

INDIGENOUS

CULTURE TRIP

Everybody loves an authentic story—and the history of Canada's First Nations is full of them. In fact, Indigenous-related tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the travel industry. Groups looking for immersive experiences that highlight Indigenous heritage don't have to go far to find them—they're right in our own backyard.

by Doug Wallace



PHOTO: LOGANSWAYZE



Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Saskatoon, Sask.

Overview: A sacred site and gathering place for more than 6,000 years, the Wanuskewin park and heritage centre advances the understanding of the cultures of the Northern Plains Indigenous peoples through tours and trails. A growing herd of bison has recently been reintroduced to the landscape here. The area is also home to the longest-running archaeological site in Canada.

Agenda: The conference facility holds up to 350 people, with Indigenous ingredients and flavours headlining the catering menus. And you can't beat the stunning views of the Opimihaw Valley. wanuskewin.com

PHOTO: ROAM CREATIVE

SQUAMISH LIL'WAT CULTURAL CENTRE



Whistler, BC

Overview: The Squamish Nation and the Lil'Wat Nation partnered to create the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, where they share their cultures with visitors to Whistler. Groups can congregate in the Great Hall, the Longhouse and Istken Hall.

Agenda: A tour of the main artwork and cultural artifacts with a Cultural Ambassador provides the background that underlines the importance of nature to the Salish people. A museum and giftshop celebrate the cultural past and present, while an Indigenous-inspired feast is augmented with ceremonial dancing.

slcc.ca



PHOTO: TOURISM SASKATCHEWAN/HANS GERHARD PFAFF





PHOTO: SIX NATIONS TOURISM

Six Nations

Ohswéken, Ont.

Overview: Visitors learn about the traditions of the Haudenosaunee People and the history of Six Nations, set within one of the last remaining Carolinian forests on the Grand River. There are two historical sites here: Chiefswood National Historic Site, the birthplace of poet and author E. Pauline Johnson, and Her Majesty's Royal Chapel of the Mohawks, built in 1785.

Agenda: Various outdoor experiences tell the story of the most populous First Nation in Canada, including canoe tours, art studios, dinner theatre and a full-day tour that hits all the highlights and includes a lacrosse game. Fifteen log cabins provide rustic accommodations, while three event centres handle your crowd.

sixnationstourism.ca



PHOTO: FRANCOIS DESPRES

WENDAKE

Quebec City

Overview: This urban reserve of the Huron-Wendat Nation lets visitors discover the ancestral culture of the region. Lore and legends are revealed through the Ekionkiestha' longhouse, Tsawenhohi house and the Huron-Wendat Museum.

Agenda: You can participate in interpretive tours, handicraft workshops, canoeing, kayaking and nature walks. The Onhwa' Lumina night walk is a kilometre-long multi-media experience of light, sound and video celebrating the Huron-Wendat Nation with rhythm and song. And several restaurants contribute to a varied culinary program.

tourismewendale.ca



Métis Crossing

Smoky Lake, Alta.

Overview: The premier centre for Alberta Métis cultural interpretation and education is sized perfectly for group visits, set on more than 500 acres of historical land one hour northeast of Edmonton.

Agenda: Explore Métis culture through signature immersive experiences that include traditional cultural practices and art workshops, a wildlife tour and even a trapline experience. A stunning Cultural Gathering Centre seats up to 400 people, with a patio adding another 200. Accommodations include a 40-room lodge, sky watching pods and trapper tents.

metiscrossing.com



UNDER THE STUMP

Rocky Harbour, Nfld.

Overview: Set within Gros Morne National Park, Under the Stump educates guests in the Indigenous Mi'kmaq Newfoundland cultures and local traditions through storytelling and guided tours.

Agenda: Explore the remote bogs and barrens, spot caribou and other wildlife, taste-test traditional jams and Face N Eyes buns—and join in a mini kitchen party with music, ugly sticks and spoons. A private (non-alcoholic) Screech In Ceremony in the woods can also be arranged. Other soft-adventure pursuits in the Gros Morne area include paddling, boating and backpacking.

underthestump.com



PHOTO: UNDER THE STUMP