



“FEAST: Growing Indigenous Food Tourism in Ontario” Strategy Launched by Indigenous Tourism Ontario

August 10, 2021

August 10, 2021, Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation, ON – The first of its kind in the world, *FEAST: Growing Indigenous Food Tourism in Ontario (FEAST)*, is being launched today with a vision to establish Indigenous foods and foodways as integral parts of Ontario’s identity.

Over a two-year period, Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) worked with partners across the province to develop FEAST, a 5-year plan to strategically advance the Indigenous food tourism sector. Visitors from near and far are looking to form connections, experience Taste of Place and learn about Culture through food & beverage. With Ontario being home to many diverse Indigenous cultures and unique foodways, Indigenous food tourism experiences can not only meet these demands but also serve as a catalyst for increased dialogue and cultural exchange, support Indigenous-owned businesses, and contribute to community development.

“As Indigenous people of these lands, we've been hosts for hundreds of years and initiatives like FEAST will further create space to help Indigenous people tell their story on their terms. Indigenous food supply chains are ancient, yet still exist and will exist as long as Mother Earth exists. As the first region in the world to complete and begin to implement an Indigenous Food tourism strategy, we are extremely proud to be helping the Indigenous Food Tourism sector in Ontario grow for all to enjoy.” - Kevin Eshkawkogan, CEO & President, ITO

The FEAST strategy will guide enhancement of the Indigenous tourism products that already exist and encourage new, immersive food tourism experience development. With wide reaching impacts, ITO is committed to maximizing the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits that Indigenous communities and businesses see from Indigenous food tourism development. In addition to strengthening local food systems, reducing food miles, and localizing the impacts of visitor dollars, this work will also contribute to cultural revitalization by protecting food traditions and celebrating innovations.

Moving forward, priorities include ensuring community involvement in food tourism development, focusing on sustainability, preventing the commodification of local cultures and cultural products, mitigating the risk of over-tourism, and protecting long-term community-access to foods and medicines.

Active partners will be essential to the implementation of this strategy. For this reason, ITO will work in close collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to seize opportunities for food tourism development. By working together, we are confident that Indigenous food tourism development will continue to enrich Ontario's tourism offering, support the industry's post-pandemic recovery, and establish Indigenous foods and foodways as integral parts of Ontario's identity.

"Since time immemorial, Indigenous foods and foodways have been enriching the place that we are so privileged to call home, and they have the potential to become a meaningful part of every visitor experience in Ontario and beyond. As settler allies operating in the tourism space, we learned so much from and remain thankful to have participated in the development of FEAST. We could not be more invested in supporting its implementation in partnership with Indigenous Tourism Ontario and Indigenous tourism businesses and organizations across the province seeking to create positive change through food tourism." - Trevor Jonas Benson, VP, Destination Development, Culinary Tourism Alliance

"FEAST is an incredible resource that is a first of its kind foundation for Indigenous food tourism development and growth in the province of Ontario. There has never been a larger need following COVID than for our Ontario Indigenous entrepreneurial spirit to rise and take its rightful place as a leader in Indigenous Food Tourism. FEAST will be essential in minimizing the risk and eliminating the guesswork, while allowing the individual and communities to truly concentrate on developing genuine Indigenous experiences that allow them to share our specific and unique culture through food. As Indigenous people we have been inviting and hosting people since time immemorial, so it is extremely exciting to be able to share FEAST so that Indigenous people can continue to champion hospitality through Indigenous Food Tourism and share with all to learn and enjoy."- Billy Alexander, Chairperson, Indigenous Food Tourism Table

To learn more about FEAST, please visit

IndigenousTourismOntario.ca/news/feast-growing-indigenous-food-tourism-in-ontario/

We invite you to join ITO in celebrating and growing Indigenous food tourism by sharing your favourite Indigenous food experiences with ITO on social media! Post a photo of your favourite Indigenous food experience, tag @IndigenousTourismOntario and use the hashtag **#FEASTIndigenous**.

About Indigenous Tourism Ontario

Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) is the province's first and only dedicated Indigenous tourism organization that focuses on uniting communities, Indigenous organizations and industry leaders to support the growth of Indigenous tourism in Ontario. Through product development and marketing of authentic Indigenous experiences, ITO establishes a platform for Indigenous cultural expression and preservation through tourism. For more information, visit indigenoustourismontario.ca.

About Culinary Tourism Alliance

The Culinary Tourism Alliance is a not-for-profit industry organization. Towards bridging the gap between the food & drink and tourism industries, we represent a strong membership base in Ontario, celebrate restaurants committed to sourcing Ontario food & drink through our Feast On® program, and work internationally with destinations of all shapes and sizes to grow food tourism. Our vision is for culinary tourism to be a meaningful and sustainable contributor to local economies in destinations worldwide. For more information, visit culinarytourismalliance.com.

About Indigenous Food Tourism Table

The Indigenous Food Tourism Table works as an affiliated body of Indigenous Tourism Ontario. The main roles of the table include advocating, researching, promoting, and connecting to grow Indigenous food tourism across Ontario. The Table and its members connect between the tourism industry, food system stakeholders, and key actors of Indigenous tourism development by representing the needs and opportunities of Indigenous food tourism development.

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