitors are asked to pay a small fee to either pitch a tent or park their RV near the powwow.

ABADAK WILDERNESS ADVENTURES INC.

PO Box 13, Site 7
Flat Bay, NL A0N 1Z0
709-647-3478 or 709-649-0857
www.abadakwildernessadventures.ca
info@abadakwildernessadventures.ca

MIAWPUKEK FIRST NATION

50 Miawpukek Drive
PO Box 10
Connie River, NL A0H 1J0
709-882-2470 or 1-866-882-2470
www.mfngov.ca
abenoit@mfngov.ca

“I’m overwhelmed and excited by what’s happening with Indigenous tourism today in Newfoundland & Labrador. It’s good to see it move from the back burner forward. We are community-based so it’s a truly authentic experience when people come. We’re not putting on a show. This is us, welcoming you, into our way of life. Indigenous experiences and connecting with the land help people, no matter where they’re from, get to the root of what’s important in life.”

— Jillian Larkham, ITAC Board Member for Newfoundland & Labrador



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Abadak Wilderness Adventures Inc.

2 Photo courtesy Miawpukek First Nation

Pirate's Haven ATV Friendly RV Park, Chalets & Adventures, Robinsons NL

Listen to the waves crash below and enjoy the view of the ocean from the cliffs above. Head into the backcountry to pick a bucket or two of berries, spot eagles or moose and go salmon or trout fishing. Explore by ATV. Whichever adventure you choose at Pirate's Haven ATV Friendly RV Park & Chalets on the southwest coast of Newfoundland, you're guaranteed to "see Mother Nature at her finest," says Paul Gale.

Paul and his wife Ruth Forsey-Gale started cutting their first ATV trail in 1999. "They go right to the ocean, right to the rivers and right to the mountains. We have hundreds of miles of ATV trails," says Gale, a member of the Qalipu First Nation. "I am very proud of my native ancestry and I've always practised it. We believe we have borrowed the land from our children, not inherited it from our ancestors." The couple invites drummers and dancers to perform and offers smudging ceremonies.

Sit back on the deck of your cosy chalet or RV lot and enjoy the view of Robinson's River, one of the top salmon rivers in the province, and of a trestle that's part of the nearby Trans Canada Trail. Visit the sauna or hot tub before cooking your own dinner or join Paul and Ruth for some moose sausage or fish cakes. "We treat everybody like kings and queens, and give everyone a Newfoundland royal tour," says Gale.

Torngat Mountains Base Camp & Research Station, Northern Labrador NL

Open your heart to the magnificent wilderness — breath-catching landscapes, icebergs, polar bears and whales — of Torngat Mountains National Park, located on the Labrador Peninsula at the northern-most tip of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Let an Inuit guide lead the way. Soak up the dazzling northern lights and allow them to stir your soul. Go fishing for Arctic char. Then cook it on hot rocks in the tradition of the people who have walked this land for thousands of years. Learn to make bannock. Feeling courageous? Go for a refreshing dip in the Arctic Ocean.

"Getting here alone is an adventure," says Janice Goudie, a spokesperson for the Torngat Mountains Base Camp & Research Station, located right next to the national park and open to visitors for six precious weeks during summer.

Visitors can purchase four- or seven-day packages and fly in via Twin Otter aircraft chartered from Goose Bay. They land at an old aviation site and then ride by boat to base camp, which is set up like a little community with mountaineering tents, bear-proof igloo-style accommodations and a research station designed to support scientific activities in the region.

"The Torngats are a very spiritual place," Goudie says. "You meet elders and you feel the history of the Inuit around you and the land speaks to you. You leave with a sense of what the land can provide for people."

PIRATE'S HAVEN ATV FRIENDLY RV PARK, CHALETS & ADVENTURES

PO Box 115, Route 404
Robinsons, NL A0N 1V0
709-649-0601 or 709-645-2169
paulandruth@nf.sympatico.ca
www.pirateshavenadventures.com

TORNGAT MOUNTAINS BASE CAMP & RESEARCH STATION

1A Hillcrest Crescent
Happy Valley, Goose Bay NL A0P 1E0
709-896-8582
jillian.larkham@nunatsiavut.com
www.thetorngats.com



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Pirate's Haven ATV Friendly RV Park, Chalets & Adventures

2 Photo by Patrick Morrow, courtesy Nunatsiavut Government (Torngat Mountains Base Camp & Research Station)

Metepenagiag Heritage Park, Red Bank NB

The building is modern but the history it showcases is ancient. A walk through Metepenagiag Heritage Park takes you back “30 centuries” to the time when the Mi’kmaq lived in a thriving fishing community. Take a self-guided tour or join a Mi’kmaq guide who will take you around the park, tell you about the archeological finds of villages and cemeteries and answer your questions about the recent and not so recent history of the Mi’kmaq.

