



# Building Bridges with Indigenous Tourism

A resource guide for DMOs looking to strengthen relationships, create campaigns, and tell visual stories with Indigenous tourism partners.



**INDIGENOUS**  
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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DU CANADA

This eBook was created in partnership with the **Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)** and with the generous participation of Indigenous tourism organizations, tourism professionals, and community members from across North America.

Special thanks to **Indigenous Tourism BC**, **Indigenous Tourism Alberta**, and editors **Cynthia Taylor** (Waskaganish Cree) and **Nick Wapachee** (Nemaska Cree), for their valuable insights.





## What's Inside

<b>How (and Why) to Use This Resource Guide</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Before You Begin: Self-Reflection for Non-Indigenous Tourism Professionals</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Building a Foundation: Learning about Indigenous History, Culture, and Reconciliation</b>	<b>07</b>
Getting Started	08
Digging Deeper into Indigenous Tourism	11
Learning Together - Webinars and Workshops for Your Organization	14
Continue Your Learning Journey!	15
<b>Engaging with Communities: How to Do it the Right Way</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Best Practices and Protocols for Promoting Indigenous Tourism Experiences</b>	<b>20</b>
Language	21
Imagery (Photos, Videos, and Visual Arts)	23
Social Media Do's and Don'ts for DMOs Working with Indigenous Partners	26
<b>GET INSPIRED! Indigenous creators</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>GET INSPIRED! Partnerships &amp; projects we love</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>STAY ENGAGED! Indigenous DMOs to follow</b>	<b>35</b>

# How (and Why) to Use This Resource Guide

Tourism is a major economic driver for many Indigenous communities, and several bodies of research show that interest in Indigenous tourism has skyrocketed in recent years. As sustainability, reconciliation, and cultural authenticity take center stage in the tourism industry, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) across the United States and Canada are increasingly eager to pursue partnerships, dream up joint campaigns, and create more inclusive content.

## Language Note

This eBook is designed for tourism professionals in the United States and Canada. Due to the size and diversity of our audience, we have opted to use the term “Indigenous” consistently throughout this eBook, unless we are referring to a particular group (for example, in the Get Inspired section).

If your DMO interacts with specific Nations or groups, it is always best to use their preferred name (Cree, Navajo, Mi'kmaq, etc). You can also familiarize yourself with subcategories, like First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (Canada) or Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian (United States). More information on preferred language can be found in the **“Best Practices for Promoting Indigenous Tourism Experiences”** section of this ebook.



Photo: Entree Destinations

The possibilities are exciting, but we must be mindful of our motives and approaches in this area. A single misguided TikTok reel can disempower Indigenous communities, further stereotypes, and contribute to mistrust on both sides. On the other hand, a well-thought-out campaign with Indigenous voices at the center can be a positive force for reconciliation, giving communities a platform to share their stories and redefine how tourism should be considered in their territory.

How can we share Indigenous tourism experiences in a way that honors the culture, people, land, and self-determination of Indigenous communities? **Luckily, we don't have to guess what to do and how to do it. Indigenous DMOs, organizations, and thought leaders have created a lot of resources to teach us how best to move forward together.** They've written articles, produced videos, drafted guidelines, and built resources. Now, it's our turn to read, watch, and listen to what they have created - educating ourselves so we can understand where to go from here.

### **That's where this resource guide comes in.**

To build this resource guide, we pored over resources from Indigenous-led DMOs, NGOs, and other reputable institutions. We also connected directly with Indigenous tourism professionals (special thanks to our partners at the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, as well as Indigenous Tourism BC and Indigenous Tourism Alberta!). Finally, we hired Indigenous editors Cynthia Taylor (Waskaganish Cree) and Nick Wapachee (Nemaska Cree) to review what we'd compiled. Together with these incredible collaborators, we've created an extensive starting point for any DMO looking to better understand how to engage, include, and support Indigenous tourism.



People can't overestimate what tourism truly means to our operators. It's not just a business. A lot of our operators say they're driven by a desire to leave the world a better place for the next seven generations.

**Mackenzie Brown-Kamamak,**  
Indigenous Tourism Alberta



Photo: Brandon White Photography

# Before You Begin: Self-Reflection for Non-Indigenous Tourism Professionals

Whether you are just starting your learning journey or knee-deep in partnership discussions and campaign plans, here are a few things to keep in mind when working with Indigenous tourism operators:

## **Are we treating this group as a living, breathing culture (rather than a historical one)?**

We are surrounded by strong, thriving communities with so much to offer in the here-and-now - that's one of the reasons Indigenous tourism is so exciting! Be sure to frame your questions and approach your learning in a way that goes beyond the history textbook; for example, ask "What ceremonies do you practice?" rather than "What ceremonies *did* you practice?"

## **Are we taking the time to *really* understand?**

Learning about Indigenous peoples in your area will likely take more than a Google search. Slow and steady wins the race! Conversation, curiosity, and an openness to constant learning (and unlearning!) are key to the reconciliation process. Keep deadlines to a minimum and remember that building a relationship requires trust, communication, and above all, time.

## **Is it this person/organization's job to educate me?**

If you are looking for information about local Indigenous groups, try to seek the answers yourself (hello, resource guide!) or ask someone with the time and mandate to answer your questions, like a cultural educator or museum. Larger state/provincial DMOs can also be a great place to start, as they typically have more people and funding to reply to inquiries (plus, you asking about Indigenous tourism will remind them that it's important!).

## **How can I involve others in my organization in this journey?**

The more, the merrier! Our interviewees suggested DMOs involve their entire team through initiatives like group training(s), written protocol(s), and a reconciliation strategy.



Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander

# **Building a Foundation: Learning about Indigenous History, Culture, and Reconciliation**

In all of our research interviews, Indigenous tourism operators stressed the importance of DMOs doing their homework before seeking a partnership. To build respectful and mutually-beneficial relationships with Indigenous tourism partners, you need a solid understanding of the cultures, histories, worldviews, traditions, and diverse Indigenous experiences in your country, state/province/territory, and region. In this chapter, you'll find some websites, books, webinars, workshops, and other places to learn more about Indigenous culture and tourism, as well as tips on how to find information about Indigenous peoples in your local area.

