

# Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Tourism

**Desk Research for RTO 12** 

July 8, 2020



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#### **Research Purpose**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought travel to a halt. Now with restrictions lifting, the travel industry must tackle the daunting task of rebuilding. There is already plenty of research to show the post-pandemic traveller will be changed in many ways, and the industry will have to adapt. For RTO 12, the big question is how will these changes specifically impact tourism to the region (and its 1,800+ operators). The answer will determine how the region should respond to those impacts

This first phase of secondary research included a comprehensive scan of research done to date by governmental, educational and private organizations in Canada and around the world into the impact of the pandemic on travel behaviour. These include, but are not limited to, USTravel.org, The Harris Poll, Destination Canada/Ontario, Skift, TripAdvisor, AirBnB, Angus Reid among many others.

We also did a scan of any competitive digital advertising activity by the other RTOs in the province as well as by Destination Ontario, Destination Canada and other provincial tourism organizations



# First, some good news



#### RTO 12 is in an enviable position

First, over 90% of the region's tourism receipts came from Ontario tourists prepandemic. Compare that to Toronto, where they accounted for just 25% of receipts, or Northern Ontario RTO (13c) at 63%

Second, RTO 12's outdoor-focused product is well-suited to the post-pandemic traveler's needs (more on that later in this report, as well as in our current quantitative study). Compare to that to Toronto's indoor-focused product

That means RTO 12 will recover more quickly than other RTOs. That said, tourism receipts will still be off next year

So will Ontarians be ready to travel again later this year? And how will RTO 12 make up the loss in revenue over the next three years?



#### Part 1

# Current state of the pandemic and impact on the travel industry



### 2020 so far



#### Worse than 9/11

The Pandemic will have more than nine times the impact of 9/11 on the global travel sector, according to Oxford Economics

Canada's tourism GDP is projected to drop approximately twice more than the national economy



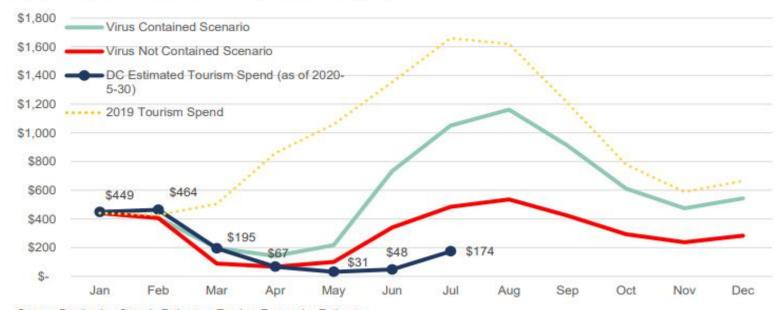


#### Worse than the worst-case scenario

In April, Destination Canada projected best-case scenario for tourism spend, where travel was returned to normal by July, and a worst-case scenario, where it wasn't.

The actual estimated revenue loss is worse than the worst-case scenario

# Estimated Tourism Spend versus Tourism Economics Virus Contained and Virus Not Contained Models, as of May 30, 2020 (\$M)



Source: Destination Canada Estimates, Tourism Economics Estimates



# Canadian receipts from international tourism revenue have been wiped out

Compared to 2019, this represents a decrease of \$3.4B in Canadian tourism export revenue (\$1.4B for Ontario alone) for Q1 and Q2 of 2020

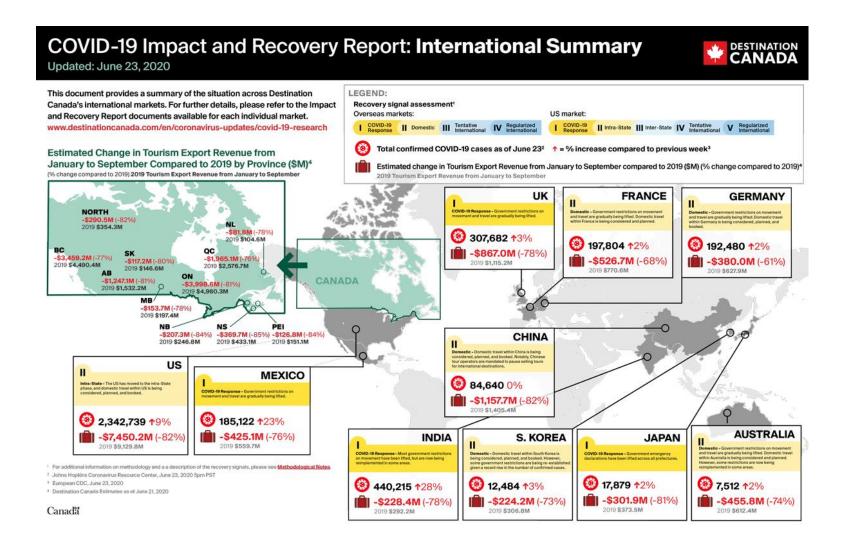
#### Estimated Change in Tourism Export Revenue Compared to 2019 by Quarter (\$M)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	Total Q1	APR	MAY	JUN	Total Q1+Q2
\$ change compared to 2019 (\$M)	\$7.8	\$36.5	-\$309.1	-\$264.8	- \$791.5	-\$1,027.5	-\$1,305.8	-\$3,389.6
% change	1.8%	8.5%	-61.3%		-92.2%	-97.0%	-96.5%	

Source: Destination Canada Estimates (data as of May 30, 2020)

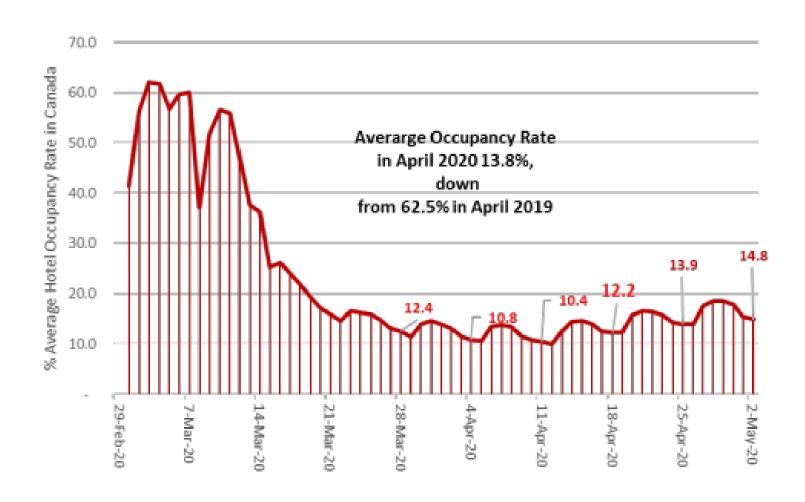


## **Revenue Loss by Country**





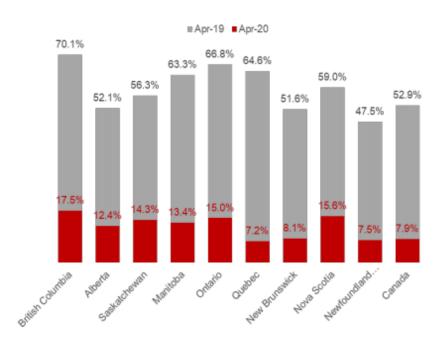
#### Hotel occupancy fell to lowest level in modern history

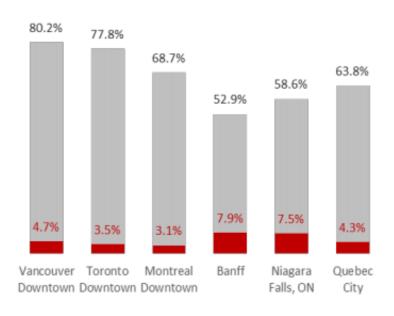




## Urban hotels were almost empty in April

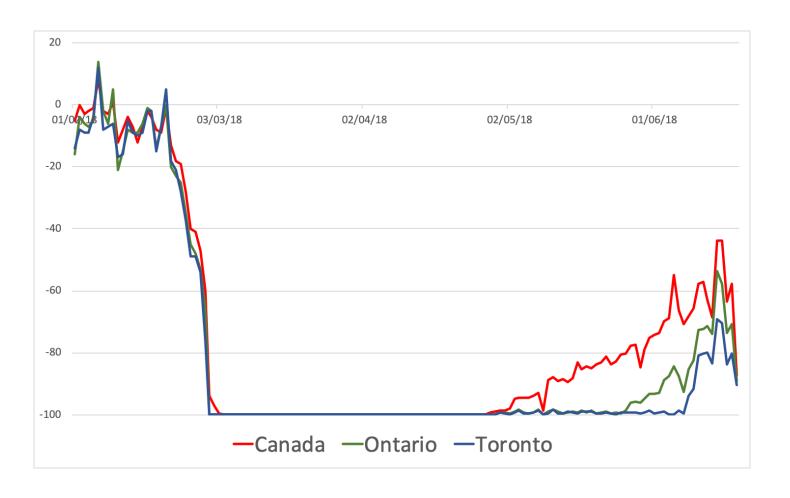








## **Change in Seated Diners - OpenTable**

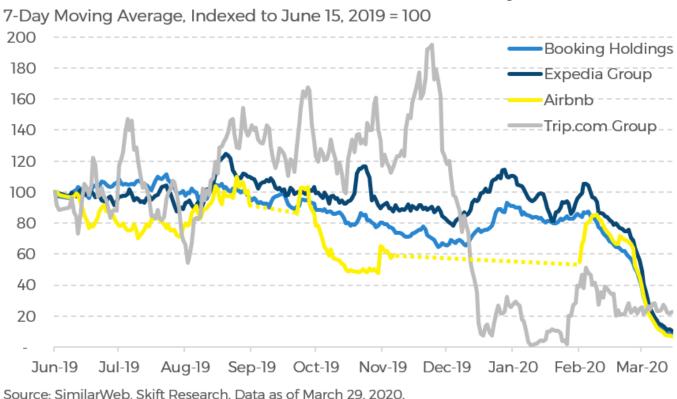




#### Online travel agencies hit hard

Most saw a decline of 70-90% in accommodation bookings by March. Chinese OTAs have been the first to recover, though the recovery is weak

#### Accomodation Transaction Volume at Major OTAs



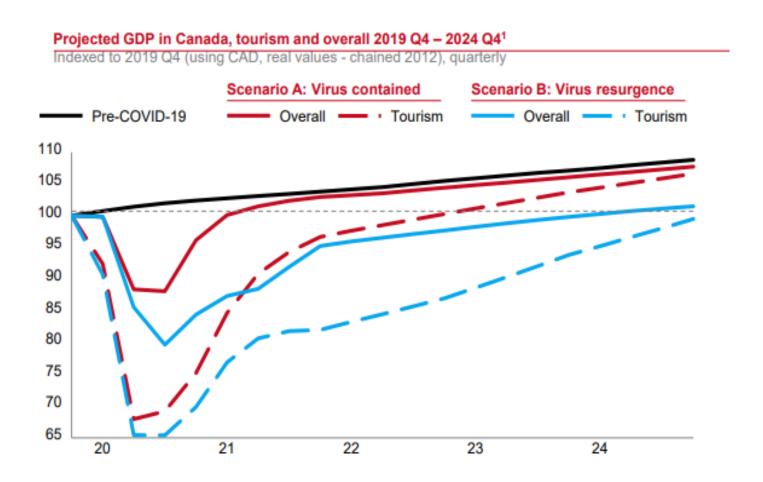


## The recovery ahead



### DC Optimistically Predicts It Starting Next Year

But it could take two to five years for tourism GDP to return to pre-COVID levels, depending on the scenario

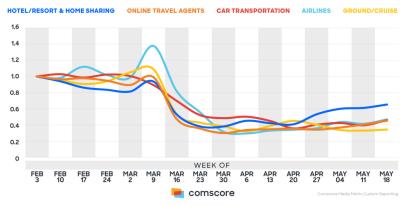




### There are signs of a rebound in Canada

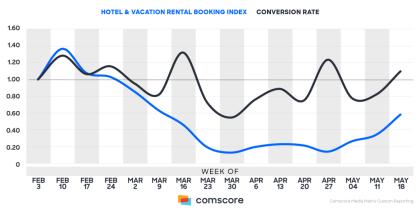
#### Weekly Visitation to Travel Categories (Desktop + Mobile)

