



Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th Parallel

CULTURES AND WILDERNESS TO DISCOVER

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To reach us:

Ministère du Tourisme
900, boul. René-Lévesque Est,
bureau 400
Québec (Québec) G1R 2B5
tourismenord49@tourisme.gouv.qc.ca

Québec's Ministère du Tourisme, in cooperation with the Tourism Intelligence Network of the Transat Chair in Tourism, publishes this northern tourism intelligence newsletter to support the implementation of the Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th Parallel. The newsletter is intended to inform all the Strategy's stakeholders about developments in northern and polar tourism around the world, as well as related trends and innovations in terms of products, services and marketing.

STRATÉGIE49

Newsletter

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NEWS

Multi-lodge adventures: A new way to visit Alaska

The multi-lodge adventure concept is developing in Alaska. It allows tourists to stay in several of a company's lodges during their visit. Within the Wild offers its customers three rustic luxury lodges, all located in the backcountry of southern Alaska, from which to explore the region. Rather than staying in the same spot for a week, visitors can stay at three different sites and enjoy three unique experiences, with some consistency in the quality of the accommodations. The company offers several packages, allowing customers to add activities such as bear watching, trekking, yoga or cooking classes, an outdoor spa experience and other wilderness activities to their stay.

Scientific tourism in Patagonia

With 83% of its area under the protection of the Chilean state, Aysén is one of the most unique areas of Patagonia. The variety of natural and cultural resources and the archaeological riches of vestiges of the Indigenous Tehuelche people make it a great scientific and tourist destination.



Source: <http://www.exploraysen.com/>

The *ExplorAysén Society for Science and Tourism in Patagonia* is a group of regional tour operators and local businesses working to promote a more complete understanding of the environment and to develop new programs for both tourists and scientists.

In collaboration with

Four types of scientific tourism have been developed in the Aysén region:

- **Exploration:** Expeditions that allow visitors to accompany researchers to the ice fields, while they evaluate the potential of new scientific research in the area explored.
- **Field research:** Tourists have the opportunity to work side-by-side with scientific groups conducting research in various marine and terrestrial ecosystems.
- **Eco-volunteering:** Volunteers offer their time, ideas and expertise to ongoing research or projects, such as a conservation program, for instance.
- **Eco-cultural programs:** They include interpretative visits to places of special interest conducted under the leadership of scientists and research assistants.

Through scientific tourism, the organization hopes to help preserve this unique and mysterious wilderness area by providing a framework for local economic development.

The northern lights are popular... even for two-day getaways

NASA scientists have been predicting for years that, in 2012, the northern lights would be exceptionally bright and intense, providing a rare opportunity to observe the brightest northern lights in 50 years. The heavenly display is growing in popularity and inspiring vacation planning to northern destinations.

Some companies are taking advantage of the opportunity to adapt their products and design special offers that include nighttime viewing of the northern lights.

For example, *Brewster Vacations* offers a “quick escape” tour that includes two nights in Fort McMurray, Alberta, watching nature’s light show. *Norwegian Cruise* offers a tour near the Russian border, above the Arctic Circle, where for much of the winter the sun barely rises. Next fall, *Quark Expeditions*, a world leader in Polar adventure travel, is preparing an exclusive tour of Greenland, combining nighttime observation with daytime activities, including visits to remote Inuit communities.



Source: <http://www.latimes.com/travel/deals/la-trb-tc-northern-lights-canada-20120201,0,3783923.story>

ACTIVITIES

Get ready for sports and northern culture at the Arctic Winter Games!

The Arctic Winter Games will be held in March in Whitehorse, the capital of the Yukon Territory. More than just a sporting event, this international celebration will also include a cultural festival, art exhibitions, craft fairs, entertainment and studio visits.

The traditional forms of competitions and activities of the Inuit and Dene cultures are distinctive features of the Arctic Winter Games. The sports events include popular sports, traditional sports and Dene games (the finger pull, pole push, stick pull, snow snake, and hand games). Instead of the usual flame, a song was relayed between the nine participating regions then mixed to create the music video theme song of the event. Nunavik had the theme song kit in October.