# Getting Started

## [Native Land Digital](#)

There are over 630 recognized First Nation communities in Canada and 574 federally recognized tribal entities in the United States - that's a lot of diversity! This virtual map of Indigenous groups, languages, and treaties can help you pinpoint whose traditional territory your operations touch, so you can focus your learning on communities near you.

## [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People](#)

### **(UNDRIP) | United Nations**

UNDRIP establishes a “universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of the Indigenous Peoples of the world.” This foundational document clearly outlines the unique human rights owed to Indigenous peoples around the world. Don't miss articles 3, 11, 12, 15, and 23, which speak to issues directly related to the tourism industry, such as cultural development and economic self-determination.

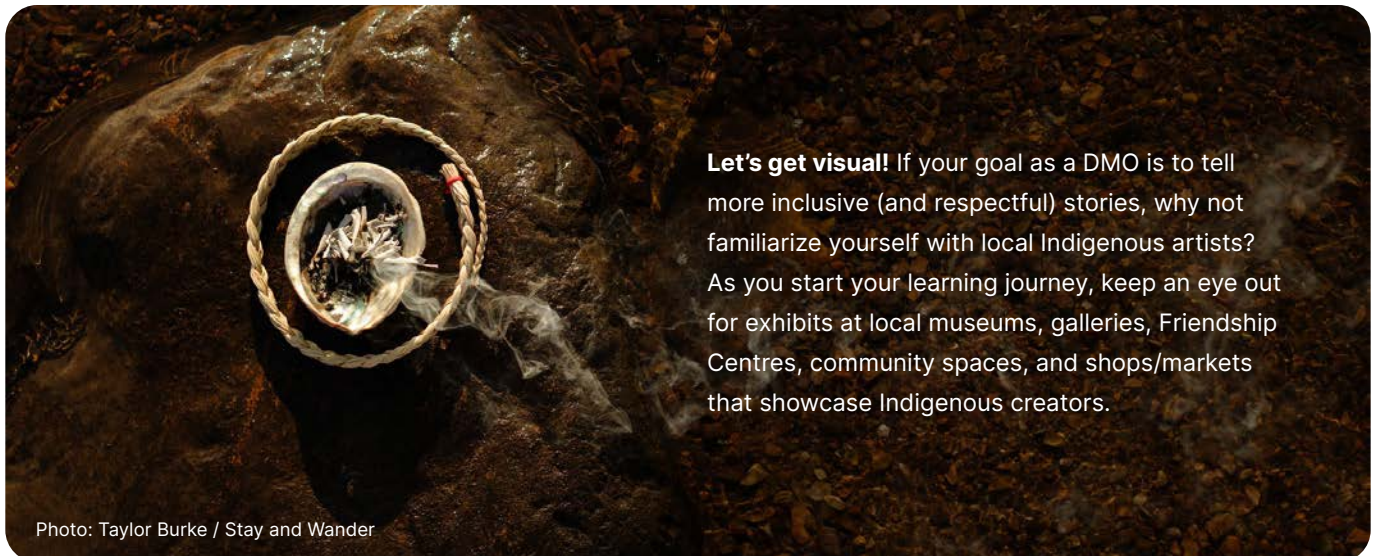


Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander

**Let's get visual!** If your goal as a DMO is to tell more inclusive (and respectful) stories, why not familiarize yourself with local Indigenous artists? As you start your learning journey, keep an eye out for exhibits at local museums, galleries, Friendship Centres, community spaces, and shops/markets that showcase Indigenous creators.

## [Indigenous Canada course](#)

### **University of Alberta**

This free Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) skyrocketed in popularity after actor Dan Levy sang its praises on Instagram. The course, which over 500,000 people have taken, is a stellar introduction to the different histories, experiences, and perspectives of Indigenous people living in Canada.

## [Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History](#)

### **Library of Congress**

This educational resource provides eight lessons on the history of Indigenous land loss and relocation in the United States. The lessons are short, easy to read, and provide a very helpful introduction into the history of Native Americans and their lands through the United States' early years, the Civil War, Wounded Knee, and beyond.

## [It's Our Time Education Toolkit](#)

### ***Assembly of First Nations***

With 22 learning modules, this comprehensive educational resource is a great starting point for understanding Indigenous history, culture, and worldview. Be sure to check out Module 8 on Cultural Competency, which describes the impact of cultural awareness within and between organizations, and Module 19, which covers economics and employment (including the tourism industry).

## [Native Knowledge 360](#)

### ***National Museum of the American Indian***

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian has a wealth of resources and information about Indigenous groups and issues in the U.S. (we definitely recommend adding the museum itself to your travel list!). Even if you can't visit in person, their online learning portal, Native Knowledge 360, features helpful webinars on topics such as tribal sovereignty, land acknowledgments, and building more complete narratives about Native Americans.

## [Indigenous Peoples and Communities](#)

### ***Government of Canada***

Through short texts and helpful links, this resource is designed to help Canadians better understand First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada. Explore the differences between diverse Indigenous groups and get a helpful introduction to Indigenous art, governance, and reconciliation.



Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander

## Reading List

Pull out your library card or queue up your audiobook app! Here are some books that can kickstart your learning about Indigenous peoples in North America.

