

MAY 2021

# RETHINKING TOURISM

GOOD PRACTICES  
GUIDE AND TOOLS

**RDÉE**  
Canada

Le leader du développement économique  
des communautés francophones et acadienne



**SALUT**  
CANADA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Visitor trends</b>	<b>3</b>
Safety: THE priority for all visitors	4
Teleworking and tourism	6
Local tourism	7
Quality tourism/sustainable tourism	8
Technological innovations	10
<b>Adapting the offer</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Rethink the client experience</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Adapt your marketing to COVID-19</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Support for the visitor economy</b>	<b>17</b>

# INTRODUCTION

Tourism in 2020 plummeted worldwide. The devastating effects of the pandemic in the tourism sector affected the lives of millions of Canadians. According to Destination Canada estimates, the drop in tourism in 2020 resulted in the loss of up to 440,000 jobs directly related to services to visitors.

Entrepreneurs had to act quickly to attenuate the repercussions on their activities. Tourism companies in Canada took measures to protect travellers, employees and the general public.<sup>1</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting worldwide confinement severely affected the behaviours of travellers, consumer habits and visitors' expectations.

To get the tourism industry back on its feet, understanding consumer behaviour and reacting accordingly will be essential.<sup>2</sup>

Organizations will have to reinvent the customer experience and build up relations with them to earn and retain their confidence. At the same time, they will have to improve their operational agility and financial resilience to confront the uncertainties that come with conducting business in a world that has been destabilized and shaken by the pandemic.

RDÉE Canada and its network of tourism professionals are pleased to provide stakeholders in the Francophone tourism industry in Canada with this guide intended to improve strategic knowledge on the impacts relating to the COVID-19 crisis. This guide describes the actions that tourism companies will have to incorporate into their recovery strategy to adapt and develop the products/services they are offering along with the visitor experience.

---

1. Business Register (2019) and Statistics Canada's Canadian Tourism Satellite Account

2. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/retail-distribution/consumer-behavior-trends-state-of-the-consumer-tracker.html>



The 2021 tourism season will be crucial to the recovery of tourism in Canada. The importance of **local tourism** and **health safety** are two issues crucial to ensuring the future of the industry in Canada.

## VISITOR TRENDS

Expedia, Skyscanner, Amadeus, Le Guide du Routard and Booking.com, which are organizations specializing in tourism, have conducted surveys to predict visitor trends in 2021.<sup>3</sup>

The desire to travel is still there, but traveller behaviours and expectations are not what they were pre-pandemic.

### What to watch for in terms of their preferences:



Searches for destinations with stringent health and safety standards



The quality/price ratio



Travelling for longer periods but less often



Last-minute trips



Preferred local jaunts



The get-away urge that is still present



Teleworking and workcations



The rise in no contact technologies

For example, travellers in Quebec were surveyed by the *Chaire de tourisme Transat*<sup>4</sup> in the summer of 2020, and the following were the preferences they expressed:



The ecological shift is taking shape among Quebec travellers



Teleworking has been spurred on by digitization and fast-forwarded by the pandemic



Most Canadian employees like teleworking



The teleworking trend is local and international



Outdoors and local products and services are sectors in vogue



Outdoor-related purchasing and development is intensifying



Sensitivity to purchasing locally and developing short routes: food security



Accessibility – digital tools

3. <https://milesopedia.com/en/news/tourism-trends-2021/>

4. [https://veilletourisme.s3.amazonaws.com/2021/01/Presentation\\_Gueuleton\\_touristique\\_2021\\_19\\_janvier.pdf](https://veilletourisme.s3.amazonaws.com/2021/01/Presentation_Gueuleton_touristique_2021_19_janvier.pdf)  
(French only)

The last Destination Canada report confirms that Canadians will play a key role in supporting the recovery of the tourism sector in Canada.

*"If Canadians shift two-thirds of their planned spend on international leisure travel towards domestic tourism, it will make up for the estimated \$19 billion shortfall currently facing our visitor economy, help sustain 150,000 jobs and accelerate recovery by one year".*

*Destination Canada*

## **Communicate** the health measures in place, even after the pandemic.



### **1** Safety is THE priority for all visitors

Safety is the key consideration that tourism companies must take into account early into their recovery strategy. Once the safety measures have been taken for visitors, staff and your community, you will have to come up with effective ways of communicating your practices to visitors.

The confidence of travellers will have to be restored by:

- Following industry guidelines to ensure the safety of your customers and keeping them informed of procedures if you are receiving groups or events.
- Keeping abreast of current health and safety regulations in your provinces and territories.
- Encouraging your staff and customers to use the COVID Alert app.
- Posting your health protocol at all times.
- Clearly indicating why it is important to comply with safety instructions as they relate to the visitor experience you are providing.
- Training your staff so that they can effectively address any concerns expressed by travellers.



