



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Culinary Tourism Alliance Launches Unique Recovery Program Promoting Hyperlocal Travel as Ontario Prepares to Welcome Back Visitors

The Great Taste of Ontario will help rebuild capacity in the food, tourism and hospitality sectors, while connecting Ontario residents with regions and experiences that are ready to safely receive them.

- *Recovery Program to help Ontario's culinary tourism and hospitality sectors build back better from the pandemic.*
- *Initiative involves +90 partners, including Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs), sector organizations, media and charities, with over 1,000 small- to medium-sized enterprises supported.*
- *Program aims to address growing consumer interest in regional destinations and unique experiences focused on local food and drink.*

TORONTO, ON, June 28 – As Ontario gears up to reopen this summer, the [Culinary Tourism Alliance \(CTA\)](#) will be leading a dynamic recovery program aimed at supporting local businesses along the food tourism value chain and encouraging hyperlocal travel within the province.

The program is complemented by a strategic, collaborative marketing campaign entitled “[The Great Taste of Ontario](#),” that brings together over 90 DMOs from across Ontario working in partnership with sector organizations, provincial organizations, media, charities with a focus on food security and industry representatives under one common goal. This effort has been made possible thanks to an investment from the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO), with support from the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario \(FedDev Ontario\)](#).

“Now more than ever, Ontarians are looking to reconnect—to people, places and our great tastes! This program helps inspire Ontarians with their travel plans while reinforcing the importance of supporting our farmers, food and beverage producers and the thousands of businesses that showcase their tastes. Explore the passports and download for your stay in Ontario and play plans!” says Rebecca Mackenzie, President and CEO of the Culinary Tourism Alliance.

“The Great Taste of Ontario is an exciting and dynamic campaign that means Ontarians will not only have the opportunity to discover new tastes and culinary delights, but will also play an integral role in helping to rebuild the tourism industry in Ontario and support our regions farmers and food and drink producers. I urge all Ontarians to take advantage of the passports and immerse themselves in what our incredible province has to offer,” said Christopher Bloore, President and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.



We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.





“Our government is proud to support the Great Taste of Ontario, as it helps some of the most impacted sectors bounce back. This initiative will stimulate local tourism and encourage more residents to reconnect with their local restaurants, shops and tourism experiences, all while protecting jobs and creating new opportunities for the province. As per our plan for a strong economic recovery, we will continue to invest in our key industries, including tourism, which are essential to the vitality of our regions,” says the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages and Minister responsible FedDev Ontario.

Building back the food, tourism and hospitality sectors

The Great Taste of Ontario is centered around a collection of hyperlocal destination passports created by destination partners, that will inspire Ontario residents to discover—or rediscover—their province and explore local businesses in the region. Designed to boost regional economies by increasing tourism visits and promoting sustainable food and drink-focused travel in a pandemic-friendly way, the program supports over 1,000 small- to medium-sized enterprises across Ontario, with more businesses added each season.

Travellers are encouraged to download the passport for their region and check-in when visiting participating businesses. Check-ins can be redeemed for Ontario made prizes or donated as cash to partner charities—FoodShare or Second Harvest—with a focus on food security. A collection of Ontario-centric playlists featuring all-Ontario artists has also been curated to officially make this the year of the road trip!

Exploring closer to home

Border closures and limited international travel have resulted in an increased intent in local, domestic travel. Road trips and extended staycations will be the most popular vacations this summer with many travellers actively seeking out unique and immersive experiences centred around local food and drink. Rural, off-the-beaten-track experiences, as well as hiking, biking, watersports and other adventure-based trips will also top the list as consumers look for ways to immerse themselves more into the outdoors. The CTA hopes to keep momentum for this interest by providing local travellers with a deeper connection to the culinary tourism value chain through ongoing initiatives such as The Great Taste of Ontario.

As the province moves ahead with its phased reopening, and businesses and local communities prepare to welcome back visitors in anticipation of a busy summer, the CTA will continue to share stories from Ontario's diverse foodie destinations and connect Ontarians and visitors to the unique experiences Ontario has to offer.



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ABOUT THE CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE

The Culinary Tourism Alliance works with communities to grow food tourism by leveraging the history, heritage, and culture behind the food and drink that makes each destination unique. Our mission is to ensure food tourism is a meaningful and sustainable contributor to local economies in destinations worldwide. Find out more at culinarytourismalliance.com

ABOUT TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO (TIAO)

TIAO is recognized as the umbrella advocacy organization for leading associations, destination marketing organizations, regional tourism organizations, educators and businesses serving Ontario's diverse tourism industry. Collectively representing 200,000 businesses and 400,000 employees, TIAO provides a strong and unified voice for the sector and is committed contributing to evidenced-based policy and providing strategic insight on how to create favourable public policy that allows the tourism industry to flourish. Find out more at tiaontario.ca

ABOUT FEDDEV ONTARIO

For nearly 12 years, FedDev Ontario has actively worked to advance and diversify the southern Ontario economy through funding opportunities and business services that support innovation and growth in Canada's most populous region. Learn more about the impacts the Agency is having in southern Ontario by exploring our [pivotal projects](#). Find out more at feddevontario.gc.ca

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