National Geographic's 10th extreme adventure race

Trekking, climbing, kayaking or mountain biking across southern Patagonia: that's the adventure proposed by National Geographic in its tenth extreme expedition race. In February, 20 four-person teams from more than a dozen countries participated in this ten-day endurance competition.



Source: <http://www.patagonianexpeditionrace.com/>

MARKETS

Frozen Planet inspires the British to travel to northern Canada

By showing unique footage of the Arctic and Antarctic on the small screen, the BBC's Frozen Planet documentary series allows listeners to be part of an ultimate polar expedition that few people will have the chance to experience. However, thanks to the show's popularity, more British travelers have decided to venture into these frozen lands, driven by the desire for an extraordinary experience. In its top five vacation ideas inspired by the series, blog *travelbite.co.uk* mentions Canada as a destination to visit and proposes an Arctic adventure on Baffin Island.



Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00mfl7n>

In connection with the show, luxury tour operator *Abercrombie & Kent* noticed increased interest in destinations such as northern Greenland and the remote regions of Canada. Tourists who cannot afford these remote destinations head to Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

Adventure tourism trends and opportunities according to tour operators

The *Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA)* consulted some of its members to find out what they thought about the trends that will affect the adventure tourism industry's development and the opportunities ahead.

The most significant consumer trends:

- The search for rich and authentic travel experiences that bring people together
- Customization and personalization
- An increasing number of female customers
- The 40 and over demographic is becoming more important
- Family adventures
- Customers looking to give back to the communities: concern for the environment and equity

The opportunities ahead:

- New geographic markets, especially China and Brazil
- Market growth due to a better understanding of adventure tourism and its democratization by soft adventure
- The interest in health, physical activity and a "greener" lifestyle
- Older travelers are more likely to be physically fit and healthy, allowing them to enjoy adventure travel; they have good potential, because they have more time and money, and are very interested in local culture
- Demand for experiential tourism will persist as travelers continue to seek more intimate and authentic experiences; these tourists prefer to travel in small groups and want to explore the wilderness while learning about local culture

Russian and Chinese tourists fill a snow hotel in Norway

Although the British are still its largest market, more and more Russian and Chinese tourists visit the border town of Kirkenes, in northern Norway. Marketing in China and the large influx of Russian visitors have resulted in a record number of guests at the Kirkenes snow hotel. Built every year in December, the snow hotel remains open until it melts in April.



Source: <http://kirkenessnowhotel.com/>

Last winter, representatives of the hotel went to Beijing to market their product. As a result, there was a significant increase in group bookings from China for January and February. Chinese tourists are also interested in other activities the area has to offer, such as dog sledding and trips to see the northern lights.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

The benefits of co-management in tourism: the case of the Los Flamencos National Reserve in Chile



Source: Servicio Nacional del turismo

Located in northern Chile's Atacama Desert, the Los Flamencos National Reserve is an inspiring example of involving Indigenous communities in developing protected areas. In 2006, the Reserve partnered with the National Forestry Corporation of Chile and mining company SQM. This partnership helped to create the first sustainable tourism information centre in a protected area of the country. To reduce its environmental impact, the building's design incorporates renewable energy production (solar panels and wind turbines), as well as techniques to re-use gray water.

In addition, all local guides are members of the Lickan Antay community and have been trained in interpretation techniques and effective communication to convey the natural and cultural values of the area to visitors. Since the centre opened, more and more members of the Indigenous community have sought training to participate in the benefits of responsible tourism.

This co-management model has enabled the Lickan Antay people, who have ancestral rights over the area where the Reserve is located, to support community aid programs. For example, revenue from entrance fees is used to expand programs to assist the elderly and disabled.

PICTURING THE NORTH

Meet the Saami

This video is an invitation to meet the Saami people and learn about their culture.

Click on the image to view the video.