INDEXED AGAINST THE WEEK OF FEB 3, 2020

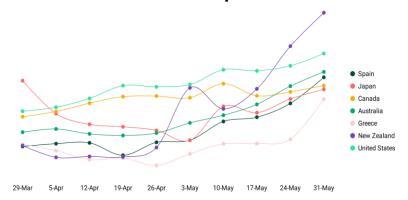


#### **Hotel & Vacation Rental Booking Trends (Desktop)**

INDEXED AGAINST THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 3, 2020



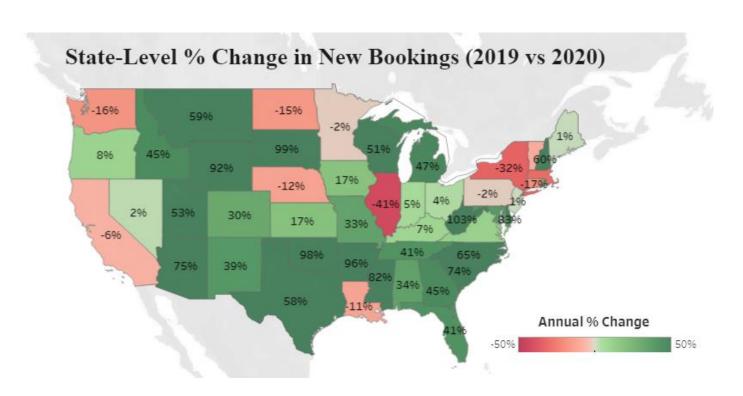
#### **Restaurant Searches on Tripadvisor**





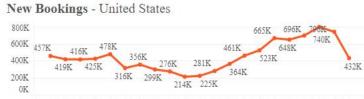
# In fact, U.S. new vacation rental bookings are up 20% over last year

According to AirDNA, the destination leading the rebound are beaches, mountain towns, lakeside getaways, and anything within driving distance of a major urban city



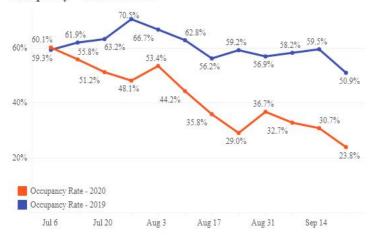


## As goes the USA, so goes Canada





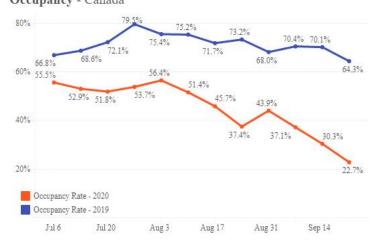
#### Occupancy - United States



#### New Bookings - Canada



#### Occupancy - Canada





### Two solitudes, Part 1: The Rich are Getting Richer

Meanwhile the "1%", most of whom hold a substantial portion of their net worth in stock markets, is having a great year, economically-speaking. This is great news for operators catering to this end of the market

#### The Nasdaq just hit a record high...





#### But...



#### Two solitudes, Part 1: Many will be poorer

We have not yet seen the real economic impact of the pandemic, thanks to government fiscal policy like CERB and the the CWSP. If those run out before the fears of the pandemic do, the real economic pain will be seen. Plus, the federal & provincial deficits will militate a tax increase, further putting pressure on the middle to low income brackets

Millions of Canadians will be maxing out their 16 weeks of CERB soon. Then what?

Ending extra \$600 in unemployment benefits will impact 20 million Americans, says government agency

We are now projecting a deeper recession in 2020 and a slower recovery in 2021.



**65%** of Americans think the economic impacts of the pandemic will have a bigger effect on their and their families' lives than COVID-19 itself.

The Harris Poll – June 16

**81%** of Americans have been financially impacted by the pandemic in some way. The youngest seem to have been hit the hardest.

The Harris Poll – June 16

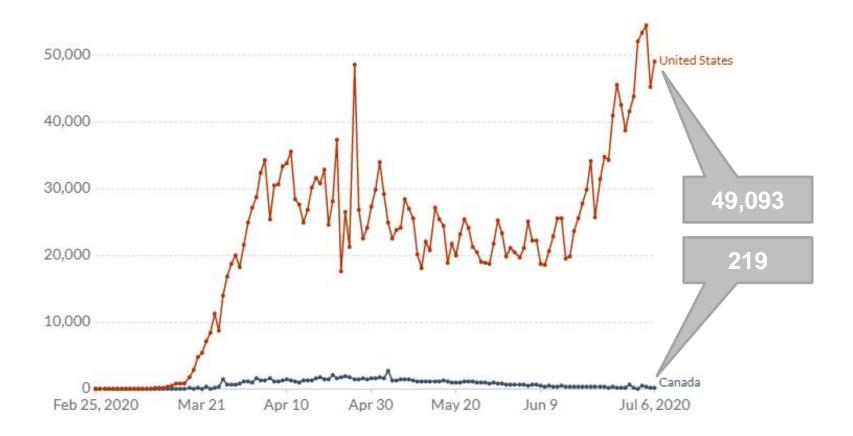
**46%** of Canadians are working reduced hours, 17% are receiving reduced pay, 16% have lost their job while 14% have someone in their household who has lost their job or is working reduced hours/receiving reduced pay (9%). Younger Canadians were also the most affected.

Ipsos – June 22



### Two solitudes, Part 1: COVID-disparity

Daily reported COVID-19 cases, according to the European CDPC, are increasing globally, driven by our neighbour to the south







# Ontario wants U.S.-Canada border to remain closed to 'reckless' Americans

In coronavirus pandemic, Canadians want U.S. border to stay closed

Border closure looks certain to extend past July

Canadian drivers with U.S. licence plates harassed by fellow Canadians

One woman said someone keyed husband's car, another said driver flipped her the finger



## Canadians are unwilling to cross the border

# Suppose the Canada-US border opened after June 21. Would you take a day trip this summer? (All respondents)

	Total (n=1,777)	Region									
		BC (n=244)	AB (n=161)	SK (n=113)	MB (n=122)	ON (n=525)	QC (n=351)	ATL (n=261)			
Definitely	6%	8%	7%	8%	10%	6%	4%	3%			
Probably	9%	8%	14%	9%	8%	9%	10%	5%			
Probably not	22%	28%	19%	25%	25%	23%	22%	15%			
Definitely not	56%	51%	44%	50%	56%	59%	61%	58%			
Don't live close enough to the border	6%	4%	17%	8%	1%	4%	3%	19%			

**Angus Reid Institute** – May 22



## **Are Ontarians willing to receive tourists?**

We're okay with intra-provincial tourism, though there are strong differences along urban/rural lines. But 63% of Ontarians say they strongly disagree with receiving American tourists. According to Angus Reid, 30% want the border to stay closed at least until the end of 2020, and another 13% want it to stay closed into 2021

% Somewhat / Strongly Agree % Tout à fait d'accord / Plutôt d'accord	BC/CB. (n=203)	AB/Alb. (n=205)	SK/MB Sask./Man. (n=200)	ON/Ont. (n=607)	QC/Qc (n=414)	ATL (n=202)
From other communities near me / des visiteurs de collectivités voisines	65%	68%	67%	53%	62%	76%
From other parts of my province / des visiteurs d'autres parties de ma province	55%	63%	57%	43%	58%	76%
From other parts of Canada / des visiteurs d'autres régions du Canada	33%	46%	29%	39%	52%	30%
From the United States / des visiteurs des États-Unis	12%	16%	13%	14%	20%	6%
From other countries / des visiteurs d'autres pays que les États-Unis	11%	18%	15%	13%	22%	6%



#### No imminent recovery in USA tourism – impact?

Given the trajectory of infections in the USA, there will be no recovery in tourism from there to Canada for years

The USA accounts for 13% of Ontario tourism receipts - a significant portion, though less than that from international destinations, which account for 27%

Still, the economic knock-on effect of this loss in income will be broad and significant for Ontario. It will negatively impact receipts from domestic tourism as a result, particularly in the low to middle income segments

Mass market tourism operators are going to feel the pandemic for years to come



### Ontarians are not THAT happy to see advertising

Almost as many Ontarians are unhappy to see advertising for their community as are happy to see it, and the numbers aren't changing. Rural Ontarians are decidedly unhappy about it

	Jun 9 9 juin (n=601)	Jun 16 16 juin (n=603)	Jun 23 23 juin (n=601)	Jun 30 30 juin (n=607)
Net level of happiness / Niveau net de satisfaction¹	-2	-4	-2	-2
Very happy / Happy Très content(e) / Content(e)	31%	31%	26%	31%
Very happy / Très content(e)	10%	8%	8%	10%
Happy / Content(e)	21%	22%	18%	21%
Neutral / Neutre	37%	35%	46%	36%
Unhappy / Mécontent(e)	20%	21%	15%	20%
Very unhappy / Très mécontent(e)	13%	14%	12%	13%
Very unhappy / Unhappy Très mécontent(e) / Mécontent(e)	33%	35%	28%	33%

	Rural/Rural (n=83)*	Urban/Urbain (n=517)			
Net level of happiness / Niveau net de satisfaction <sup>1</sup>	-11	0			
Very happy / Happy Très content(e) / Content(e)	26%	32%			
Very happy / Très content(e)	7%	11%			
Happy / Content(e)	19%	22%			
Neutral / Neutre	37%	36%			
Unhappy / Mécontent(e)	22%	19%			
Very unhappy / Très mécontent(e)	15%	12%			
Very unhappy / Unhappy Très mécontent(e) / Mécontent(e)	37%	32%			



#### Ontario's demographics are changing - fast

Almost 1/3 of the population identifies as a visible minority, having doubled in 24 years. This group is a critical audience for growing receipts from Ontario

Visible minority and Aboriginal population (Canada 2016 Censu			ensus)	) 2011 NHS₽		2006 Cens	sus 🗗	2001 Cens	suse₽	1996 Census 🗗	
Popula	ation group	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
European		8,982,180	67.8%	8,930,835	70.6%	8,879,900	73.8%	8,944,190	79.3%	8,714,680	81.9%
	South Asian	1,150,415	8.7%	965,990	7.6%	794,170	6.6%	554,870	4.9%	390,055	3.7%
	Chinese	754,550	5.7%	629,140	5.0%	576,980	4.8%	481,505	4.3%	391,090	3.7%
	Black	627,715	4.7%	539,205	4.3%	473,765	3.9%	411,095	3.6%	356,215	3.3%
	Filipino	311,675	2.4%	275,380	2.2%	203,220	1.7%	156,515	1.4%	117,365	1.1%
	Arab	210,435	1.6%	151,645	1.2%	111,405	0.9%	88,540	0.8%		
Visible minority group Source: <sup>[8]</sup>	Latin American	195,950	1.5%	172,560	1.4%	147,135	1.2%	106,835	0.9%	85,745	0.8%
	West Asian	154,670	1.2%	122,530	1%	96,615	0.8%	67,100	0.6%		
	Southeast Asian	133,855	1%	137,875	1.1%	110,045	0.9%	86,410	0.8%	75,910	0.7%
	Korean	88,935	0.7%	78,295	0.6%	69,540	0.6%	53,955	0.5%	35,400	0.3%
	Japanese	30,830	0.2%	29,085	0.2%	28,080	0.2%	24,925	0.2%	24,275	0.2%
	Arab/West Asian									118,655	1.1%
	Visible minority, n.i.e.	81,130	0.6%	81,130	0.6%	56,845	0.5%	78,915	0.7%	52,170	0.5%
	Multiple visible minority	97,970	0.7%	96,735	0.8%	77,405	0.6%	42,375	0.4%	35,160	0.3%
Total visible minority	population	3,885,585	29.3%	3,279,565	25.9%	2,745,205	22.8%	2,153,045	19.1%	1,682,045	15.8%
	First Nations	236,680	1.8%	338,480	2.7%	311,830	2.5%	131,560	1.2%		
	Métis	120,585	0.9%	89,975	0.7%	81,320	0.7%	48,340	0.4%		
Aboriginal group	Inuit	3,860	0%	5,310	0%	4,250	0%	1,380	0%		
	Aboriginal, n.i.e.	7,540	0.1%					5,345	0%		
	Multiple Aboriginal identity	5,730	0%	7,630	0.1%	6,395	0.1%	1,690	0%		
Total Aboriginal popu	ulation	374,395	2.8%	441,395 <sup>[9]</sup>	3.5%	403,790 ₺	3.4%	188,315 ₺	1.7%	246,065 ₺	2.3%
Total population		13,242,160	100%	12,651,795	100%	12,028,895	100%	11,285,550	100%	10,642,790	100%



#### Part 2

## Traveller behaviour/sentiment



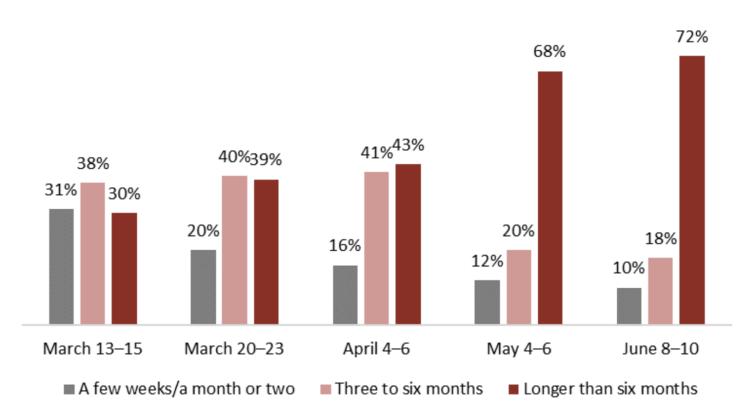
# How are they feeling about the current state of the pandemic and travel?