### **An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States**

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

### **Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Issues in Canada**

Chelsea Vowel

### **Aboriginal TM: The Cultural and Economic Politics of Recognition**

Jennifer Adese

### **Encyclopedia of Native Tribes of North America**

Michael G. Johnson

### **The Truth about Stories**

Thomas King

### **21 Things You May Not Know about the Indian Act**

Bob Joseph

### **Indigenous Relations: Insights, Tips & Suggestions to Make Reconciliation a Reality**

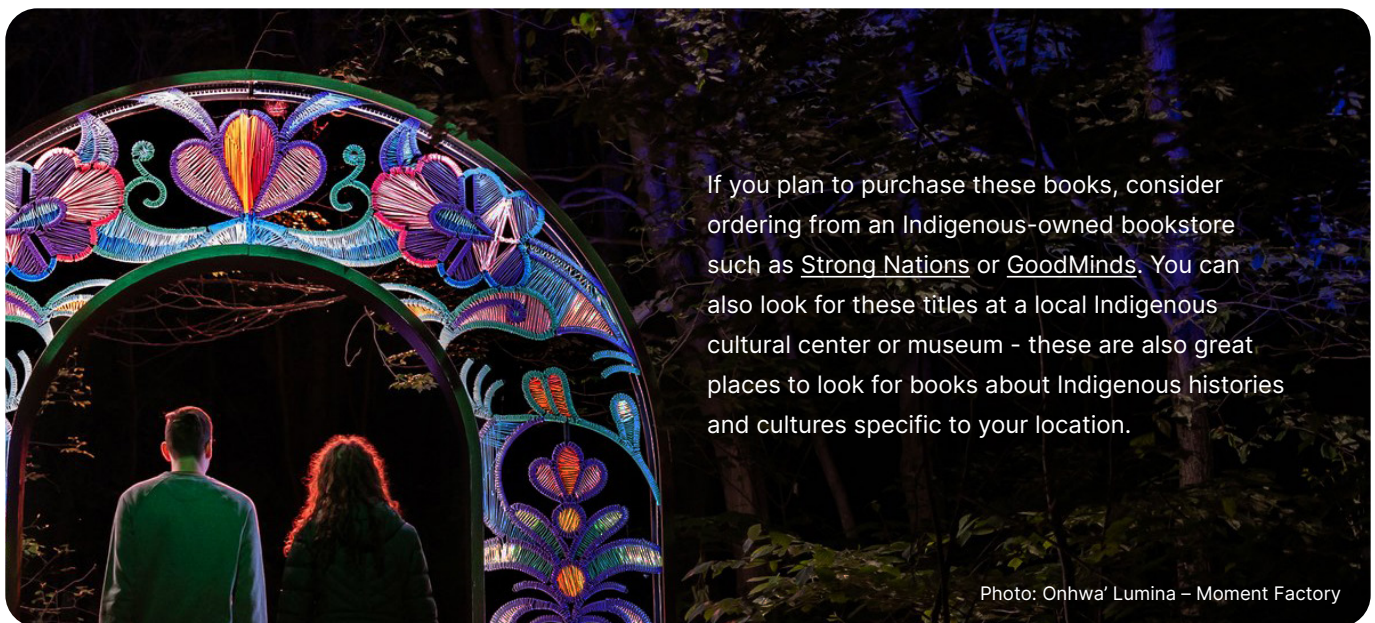
Bob Joseph w/ Cynthia F. Joseph

### **[The Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#)**

Canadian Geographic

### **Our Story**

Thomas King, Tantoo Cardinal, et al.



If you plan to purchase these books, consider ordering from an Indigenous-owned bookstore such as [Strong Nations](#) or [GoodMinds](#). You can also look for these titles at a local Indigenous cultural center or museum - these are also great places to look for books about Indigenous histories and cultures specific to your location.

Photo: Onhwa' Lumina – Moment Factory

# Digging Deeper into Indigenous Tourism

## [Indigenous People and the Travel Industry: Global Good Practice Guidelines](#)

***G Adventures in collaboration with the Planeterra Foundation and International Institute of Tourism Studies***

This quintessential resource has been cited by the United Nations, UNESCO, and countless other organizations. With 18 clear and detailed guidelines on how to develop, operate, and market Indigenous tourism experiences, you'll want to read this one cover to cover.

## [National Guidelines - Developing Authentic Indigenous Experiences in Canada](#)

***Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)***

ITAC's guide aims to "inspire excellence in Indigenous cultural tourism experiences across Canada.". While the guide is primarily written for Indigenous tourism operators, it offers DMOs great information on what is (and is not) an authentic Indigenous tourism experience, as well as providing case studies to inspire your projects



Photo: Indigenous Tourism Alberta

## [AINTA Town Hall Series](#)

***American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AINTA)***

If webinars are more your scene, look no further than these town hall presentations. Watch Indigenous tourism leaders speak about the creative economy, the State of Indian Country Tourism, and the latest Marketing initiatives by AINTA partners.

## [Indigenous Cultural Tourism Protocol](#)

***Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.***

This detailed resource provides in-depth background information on the relationship between Indigenous peoples and tourism, including a list of do's and don'ts for interacting with Indigenous communities and tourism operators.



### [How to Travel Responsibly](#)

#### ***Indigenous Tourism B.C.***

This thought-provoking article is a great starting point to decolonizing your thinking about tourism, with pearls of wisdom like “wait for your welcome” and “travel less, stay longer.”

### [Things to Consider for Your First Pow Wow](#)

#### ***Indigenous Tourism Quebec***

Pow Wows are inclusive events that can draw large crowds and be a point of interest for Indigenous tourism. This article provides guidelines for attending a Pow Wow, as well as general considerations for DMOs and tourists going into these events.

### [Walk with Us - Respectful Travel Guidelines](#)

#### ***Indigenous Yukon***

This beautifully crafted, easy-to-follow guide focuses on respect specifically, sharing what it means for tourists to respect Indigenous lands, teachings, and cultures.

### [Nations Magazine](#)

#### ***Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)***

ITAC's information-rich, visually stunning annual publication breaks down the latest Indigenous tourism trends, regions, sites, and stories. Read it to get inspired, educated, and to find some new places to add to your travel list!

## Why Indigenous-Centred Tourism is Rapidly Growing

### **TVO**

Learn more about how and why the Indigenous tourism sector is growing in this interview featuring Kevin Eshkawkoga (president and CEO, Indigenous Tourism Ontario, from M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island) and fishing guide/producer Neil Debassige.

## How Canada Uses Indigenous Art to Market Itself to the World

### **The Walrus**

This is a fascinating deep-dive into how Canada has used Indigenous art and imagery to “brand” itself abroad, often without the collaboration or consent of Indigenous peoples. It’s an eye-opening read for any DMOs seeking to avoid tokenism, cultural appropriation, or history sanitization in their work with Indigenous partners.

Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander



Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander

# Learning Together - Webinars and Workshops for Your Organization

## [Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples®](#)

### ***Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.***

Founded by Gwawaenuk Nation member, Master Trainer, and bestselling author Bob Joseph (yes, the same Bob Joseph you saw on our reading list!), ICT has spent 20+ years helping organizations better understand Indigenous cultures and create mutually beneficial partnerships. ICT workshops can help engage everyone in your DMO, so you can build your knowledge, awareness, and skills together.

## [Indigenous Awareness 101](#)

### ***ECO Canada***

This free, one-hour webinar, taught by Saddle Lake First Nation Knowledge Keeper Brad Spence, introduces the history, culture, and issues faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada.

## [The National Indigenous Cultural Safety Learning Series](#)

### ***Various Contributors***

Hear from some of the top minds in Indigenous cultural safety as they take on topics such as Transforming Organizations: The Crucible of Change and Racism, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Cultural Safety. While these cultural safety webinars are geared toward healthcare settings, the takeaways can be impactful for any organization.

**You may also find training available through your local, state, or provincial Indigenous Tourism Association.** For example, Indigenous Tourism Alberta offers [Cultural Awareness Training](#). Local museums and cultural centers may also offer educational events, tours, or cultural activities that you can attend as a team.



Photo: Simon Clark

## Continue Your Learning Journey!

Here are some other ways you can educate yourself about Indigenous cultures near you:

**Watch and follow Indigenous visual storytelling content** - To find Indigenous social media content, follow hashtags such as traditional territory names, treaty numbers, or the names of local Indigenous Nation(s) and events near you. For example, commonly used hashtags for Indigenous content in and around Toronto include #tkaronto, #indigenoustoronto, and #treaty13. You can also follow (or even partner with) Indigenous creators on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and other visual storytelling platforms.

**Visit a local cultural center or hire an Indigenous tour guide.** Tour guides and educators at cultural centers are a great source of information on local Indigenous cultures, history, and worldview - after all, it is their job to teach it! Consider booking a couple outings a year to Indigenous tourism sites, so you can meet people in your area and learn something new at the same time.

**Include Indigenous businesses within your membership** - Authentic, peer-to-peer relationships with Indigenous members open doors to communication and equitable partnership. Having a membership body that includes Indigenous destinations (and considers their interests in campaigns) is an excellent starting point.

In the next section, we'll share resources on building partnerships with Indigenous communities, DMOs, and tourism operators so you can start (and continue!) on the right foot.



Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander

# Engaging with Communities: How to Do it the Right Way

When it comes to Indigenous partnerships, the prevailing wisdom is simple and powerful:

***“Nothing about  
us, without us.”***



Photo: Indigenous Tourism Canada

With that in mind, we're passing the mic to Teresa Ryder, Director of Partnerships at the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, to share some best practices for DMOs engaging with Indigenous tourism businesses, communities, and organizations.

Photo: Brady McCluskey



To build and promote Indigenous tourism effectively, it is important that you work to understand who the Indigenous operators are in your area and work to better understand who the Indigenous communities are who own the lands where your DMO operates. From there, you can start to form the relationship - and think about what your impact is beyond a land acknowledgment. When building these partnerships, here are some important considerations:

**Allow Indigenous-led representation of the Nations in how you are telling the stories of place.** Think about how you may have represented the place in the past - was it inclusive of Indigenous stories? And, if it was inclusive, did you work with the local Indigenous people for approval on how they are being shown in your marketing campaigns? Getting buy-in from the community level on what stories and how they are being shared will be a critical building block.

**Know what you bring to the table, and give the relationship time to grow.** Help the Indigenous operator understand what your expertise is, how you can help build their economies and what type of visitors you intend to promote to. Explore these important pieces through ongoing conversation - is it revenue or more visitors you can bring? Is it marketing, promotion, and/or experience development support that you can provide? Understand that it might take more time than usual to get a decision or to advance a partnership between your organization and the Indigenous community. By not going in with a timeline, you open the door for meaningful connection.

**Relinquish control.** Yes, we know there are pressing deadlines and sometimes there is a really great story that visitors might be interested in. Know that Indigenous people, through colonization, lost the rights to tell their stories or share their culture. Now, it is time to allow Indigenous people to determine what will be shared, and how, as we reclaim space. Sometimes this might mean visitors are welcome at all times to visit an Indigenous experience, but other ceremonies or cultural practices might not be available. This could be different community to community (and even in the same area) - which is why it is important to build a trusting and open relationship to make sure you get it right."

Here are some resources that build on Teresa's advice and can prepare you to approach Indigenous partnerships in a respectful, collaborative way:

## [10 Considerations When Working with Indigenous Communities](#)

### ***Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC)***

Building on the pre-colonial traditions of commerce and trade, this article discusses how the role that respect, recognition, relationship-building, and reciprocity play in improving Indigenous-settler relationships in the tourism industry.

## [Toolkit: Working with Indigenous Partners](#)

### ***Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA)***

ITA helped us out a ton with this eBook, so we're a little biased...but we have to say, this toolkit is fantastic! This resource compiles thought-provoking tips and insights organized into bite-sized sections with quotes from Elders and ITA members. There are countless helpful nuggets in here, like a call to think about "Indigenous relations instead of Indigenous engagement" and how humor and fun can enable stronger relationships.



Photo: Joanne Pai / Stay and Wander

Photo: Indigenous Tourism Canada



## [Protocols for Engaging with Indigenous Peoples](#)

### ***Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund***

This eBook sets out some general protocols for various scenarios, including consultations, gift-giving, networking, and procurement. The section on photo and video permission will be particularly relevant to DMOs who want to tell visual stories with Indigenous tourism partners (for more on that topic, check out our best practices for imagery later in this eBook.)

## [4 Phases of Indigenous Engagement](#)

### ***Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.***

ICT provides a simple framework that can help you take the first steps toward relationship-building. This article details their four-step approach (research, initial contact, issues engagement, and ongoing engagement). The article also links to further reading and information on their [Indigenous Consultation & Engagement Training](#) workshop.