“We are in one of New Brunswick’s oldest continuously inhabited communities,” says Patricia Dunnett, general manager of Metepenagiag Heritage Park. “It dates back almost 3,000 years. We are an ancient Mi’kmaq community.” Visitors from around the world come to stay in a teepee on the powwow grounds, sit around the fire to hear elders tell stories, or go inside to wander through interactive displays, images and videos about archeological finds.

“We have a lot of people who are specifically trying to find out about First Nations,” says Dunnett.

When they do, many experience a connection to the Mi’kmaq. “A lot of the visitors that I talk to about our culture like to find a similarity to their own culture,” says Dunnett. Sometimes those connections can be quite emotional. “I’ve made people cry, in a really good way. They’re very touched in their spirit and they are overcome with emotion. They just fall in love with this place.”

Metepenagiag / Redbank Lodge, Red Bank NB

Metepenagiag means “from the high banks of our river,” and that’s exactly where you’ll find the Metepenagiag / Redbank Lodge, high above the confluence of the Little Southwest Miramichi and the Northwest Miramichi rivers. Inside the cosy lodge on the riverbank, you’ll see local artists displaying their work. Feast on Indigenous fusion cuisine that includes salmon, wild-game meatballs, fiddleheads and traditional bannock.

Outside, you can immerse yourself in nature, doing everything from Atlantic salmon fly-fishing to spotting deer and birds, to watching for bears and moose that roam the area. There’s also just sitting back and soaking up the view. “You have the gorgeous banks of the river, you see our 3,000-year-old archeological sites in the background and our lookout points,” says Patricia Dunnett, manager of Metepenagiag / Redbank Lodge. “It’s beautiful.”

The Mi’kmaq of Metepenagiag have been enjoying the river for three millennia. “You have the nice swift current, and you can sit with your feet in the water,” says Dunnett, who has seen more than a few guests take lawn chairs down to plunk in the shallow water. “It’s so gorgeous; the river is clear and fresh and hundreds of little fish will come up and nibble around your legs and toes. It’s almost like a spa experience when you go down to the river.”

METEPENAGIAG HERITAGE PARK

2156 Micmac Road
Red Bank, NB E9E 2P2
506-836-6118 or 1-888-380-3555
www.metpark.ca
info@metpark.ca

METEPENAGIAG / REDBANK LODGE

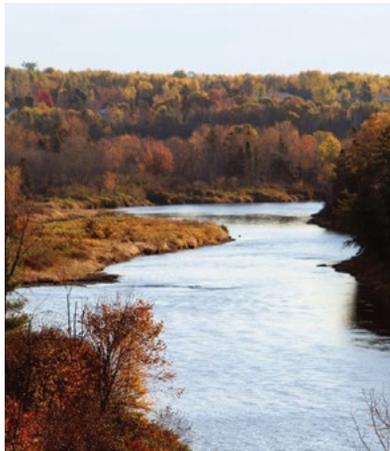
2202 Micmac Road, PO Box 332
Red Bank, NB E9E 2P2
506-836-6128 1-800-570-1344
www.redbanklodge.com
metepenagalodge@live.com

“There’s excitement in the air among the Mi’kmaq with respect to Aboriginal tourism in New Brunswick. There’s strong leadership at a national level and I can see that local chiefs are taking notice. We’ve been trying for years to aim the spotlight on Aboriginal tourism with our powwows and cultural experiences. The time is here for us to tell our own stories.”

— Patricia Dunnett, ITAC Board Member for New Brunswick



1



2



3

St. Mary's Entertainment Centre, Fredericton NB

Welcome to the largest bingo operation in Atlantic Canada — solely owned by the St. Mary's First Nation, located in the heart of Fredericton and housed within a striking building that is designed around four teepees.

In a safe, secure and professional environment with friendly staff at your service, enjoy opportunities to play bingo (seven nights a week with daily jackpots of \$5,000), dine (a Pinetree Crispy Burger, anyone?), gamble (75 machines) and listen to music along with thousands of others who visit weekly.

“We give out the biggest prize money in Atlantic Canada,” says longtime general manager Walter Brooks, adding that the majority of employees working at the centre are St. Mary's First Nation band members. “We are Maliseet. When you come visit us, we do everything we can to make you feel welcome.”

The centre plays an integral role in the community, Brooks says, giving royalties to community members every Christmas, sponsoring sports teams, supporting larger community events and bringing in tourists from all over Eastern North America to Fredericton, contributing to the local economy.

“We train our staff to be courteous,” continues Brooks. “I want people to leave here and say they had a great time, and that they want to come back tomorrow. If not tomorrow, then the day after tomorrow!”