#### Growing acceptance of the new abnormal

According to a June study by Angus Reid, an overwhelming majority of Canadians feel it will be more than 6 months before Canada is back to normal is growing

#### How long until Canada is back to normal?





### **Growing weariness with the lockdown**

The same study found that younger Canadians are feeling "worn out/fatigued" by the lockdown...

		Age and Gender						
(Weighted	Total		Male			Female		
sample sizes)	(n=1,510)	18-34 (n=204)	35-54 (n=248)	55+ (n=269)	18-34 (n=222)	35-54 (n=271)	55+ (n=292)	
Worn out/ Fatigued	31%	38%	34%	20%	43%	38%	20%	
Anxious	28%	25%	25%	18%	44%	34%	23%	
Grateful	25%	16%	20%	26%	26%	31%	28%	
Bored	22%	27%	23%	24%	25%	19%	19%	
Worried	22%	14%	23%	19%	29%	22%	25%	
Normal	16%	18%	14%	21%	11%	13%	18%	
Optimistic	15%	11%	12%	23%	11%	15%	17%	



#### **Caution: Thrown to the wind?**

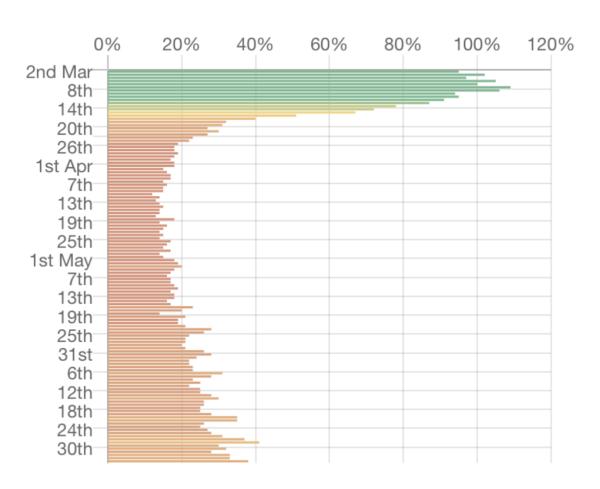
Though Ontario is still the most careful of the provinces

Percentage who are <u>doing each activity less</u> over the last couple weeks									
Unweighted sample sizes	Total (n=1,510)	Region							
		BC (n=197)	AB (n=149)	SK/MB (n=187)	ON (n=467)	QC (n=403)	ATL (n=107)		
Staying away from public spaces	64%	73%	82%	75%	54%	63%	72%		
Keeping up with info from experts in your province	63%	58%	75%	70%	58%	65%	58%		
Keeping extra personal distance / social distancing	44%	49%	67%	58%	37%	40%	37%		
Not shaking hands or hugging people in your life	33%	36%	47%	43%	30%	31%	30%		
Washing hands/sanitizing	30%	33%	38%	40%	29%	23%	29%		



#### "Normal" is still a long way off

The Citymapper measures the mobility of its users in major cities around the world. As of the end of June, few Torontonians were moving about the city. This chart shows the percent of users moving compared to prior year.





# US data indicates that as people stop hoping for a vaccine anytime soon, perception of safety is built on other factors

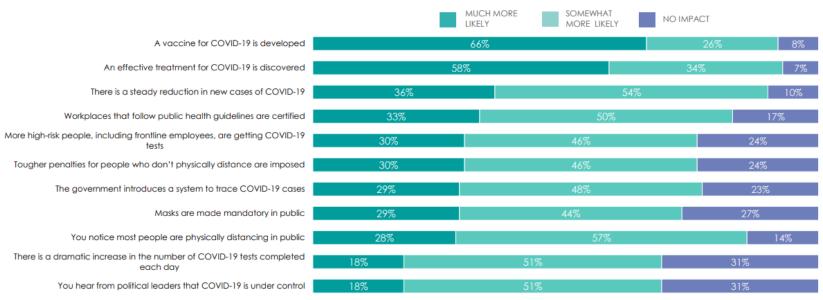
The Harris Poll asked which of the following actions would make respondents comfortable to do certain activities (e.g., fly, go to the gym, go to sporting events, go on a cruise, etc.) again?

**In April,** 62% said when a vaccine has been created, while 53% said extreme cleaning of the facility

**In June**, the findings were reversed with 51% saying extreme cleaning of the facility and 49% saying when a vaccine has been created



# Still, a vaccine or treatment is the only factor that will cause consumers to feel confident enough to resume normal activities



© Ipsos

Q3. To what extent, if any, does the following make you more likely to resume 'regular' activities of life? Base: All respondents (May 29-31 n=501)







#### But a vaccine is still a year or more away

Most experts think a vaccine is likely to become widely available by mid-2021. That would be a huge scientific feat and there are no guarantees it will work

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), says a vaccine won't be available for widespread use for at least another 12 to 18 months. This is the timeline to complete the phase III clinical studies.





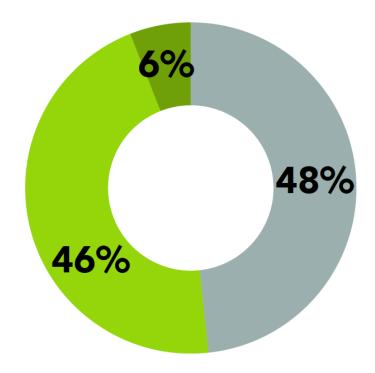
### **Are Ontarians ready to travel?**

According to the Abacus study, Within 3 months of restrictions being lifted 62% would be comfortable travelling within the province. But there is trepidation, with only 6% saying they'd "jump right back in". Interestingly, travelers in the premium category are most likely to say that, at 10%.



I'll get back in but carefully

I'll jump right back in



What best describes how you feel about travelling now as physical distancing restrictions start to be lifted?

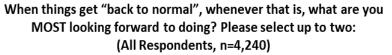


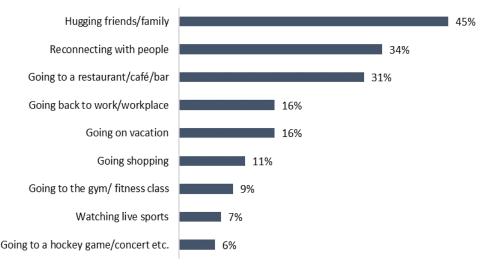
Going on vacation/traveling was the most mentioned purchase Americans are planning once things return to normal and businesses re-open (35%, vs. 27% the prior week).

The Harris Poll – June 20

are most looking forward to once things get 'back to normal'.

Angus Reid Institute - April 13

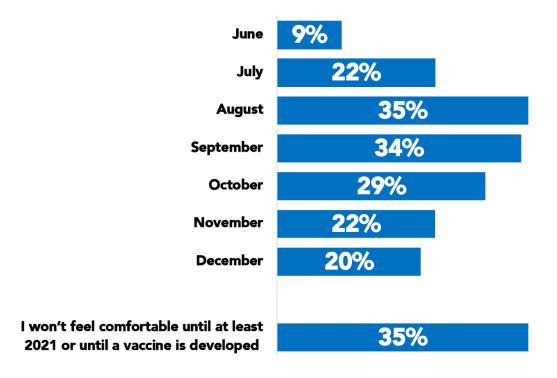






### Many Ontarians say they would be comfortable traveling to a local destination in August or September

Though there is a significant portion of the population who say they will wait until next year or when a vaccine is developed



As of right now, which months of the year do you feel comfortable making travel plans to a destination in Ontario?



#### Who will travel first?

Those most comfortable traveling before the end of 2020 are the ones who travel the most in general, with an average of 3-4 leisure trips and 2-3 business trips in the past year.

The Harris Poll - May 8

The "Comfortable Retired" segment has disposable income as well as the time to travel and is willing to get back to traveling sooner rather than later, with most planning to travel in 2020 (61%).

The Harris Poll – May 8

**Millennials** seem **more inclined to travel soon**, having voted 40-47% willing to go to a beach destination, somewhere in nature or a small town within 1 month (versus 27-33% for all respondents).

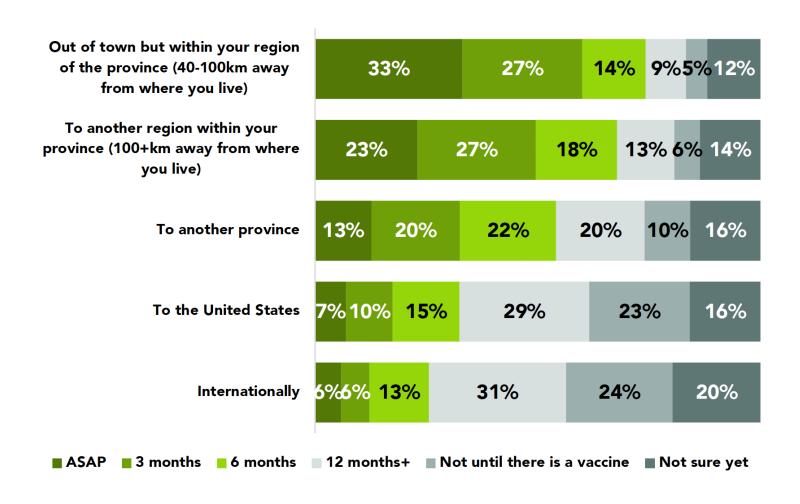
Fuel – May 28



### Where will they travel?

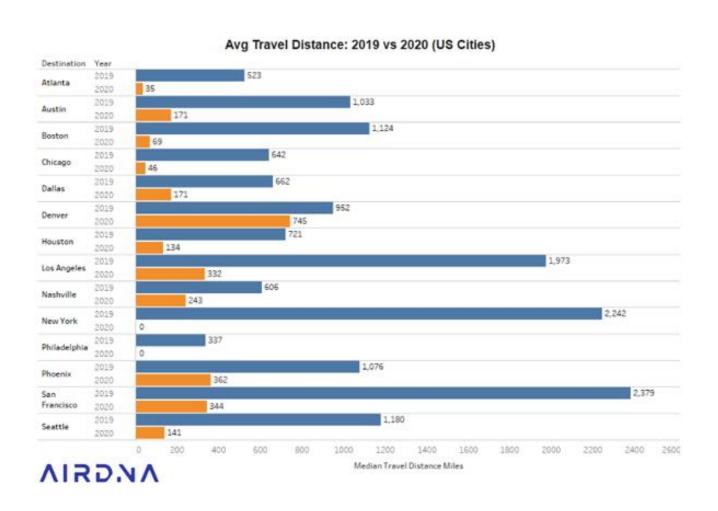


# Most Ontarians say it will be a year or more before they are comfortable traveling internationally





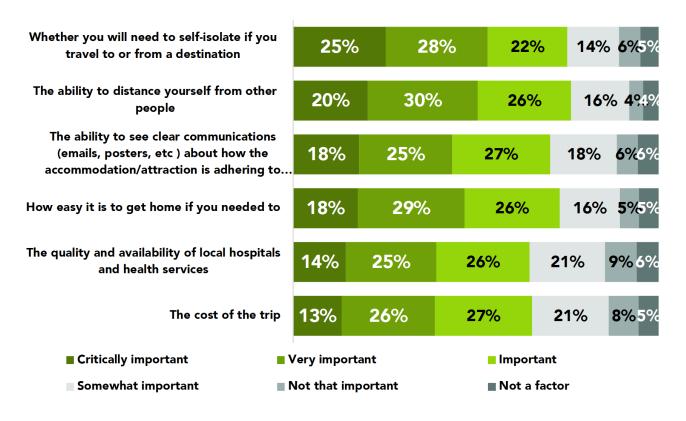
# Closer destinations will be preferred. In the USA, the average distance traveled has decreased by 74%





#### Safety trumps cost

According to Abacus, for Ontario travelers, the ability to physically distance, ease of returning home, and knowing the operator will adhere to public health recommendations are all more important than cost



When deciding where to go and what to do for travel this summer, how important, if at all, will the following factors be in your decision making?