## [Working with Elders](#)

### ***First Peoples Cultural Council***

Throughout your consultations, collaborations, and campaigns, you may meet with Elders and Knowledge Keepers. These guidelines will help you better understand how to approach, communicate, remunerate, and follow up with these esteemed community members, especially when you want their assistance.

## [Helping Native Business Owners Thrive: How to Build a Supportive Ecosystem](#)

### ***Nonprofit Quarterly***

This article, published by nonprofit quarterly in partnership with the First Nations Development Institute, offers background information and actionable ideas on how to help Indigenous entrepreneurs succeed. These ideas are not tourism-specific, but DMOs will find the insights in this article helpful as they seek to engage and support their Indigenous members.

Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander





Photo: Indigenous Tourism Alberta

# Best Practices and Protocols for Promoting Indigenous Tourism Experiences

As a DMO, promoting destinations is your bread and butter. It's what you do best. You've mastered the tactics, channels, film angles, and hashtags, but how do you ensure your work is respectful to and inclusive of Indigenous destinations and communities?

Now that you have a deeper knowledge of Indigenous history and culture and are working towards strong partnerships, joint promotions may be top of mind. To help you get started, this section includes resources on best practices for promoting Indigenous tourism experiences, with a focus on visual storytelling and short-form videos that capture the essence of these unique destinations.

Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander

## Language

Language goes beyond the terms we use. In our brochures, editorials, websites, and other publications, we need to present a narrative that is rooted in the truth; balancing promotional considerations with the need to uplift, respect, and center Indigenous communities. We must also pay attention to how Indigenous peoples refer to themselves and their lands, and honor their language revitalization goals. Here are some resources to help you find the right ways to speak to and about Indigenous partners.

### [Media Style Guide](#)

#### ***Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada***

Writing about Indigenous peoples and communities in a deeply colonial language can be tricky. Still, there are some core rules you can keep in mind. ITAC's one-pager breaks down 12 "rules" for choosing better words when writing about Indigenous peoples. For further reading, check out Gregory Younging's essential book, [Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples](#).

### [The Impact of Words and Tips for Using Terminology](#)

#### ***National Museum of the American Indian***

The United States has some particularities when discussing Indigenous people, including wide use of terms like "Tribal Nation" and "American Indian." Instead of suggesting the best words to use in a this-or-that format, this resource from the Smithsonian educates readers on the diversity amongst Indigenous People in the country, making a strong case for asking people their preferred terminology.

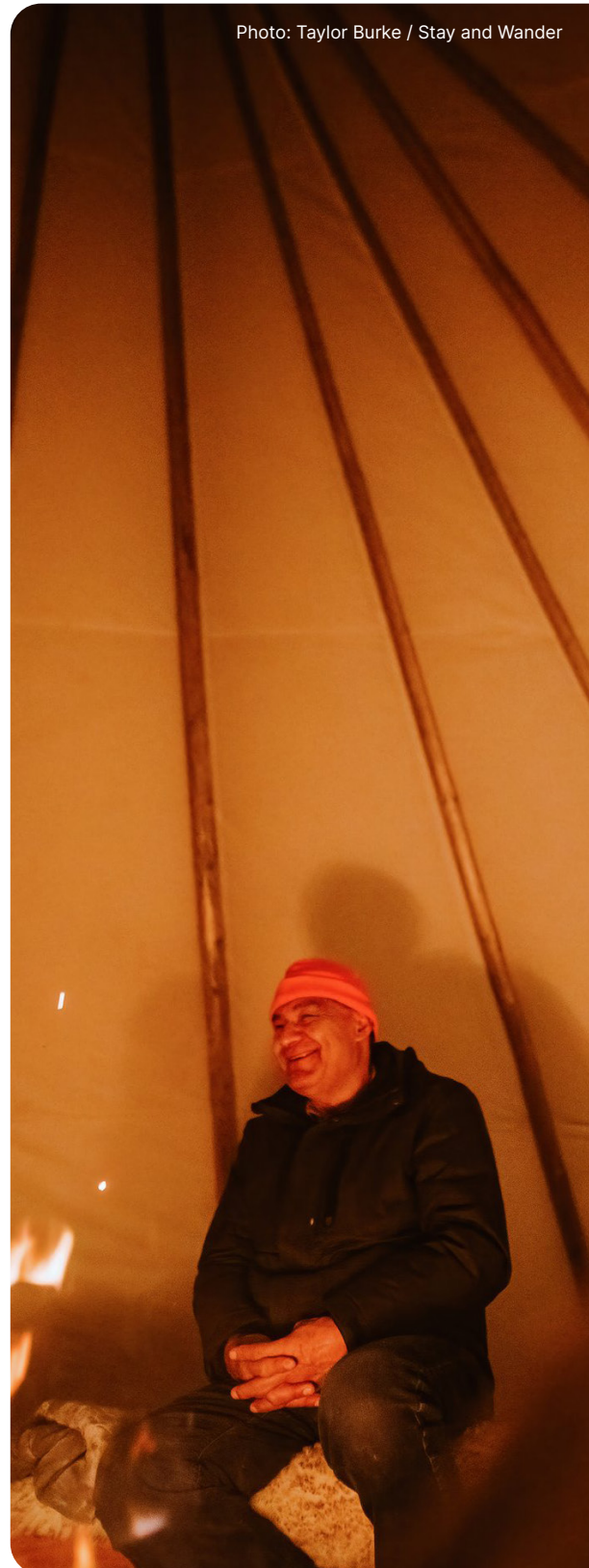


Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander



## [Indigenous Peoples Language Guidelines](#)

### ***University of British Columbia***

This is among the most in-depth guides currently available on language use when speaking about Indigenous peoples, with many clarifications and considerations to read through. The guidelines also cover capitalization, peoples versus people, and resources for wording acknowledgments and recognition.

## [Reporter's Checklist](#)

### ***Reporting in Indigenous Communities***

RIIC is a go-to resource for journalists new to reporting in Indigenous communities, with great foundational pointers for anyone who is new to this kind of storytelling. It is well-researched and frequently referenced, with most of its points going back to the Strategic Alliance of Broadcasters for Aboriginal Reflection (SABAR). Brand storytellers, including those working for DMOs, can apply the principles in this checklist as they work to research and tell stories about Indigenous destinations.