ST. MARY'S ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

185 Gabriel Drive
Fredericton, NB E3A 5V5
888-992-4646
www.stmec.com
bingo@stmec.com

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Metepenagiag Heritage Park

2 Photo courtesy Metepenagiag / Redbank Lodge

3 Photo courtesy St. Mary's Entertainment Centre

Destination Membertou, Membertou NS

The gentle voice on the recording from long ago begins with: “Nikmatut, ke’sk mna’q wape’k ji’nm pekisinukwek ula kmitkinaq ki’s Mi’kmaq L’nu’k eykisnik.” “My friends,” Chief Ben Christmas was recorded saying in 1961, “prior to the arrival of the White Man on our shores, the Mi’kmaq were already here.” These precious recordings describing the old ways are part of the exhibit at Membertou Heritage Park, one of many places to visit in Membertou near Sydney, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

“A guide dressed in Mi’kmaw regalia will take you through the exhibit and through the history of the people,” says Kelsea MacNeil, sales and product development manager for Destination Membertou. Old black-and-white photos line the walls, and visitors can take part in smudging ceremonies, join a sweat, and learn traditional basket weaving or beading. “They walk away with a really great sense of our history and feeling a connection to the culture.”

A generation before Chief Christmas recorded the stories and songs in Membertou Church, the community was forced to move from its traditional land along the Sydney waterfront to a new area three kilometres away. “My friends, there have been many stories about the Mi’kmaq,” he says in one recording. “And, the whole of who the Mi’kmaw is cannot be spoken about in one night. So let us put aside all that has been said about him for now, including where he originates from, until we all meet again.”

DESTINATION MEMBERTOU

111 Membertou Street
Membertou, NS B1S 2M9
902-563-4534 or 1-844-323-7255
www.destinationmembertou.com
info@destinationmembertou.com

ITAC MISSION

To provide leadership in the development and marketing of authentic Indigenous tourism experiences through innovative partnerships.

ITAC VISION

A thriving Indigenous tourism economy sharing authentic, memorable and enriching experiences.



“In Nova Scotia, the Mi’kmaq have some of the oldest treaties in North America. These were signed as nation-to-nation treaties with the British Crown, way before Canada ever became a country. In our territory, you can find archeological evidence that goes back 14,000 years. We have petroglyphs that illustrate the arrival of the first ship on our shores. We’ve struggled due to policies designed to remove the culture from our people and we are working hard to reclaim our ways. We have so many stories to share.”

— Robert Bernard, Chair, ITAC Board Member for Nova Scotia



Membertou Heritage Park, Membertou NS

If your timing is right, a visit to Membertou Heritage Park might include the chance to interact with Mi'kmaq elders gathered to do some beading. There could be a talking circle or full-moon ceremony underway. Settle in to listen to stories. Learn a bit of the language in a class.

"None of the spiritual events is part of a tour, but they're here, they're happening," says general manager Jeff Ward. "We like to say that we don't re-enact, we enact." This living, breathing interpretive centre is at the heart of Membertou, a thriving community located on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. Here, visitors are fully immersed in a rich, ancient culture. "You can come in, watch a movie, relax," says Ward. "You can touch the experience with classes in drumming, beading and basket-weaving."

With a variety of food-service options — everything from a bite of bannock with blueberries served with tea to a feast of salmon, moose and fiddleheads at the convention centre — you can taste the culture, too. Find Mi'kmaq arts and crafts at the Petroglyphs Gift Shop: a quill basket, perhaps, or a pair of butter-soft moccasins. People come from far and wide to visit Cape Breton, especially to see its fall colours, but Ward says Membertou Heritage Park offers them something special. "Visitors come here and they connect on a spiritual level. We're small, but we connect. It's what we do."

MEMBERTOU HERITAGE PARK

35 Su'n Awti
Membertou, NS B1S 0A5
www.membertouheritagepark.com
902-567-5333
info@membertou.ca

Wagmatcook Culture and Heritage Centre, Wagmatcook NS

After the animals, plants and birds were placed on the earth, the Giver of Life sent a bolt of lightning to hit the surface and form the shape of a person — his head facing the rising sun, his arms and legs outstretched, right hand pointing north. A second bolt of lightning gave the person fingers and toes, and the third allowed him to move. The Mi'kmaq in Cape Breton share origin stories such as this along with dances and other traditions with visitors to the Wagmatcook Culture and Heritage Centre.

"People are looking to learn about our people. They're looking for the real story," says Robert Bernard, operations manager and community culture and tourism planner. "The reality is our people faced issues with residential schools, centralization and colonialism for so many years, and still do to a certain degree. But with that is a positive story of survival and cultural preservation."