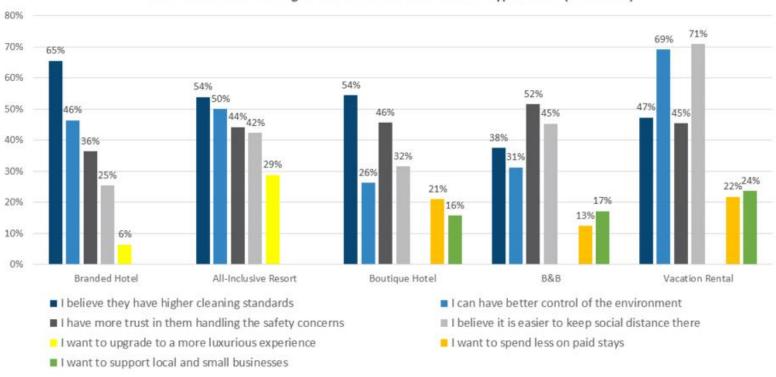


### Where will they stay?



# Control and ability to distance drives accommodation preference





Source: Skift Research, June 2020



Consumers are **218%** more likely to want to take a trip where they can relax compared to before the pandemic, and nearly two thirds (59%) report they would prefer to go somewhere off the beaten path versus a popular destination post COVID-19.

In North America, for example, there has been a spike in traffic researching Campgrounds, Ranches and Beach Motels, as well as lodgings featuring Boating, Skiing, Canoeing or Horseback Riding

**Tripadvisor** – May

### Rural Accommodations have become a priority for EMEA

Index vs All Hotels in Region, 100 is Average

#### Top & Bottom Lodging Types

Farmhouse	235
Ranch	233
Castle	210
Campground	208
Villa	207
Hotels On The Lake	181
Family Resorts	84
City Center Hotels	81
All Inclusive Resorts	70
Budget Hotels	69
Spring Break Hotels	68
Cheap Resorts	67

Numbers are looking at % YoY Decline for each Type indexed vs the average decline for region

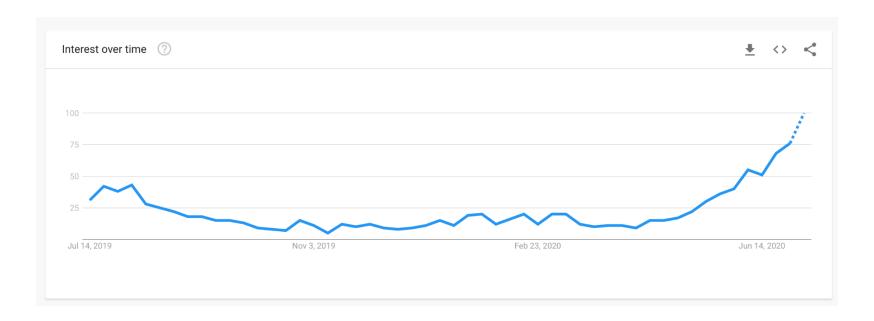
Farmhouse and Ranch stays are researched more often this year

versus last for European destinations by EMEA IPs.

Source: Tripadvisor unique user traffic data, Tripadvisor server analysis, May 2020



# Interest in RV rentals according to Google Trends (Ontario data)



**86%** of consumers say **Cleanliness** will be very important when selecting an accommodation after COVID-19, with the provision of hand sanitizers and sealed amenities, the frequency with which rooms are disinfected, and the use of temperature checks for employees and guests all now cited as top considerations.

Four in five (82%) say that the disinfecting of high-contact surfaces will be a very important consideration when deciding to book tours, activities and attractions.

Tripadvisor



For their next vacation, a third of respondents want **housekeeping** only when requested (29%, or 35% for millennials).

The most chosen dining options for respondents' next vacation were to eat at a local restaurant (75.2%) and to eat on-property (67.6%), but in both cases **they want to eat outside** 

**81%** of respondents would be willing to use a hotel's mobile app to checkin. 60% would be willing to use a hotel's mobile app to unlock their room.

Fuel Travel May Survey



### US data indicates cancellation policies are crucial to travel decision

According to research from Tripadvisor in May, 76% of respondents say that flexible cancelation policies are a must on anything they book for their next trip

According to Fuel Travel's May 28 Consumer Sentiment Study, the following are most likely to persuade North Americans to book a future vacation during the outbreak:

- Flexibility to change travel dates without penalty (70%)
- Discounts on the stay (63%)
- Reassurance that the property is doing extra sanitizing (58%)
- Policies that cover future disruption caused by the virus (50%)



### What will they do when they travel?



### Where & how will Ontarians will travel is changing due to COVID...in our favour

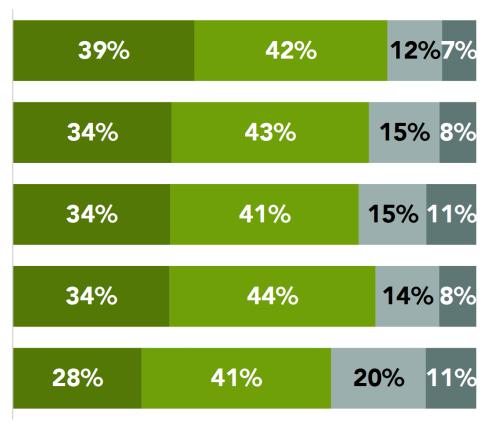
I will prefer small group activities, rather than activities that require me to be around a lot of people

I will prefer to do activities where I only interact with my travel companions

'Il probably be taking more road trips, to avoid airline travel

I will prefer less populated destinations, like a smaller city, or rural communities because of COVID-19

I will prefer staycations (travel within 40km of where I live), over traveling somewhere further away





#### **Preferred activities favour RTO 12**

According to Abacus, Ontarians are more comfortable with activities involving minimal interaction with public and allow them to easily practice physical distancing.

	% completely/ mostly comfortable	Those that love to do this activity
Visit with family and friends who live at the destination you're visiting	68%	82%
Outdoor activities (e g hiking, cycling, fishing etc)	<b>69</b> %	85%
Shopping	50%	63%
Food & drink	<b>52</b> %	<b>59</b> %
Camping (in a tent or RV/trailer)	43%	<b>78</b> %
Touring (RV, motorcycle, boating)	41%	<b>76</b> %
Cultural events/Museums/Art Galleries	<b>30</b> %	45%
Wellness experiences (e g spa, yoga)	<b>27</b> %	54%
Amusement Parks/Zoos/Aquariums	28%	41%
Sporting events	20%	43%
Concerts or music festivals	20%	<b>32</b> %



### Of the 10% who have already booked travel, 63% have booked it for an Ontario destination





#### What about the Business Traveller?



### Business travel may not never fully recover

65% of Americans agree they will have more 'virtual' meetings instead of traveling

58% agree they will have **fewer face-to-face meetings** that require travel

55% agree they will travel less often for business and will attend fewer trade shows and conferences

51% agree their company will reduce its travel budget

37% agree they are willing to travel, but their clients are canceling meetings

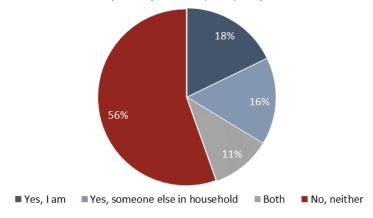
Ipsos – June 15



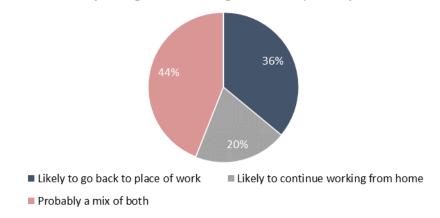
#### Working from home is big, and here to stay

Because of the coronavirus outbreak, have you or someone in your household, been working from home?

(All respondents, n=1,501)



Do you anticipate going back to your place of work as you did before the pandemic, OR do you anticipate continuing to work from home? (Among those working from home, n=433)



Angus Reid Institute, June 11

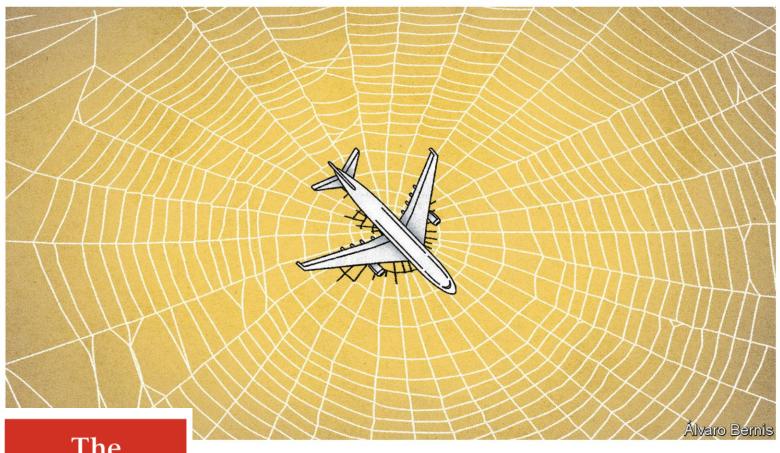
"Business travel is one of the last things to return, because companies are suffering, right? That has big implications for airlines, because the business traveler usually is paying half the revenue on one of those flights. So I think you'll see the frequency of trips go down and average fares go up."

Steve Hafner, co-founder and CEO of travel search engine Kayak Software Corp.



### Whither air travel?





The Economist

Jul 4th 2020 edition >

If covid-19 devastated aviation

What if aviation doesn't recover from covid-19?



#### Whither air travel?

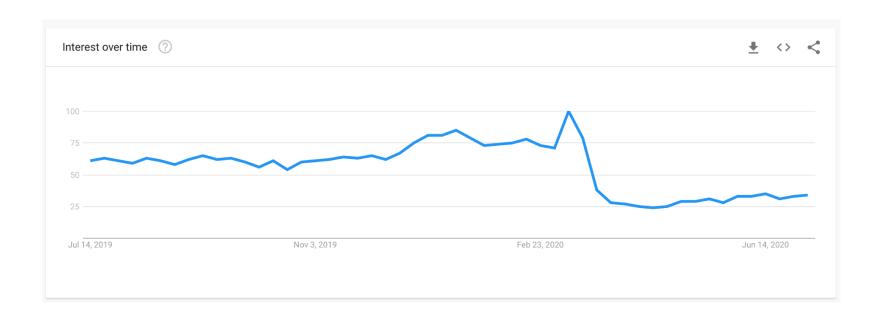
According to Deloitte, Canadians say they expect to use personal cars and bikes more once the stay-at-home measures have been lifted, while using less of air, bus, subway, taxi, train qnd carpooling

In April, global searches for "dealerships near me" grew by over 30% in a single week, and in Canada we're seeing spikes in interest for "is it a good time to buy a car."