## [9 terms to avoid in communications with Indigenous peoples](#)

### ***Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.***

Why should we avoid calling Indigenous peoples "stakeholders"? What is the difference between the terms Indigenous rights and special rights? How do I introduce myself to Indigenous clients and members? This article provides helpful details on the best language to use when talking with or about Indigenous partners, including and especially business communications and collaborations.

Photo: Entree Destinations



# Imagery (Photos, Videos, and Visual Arts)

When promoting Indigenous tourism experiences, your imagery holds immense power. It is critical to consider every frame, caption, and cut to ensure you're portraying Indigenous communities respectfully and accurately. In this section, you'll find resources to guide you in identifying which visuals honor Indigenous cultures, traditions, and values so you can create compelling narratives that celebrate and respect your Indigenous partners and members.

## [Images of Native Americans in Advertising](#)

### ***Advertising Education Foundation***

Content warning: contains images of advertisements with racist depictions of Indigenous peoples.

Understanding the history of Indigenous depiction in North American advertising is critical when navigating the contemporary marketing terrain. This resource provides detailed information about the background and impact of tropes and stereotypes, so you can steer clear in your own campaigns. You can also check out resources on Indigenous media depiction, such as the 2009 documentary film, [Reel Injun](#), or the digital resource on [MediaSmarts](#).

## [Inclusive Marketing Guide - Indigenous Peoples Google, in partnership with the National](#)

### ***Congress of American Indians***

This beginner-friendly guide features helpful sections such as "harmful tropes," "decolonize perspectives," and "ask for permission." While the takeaways are globally applicable, the involvement of the National Congress of American Indians makes this a foundational resource for American marketers in particular.





Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander

## **Brand Guidelines for Photography**

### ***Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada***

This highly visual eBook introduces the do's and don'ts of visual content creation in Indigenous tourism. Learn how to avoid stereotypes, focus on what matters, and engage audiences with tips and sample shots from Canadian tourism destinations. If your job involves creating or sharing content, this one is worth bookmarking!

## **On-screen Protocols and Pathways**

### ***imagineNATIVE***

This living document, produced via national consultation in 2019, sets out guidelines around key issues in filmmaking and storytelling such as narrative sovereignty, responsibility, reciprocity, consent, and relationship-building. While it focuses more on longer-form media like film and documentary, these detailed protocols provide critical insight into how to approach any production (including promotional videos and short-form video) - from who can (and should) tell a story to the finer points of intellectual property, distribution, and working with Indigenous cast and crew.

## **Indigenous Protocols for the Visual Arts**

### ***Canadian Artists' Representation / Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC)***

These protocols focus on dealing with Indigenous knowledge, despite the lack of intellectual property law protecting these rights. The protocols are organized around four key principles: respect, control, communication and consent, and integrity and authenticity. DMOs will find it useful to learn about these principles as they seek to tell visual stories that include Indigenous art, stories, and sites.

## **Think Before you Appropriate**

### ***Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage (Simon Fraser University)***

This 23-page eBook is an essential resource for organizations looking to ethically engage with Indigenous cultural heritage. Be sure to check out the final pages, which provide case studies of images of symbols and objects that may be commodifying, misrepresenting, or disrespecting Indigenous cultures.

**A picture is worth a thousand words - but a video is worth a million.** The Global Good Practice Guidelines say that promotional materials for Indigenous tourism sites “should accurately and respectfully represent the community’s living culture, customs, language, connection to natural resources, and history in a manner consistent with the Indigenous narrative.” Images are critical to achieving this, but it can be hard to communicate Indigenous culture to colonial audiences with just a snapshot. That’s why video is such a valuable piece of the promotional puzzle when it comes to Indigenous tourism. This medium allows for a richer portrayal of Indigenous practices and voices, so Indigenous destinations and operators can share their culture, experiences, and brands the right way.

**But remember, in any visual production, permission is paramount.** When taking photos or videos of Indigenous peoples, ensure you have permission to do so - even for your own use. Some aspects of Indigenous culture are not allowed to be documented in this way; rather, as a visitor, you are allowed to bear witness to something special.

The protocols listed in this resource guide can help you approach these projects and productions respectfully and consensually.



Photo: Archbould

# Social Media Do's and Don'ts for DMOs Working with Indigenous Partners

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ✓ <b>Do</b> amplify Indigenous creators.   | ✗ <b>Don't</b> take things out of context.  |
| ✓ <b>Do</b> make sure your message has a purpose (besides likes or clicks).  | ✗ <b>Don't</b> misquote or cut off statements from Indigenous peoples.  |
| ✓ <b>Do</b> take the time to continually listen and learn  | ✗ <b>Don't</b> post footage without consent, especially when your photos/videos include cultural practices, ceremonies, or individuals who may not have consented to being shown. |
| ✓ <b>Do</b> ask Indigenous partners and members what they want to see on your social media.  |   |
| ✓ <b>Do</b> ask Indigenous partners and members what they want to see on your social media.  | ✗ <b>Don't</b> post footage without consent, especially when your photos/videos include cultural practices, ceremonies, or individuals who may not have consented to being shown. |
| ✓ <b>Do</b> be mindful of commemorative dates, celebrations, and seasons.  |   |
| ✓ <b>Do</b> recognize language sovereignty, including spelling names and locations correctly and integrating Indigenous languages into messages about them where possible. |   |

*"Amplify Indigenous voices. If you see a post you like, it's okay to quote their message with attribution and not change their words."*

**Deanna Wampler,**  
Indigenous Tourism BC

Photo: Taylor Burke / Stay and Wander

**Content tip 1:** Short-form video is a great tool, but it is important not to “cut off” an Indigenous person or practice for the sake of a soundbite. To make this work for your Reels or TikTok strategy, try using a short-form video as a “preview” to point to longer media, with a link to see the full footage. Or, pair a meaningful, word-free video clip with a more extensive caption that captures a person’s complete statement.