Wagmatcook celebrates the Mi'kmaq culture with arts and culture festivals, monthly lectures and other events. The gift shop brims with locally made jewelry, clothing and other items. The restaurant serves traditionally prepared breads and fish caught nearby. Plans are afoot to create a Mi'kmaq village where families "will live like we used to live" in the warmer months, welcoming visitors to come in, spend time and ask questions. "And maybe, if they're lucky, they can go catch some oysters with a local," says Bernard, "or go fishing with the guy who just so happens to be going fishing with his family."

WAGMATCOOK CULTURE AND HERITAGE CENTRE

10765 Highway 105
PO Box 30029
Wagmatcook, NS B0E 3N0
866 295-2999
www.wagmatcookcentre.com
wchc@wagmatcookcentre.com



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Membertou Heritage Park

2 Photo courtesy Wagmatcook Culture and Heritage Centre

Indian Art & Crafts of North America, Lennox Island First Nation PE

Walk through the doors of Indian Art & Crafts of North America and you'll find gifts and souvenirs for everyone. There are dream catchers, masks and carvings. Beaded barrettes and moccasins. Handmade silver and turquoise jewelry, Iroquois bone bracelets and the region's famous handwoven baskets, figurines and pottery.

There are even cookbooks and publications about local history, poetry and art of the Mi'kmaq people.

Located on the Lennox Island First Nation on Prince Edward Island, Indian Art & Crafts is a gift shop offering a range of souvenirs and art, primarily created by Indigenous artists from P.E.I. as well as other parts of Canada and the U.S.

Doreen Sark bought the store from her brother-in-law, Ray Sark who started it in 1972 as a way to showcase the work of artists and craftspeople he encountered on his travels from California to Canada.

When Ray retired, Sark took it over, putting her own spin on the offerings. These days, during the summer, you can enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, or perhaps an ice-cream cone, while you relax at a table overlooking the beautiful Malpeque Bay.

And, of course, you can browse for all your souvenir needs. "There's so much to see in the shop," says Sark. "You can easily spend half a day here and you'll probably want to come back."

Micmac Productions, Lennox Island First Nation PE

Inside a studio on a small island in Malpeque Bay, artists are getting ready for a busy summer season, creating ceramic wares, pots and figurines based on the stories of the legendary figure, Glooscap. The handmade pots are marked with traditional Mi'kmaq designs. Close by, handwoven Mi'kmaq baskets await their future owners, too.

Located on the Lennox Island First Nation on Prince Edward Island, Micmac Productions is a company creating regional Indigenous art. It formed in the mid-1990s, when Charlie Sark Sr. retired and realized there was a place in the market for locally made Indigenous artwork, and decided to do something about it. He hired a British artist to train local craftspeople in mould-making techniques. Then, they built a workshop and began producing ceramic pottery. Traditional and contemporary handwoven baskets also became part of the offerings.

Today, these artworks are for sale at Indian Art & Crafts of North America on the Lennox Island First Nation. Both Micmac Productions and Indian Art & Crafts of North America are operated by Charlie's wife, Doreen Sark and her family.

Doreen says it's important to have locally crafted items for sale for visitors because it maintains the skills of Indigenous artists and helps with employment in the region. "It's about telling the stories and the legends," she says. "Plus, it's something that is actually made here on Lennox Island."

INDIAN ART & CRAFTS OF NORTH AMERICA

4 Eagle Feather Trail
Lennox Island First Nation,
PE CoB 1P0
902-831-2653
www.indianartpei.com
doreen.sark@gmail.com

MICMAC PRODUCTIONS

28 Eagle Feather Trail, PO Box 176
Lennox Island First Nation, PEI
CoB 1P0
902-831-2653
doreen.sark@gmail.com

When people visit Prince Edward Island, our role is to make sure they are looked after. The Mi'kmaq have been welcoming people into our territory for thousands of years. It continues today. We love to feed people, and with all of this seafood you'll never go hungry, that's for sure. We can also take you to places in nature that are timeless. Human beings need to connect with the untouched natural world and get away from the influences of modern civilization. I invite you to come play on our island."

— Charlie Sark, ITAC Board Member for Prince Edward Island



PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Indian Art & Crafts

2 Photo courtesy Micmac Productions

Shakat Tun Adventures, Haines Junction YT

As dawn breaks on Christmas Bay, the sun's reflection on the turquoise waters of Kluane Lake awakens the greys of rugged rock, the greens of shoreline spruce, the white-capped gleam of mountain peaks. Emerge from a log cabin to drink in its beauty before embarking on adventures that will immerse you — body, mind and spirit — in the culture of the people who have called this place home for thousands of years.

James Allen has long been hosting culture and healing camps for Indigenous youth and adults at Shakat Tun, which means “summer trail” in the language of the Southern Tutchone. In recent years, he's extended his family's warm welcome to his camp, located next to Kluane National Park and Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site three hours' drive north of Whitehorse, Yukon.