We have yet to fully understand how trends will play out long-term, but China may offer some clues: in March, usage of personal or private cars has nearly doubled since the COVID-19 outbreak began. Reliance on public transportation fell by more than half, with taxis and ride hailing services each seeing significant declines

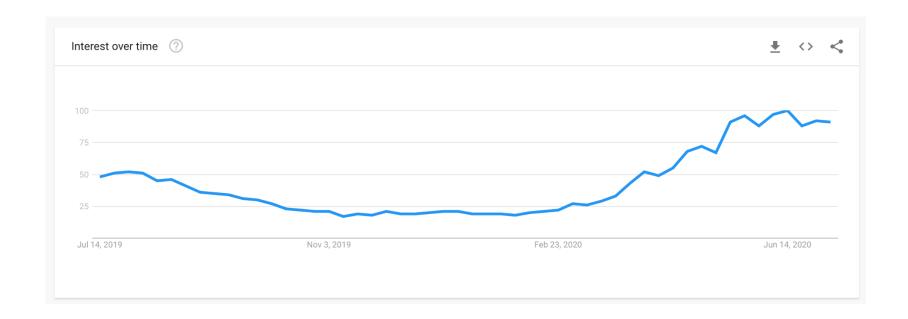


# Interest in air travel according to Google Trends (Ontario data)





# Interest in biking according to Google Trends (Ontario data)





### What will they do when they travel?



### Media and communication preferences

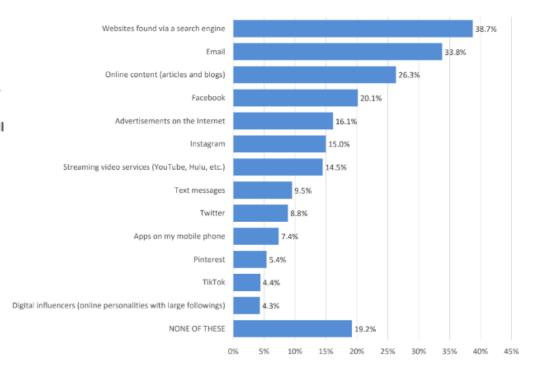
#### Content is still king, influencers not so much

#### Marketing Channels & Traveler Receptivity

Question: Please think about how travel destinations could best reach you with their messages right now.

Where would you generally be MOST RECEPTIVE to learning about new destinations to visit? (Please select all that apply)

(Base: All respondents, 1,205 completed surveys. Data collected June 19-21, 2020)







- **86%** of consumers feel more positive toward brands communicating right now
- **95%** say brands should focus more on positive communications during this time
- **81%** say they want to hear more heartfelt language used in these communications
- **81%** say how well a brand responds during this crisis will have a huge impact on their likelihood to buy that brand in the future
- **66%** say that having a sense of community while we are separated from one another is more important to them now than it has ever been

Tripadvisor- May



# **Implications for Strategy?**

RTO 12 Desk Research Presentation



# **Strategic Implications**

- "The Great Canadian Wilderness experience" has never been more relevant or compelling
- Keep focus on Ontario travelers until 2022 at the earliest
- Target affluent consumers
- Diversify audiences to include ethnic communities
- Air travel offers little opportunity in the near term
- "Staycation" advertising at the provincial level is unnecessary when Ontarians have no desire to leave the province. Funds are better deployed on incentives to encourage intraprovincial travel



### Part 3

# Regional Tourism Communication Initiatives

RTO 12 Desk Research Presentation

### **Destination Canada**

Destination Canada has chosen "Canada Nice" as the theme for their current marketing campaign

The intent is to create a domestic program that is flexible enough to be delivered at the hyper-local and local level across the country, yet is cohesive enough to build to a national and eventually an international campaign

In addition, it is supposed to reflect and respect differing and shifting provincial health guidelines, and resident sentiment towards visitors

Destination Canada will ask the regional campaigns to execute on the central theme, but in their own voice

By using a hashtag built on NICE, rather than EXPLORE, Destination Canada intends to remind people how to be, not what to do, and create a more enduring theme

Destination Canada – June 3

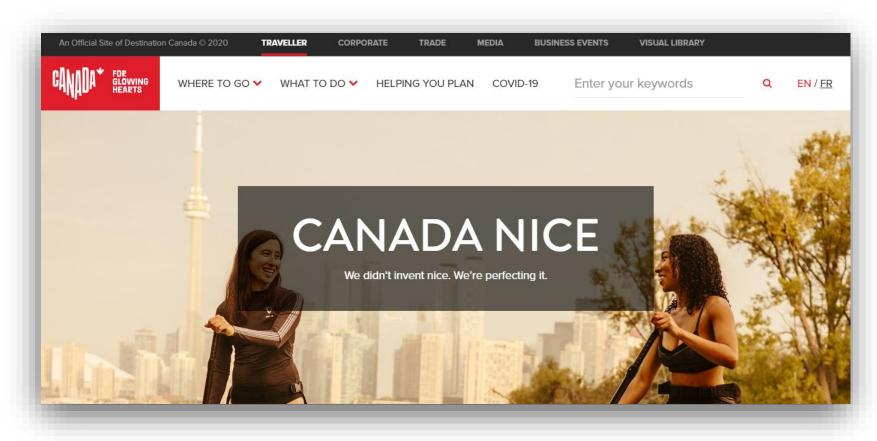


### **Destination Canada website - after July 1**

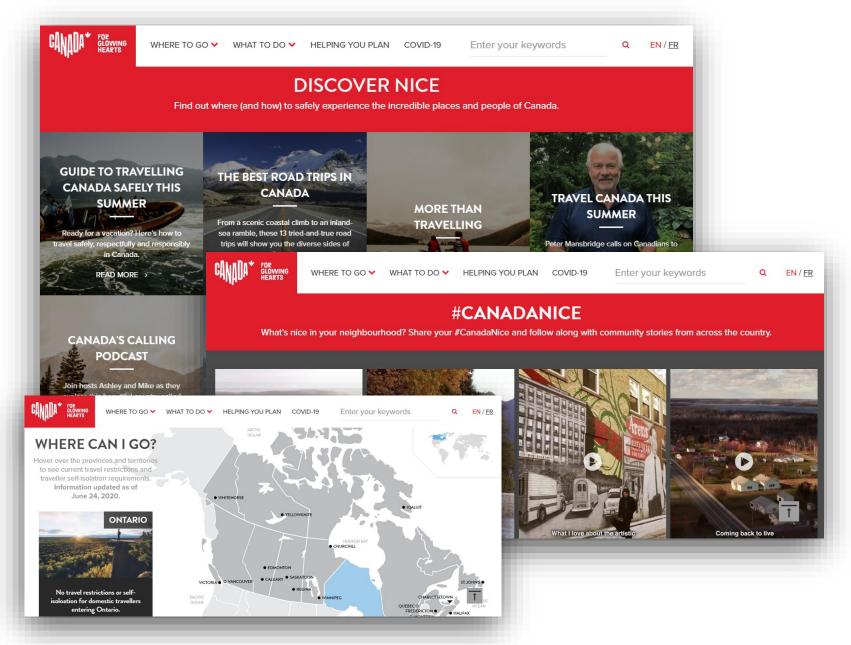




### **Destination Canada website - after July 1**











A Twitter event called #CanadaChat happened on June 17. Participants were asked to talk about their favorite staycation spots, local cafes and restaurants, parks, places to watch wildlife, local businesses and gems around their city or town, and some replies were retweeted. At the end of the chat, they tweeted that the next #CanadaChat is happening on September 16



### **Destination Ontario**

"Ontario's Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries, Lisa MacLeod, said that the ministry is developing a **three-phase approach** to helping the tourism industry through the post-COVID-19 recovery:

- 'Shop local, stay local'
- 'Stay-cation' and domestic tourism marketing plan to promote Ontarians being tourists in Ontario
- Investing in marketing abroad

The minister made several announcements including **Destination Ontario, launching a campaign to promote local tourism and reduce the stigma of going to venues**, and \$13 million in funding for a marketing plan. More than half of the announced funds, \$6.95 million, will go to the various Regional Tourism Organizations in the province





**⇔** HOME

**M** EXPLORE

**O PLAY** 

🖹 PLAN A TRIP

a<sup>8</sup> GET SOCIAL

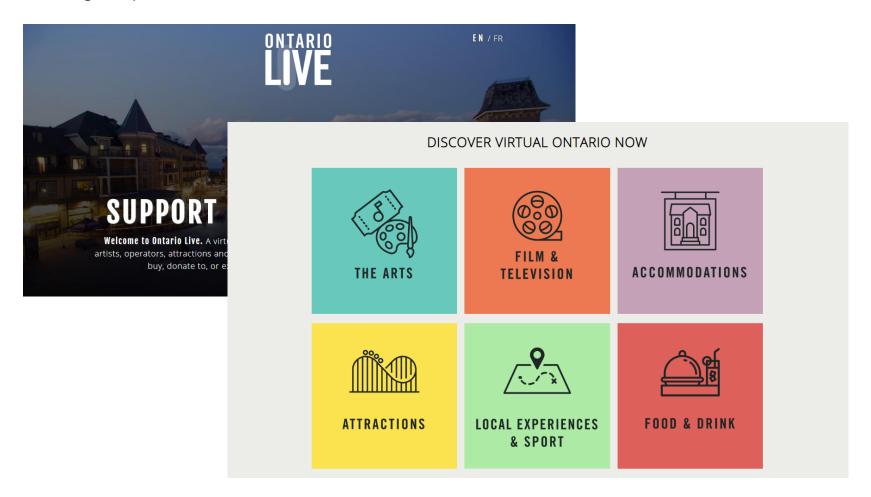






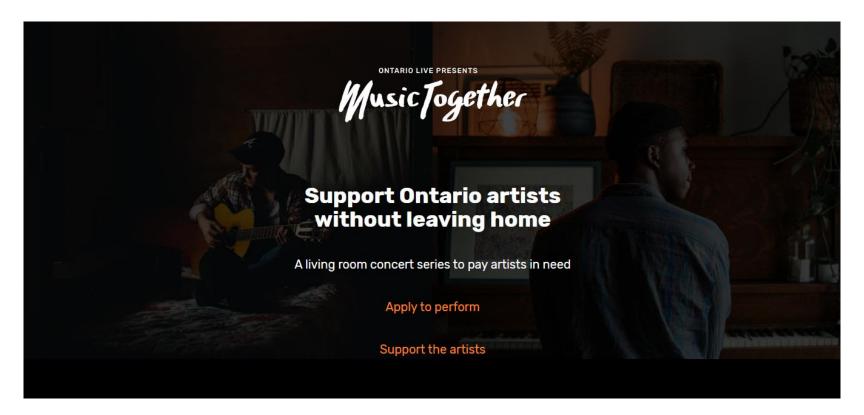


**Ontario Live**, a virtual marketplace for artists, tourism operators, attractions and businesses to share their sites with audiences at home, launched by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries on June 10.





Ontario Live is a matching partner of the **Music Together** project, a living room concert series that supports working Ontario musicians during the COVID-19 crisis with direct funding, new opportunities for fan discovery and eCommerce tools.



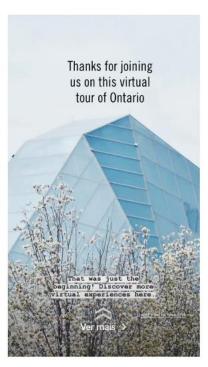


# An Instagram stories series, "At Home", suggests activities for a day exploring Ontario from home











Instagram stories series, **Virtual Tours**, with polls for visitors to choose the activities they would like to do at different Ontario destinations









**Destionation Ontario's Instagram Stories** 



# What are the other RTOs doing?



# Mostly creating content about COVID-19

This includes keeping partners informed about the evolution of the pandemic and related reopening and security protocols, financial relief resources, industry reports and research, training resources (tutorials, videos, webinars) about content production, online experiences, branding and other themes

Many RTOs are cutting down on advertising expenses, focusing on messages of support, emphasizing the beauty and atmosphere of their regions and engaging with visitors based on memories created in previous visits or the desire to travel again soon, in order to stay top-of-mind

Creating campaigns of support for local businesses (using wordmarks, hashtags and contests) and curating, reposting or creating special pages to promote businesses that offer delivery / take out / curbside pickup options

Reopening regions are highlighting cleaning / social distancing / outdoor seating / attendance limits / contact-free alternatives and other measures to ensure health and safety for travelers, as well as promoting attractions and local businesses that are open and encouraging travel



### RTO 1 – Southwest Ontario

"See You Down The Road" is the overarching theme for tourism marketing messaging for Ontario's Southwest during the COVID-19 isolation period

All of SWOTC tourism partners are encouraged to incorporate the wordmark onto web and social images to help communicate that "we look forward to welcoming tourists in the future, but not at this time."