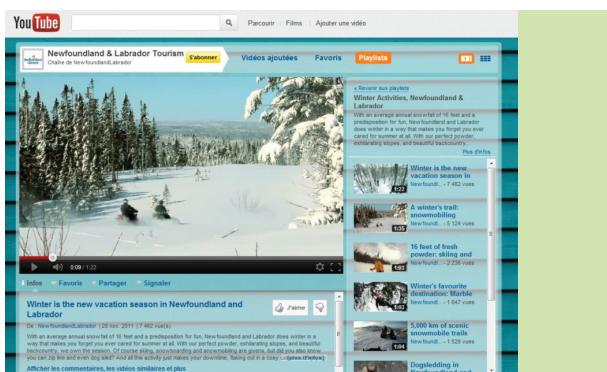


Source: Visit Sápmi

Video channels on YouTube promote northern destinations

Since 2008, Newfoundland and Labrador have been sharing videos of their destinations and activities on their own YouTube channel. Clips are grouped into playlists such as winter activities, food & dining and diving.

Click on the image to view the video.



Source: Winter Activities, Newfoundland & Labrador

See You in Norway

The See You in Norway channel has 50 videos featuring experiences in northern Norway. This initiative was set up by Innovative Experiences, a group of tourism businesses in the Nordland region dedicated to promoting their destination through innovation. They like to say that their customers will have experiences that give them goose bumps there and then, and memories for a lifetime.

Click on the image to view the video.



Source: See You in Norway

INTERVIEW WITH AN EXPERT

**Interview with Graham Dickson,
Chief Expedition Office of Arctic Kingdom Polar Expeditions**

"As a Canadian company, we think the Canadian Arctic is the most special part of the region."

With eight full-time employees and a team of 50 in the field, *Arctic Kingdom Polar Expeditions* has the Arctic experts to give travellers the opportunity to discover the region's culture and peoples. This Nunavut business's success is based on expertise, knowledge of wildlife and geography and a long-standing relationship with Inuit communities.

The agency's signature experience, *Arctic Kingdom's Narwhal and Polar Bear Safari*, was chosen by the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) as part of its Signature Experiences Collection® (SEC) to show the world what Canada's tourism brand is all about. Here are a few excerpts from the CTC's interview with the Chief Expedition Officer:



Source: Arctic Kingdom Polar Expeditions

The business and the challenges it faces

- “We go into these very small Inuit communities that want tourism, but it’s a complex process. We provide training and exposure for these small remote communities that have something they want to share. It’s a privilege to do so.”
- “We’ve always worked closely with the local communities throughout the Arctic, sharing the knowledge of local guides and elders. We show visitors the culture, history and wildlife in the Arctic at different times of year.”
- “Getting the word out about our business is still a challenge. So is fighting the misconception that the Arctic is always a cold and somewhat dreary place. It’s anything but that. We go to places that are bubbling with wildlife. The problem is that when you show the Arctic to most of the world, people shiver! It’s not all cold and inhospitable. The different latitudes and different times of year make a considerable difference, with spring coming much earlier in Labrador, say, or Nunavik than in the high Arctic.”

The experience and the clientele

- “The Narwhal and Polar Bear Safari is special. At least half the staff on the tour comes from local Inuit communities, enabling visitors to get a real feel for the culture they are surrounded by...”
- “They are typically international visitors, and not taking their first vacation. They come from all over: China, Europe, even Brazil. We’ve had honeymooners...”
- “We have those who want to go on their own, especially professional or serious amateur photographers. There are also a lot who just want to enjoy themselves; these are typically well-travelled people who come from almost anywhere on the planet.”

The benefits of partnership with the CTC

- “It has been a growing and exciting relationship for us. We received support as well as from the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation, for a National Geographic trip to film polar bears in James Bay while beginning to evaluate the potential for future tourism products in the region.”
- “It will also help deal with the challenge of Alaska in terms of the branding of the north. Arctic still means Alaska to a lot of people around the world. So we hope that there will be outreach through CTC that will bring awareness of our company and the tourism products we offer.”

Tourism businesses that can deliver authentic Canadian experiences are being invited to apply to become part of the CTC’s Signature Experiences Collection®.



Source: Arctic Kingdom Polar Expeditions

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Picturing The North

Visit Sápmi. Welcome to Sápmi.

See you in Norway. Nordland Experiences.

Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism. Newfoundland & Labrador channel.

Interview With An Expert

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Arctic Kingdom Polar Expeditions