Today, Shakat Tun Adventures offers its visitors a once-in-a-lifetime, hands-on experience in the ways of an indomitable people. Try your hand at beading, trapping and drum-making. Taste traditional foods gathered on the land that have sustained its people for generations, such as dried meat or fish. Learn about the deep reverence they have for the area's lynx, moose and caribou.

“What I want to do is tell people our story on the land,” says Allen, a former chief of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. “Our guests often have a spiritual awakening when they are in the bush. The culture and the land awaken your inner spirit.”

Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, Whitehorse YT

Based in Whitehorse, Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association (YFNCT) works with all communities in the territory, “supporting the growing arts, culture and tourism industries,” says executive director Charlene Alexander. Yukon's seven cultural and interpretive centres give visitors a glimpse into Indigenous life and history. “These centres are a good starting place in each community for visitors to meet people and learn about their past and their living culture,” says Alexander.

The annual Adäka Cultural Festival showcases all 14 First Nations who live in Yukon. It's just one of the arts and cultural events held across the territory organized by YFNCT. At Adäka, visitors will experience one of Yukon's largest gatherings of First Nations people who travel, from within the territory and beyond, to demonstrate and exhibit traditional and contemporary arts.

The festival's unique presentations and nightly performances from Indigenous musicians, dancers, drummers and storytellers reveal a vibrant living culture communicated through the arts. “There is so much to experience in Yukon,” says Alexander. “Connections are made with the land and the people. Once travellers have visited, they often leave transformed. With our excellent road systems, Yukon can take you to places you never dreamed of.”

SHAKAT TUN ADVENTURES

PO Box 2104
Haines Junction, YT YoB 1L0
867-332-2604
shakattunadventures.com
info@shakattunadventures.com

YUKON FIRST NATIONS CULTURE AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION

#1 1109 Front Street
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 5G4
867-667-7698
www.yfnct.ca
info@yfnct.ca

“Yukon is unique for the North. We’re home to several established and highly regarded Aboriginal festivals and cultural centres which are entry points into the extraordinary First Nations communities living here. We’re also home to amazing, diverse and soulful landscapes — including the magnificent Kluane National Park and Reserve. We invite you to come and visit soon. With three airlines flying in daily, and excellent road systems, we’re not as remote as you think.”

— Shirlee Frost, ITAC Board Member for Yukon



1



2

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Shakat Tun Adventures

2 Photo by Fritz Mueller Photography courtesy Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association

B. Dene Adventures, Yellowknife NT

Brilliant hues streak across the night sky like a glorious abstract painting, the vibrant pinks, greens, blues and reds rendering a visual symphony to stir both heart and soul. Take in the splendour of the ever-changing aurora borealis after a day of immersing yourself in the history and living culture of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. Listen to the pulsating rhythm of drums and learn how to drum yourself. Hitch a ride on a snowmobile to a Dene camp, take in an afternoon of ice fishing or explore the land on snowshoes.

Bobby Drygeese, the owner and operator of B. Dene Adventures, teaches visitors the basics of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, “who we are, what we do and how we live our lives.” Descended from a long line of Dene chiefs — his great-grandfather was a signatory in the Treaty 8 signing, and his grandfather met Queen Elizabeth in the 1960s when she visited Yellowknife — Drygeese is proud to share his traditional way of life with visitors from around the planet.

“We have a lot of fun,” the affable Drygeese says of B. Dene Adventure's programs, which include camps and cultural tours near his home village of Dettah, just across the bay from Yellowknife. “Our guests always say they loved learning about Dene culture — and that seeing the northern lights is one of the most amazing experiences they've ever had.”

Enodah Wilderness Travel Ltd., Yellowknife NT

In summer, go fishing for “monster pike” on Great Slave Lake and come away with one of the biggest trophies in the world. In fall and winter, spend hours gazing up at the blazing aurora borealis as it dances across the northern sky. And when there's a thick blanket of snow, drive your own dogsled. Regardless of when you visit Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories, Enodah Wilderness Travel has an exceptional northern experience waiting.

Enodah Wilderness Travel and Trout Rock Lodge are owned by Ragnar and Doreen Wesstrom. Ragnar, a former Swedish marine who's sailed around the world, met Doreen, a member of Yellowknives Dene First Nation, on his first day in Yellowknife in 1986. The couple started the business from scratch a few years later, in 1990.

“The focus in the early days was American fishermen for the summer seasons,” Ragnar says. “Today we get guests from all over the world who come and stay at our Trout Rock Lodge to see and photograph the spectacular aurora borealis.”

In summer, Americans keen on “the best trophy pike fishing in the world” flock to the couple's business. In fall and winter, tourists from Asia and elsewhere come north for the aurora season. The Wesstroms, meanwhile, enjoy their work year-round. “We love sharing the beauty of the Northwest Territories and meeting new people from all corners of the world.”