**Content tip 2:** Indigenous destinations may not be on the same calendar as your other members. For example, they may have traditional hunting or fishing seasons that impact when they accept bookings. Or, they may have limited capacity to welcome visitors during certain months. Make sure you time any posts featuring a destination in a way that aligns with their promotional seasons, messages, and goals.

**For more in-depth guidance and content ideas, check out these resources:**

### [How Brands Can Support Indigenous Communities on Social - the Right Way](#)

#### ***Hootsuite***

Social media managers, this one’s for you! Wondering what to post on days like National Day for Truth and Reconciliation? Trying to figure out how your social media behaviors help (or hurt) Indigenous peoples and causes? This in-depth guide by Métis lawyer and CEO of the National Women’s Association of Canada, Lynne Groulx, covers all this and so much more.

### [Indigenous Social Media Calendar](#)

#### ***Shop First Nations***

Created by Indigenous marketers, this social media calendar contains key dates, hashtag recommendations, post inspiration, and more. You can purchase the calendar through Shop First Nations’ website, so you can support an Indigenous business while building your social media strategy!

### [Indigenous Story Ideas](#)

#### ***ITAC***

Looking for Indigenous content inspiration? ITAC’s Story Idea booklet contains a list of eye-catching events, statistics, and updates on the state of Indigenous tourism. This resource will give you an idea of the types of stories the Indigenous tourism community is eager to share. That way, you’re promoting the messages they want to get out there (rather than appropriating stories they would prefer to tell themselves).



Photo: Miranda Haughian

*“Recognize the Indigenous Social Media Calendar as a representation of diverse Indigenous voices and experiences. It’s not one-size-fits-all, and it’s important to appreciate the diversity within Indigenous communities. Use the calendar as a foundation, but also seek direct collaboration with specific communities to tailor your content...the aim of any collaboration with Indigenous partners should be to learn from and about each other, so take the time to learn and understand the content you’re sharing.”*

**Rob Schulz,**

Owner & Founder, Shop First Nations



# GET INSPIRED!

## Indigenous Creators

**Amanda Mitchell**  
**@athabascan.adventures**



Amanda is an Alaska Native, photographer, and adventurer who posts travel content from Alaska and around the world. Check out her amazing images from her home in [Alaska](#), or the beautiful [reels](#) she has created on her many trips (including a Mount Everest hike!).

**Santee Sioux**  
**@Santeesiouxx**



Santee is an Indigenous model and activist. Check out her short-form video content about urban Indigenous travel in partnership with [Ottawa Tourism](#) and [Destination Toronto](#).

**Haylee Gendron**  
**@hayoui**



Haylee is an Indigenous travel influencer who partners with tourism brands like [Explore Canada](#) and [Destination Indigenous](#). Check out her highlight reels to see some amazing footage of recent trips to Indigenous destinations!

**Klahoose Wilderness Resort**  
**@Klahoosewildernessresort**



This 100% Indigenous-owned eco-resort has racked up tens of thousands of Instagram and TikTok followers with short-form video content that includes wildlife close-ups, beautiful vistas, and the cultural practices they share with guests, like this [brushing off ceremony](#).

**Stacia Morfin / Nez Perce Tourism**  
**@stacia\_luvurself / @nezpercetourism**



An awesome example of a tourism entrepreneur in action, Stacia and her company, Nez Perce Tourism, post incredible images and reels of Indigenous art, culture, performances, and tours in Nimiipuu (Nez Perce, Idaho).

# GET INSPIRED! Partnerships & Projects We Love



## [The Original Original Campaign](#)

*Destination Indigenous (Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada)*

**What it is:** The Original Original mark was created by ITAC to promote authentic Indigenous experiences. Businesses approved to use the mark must meet four key criteria: be at least 51 percent Indigenous owned, embrace the values of Indigenous tourism, offer a market or export-ready experience, and have ITAC membership. The branded seal was rolled out with a film, video series, and poster series, “a collection of striking imagery that visually encapsulates the spirit of Indigenous travel experiences across Canada.”

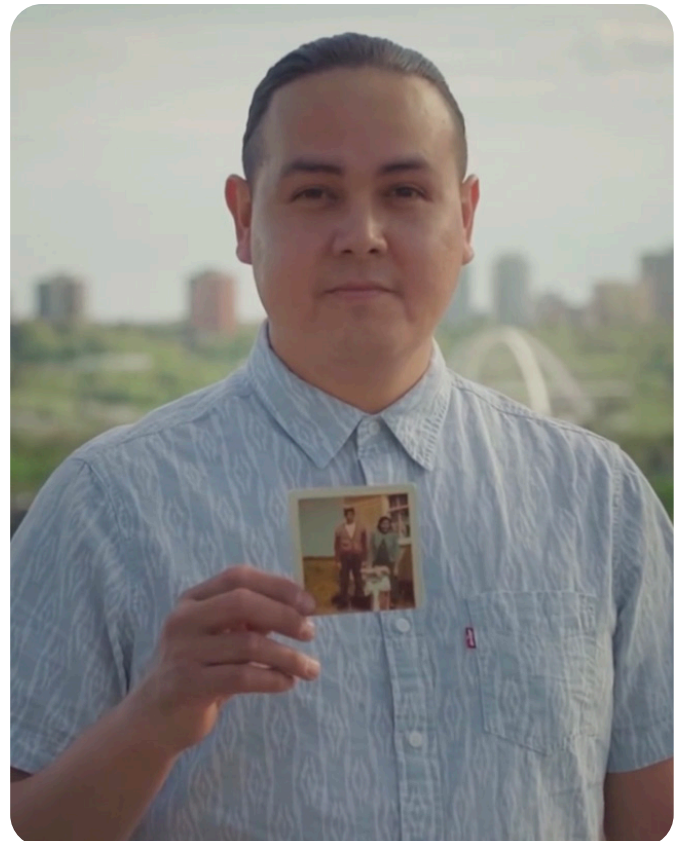
**Why we love it:** The Original Original campaign was released with a stunning [video](#) on National Indigenous Peoples Day in 2021 alongside the Original Original campaign. We love a perfectly timed, visual-rich campaign launch! It was a huge success, with the campaign video winning the 2022 Webby People’s Voice for Branded Content Video - Unscripted. The Webby Awards is “the leading international awards organization honoring excellence on the Internet,” and there are millions of votes for the People’s Voice awards, so this is an extremely meaningful achievement.