Destination Canada has compiled the practices adopted in recent months by the government and tourism companies, along with practices gleaned from research and surveys of consumers.<sup>5</sup>

**Stay up to date** on the status of COVID-19 infections as well as current health and safety regulations for small businesses.

**Emphasize safety:** Above all, your guests want their vacation to be safe and stress-free. By delivering the latest accurate information on travel restrictions and safety regulations, you're providing peace of mind to travellers. Research tells us that safety is the primary concern of Canadians, with 75 percent of respondents indicating that clear communication of protection measures is the top factor for selecting travel.

When you respond to visitors' concerns, you regain their confidence and loyalty.

**The pandemic has had a financial impact and visitors will be looking for the best possible value for money.**

**These behaviors will likely continue for several years.**



Beyond the posted prices, visitors expect:

- Flexible, clear, and transparent cancellation policy
- A refund process
- No-cost modification options to their reservations
- Promotions
- More services and added value.

---

5. <https://www.destinationcanada.com/en/coronavirus-updates/covid-19-research>

## 2 Teleworking and tourism

With the advent of teleworking, tourists have more travel options. They can be gone for longer periods and combine work and leisure. The freedom of not having to go into an office five days a week is a perfect opportunity for many travellers, who can work from a dream destination, even if they have to quarantine. This trend will be reflected by accommodation rentals being extended one or two weeks after the vacation so that they can resume work without having to go back home.

To make it easier to rent accommodations for a longer duration, establishments could:

- Add a workspace that is well equipped or adapt an already existing space.
- Offer work equipment and a very reliable Wi-Fi connection.
- Offer services to support visitors having to quarantine.
- Review policies on business trips.
- Develop and adapt offers that meet the individual needs of teleworkers.
- Develop offers with companies in the community.
- Develop partnerships with community organizations that could offer activities that complement teleworking (day camps, daycare, etc.).
- Put together longer packages.
- Offer complementary services.
- Take steps to make rental units more suited to teleworking.

**Work + Vacation =  
Workation.**



### 3 Local tourism

In 2020, Canadians explored provinces and territories in Canada. Many remained in their province or territory, sometimes in their own backyard, or drove to other provinces. Others went so far as to drive or fly to far away provinces. Visits to larger cities took a back seat to trips to smaller venues that provided access to outdoor activities.

The report of the consequences of COVID-19 and the recovery of the domestic market by Destination Canada<sup>6</sup> showed us that the trend is toward trips to very local destinations or within the visitors' provinces and territories.

Due to the pandemic, local trips have never been as popular. This trend is here to stay, and travellers will be visiting places closer to home going forward.

The *Mission des offices de tourisme Nouvelle-Aquitaine* (MONA) developed a series of tools to help build local tourism.<sup>7</sup> These include resident profiles and six objectives that can be assigned to the profiles identified.

<b>WELCOMER</b> sells his products to tourists in high season, welcomes newcomers to the village
<b>INFLUENCER</b> explains to his customers where his animals are grazing and how to go and see them graze in the nature, keeps a blog in which he promotes his good plans that he has tested on the territory
<b>CONSUMER</b> often receives friends and family and shows them around the territory, doesn't miss any of the activities offered in the territory
<b>OFFERER</b> has a large house and rents out a room via AirBnb in high season, is a member of a greeters association
<b>CITIZEN</b> recently participated in the consultation meetings for the development project of the center. invested in his community

6. Report of the consequences of COVID-19 and the recovery – domestic market – March 9, 2021 ([destinationcanada.com](https://destinationcanada.com))

7. <https://www.monatourisme.fr/category/ressources/autres-ressources-thematiques/metteur-en-scene-de-territoire/tourisme-et-habitants/> (French only)



# Stay + Vacation = Staycation.

**Satisfaction and quality of life,  
perception and well-being of residents.**



Based on the objectives identified, it will thus be very important that tourism stakeholders be able to:

- Involve members of the community in local tourism actions
- Improve the reception provided
- Promote tourism offers on the territory to residents to turn them into ambassadors
- Develop along with the members of your local community a feeling of belongingness to the territory (buying locally, targeted tours)
- Enriching and diversifying available tourism opportunities with the input of community members
- Develop business partnerships with businesses and organizations in the community, which come from other sectors of activity
- Provide last-minute activities.

Promote tourism exclusively to members of your local community so that they can become ambassadors of the destination. They will then be able to share their experiences.

- Create offers aimed specifically at residents (e.g., hotels, tourist attractions, restaurants)
- Create an ambassador club or community passport.

## 4 Quality tourism/sustainable tourism

The World Tourism Organization defines sustainable or responsible tourism as:  
Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.<sup>8</sup>

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**



8. <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>

In future, visitors will seek ways of travelling that are more respectful of the environment, and they will want to travel less often but for longer periods. The pandemic has caused many to realize the economic, social and environmental impact they have had on local communities.

