



**INDIGENOUS**  
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

ASSOCIATION TOURISTIQUE  
**AUTOCHTONE**  
DU CANADA

# LEARNING ABOUT THE CONSUMER

Destination Canada & ITAC US  
Qualitative Research Project  
(2017)

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Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada



DESTINATION  
CANADA



ABORIGINAL  
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

Aboriginal Tourism  
US Qualitative Research  
Summary of Findings and Considerations

Canada

## FINDING #1

- Interest is there, Awareness is low



Photo Courtesy: Aboriginal Experiences, Ottawa, ON.

## FINDING #1

- Host visitors with the understanding that Americans are interested in Indigenous cultures, but do not necessarily understand us or have ever learned anything about our history and relationship with Canada.
- Clearly name your community or nation within your marketing descriptions – share your language if you like.

Your visitors are interested in learning!

## FINDING #2

- Authenticity is key
  - One-on-one unique experiences
  - Actively involved in learning about culture, traditions, land, environment
  - Messaging should not be overly commercial



Photo by: Cody Drygeese  
Photo courtesy: B. Dene Adventures, Yellowknife, NT.

## FINDING #2

- Be yourself, be authentic, and avoid ‘staged’ experiences.
- Find multiple ways your guests can interact with your staff, performance groups and knowledge keepers.
- Include land acknowledgements in your business and experience descriptions.
- When talking about your business, focus on what makes it unique and different

## FINDING #3

- Aboriginal Tourism Differentiation
  - Transform trip to Canada from ordinary to extraordinary
  - Experiential and emotional



Photo courtesy: I-Hos Gallery, Courtenay BC.

## FINDING #3

- Visitors are seeking what is unique, what stands out, and what is 'new' in a destination - focus on showcasing what you do best – keep it authentic, engaging, and extraordinary.

Showcase what you do best

## FINDING #3

- Canadian Differentiation

- Impressions of Aboriginal tourism in the US may be negative (are visitors welcome?)
- Indigenous experiences in Canada are perceived as more authentic



Photo courtesy: Sidney Whale Watching, Sidney, BC.

## FINDING #3

- Do not be afraid to share your community's story and historic relationships with Canada.
- Acknowledge that there are locations, information and stories which your community has decided are not to be shared; tell your visitors why.
- Authentic Indigenous tourism experiences do not live in the past. Indigenous people in Canada are young and vibrant, traditional and modern, and diverse across the country.

## FINDING #4

- Strong & Compelling Positioning
  - Personal and unique experiences
  - An experience they could not find anywhere else
  - Interaction focused



Photo courtesy: Eskasoni Cultural Journeys, Eskasoni, NS

## FINDING #4

- Use marketing photography which includes people doing your experiences.
- Highlight your knowledge keepers and storytellers by name – tell their story too!
- Embrace how Aboriginal culture is alive and well, and part of a modern society – the experiences are not ‘stuck in the past’.

A personal and authentic connection

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