B. DENE ADVENTURES

PO Box 2397
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P8
1-867-444-0451
www.bdene.com
tours@bdene.com

ENODAH WILDERNESS TRAVEL LTD.

PO Box 2382
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P8
867-873-4334
or 867-669-7980 (lodge)
www.enodah.com
info@enodah.com

“I’m a firm believer that people everywhere are longing to reconnect with Mother Nature. In the Northwest Territories, we’ve got it all — from untouched wilderness to intact, earth-bound Indigenous cultures to the aurora borealis. We even have Canada’s only free-range reindeer herd. A visit here is to experience childlike wonder at every turn.”

— *Kylik Kisoun Taylor, ITAC Board Member for Northwest Territories*



PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo by Cody Drygeese courtesy B. Dene Adventures

2 Photo courtesy Enodah Wilderness Travel Ltd.

Grey Goose Lodge, Deline NT

It is a tiny community of only 600 souls, 500 kilometres north of Yellowknife. The hamlet of Deline, Northwest Territories, though, is a treasure trove of history and lore. The Dene people have long believed that their beloved Great Bear Lake has a massive beating heart that pumps water through the world's rivers and oceans. The town that served as the staging area for Sir John Franklin's second Arctic expedition is also famous for being the birthplace of Canada's game, hockey.

Today, the inhabitants of Deline welcome visitors with world-class ice and sport fishing, dogsledding and many other attractions. Grey Goose Lodge, a four-star accommodation, sits on the shores of Great Bear Lake, famous for its pristine water and trout fishing. The 12-room lodge offers a full-service restaurant, year-round conference facilities and a team of experienced local guides.

"The majesty of Great Bear Lake is overwhelming," says Bob Gill, CEO of business interests for the Deline Government, which manages the lodge, as well as other businesses. "You can drink straight from the lake, the eighth largest in the world."

The residents recently celebrated Great Bear Lake's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. To keep up with rising demand from visitors around the world, Grey Goose Lodge is also embarking on a \$2-million expansion, adding one- and two-bedroom cabins to its offerings. "The aurora borealis is another star attraction," says Gill. "There is so much to see and do in Deline."

Tundra North Tours, Inuvik NT

A vast herd of 3,000 reindeer moves slowly, like a living river, across the stark, snowy tundra. Follow in their footsteps as they travel towards their spring calving grounds. See shimmering northern lights shoot across the horizon as you head for the night into an igloo you helped build. Mush your own dog team, smoke fish and share a feast cooked by Inuvik elders while chatting with them about traditional life. Take part in old-time games, dances and songs and feel the connection these people have with the Arctic's creatures and wide-open spaces.

For over a decade, Kylik Kisoun Taylor of Tundra North Tours has been introducing visitors to the spectacular North. An Inuvialuit/Gwich'in from Inuvik whose grandparents lived a traditional lifestyle, Taylor is passionate about sharing insights about his world. "People come here seeking to connect with untouched wilderness and experience other cultures," he says. "They leave transformed."

Tundra North Tours takes visitors on a range of summer and winter expeditions in the Northwest Territories and Yukon — including trips along the Dempster Highway, the Ice Road over the Mackenzie River and Arctic Ocean to Tuktoyaktuk, along the Arctic coast and to Herschel Island. "Anyone can take you on a boat trip down the Mackenzie River or picking berries on the tundra," says Kisoun Taylor. "But we share an intimate look at what it means to be Indigenous."

GREY GOOSE LODGE

PO Box 156
Deline, NT X0E 0G0
867-589-5500
www.deline.ca
or www.destinationdeline.com
info@destinationdeline.com

TUNDRA NORTH TOURS

PO Box 2785
185 McKenzie Road
Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0
1-867-678-0510 or 1-800-420-9652
www.tundranorthtours.com
kylik@tundranorthtours.com



1



2



3

NARWAL Northern Adventures, Yellowknife NT

Grab a paddle, step into a 29-foot (nine-metre) voyageur canoe and glide across Yellowknife Bay, while tapping your toes to a Métis fiddler playing on board. Watch as characters pop up along the shore, re-enacting nuggets of northern history during a unique floating dinner experience. Enjoy feasts that feature moose meat on the menu, and bison soup served with bannock.

“It’s a multicultural, multi-art northern immersion,” says Catharine Allooooloo, the owner and operator of NARWAL (Northern and Remote Wilderness Adventures Ltd.) who runs the business with two of her three children who are of Inuit ancestry. “My son Devon guides and harvests the game meat, and my daughters throat sing and teach traditional Inuit games.”