They will choose destinations not as well known and away from more popular attractions to avoid crowds. It is highly likely that they will make travel decisions that will contribute to the economic recovery of their destination. They not only want to protect themselves but the places they are visiting.

In order for tourists to enjoy the most rewarding and satisfying experience possible, some practices shall be given priority such as:

- Offering outdoor activities and leisure.
- Offering ways of reducing the amount of garbage.
- Giving preference to slow travel such as walking, hiking and cycling.
- Providing mass transit opportunities.
- Developing new crowd management measures.
- Providing opportunities to purchase local products.
- Proposing more interesting packages out of season.
- Being transparent in the ways you use your customers' money to help communities rebuild, paving the way to regenerative tourism.
- Proposing longer-term packages.
- Proposing new types of agri-tourism products.



## Offer visitors actions that benefit the sustainable development of the destination.



### 5 Technological innovations

Technical will be crucial in helping to curtail health risks during trips and to inform visitors of the health situation at the destination. More travellers will be more inclined to personalize their travel experience with applications offering choices of accommodation and experiences.

The tourism sector will have to not only respond technically to travellers' logistical requirements but anticipate ways of accompanying them.

The contactless customer experience: a pillar of recovery!

Here are some ways of putting the latest technology to use:

- No-contact payment.
- Mobile ticket purchase applications (single or package purchases).
- Mobile applications with notifications and alerts when there are changes to government guidelines.
- Enable visitors to discover your product or destination, using virtual reality.
- Provide virtual or hybrid experiences.
- Interactive virtual guides.

Reviewing your technological bases such as your Internet site, reservation platform, etc., will be important. Online presence will be essential to the survival of companies operating remotely.



# ADAPTING THE OFFER

According to the Destination Canada report, rebuilding travellers' confidence is placing importance on keeping safety top of mind and in plain sight. It will be important to adapt your activities according to the preferences of consumers, who will continue to evolve and change as the pandemic draws on.

The industry will have to adopt a management approach based on what visitors have to say in order to adapt to their new needs and behaviours. For the first few years, the industry will have to emphasize the strengths of the local region, culture and values so that they are at the heart of visitors' priorities.

A **report on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis** on the visitor experience, which was presented to the Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec,<sup>9</sup> shows the importance of an efficient offer.

Here are a few proposals that could help you adapt your offer:

## Promote a community approach

- Propose varied and practical offers of products from your community (take-out meal basket, beauty products, local products, etc.).
- Create ties with community actors to provide a broader range of community and tourist activities.
- Have visitors enjoy a local experience with packages exclusive to residents.
- Develop local partnerships to raise the visibility and notoriety of your region.
- Take advantage of the savings of Canadians by having them dream of spending time with you and by proposing targeted and innovative packages.

---

<sup>9</sup>. Les impacts de la crise de la covid-19 sur l'expérience visiteur : <https://allianceturistique.com/covid19/> (French only)

### Take a qualitative approach

- Propose personalized and more human offers according to your customer segments.
- Suggest unique experiences such as well-being tourism (spas, fitness centres, etc.) or offer activities and private settings.
- Make sure to offer additional and complementary services to your customers.
- Create packages that favour teleworking and long stays based on the profile of your target markets.

### Prioritize responsible tourism

- Emphasize a territorial, inclusive and innovative approach.
- Bring the human experience to the forefront so that visitors can find meaning in it, take part in slow travel (walking, hiking, biking) and derive benefit from these experiences.

### Consider putting together last-minute trips

- Develop packages with special prices and last-minute offers.

## RETHINK THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Reception entails all behaviours and techniques aimed at making it easier for tourists to approach the business. It is important that this "new" customer experience combine the reception of visitors and customer service. Understanding in detail the major dimensions of the experience that will arise from or be changed by the COVID-19 crisis is essential. Employees and tourist companies will thus be able to adapt to the offer of a "truly" warm and reassuring reception.

The **report on the impacts of the COVID-19** crisis on the visitor experience, which was presented to the Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec<sup>10</sup>, illustrates the impact of COVID on the visitor experience and the dimensions to be given priority in this context.

---

10. Les impacts de la crise de la covid-19 sur l'expérience visiteur : <https://allianceturistique.com/covid19/>  
(French only)



There is no denying that **technology** will be crucial to improving the visitor experience. Using an online reservation system can reduce wait times and influx of people to public spaces, in addition to limiting contacts.

Visitors will need assurance on **health safety**. To address this need, make sure that the physical environment is as clean as possible. You will thus be able to implement measures such as taking temperatures, identifying seating areas and indicating disinfected areas with stickers or cardboard signs so that visitors feel safe at all times.