Places to Go Trip Tools Sign Up





WAYS TO PLAY

TRIP INSPIRATION EVENTS OFFERS EXPERIENCES HELP ME FIND Q





**Ontario's Southwest website** 

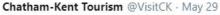




#### Ontario's Southwest @OntSouthwest · Jun 14

If you could go anywhere in Southwestern Ontario, where would you go? Did you know that the anticipation of an experience is proven to bring people almost as much joy as the experience itself? #TourismMatters #OntSouthwest #SeeYouDownTheRoad ow.ly/nXrQ50A48Pu





VisitCK
Gatherings like this seem so foreign. We thought #TourismWeek was a great time to share this pic of all of the fun we've had with visitors to #CKont and of better times ahead some day! #VisitCKLater #SeeYouDownTheRoad





Tourism Windsor Essex ② @TWEPI · Jun 13

Our tourism partners have been using this time to be creative. We can't wait to See You Down The Road and show you all the great things to see & do in #YQG #SeeYouDownTheRoad #YQGStandsStrong





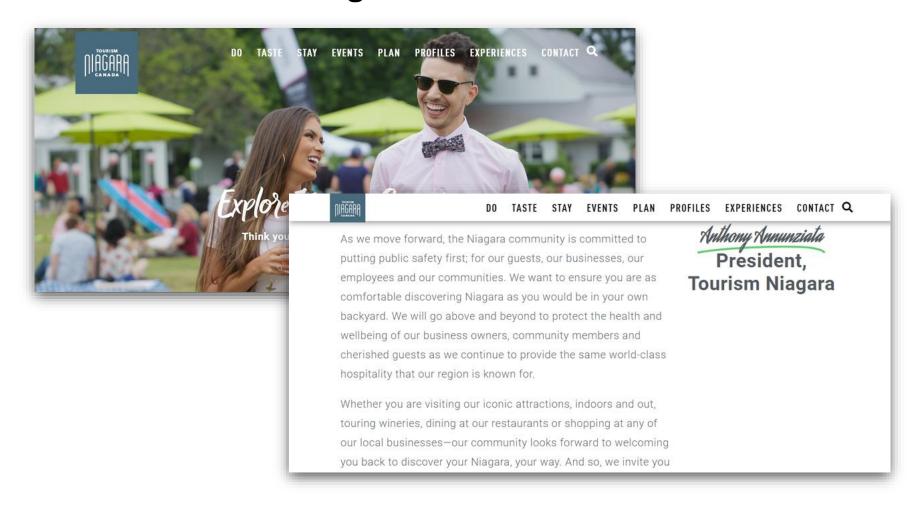
Tourism Windsor Essex 📀 @TWEPI - Jun 14

Think of all the things you will discover when it's safe to travel again #SeeYouDownTheRoad #YQGStandsStrong





### **RTO 2 – Tourism Niagara**

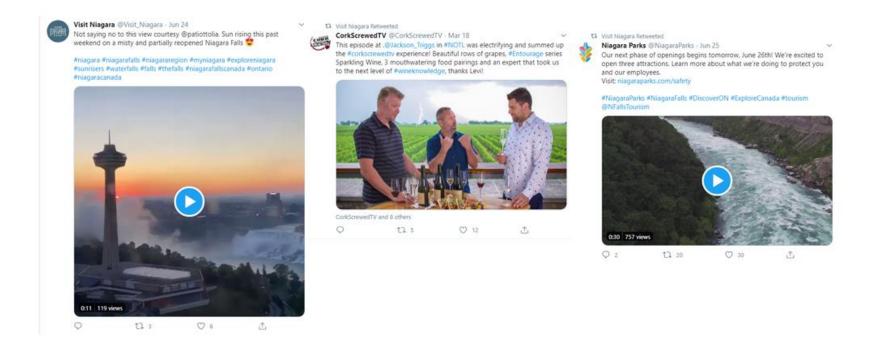




DIAGARA DO TASTE STAY EVENTS PLAN PROFILES EXPERIENCES CONTACT Q Who Did You Become During Your Time at Home? Your days were spent finding the You passed your time at home You value peace and quiet above all best lighting indoors for your daily getting to intimately know the "finest else. You exhibited peak comfort in Instagram posts and TikTok videos. vintages" from the back of your shelf. loungewear and afternoon naps Now it's time to taste all that Niagara during your time at home, but you're Now it's time to get out and capture FOMO inducing content... has to offer. ready for more refined comfort... Wine-ing All Day Social Star **Comfort Seeker** Wine-ing All Day Comfort Seekers When you have been waiting this You passed your time at home with You're a super-parent, caring for your long for a gourmet meal (other than regular rides around the block and family and taking on home-schooling like a champ. We think you deserve a your own of course), you can't settle daily at home workouts, but you're for anything less than best! tired of staring at the same scenery... field trip. **Chef Status Substitute Teacher Wellness Warrior** Substitute Teacher



Mainly posting and retweeting/sharing inspiring local views, along with a few posts featuring wineries. Lately they have been posting about local attractions as they start the reopening process



# **Niagara Falls**

Niagara Falls Tourism has recently received a \$4.5 million dollar grant from the federal government. According to Janice Thomson, CEO of Niagara Falls Tourism, the grant money will be used to benefit Niagara businesses

"This will allow Niagara Falls Tourism to mount the first phase of an advertising and PR (public relations) campaign to encourage Ontario residents within a four-hour drive to rediscover Niagara Falls,' she said. "We will be encouraging them to make Niagara Falls their vacation destination of choice."

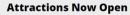
Thomson and other Niagara Falls Tourism members are hoping to start the first phase of the advertisement campaign shortly. Phase 1 of the SafeToPlay campaign will be geared towards attracting visitors from within a four-hour drive in Ontario. Phase 2 will move out "slowly" into other areas of the country. Marketing towards potential American visitors will wait until the border reopens to all travel



Niagara Falls Tourism launched Safetoplay.ca on June 15, right before Niagara Falls reopened, on June 19.

















#### **Shopping**

















#### **Restaurants with Patios Now Open**









### **Public Washrooms**

Niagara Parks has the following public washrooms open daily from 9:30 am to 5:00pm

• Queen Victoria Place (ground level)



#### **Dining & Treats**

Open for take-out and/or delivery service only







#### Safety is a Shared Responsibility

- Practice physical distancing by staying 2 metres (6 feet) apart from other groups. Face masks are recommended if
  physical distancing is not possible.
- Cover your mouth & nose when sneezing or coughing. If you use a tissue, put it in the garbage and wash your hands or
  use hand sanitizer right away.
- Wash your hands often for at least 15 seconds with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching
  your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- . Stay home if you are not feeling well.

Note that any public location where people are present provides an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19. Help keep each other healthy by following health & safety guidelines. By being in public places you voluntarily assume the risks related to exposure.

Some imagery shown throughout our website and social media may not represent current situations and health & safety guidelines.

Due to the evolving nature of this situation, details are subject to change without notice.

### **Niagara Falls Tourism website**



### RTO 3 – Hamilton, Halton and Brant

RTO3 started a campaign for non-local audiences around the tagline "Worth the Wait", intended to reference both the quality of its tourism product and the safety of travelers and their families as they refrain from traveling now.

The wordmark and hashtag are being used in social media posts.



**The Heart of Ontario Facebook** 



### RTO 3 – Hamilton, Halton and Brant

For local markets, a campaign theme was built around the tagline "Show Some Local Love", encouraging residents to support their community's economy by ordering food, buying products and accessing virtual activities from local businesses and organizations (who were encouraged to use the campaign wordmark in their own marketing materials as well).



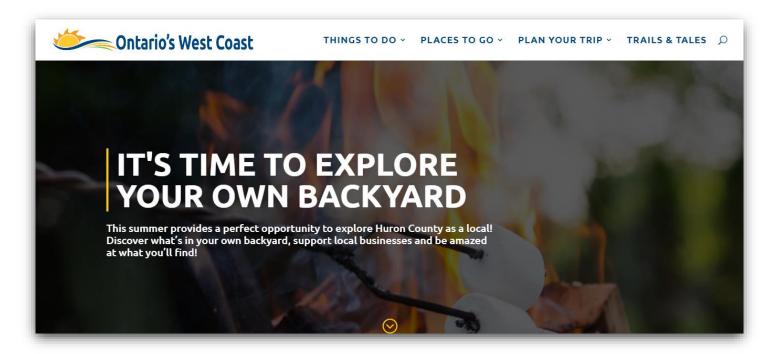


# RTO 4 – Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington

RTO4 doesn't have a consumer-facing website or social media channels. They believe umbrella branding of RTOs caused consumer confusion and friction with branded destinations and operators, and focus on using resources to enhance, amplify and disseminate the existing demand generators/brands within the region that are provincially significant.



The **County of Huron** has a new recently-launched OntariosWestCoast.ca website, created to act as a hub for up-to-date information and to promote the County's key product and experience offerings. The 'In Your Backyard' tourism marketing campaign encourages locals and seasonal residents to explore their own backyard through the quintessential summer experiences found on Ontario's West Coast."



**Perth County** initiatives include business-impact surveys, "How-To From Home" video series, featuring local business owners teaching skills and offering behind-the-scenes glimpses at their operations, with a new episode released on the county's Facebook page every Tuesday and 19 Ways & 19 Days campaign via the county's social media presence, giving residents a different way every day to safely support local businesses





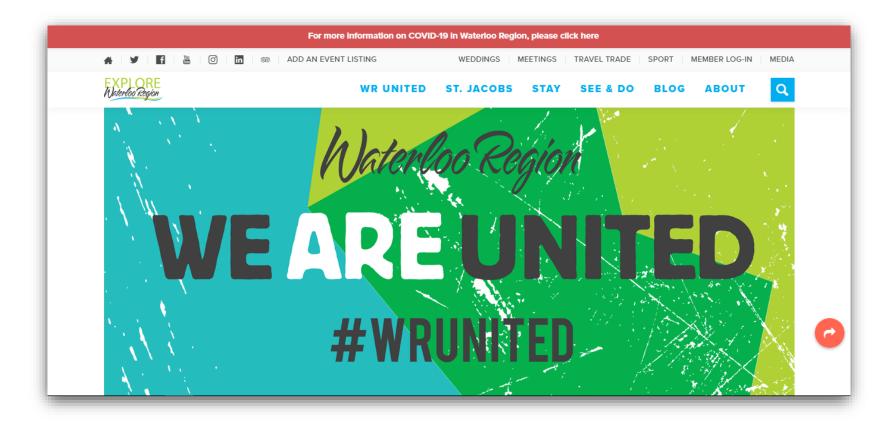


- Perth County bingo cards
- Perth County backgrounds for Zoom video conferences
- The #MeetTheOwner campaign, introducing local businesses' owners
- The Chalk It Up campaign, writing messages of support, gratitude and encouragement with chalk throughout the County and inviting residents to join in and share a message in their driveway



### **Waterloo Region**

In June, Explore Waterloo Region started to roll out the first phase of its "WR United" initiative, an umbrella campaign to encourage local residents to rediscover the region's hospitality and tourism elements



# Waterloo Region

It started with the announcement of the "Art Fresco Picnic Table Tour", a series of picnic tables that have been transformed by local artists and should start to appear on restaurant patio locations across the region before the end of July

The first pillar of the campaign is a push to Eat Local, promoting either going to an open patio, getting take-out or delivery from a local restaurant or buying fresh produce from local farmers

As attractions start to open up in Stage Two, residents are being encouraged to get out and hit the links at a local golf course or mini-putt, plan an adventure on the Grand River, go for a hike or bike ride on a local trail, explore the collections at a Waterloo museum or gallery, camp close to home, discover new species of insects and butterflies or hit the trails on horseback

The third phase of WR United is Stay Local, which will see the campaign expand to get people come for an extended stay to enjoy what Waterloo has to offer. It will launch as the region moves into Stage Three of the province's reopening framework. The WR United campaign is expected to run into 2021

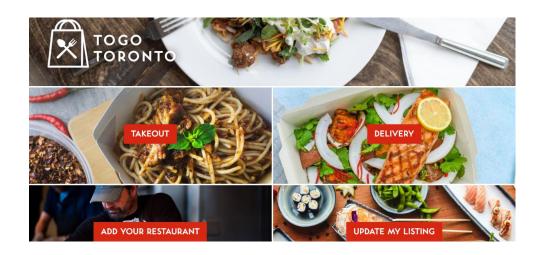
### **RTO 5 – Greater Toronto Area**

On March 20, Tourism Toronto reported to have paused all marketing activity, "excluding a shift in social media where we remain active with an adjustment to our tone and focus of our content."