Started in 1987, Yellowknife-based NARWAL has a B&B and offers year-round cultural and adventure programs that feature traditional Inuit clothing rentals, igloo-building, ice-cave adventures, northern lights viewing, hiking, fishing and one- to six-day kayak and canoe expeditions that include gourmet meals. Allooooloo’s daughter Tiffany Ayalik hosts the First Nations food and cooking TV show Wild Kitchen.

Many of NARWAL’s guests are families. “Their awe makes us realize what a privilege it is to live here and share Inuit culture,” says Allooooloo. “I have combined my outdoor passion with my desire to give my kids the opportunity to explore, celebrate and research what it means to be a young Indigenous person in Canada today, and to share that knowledge with others.”

NARWAL NORTHERN ADVENTURES

4702 Anderson-Thomson Boulevard, PO Box 11072
Yellowknife NT X1A 3X7
867-873-6443
www.narwal.ca
outdoors@narwal.ca

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo courtesy Grey Goose Lodge,
Deline Got’ine Government
2 Photo by Danny Swainson courtesy
Tundra North Tours
3 Photo by Kenneth Mackay courtesy
NARWAL Northern Adventures

Arctic Bay Adventures, Arctic Bay, NU

The snow shimmers like a blanket of diamonds under a blue sky framed by rugged mountains, sheer red-rock cliffs and haunting hoodoos. Orcas play in its waters, while polar bears prowl the sea ice. Here, near Admiralty Inlet, the world's largest fjord, the summer sun shines 24 hours a day, while in winter the northern lights offer a stunning show of dancing colour. Spot narwhal and the red-throated loon. Warm your body and soul with tea steeped in the melted chips of an iceberg. Sample traditional Inuit cooking. And visit a sod house, a structure that sheltered the Inuit peoples for thousands of years.

When people see Arctic Bay for the first time, many are left speechless. "The looks on their faces, the awe, tells you everything," says Gene O'Donnell, manager of Arctic Bay Adventures, located in the fly-in hamlet of Arctic Bay, Nunavut, on the northwest corner of Baffin Island. "It is a different world here, unlike anywhere else on earth."

Arctic Bay Adventures offers a variety of activities and expeditions to guests, from learning about the nomadic ways of the Inuit and taking in traditional song and dance to hiking, canoeing and birdwatching with experienced local guides. "The beauty of the land, the roughness of it, is hard to explain," says O'Donnell of this magical place in one of the world's most remote communities. "It has to be experienced first-hand."

Beaches Bed & Breakfast, Iqaluit NU

It may be Canada's smallest capital city, but Iqaluit is overflowing with culture, history and natural beauty. Wander its streets exploring art galleries, stop in at a restaurant serving up Arctic char and caribou stew and mingle with locals dressed in traditional sealskin clothing.

For visitors to the remote territory of Nunavut, Iqaluit is the first stop. A perfect place to lay your head after a day of exploring is Beaches Bed & Breakfast, an Inuit-owned lodging and meeting space. "People want to learn about Inuit history and culture," says Beaches owner Jack Anawak, an Inuit who hails from Nauyasat on the shores of Hudson Bay. "I was raised in a hunting-gathering environment and then I went to residential school. If people are interested, I can share those experiences with them."

In addition to its five well-appointed rooms, Beaches Bed & Breakfast offers tours of the community's rich offerings, as well as consultation services to help foster valuable relationships within Nunavut communities. "If you want to go dogsledding or ride on a snowmobile, we can set that up," says Anawak. "We know what is going on in town all year."

Anawak, a former member of Parliament who served as interim commissioner for Nunavut after its formation in 1999, is a longtime champion of the territory he calls home. "People are interested in how the Inuit have survived for thousands of years," he says. "It is an incredible story."

ARCTIC BAY ADVENTURES

PO Box 78
Arctic Bay, NU X0A 0A0
867-439-8888 or 1-844-347-4822
www.arcticbayadventures.com
info@ArcticBayAdventures.com

BEACHES BED & BREAKFAST

114 Sina Street, PO Box 1432
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
867-979-3034 or 867-222-8850
www.iqaluitbeaches.ca
caroline@iqaluitbeaches.ca

“It’s an honour to represent the Indigenous tourism aspect of Nunavut. Come enjoy a feast of caribou, ptarmigan or whale meat with the Inuit elders who live here. This is a land of igloos, dogsledding, polar bears, northern lights and narwhals. We have great potential for extreme adventure travel in this part of Canada. Come. Be free. And experience the awesomeness of our nature.”

