



INDIGENOUS TOURISM BC

Media Fact Sheet 2018-2019

Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC) is a non-profit, Stakeholder-based organization that is committed to growing and promoting a sustainable and culturally rich Indigenous tourism industry in the province of British Columbia. Through training, information resources, networking opportunities and co-operative marketing programs, ITBC is a one-stop resource for Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities in British Columbia who are already operating or looking to start a tourism business.

ITBC works closely with tourism, business, education and government organizations to help Indigenous tourism businesses in BC offer quality experiences and actively promotes these experiences to visitors and local residents. This is achieved through *cultivating* relationships with Indigenous communities and their entrepreneurs, *inspiring* visitors to experience Indigenous tourism, *activating* experience development for businesses and *advocating* for growth in Indigenous economies.

The Indigenous businesses and operators represented via ITBC range from boutique hotels and lodges to wineries and restaurants, cultural interpretive experiences, museums and are found in every corner of the province.





Indigenous Peoples in BC:

- British Columbia is the most diverse province in Canada for Indigenous peoples, and is home to more than 200 First Nations, representing one third of Canada's First Nations.
- BC has the most First Nations languages, with 34 languages and approximately 60 dialects.
- There are seven distinct language families in BC that account for 60% of Canada's First Nations languages.
- Today, there are approximately 200,000 Indigenous peoples in British Columbia. They include First Nations, Inuit and Metis; the three distinct groups of Indigenous people in Canada.
- Some would say, First Nations languages are "the voice of the land," speaking to how people feel about the land, rivers, oceans and the environment. For example, in SENĆOŦEN the word for the "Earth" translates as "my wish for the people", with the possessive referring to the creator of all things. A "mountain" is "my gift" and "islands" are "my relatives of the deep".





Indigenous Tourism in BC:

- In 2016-17, an estimated 401 Indigenous tourism-related businesses operated in BC, representing a 33% increase over establishments identified as being in operation in 2014.
- Throughout the province, the largest shares of Indigenous businesses were engaged in retail (34%), outdoor adventure (19%), and accommodation (12%) operations.
- In 2016, Indigenous businesses generated an estimated \$705 million in direct gross domestic output to meet consumer demand for their products and services.
- Indigenous tourism businesses in BC have also created more than 7,400 direct full-time jobs for Indigenous peoples, and other BC residents through their activities.
- The top five markets for Indigenous tourism in Canada include: Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and China. Over the next two years, Indigenous tourism providers can expect to welcome roughly 7.2 million visitors from these countries.
- Tour operators are seeing growing consumer demand for authentic cultural experiences, with 89% indicating in a recent ITBC survey that they would consider offering or expanding Indigenous experiences as part of their packages.
- Over a third (36%) of travellers surveyed in a study commissioned by ITBC indicated that they had visited Indigenous sites/attractions and events on previous trips to BC on average, they had included such experiences on four trips in the past three years.
- Two-thirds (63%) of Indigenous cultural visitors indicated that they planned to return to BC for Indigenous tourism within the next three years.
- Travellers taking part in Indigenous tourism in BC tend to be well-educated, upper- middle-income wage earners and female baby boomers. They are primarily visiting from North America and Europe; and are spending more money per trip than other visitors.
- Compared to other BC travellers, Indigenous tourism visitors are more likely to spend more time in BC, travel in larger parties, and visit more than one Indigenous location on their trip.

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