On March 27, the organization said marketing investment and effort have shifted to B2B and B2C social channels with contextually relevant content themes and posts curated from the community in Toronto

New content themes include Toronto's Creators (promoting live streams and recorded performances of individuals in our arts, theatre and music scene), Good News (featuring people and businesses that are stepping up and helping others) and At-Home Entertainment (featuring social activities for families, singles or couples such as virtual museum or gallery tours, movies and TV shows filmed in Toronto and playlists from Toronto artists).

The **ToGo Toronto** online restaurant hub was created in April, featuring restaurants with a focus on delivery and takeout options. It had 8,000 referrals for the 300+ registered restaurants in the first week



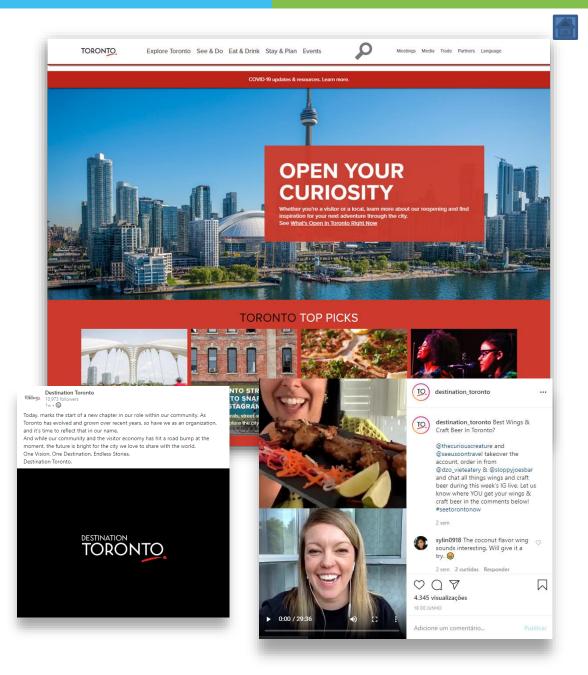
To promote ToGoToronto.com, Tourism Toronto launched a campaign with INDIE88 campaign launched May 19th, consisting of "social, digital and on-air broadcasting components, along with a contest, giving away \$50 gift cards

Tourism Toronto started hosting a weekly Instagram Live series via @SeeTorontoNow partnering with local content creators to feature some of Toronto's favourite restaurants. @SeeTorontoNow is also hosting weekly contests to give away \$100 restaurant gift cards for locals to take part in #TakeOutDay each Wednesday

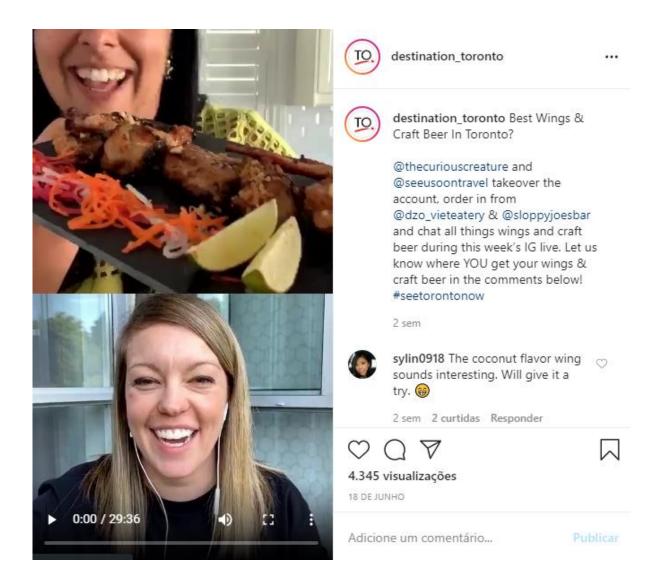
Since launching ToGo Toronto, more than 400 restaurants have signed on. To date, ToGoToronto has referred 13,068 site visitors to restaurants

On June 5, Tourism Toronto reported to be actively monitoring the public health status and guidance as to when it will be appropriate to restart sales and marketing. They announced their team is closely watching key market signals to be ready to market when the time is right.

The first phase of return to travel will be primarily local and marketing efforts will reflect this







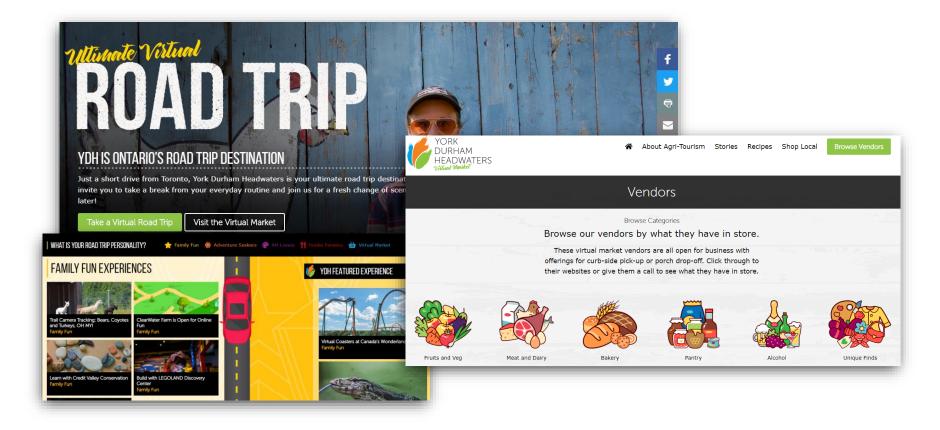
**Destination Toronto Instagram - Virtual Dinners IGTV video series** 

RTO 12 Desk Research Presentation



#### RTO 6 – York Durham Headwaters

Central Counties Tourism repurposed and re-positioned all homepage content to be viewed as pre-planning material for a future YDH Road Trip, while offering opportunities to explore the regions virtually. CCT intends to promote the portals via paid and organic digital, and through Instagram ambassadors





**Central Counties Tourism** is encouraging and assisting stakeholders to produce content for Ontario Live, framing it as a call-to-action to visit once it is safe to do so. The website will provide greater reach to new audiences, and the content will "have legs far past the ending of the current crisis", assisting stakeholders to "build their audience and provide municipalities, DMO's, CCT and Destination Ontario great stories to feature as part of the recovery efforts

CCT has produced complete stories ready for publication and were featured on the Toronto Star, Dine Magazine, CHIN Radio, Core Magazine, Kidz Magazine, York Region Online, Snap'd and Dailyhive.com

CCT immediately suspended all paid and organic spring social posts, and re-crafted their spring language to encourage planning while keeping their regions top-of-mind. Stakeholders still offering tourism products are featured in stories sorted by category, and CCT is sharing posts about virtual experiences, take-out and food/beverage delivery. The Field Managers reached out to all stakeholders, ensuring they continued to tag @visitydh, @(region/DMO), @municipality and hashtag's #



# RTO 7 – Bruce Peninsula, Southern Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe

According to their business plan, RTO7 marketing campaigns will endeavour to strike a balance of delivering the message that a visit to BruceGreySimcoe is a 'dream come true' while appreciating that this is a difficult time of recovery for most people

RTO7 will rely on Destination Ontario for intelligence on messaging, current consumer behaviour and sentiment, and will consider all Destination Ontario planning and look for synergies in approaches to be actioned

The recovery marketing plan will include Short-Term, Mid-Term and Long-Term oriented campaigns

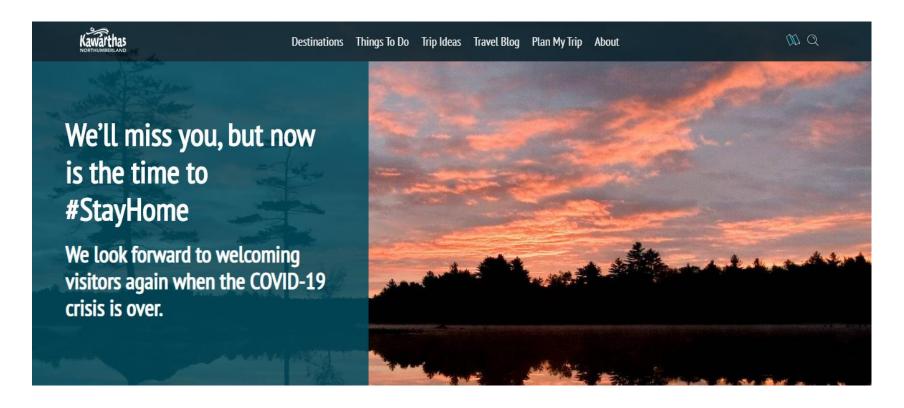
The Millennial Traveller will be targeted more aggressively than in the past (this still needs to get more confirmation from research data). RTO7 will encourage day visitation







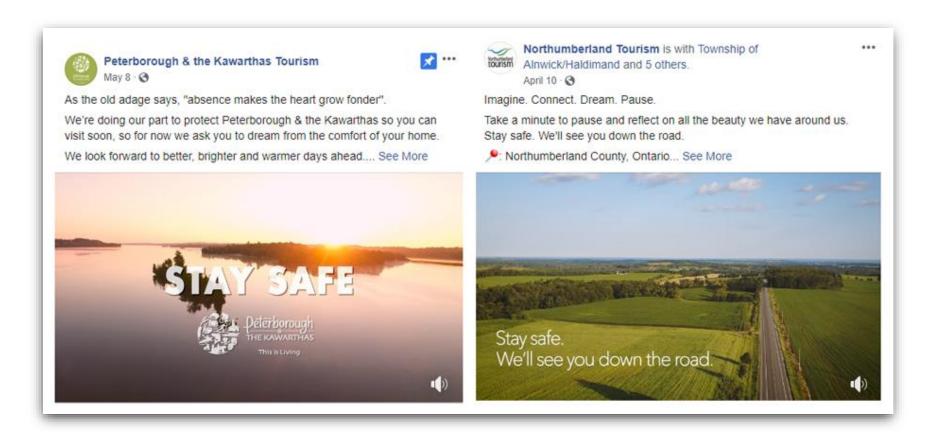
#### **RTO 8 – Kawarthas Northumberland**





The three DMOs (Northumberland Tourism, Kawartha Lakes and Peterborough & the Kawarthas) have been following similar models for their social media content

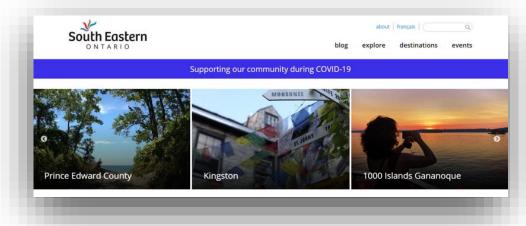
At first, they prioritized "stay safe" messages and engaged with followers asking about their favorite travel memories, the places they were dreaming of visiting, and sharing striking photos of the region's views and attractions





#### RTO 9 – South Eastern Ontario

RTO9's plan involves a pan-regional marketing and promotion plan based on market research insights to promote RTO9 to those markets that are most likely to visit, i.e., regional (GTA, Ottawa, Montreal), return visitors and intrepid visitors.

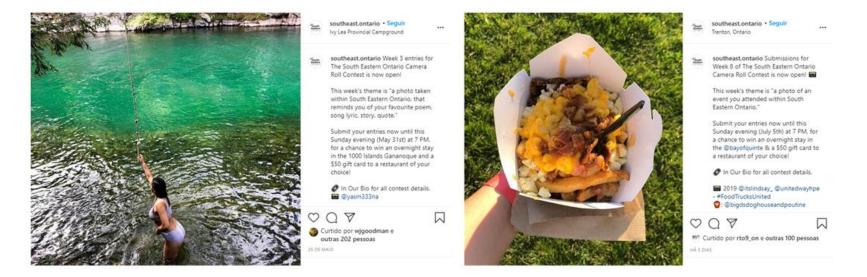


Throughout 2020, the RTO intends to "develop marketing campaigns to with the themes:

- "Come Visit Me" (for travelers visiting family and friends, who represent +80% of travel to the region now, encouraging hotel stays)
- "The RTO9 Road Trip" (to encourage travelers to explore by car, bike, motorcycle or RV)
- "The Getaway to the RTO9 region" (a trip back to simpler times in Eastern Ontario's quaint towns and villages)
- "The Culinary Delight" (building the culinary story to highlight the people of the region that are offering homegrown produce, food products, beer, wine, etc., and heavily promoting Aug-Nov experiences which are peak culinary experiences months)



South Eastern Ontario's Instagram is hosting a 9-week Camera Roll Contest, with the prize consisting of an overnight stay in a South Eastern Ontario destination (that changes every week) and a \$50 gift card to a restaurant chosen by the winner





# RTO 10 – Ottawa and Countryside

Ottawa Tourism has put all its marketing efforts on hold during the pandemic

While it waits to resume those campaigns, Ottawa Tourism CEO Michael Crockatt said the organization is keeping a close eye on social media and analyzing search engines to predict what destinations and activities travelers will be most eager to experience once they feel free to get back on the road

'We may not be able to outspend other destinations, but we want to be able to outsmart them. Whatever we do in the market has to be the smartest, most well-researched, datadriven, strategic approach to attracting visitors that there can possibly be."