## Ancestral Photo Video Series

### ***Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA)***

**What it is:** For National Indigenous History Month, ITA developed short-form videos that explore “the ancestral roots of some Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs and the ways in which our ancestors, our roots and the land influence the ways we move forward in the world.” These intimate vignettes feature entrepreneurs holding photos of their ancestor(s), paired with captions that delve into how this history shaped their businesses, passions, and perspectives.

**Why we love it:** Our conversation with Tom Babin from ITA really opened our eyes to both the strengths and limitations of short-form video for Indigenous tourism - while it has amazing potential to spread ideas and showcase Indigenous businesses and talent, he cautioned against cutting off a message to maintain an aesthetic. This series does it right, pairing a compelling, wordless visual with a caption that allows participants to add as much or as little context as they would like. It's also a super creative way to acknowledge historical and contemporary Indigenous peoples in Alberta, and show the faces behind Indigenous tourism in the area!





## Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) + Destination BC [partnership](#)

**What it is:** Honouring the principle of “nothing about us, without us” Destination BC has signed a partnership to work with ITBC on key goals, including promoting Indigenous cultural tourism and engaging with Indigenous communities that have made tourism development a priority. See this partnership in action with the Indigenous highlights reel on the @hellobc Instagram, where they amplify content from @indigenoustourismbc to their 605k followers.

**Why we love it:** Not only are the videos and images from ITBC and Destination BC creatively inspiring to us as tourism marketers, but this DMO partnership [goes deeper](#). Their written agreements hold Destination BC accountable for investing in Indigenous tourism development and community engagement, making it clear how and why they will work together. It’s great to see a partnership like this move forward, and definitely a case study for other places looking to do similar work!

## [KWE! Festival](#)

*Indigenous-led, in partnership with Indigenous Tourism Quebec*

**What it is:** This Indigenous-led annual event, which takes place in the heart of Quebec City, is a dream for experiential marketers and content creators alike. Each of Quebec’s Indigenous Nations have a booth that showcases their culture and traditions, while workshops and performances bring the festival to life.

**Why we love it:** KWE! Is an amazing example of how tourism organizations can partner with Indigenous-led initiatives to make a big splash. We love how KWE! creates space to showcase all of Quebec’s Indigenous cultures - those who want to welcome tourists can use the festival to share their sites and experiences, while those who are not currently prepared for tourists can still share their culture and build awareness around the issues that face their communities. This approach is thoughtful, inclusive, and - of course - the reels and photos that came out of the festival are spectacular!





## [American Indians & Route 66](#)

### *The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association*

**What it is:** A guidebook and [website](#) that guides travelers through the famous Route 66 road trip from the lens of American Indian people. The PDF and website help to break down stereotypes from faded tourist “sites” that appropriated Indigenous culture, and share knowledge about the authentic cultures and histories that exist along the route.

**Why we love it:** Route 66 cuts through the lands of 25 tribal nations, which means this project was an incredible feat of collaboration and research. We also love how NativeAmerica.Travel integrated the guide into their website, so people can easily find (and book) sites and accommodations for their own trip.



## [National Indigenous Peoples Day Video Series](#)

### *Parks Canada*

**What it is:** This playlist offers a fantastic peek at the many reconciliation stories woven within Canada’s National Parks. Learn how the Parks have worked towards healing relationships while welcoming visitors and furthering culture, education, and sustainability goals.

**Why we love it:** Parks Canada’s intimate, unscripted videos, like [Stories of Growing up Métis](#) and [I Was Born There](#), do a good job of centering Indigenous voices. These videos go beyond one-line land acknowledgments to truly capture the peoples and cultures that live/lived on the territory where Canada’s National Parks now reside. The playlist also gives viewers a front-row seat to the intersection of tourism, sustainability, and reconciliation with project features like [Building ʔapsčičik ʔašii](#).

## BONUS INSPIRATION!

### [Report of the UNWTO Panel on Indigenous Tourism: Promoting Equitable Partnerships](#)

**United Nations World Tourism Organization**

While it's not a campaign per se, this report is filled with several inspiring Indigenous-settler tourism partnership success stories. From an accountability checklist in the Asia-Pacific region to the creation of the CommuniTea Festival in India, you'll find lots to look into in this report. Plus, the interventions from the audience raise a host of interesting questions, including how to keep ceremonies private amidst an uptick in tourism.



Photo: Indigenous Tourism Alberta

**Psst...we want to hear about your successful Indigenous tourism partnerships and campaigns!**

This ebook is just the beginning - we're excited to keep sharing inspiration and ideas to help DMOs engage with Indigenous tourism in a respectful, supportive way.

So, if you've worked on a relevant project, or you've seen a campaign that knocked your socks off, we'd love for you to **tell us all about it by emailing [marketing@crowdriff.com](mailto:marketing@crowdriff.com)**! We may feature your campaign in a future article, so DMOs can learn from your awesome work.

Photo: Audet



# STAY ENGAGED!

## Indigenous DMOs to Follow



**Indigenous Tourism  
Association of Canada**  
@DestinationIndigenous  
@itac\_Corporate



**Indigenous Tourism Alberta**  
@indigenous.tourism.alberta



**Indigenous Tourism Ontario**  
@indigenoustourismontario



**Indigenous Tourism BC**  
@indigenoustourismbc



**Indigenous Tourism  
New Brunswick**  
@indigenoustourismnb



**Indigenous PEI**  
@indigenoupei



**Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism**  
@nsiten\_info



**Northwest Territories Tourism**  
@spectacularnwt



**Brandon Indigenous Tourism**  
@bdnindigenous



**Navajo Tourism Department**  
@discover\_navajo



**American Indian Alaska Native  
Tourism Association**  
@aianta\_offici



**Visit Cherokee Nation**  
@visitcherokeeanation



**Akwasasne Travel**  
@akwasasnetravel



**Alaska Native Heritage Center**  
@akheritagecenter