Reassuring customers and ensuring compliance with public health standards will be a permanent challenge for tourist companies. You will have to strike a difficult balance between courtesy and firmness to manage visitors reluctant to observe directives or those who violate these measures directly.

To minimize the impact on the visitor experience and on front-line staff, the latter will have to be clearly informed and given support, as they will also be perceived as visit counsellors.

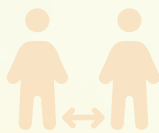


# ADAPT YOUR MARKETING TO COVID-19



**Publish new content on your Website and in your social media accounts to describe the experience your company offers.**

It is more important than ever to invest in marketing to ensure strong presence on the Web and in social media to increase your chances of being seen by travellers.



**Explain the safety measures implemented while stressing fun at the same time.**

Here is some advice to create content adapted to COVID:

- Display your health safety measures so that they are visible at all times
- Update information regularly
- Publish comments by visitors
- Design visuals that show you are compliant with health guidelines
- Produce content that has a human touch and is reassuring
- Develop content that lines up with the values of your target markets.

**Advice for content adapted to the new needs of visitors.**

The messages conveyed by the marketing materials must match the experience that visitors will experience along the way.

Develop **safer** experiences and activities such as those held outdoors and in small groups.

Emphasize more human and immersive experiences more centred on **social** and **environmental values**.

Develop promotional campaigns targeting your **local community, intraprovincial and territorial markets** for starters and then expand your promotion to other provinces and territories.

Show experiences and visits where people are practicing **physical distancing** with adapted images and photos where masks are being worn or scenes where people are distanced in accordance with the health requirements of your region.

Include COVID-related **safety precautions** subtly in your photo or video content produced during the pandemic.

Post your **protocols** and enhanced **cleaning procedures** to ensure the safety of your customers

Post the **movement restrictions and isolation requirements applicable to travellers.**

Focus on the **present time** in 2021, but do make it possible for people to dream of what lies ahead during the 2022 season.

Create content in **collaboration** with your **community** to present the shared values of the destination.

Create campaigns for people in your communities to encourage **local tourism**.

Promote the **low season** and locations that draw fewer people.

Focus on the **value-added** dimension.

Do promotion with people in your community to highlight **local products, knowhow** and local tourism.

Deploy promotion that is targeted and adapted to people in your community in **local media** such as community radio and local newspapers.

Develop marketing strategies to promote **teleworking** tourism.

It will be important to analyze data on the trends and intentions of travellers and use this information to develop your marketing strategy. Moreover, it is suggested that you redefine your success indicators to incorporate new measurements of satisfaction (e.g., well-being for experiences in a spa, learning for visits to a museum and surpassing oneself for forays in a kayak).

## EXAMPLE



**Focus on connecting with nature** for a visit to a regional park, for example.

Dream in the present while setting the table for the future!

## CONCLUSION

### **The urge to get away is always there!**

Despite all of these trends that are taking shape, the good news is that the urge to travel will continue to increase exponentially during the coming year.

It is expected that some of the trends presented will be temporary, but is more than likely that most of them will open up new avenues for the sector.

Adapting the offer will be very important in order for visitors to feel safe at all times and to ensure that the focus is on local tourism for the 2021 tourist season.



# SUPPORT FOR THE VISITOR ECONOMY

This page offers an update on Destination Canada's response as well as industry and government updates and support resources.

## General support

- [Regional Relief and Recovery Fund \(RRRF\) through your Regional Development Agency \(RDA\)](#).
- [Canada Emergency Business Account \(CEBA\)](#)
- [Canada Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\) extended](#)
- [Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy \(CEWS\)](#).

## Provincial and territorial support

- [Alberta](#)
- [British Columbia](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [New Brunswick](#)
- [Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [Northwest Territories](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)
- [Nunavut](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Quebec](#)
- [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Yukon](#)

## Provincial and territorial reopening plans

- [Alberta](#)
- [British Columbia](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [New Brunswick](#)
- [Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [Northwest Territories](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)
- [Nunavut](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Quebec](#)
- [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Yukon](#)

## Tourism specific

- [Tourism Industry Association of Canada \(TIAC\)](#)
- [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada \(ITAC\)](#)
- [Canada's Regional Development Agencies \(RDA\)](#)

## Planning support for businesses

- Tourism HR Canada offers a wide range of checklists and resources to help tourism operators and their teams rebound from the crisis and build a resilient workforce through their [Tourism Workforce Recovery Toolkit](#).
- They also publish the latest tourism employment numbers and insights in their [Employment Tracker](#).
- For operators looking for information on how to prepare to safely reopen their operations, the Canadian [Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has a series of bilingual guidelines](#) available to businesses regarding COVID-19.

## Other key resources

- Public Health Agency of Canada: [General information on COVID-19](#)
- [Travel restrictions, exemptions and advice](#)
- Follow [Government of Canada social media channels](#) for the latest updates.