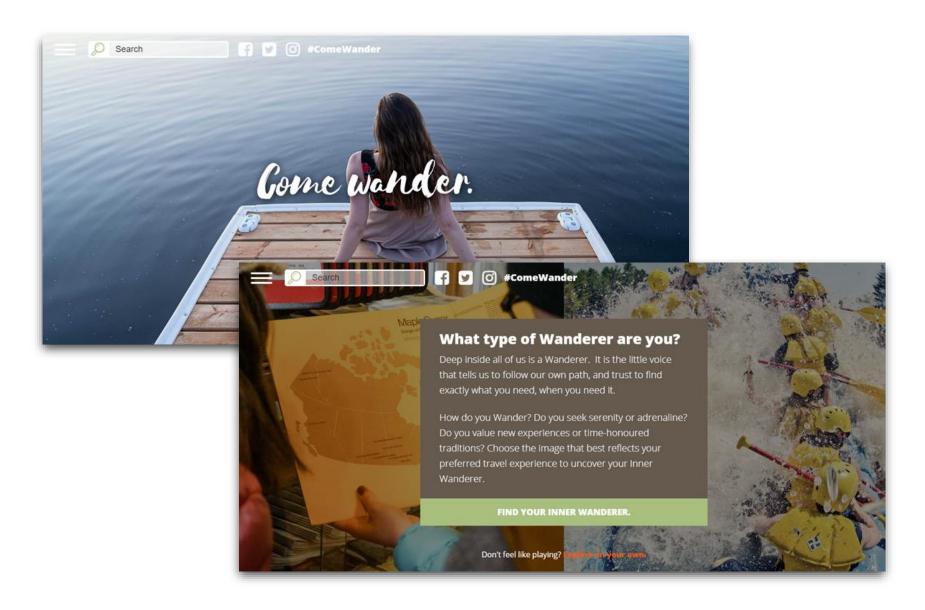
# RTO 11 – Haliburton Highlands to the Ottawa Valley

Stated immediate concern going forward is two-fold:

To ensure tourism community is linked in with the resources and information that will support their ability to make informed immediate, mid- and long-term planning decisions, and to work with our tourism community to shift storytelling with our audiences towards more useful and sensitive content during this time of crisis.

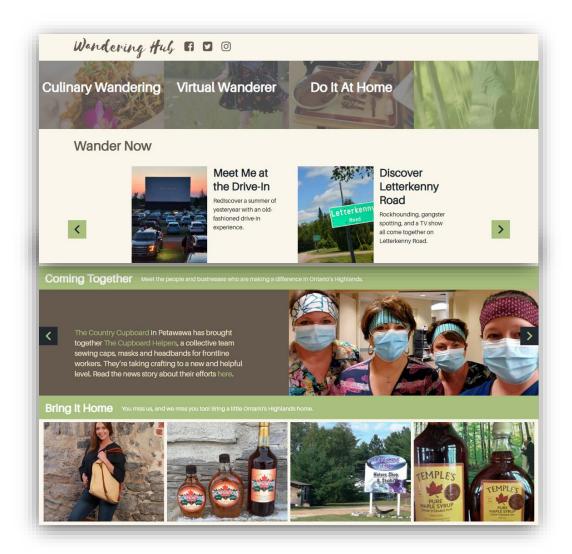
Marketing activities will shift towards developing content our audiences can look to for hope and inspiration while reminding them of the experiences they can look forward to once this crisis is over. Messaging will be delivered through our social channels and website rather than advertising campaigns for the near term to give us an opportunity to experiment with our tone and timing"







The Wandering Hub is a website for "rediscovering the people and places that have been our rock in challenging times and our inspiration for future adventures" and "planting the seeds of inspiration for future travel."

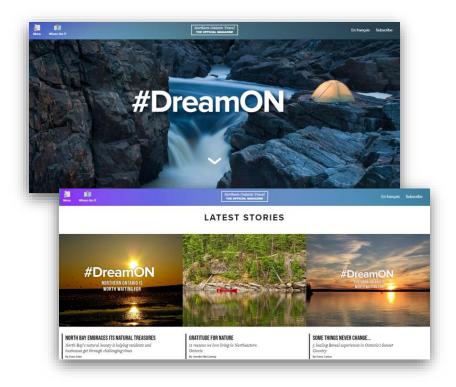




#### **RTO 13 – Northern Ontario**

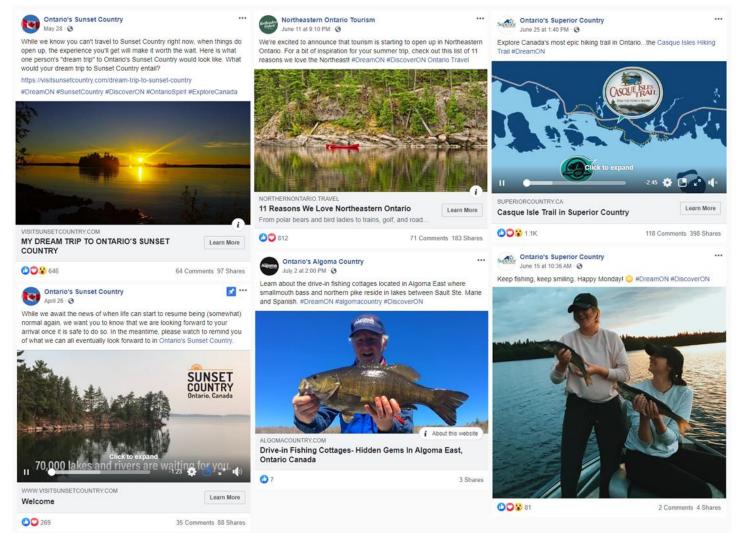
In cooperation with DNO's marketing partners Sunset Country, Northeastern Ontario, Algoma Country, and Superior Country, as well as local tourism operators, the #DreamON campaign aims to connect with seasonal visitors using inspiring images, stories, and updates from the places they cherish, while inviting them to share their own memories

The campaign rationale is based on data that shows that Canadians are looking for positive stories. In Canada, web searches for "good news" spiked in early April and remain at their highest levels since 2004 when record-keeping began"





The region's DMOs' social media profiles have been mostly posting inspiring nature and wildlife photos, sharing pictures of people's fishing catches, sharing content from their own websites and from Northern Ontario Travel's and using #DreamON



### Québec



On April 20, Quebec launched the #PourUnInstant (#ForAMoment) campaign, with a video inviting Quebecers to rediscover the province from their windows and share their best views.



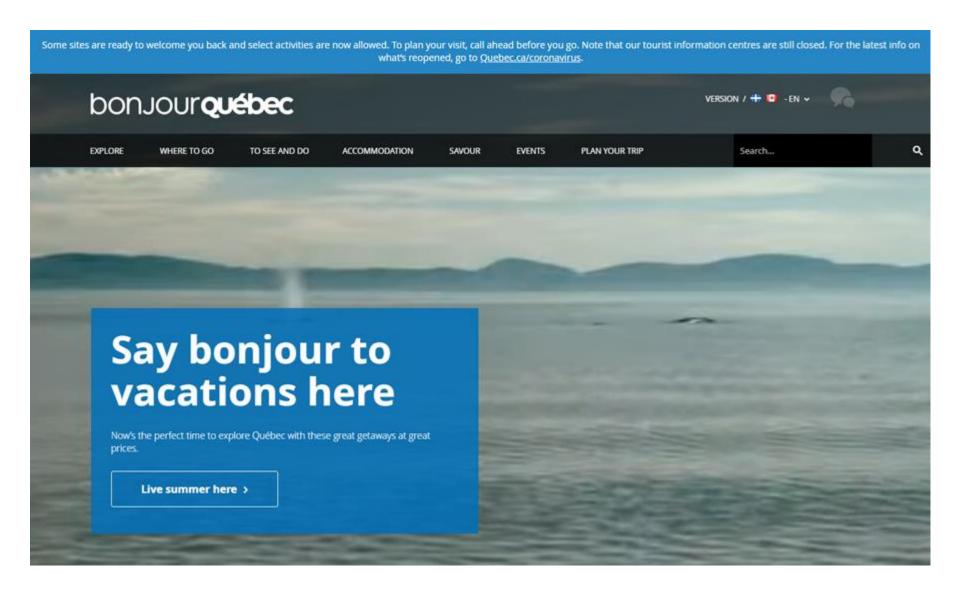
On May 20 a second video was released (#PourUnInstant vos photos), featuring photos taken from the windows of residents' houses across Québec.



#### Québec

- A new annual tourism promotion campaign was launched, along with the renewed Bonjour Québec tourism signature
- The objective of this annual campaign is to make Quebecers discover or rediscover the pleasures of the experiences of Québec and its regions
- The summer digital version of the campaign presents images of a multitude of places and moments captured in Québec, accompanied by a narration by the novelist and poet David Goudreault. The campaign runs in three phases, summer, autumn and winter pleasures, on different platforms, in order to encourage Quebecers to discover and rediscover Québec
- On June 21 the Minister of Tourism, Caroline Proulx, unveiled the new signature for Tourism Quebec









Attraction Passport with discounts from 20% to 40% when purchasing a passport of 2 to 4 activities, and both regional and multi-regional options



Explore Québec on the Road package, including at least two nights' accommodation and two activities with 25% off regular price

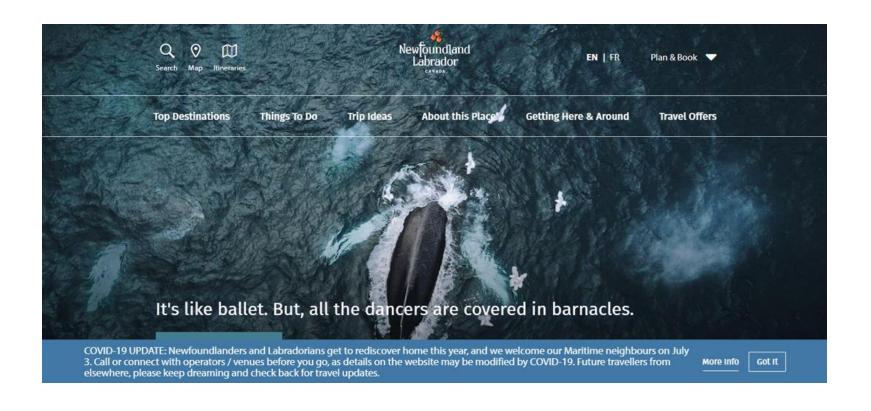


#### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

On June 23, Cabot Tower lit up with the word "Home", kicking off the province's :Stay Home Year" campaign." The campaign invokes the memory of the province's most famous and successful tourism campaign, 1966's "Come Home Year". The call to action is simple: "get out and explore the place we love, and call home











The Tall, True and Tangled website, Newfoundland and Labrador tourism's digital content hub, now presents a series of four 25-minute videos called *The Tale Blazers*, featuring two friends travelling the province in search of stories.



"Target Communications founder and director of strategic and creative planning, Noel O'Dea, says "We're still getting very high visitor numbers and long [dwell] times on our site, so that's why we made (The Tale Blazers) available.

Just like everything from Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism, these aren't commercials... They're laid out there as entertainment, and we hope people find them enjoyable and inspirational."

The original plans for the series included paid promotion and inclusion on Air Canada's in-flight entertainment system, but Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism pulled all of its advertising when the COVID crisis hit.

The campaign aligns with the storytelling approach that has become a core component of Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism's marketing over the years. The 60 or so content pieces on TallTrueAndTangled.com have proven hugely popular, generating over 300,000 online reading sessions, and more than 27,000 e-book downloads in its first year.