— Gene O’Donnell, ITAC Board Member for Nunavut



1



2



3



4

PHOTO CREDIT //

1 Photo by Clare Kines courtesy Arctic Bay Adventures

2 Photo courtesy Beaches Bed & Breakfast

3 Photo by Clare Kines courtesy Arctic Bay Adventures

4 Photo by Clare Kines courtesy Arctic Bay Adventures



PHOTO CREDIT // Photo courtesy Eskasoni Cultural Journeys

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- Aboriginal Creations
- Aboriginal Tourism BC
- Canadian Inbound Tourism Association
- Caribou Chilcotin Adventures
- Explore Canada Marketing Group Inc.
- Legacy Tourism Group
- Moricetown Band
- Ramada Kamloops
- Small Planet Consulting
- Tourism Café Canada
- Tzoonie Ventures Ltd.
- Uncommon Canada Travel Collection

ALBERTA

- Brown Bear Women Events
- Calgary Stampede
- Edmonton Tourism
- Gunn Metis Local 55
- Head-Smashed-in Buffalo Jump
- Heritage Park Historical Village
- Lac La Biche Canadian Native Friendship Centre Association
- Painted Warriors
- Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site

SASKATCHEWAN

- Whitecap Dakota First Nation

MANITOBA

- Bay River Developments
- Canadian Ecotourism Services (CES)
- Eastern Manitoba Tourism Association
- Travel Manitoba

ONTARIO

- Conference Board of Canada
- Cree Village Ecologie
- EF Education First
- Gallery of Canada
- Historic Saugeen Métis
- MacLeod Farley & Associates
- Ottawa Tourism
- Wikwemikong Tourism

QUEBEC

- Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO)
- Cree Outfitting & Tourism Association
- Inuit Adventures
- S. Annanack Enterprise Inc.
- Whapmagoostui Eeyou Enterprise Development Inc.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

- No` Kmoq Village Flat Bay Band

NEW BRUNSWICK

- Hampton Inn & Suites Moncton
- Ninen Productions Inc.
- North Shore MicMac District Council
- Roads to Sea Inc.

NOVA SCOTIA

- Cape Breton University School of Arts & Sciences
- Destination Cape Breton Association
- Eskasoni Cultural Journeys
- Future Inns Halifax Hotel & Conference Centre
- Hampton Inn Sydney
- Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre
- Nova Scotia Community College
- Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia
- Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

- Lennox Island Development Corp.
- Mikmaq Confederacy of PEI Employment Services

YUKON

- Government of Yukon Tourism
- Le Chti Jardinier Voyageur
- Northern Vision Development

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

- Government of Northwest Territories
- North Star Adventures Ltd.
- Northwest Territories Tourism

NUNAVUT

- Hamlet of Chesterfield Inlet
- Parks Canada Nunavut
- Nunavut Tourism



CONTACT OUR ITAC BOARD MEMBERS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

MIKE WILLIE

mike@seawolfadventures.ca

ALBERTA

BRENDA HOLDER

brenda@mahikan.ca

SASKATCHEWAN

DANA SOONIAS

dana.soonias@wanuskewin.com

MANITOBA

JEFF PROVOST

jeff.provost@eastinc.ca

ONTARIO

KEVIN ESHKAWKOGAN

keshkawkogan@circletrail.com

QUEBEC

DAVE LAVEAU

dlaveau@tourismeautochtone.com

**NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR**

JILLIAN LARKHAM

jillian.larkham@nunatsiavut.com

NEW BRUNSWICK

PATRICIA DUNNETT

patriciad2156@gmail.com

NOVA SCOTIA

ROBERT BERNARD

rbernard@wagmatcook.com

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

CHARLIE SARK

charlie@sark.ca

YUKON

SHIRLEE FROST

frostse@northwestel.net

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

KYLIK KISOUN TAYLOR

kylik@tundranorthtours.com

NUNAVUT

GENE O'DONNELL

geneodonnell@live.com

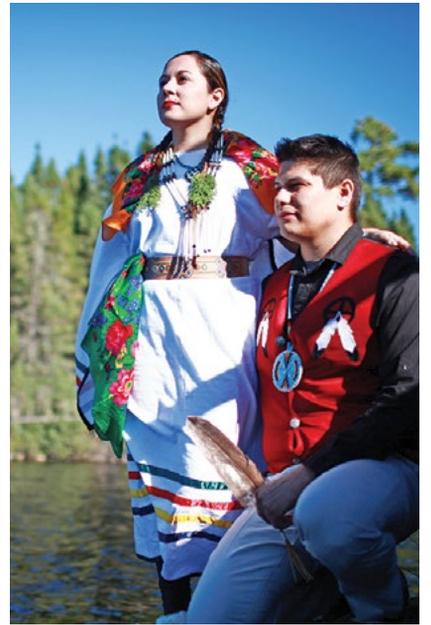


PHOTO CREDIT //

Photo by Clare Kines courtesy Nunavut Tourism



© 2017 Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada. All rights reserved. Neither this publication nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the prior permission of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, 300-3665 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC, V5R 5W2.



INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA