



THE GREAT TASTE OF

Ontario

Final Program Report

PREPARED BY THE CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE

JANUARY 2022

The Great Taste of Ontario is a **collaborative** tourism **recovery** program involving +80 partners including DMOs, RTOs, sector organizations, media, and charities

THE PROGRAM WAS FUNDED IN PART BY

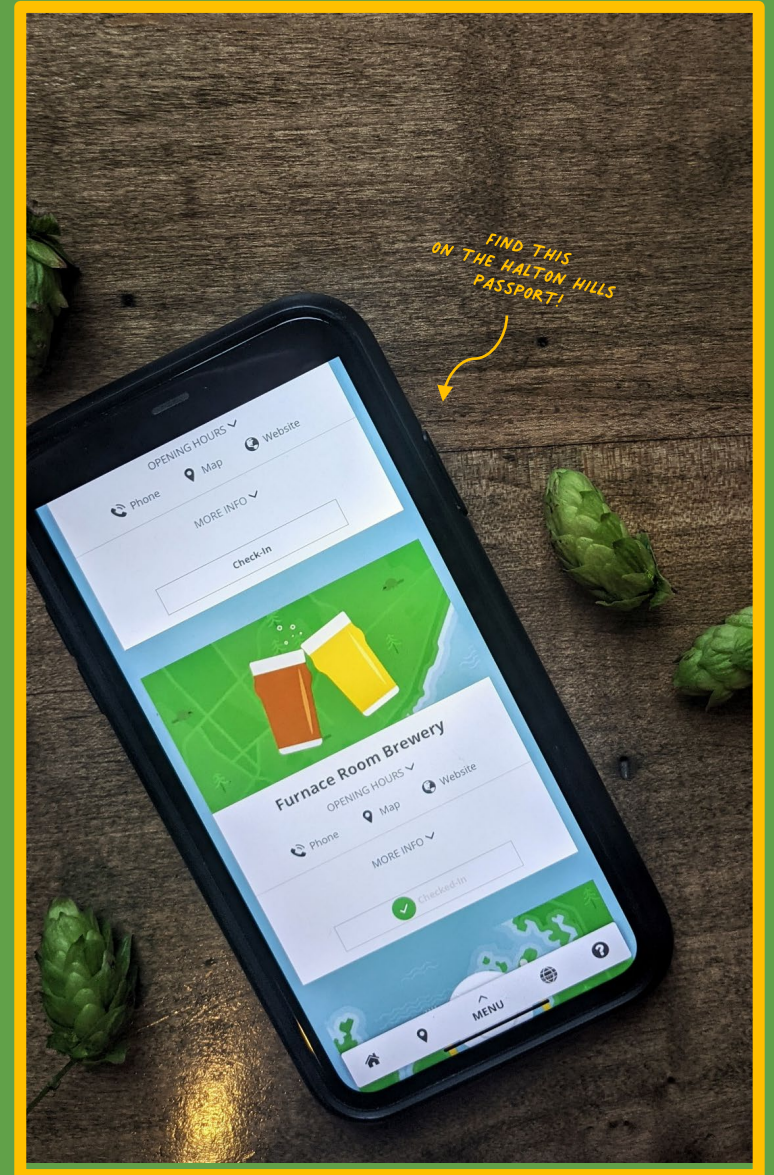


We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.



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READY, SET,

FIND THIS
ON THE DURIAM REGION
PASSPORT!

Let's dig in!

About The Program

The Great Taste of Ontario is a program with a unique recipe for success.

There was a 4-phased approach that focused on a unique mix of collaboration, product development and marketing to help **rethink how the tourism in Ontario operates** and who benefits from its success. The goal was to inspire Ontario residents to explore Ontario through food and drink.

Phase 1 was the creation of **Business Inclusion Criteria** to help guide partners in selecting businesses often overlooked in tourism marketing.

Phase 2 was developing **webinars and other educational materials** that were hosted, recorded and distributed. These materials include the WTTTC Safe Travels Certification administered by TIAO, the Rainbow Registration administered by the CGLCC, and CTA programs including Feast On® Certification, Tourism Readiness and Content Creation. Many of these materials were offered in both English and French with support from SEO Francophone Ontario.

In phase 3, unique **digital passports featuring 15 businesses per destination** were curated in partnership with destination partners using the Bandwango platform.

In phase 4, content was created and/or collected from partners to encourage downloads and fuel a **content marketing campaign**. This occurred alongside strategic advertising in partner publications.

About the Business Inclusion Criteria

Outside of tourism recovery, one of the main goals of the Great Taste of Ontario was to leverage the upheaval caused by the pandemic to help organizations **rethink how they operate** and what should be incorporated into their experience offerings.

Supporting **sector organizations** that service the tourism and hospitality industry was also a goal and included Indigenous Tourism Ontario, Resorts Ontario, SEO Francophone Ontario and Attractions Ontario, to name a few.

To provide assurances to consumers, all businesses included in the itineraries were asked to register for the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Safe Travels Stamp.

Priority was also to be given to businesses that meet the following criteria:

- Are an Ontario member of the Canada's Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
- Are an Ontario member of the Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce
- Are recognized as part of Indigenous Tourism Ontario's (ITO) Cultural Authenticity Program (CAP)
- Are recognized as part of Société économique de l'Ontario (SÉO) Route Champlain and Corridor Canada Members or has received the label from Classification nationale des services en français
- Practice organic, sustainable or regenerative farming , or sustainable fishing and aquaculture
- Offer an agri-tourism experience
- Are an active member of Ontario Craft Brewers (OCB), Resorts of Ontario, Attractions Ontario, Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) or Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA)

The Brand

The playful brand was created by the Ontario-based designers **LAW Design** with custom fonts by artist **Jen Wagner** and adorable illustrations by the great **Martin Bregman** to evoke vintage travel artwork.



Marketing Plan

The program required us to be agile and responsive to ongoing travel advisories and consumer sentiments. [The original Marketing Plan can be found here](#).

The plan had four goals:

- Reach 10 million Ontario residents
- 1000 monthly Great Taste of Ontario passport downloads
- Publish 300 Great Taste of Ontario partner “itineraries” as blogs on OntarioCulinary.com and partner websites
- Support sector organizations and independent publications that promote ethical, local consumption and sustainable tourism



Marketing Results

A total of 11,081,462 digital impressions were garnered by the campaign in 2021. Total impressions exceeded **26.9 million**.

7,543 passports were downloaded during the campaign with marketing activity limited to Q3 – Q4 in 2021.

211 partner “itineraries” were published and promoted. Partner capacity to submit was limited due to on-going staffing shortages with partner organizations.

Advertising dollars were spent with various partner publications owned by sector organizations, as well as a variety of small, community newspapers, magazines and other online communities. An overview can be found on the next page.



Marketing Results by Activity Type



Advertising Results

Outlet	Medium	Placement Date	Reach
Resorts of Ontario Guide	Magazine/Digital	April - annual guide	900,000
6x Globe & Mail Special Reports	Newspaper + Digital	Quarterly starting Sept 2020	3,300,00
The Growler	Magazine	October	180,000
The Weather Network	Digital	September, October, November, December	625,021
The Weather Network	TV Placements	September, October, November, December	TBD
NOW Magazine	Newspaper (print and digital)	10 placements, bi-weekly between August - December	5,200,000
NOW Magazine	Web and newsletter ads	September - December	200,000
Post Media	Newspaper (including Toronto Sun, National Post, Windsor Star, Kingston Whig, London Free Press, Cornwall Standard, The Londoner, Kingston The Week, Stratford Beacon Herald, Belleville Community Press)	August, October, December	4,359,400
LCBO	Magazine (Food & Drink)	September 15	515,000
ADAMO Nest	Digital & print	August	476,000
Global Heroes (plus insert supplements)	Digital and print	July, August	2,000,000
	Toronto Star	September	
	National Post	September	
	Globe & Mail	September	
Attractions Ontario Guide	Print and Digital	July	80,000
TOTAL			17,835,421



Social Media Results

Social media efforts were centered on Facebook and Instagram activity. Activity included a mix of ad placements and boosted itinerary content submitted by partners or created by the Culinary Tourism Alliance.

INSTAGRAM

Reach: 840,571
Engagement: 105,784

FACEBOOK

Reach: 1,294,955
Engagement: 53,068

TOTAL REACH: 2,135,526

TOTAL ENGAGEMENT: 15,852



Participation Overview

The following organization participated in the Great Taste of Ontario:

1000 Islands
Almaguin Highlands
Barrie & Area
Bay of Quinte
Black Foodie
Blue Mountain Region
Bracebridge
Burlington
Chatham-Kent
City Of Brampton
City of Brantford
City of Guelph
City of Sudbury
Clarington
Cornwall & SDG
Durham Region
Fergus & Elora
Frontenac County
Haldimand County
Haliburton Highlands
Halton Hills

Halton Hills
Hastings County
Huron County
Kawartha Lakes
Kawarthas Northumberland
Lake Superior North Shore
Lanark County
Lennox & Addington County
Markham
Middlesex County
Niagara Falls
Niagara On The Lake
Niagara Parks
Niagara's South Coast
Norfolk County
North Bay
Northumberland
Oakville
Ontario's Algoma Country
Owen Sound
Oxford County

Perth County
Perth, Ontario
Peterborough & The Kawarthas
Prescott Russell
Prince Edward County
Sarnia Lambton
Sault Ste. Marie
Simcoe County
Six Nations of Grand River
Societe Economique de L'Ontario
South Eastern Ontario
St. Catharines
Temiskaming Shores
Thunder Bay
Timmins
Toronto
Town of Cobourg
Town of Lincoln
Trent Hills
Vaughan
Visit Kingston

VQA Wines of Ontario
Ontario Craft Brewers
Waterloo Region
Wellington County
Windsor Essex
York Durham Headwaters
York Region

Promotional and advisory partners included TIAO, TIAC, Destination Northern Ontario, The Globe & Mail, Resorts of Ontario, Attractions Ontario, Festivals & Events Ontario, BLACK FOODIE, the City of Toronto, and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

Charitable Partners included Second Harvest and FoodShare.

Partner Success Stories

SAFE TRAVELS STAMP

With the help of our destination partners, the team at the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) was able to certify over 1800 tourism businesses across Ontario to use the WTC Save Travels Stamp.

The specially designed stamp allows travellers to recognize companies around the world which have adopted global standardized protocols in health and hygiene.

RAINBOW REGISTERED BUSINESSES

The Culinary Tourism Alliance co-hosted two sessions with the Canadian Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC) to share information of the new Rainbow Registered program for tourism businesses and underscore the value of operating an inclusive and welcoming business.



BLACK FOODIES GUIDE TO BLACK-OWNED ONTARIO

The CTA partnered with BLACK FOODIE to create content celebrating Black-owned businesses across Southern Ontario.

This included a video profiling '8 Must-Visit Black Owned Businesses in Ontario'. It was shared on YouTube and natively on Facebook/Instagram and viewed 120,000 times to date.

ONTARIO TOURISM AWARD FOR BEST MARKETING COLLABORATION

The Great Taste of Ontario was awarded the 2021 Ontario Tourism Awards for Best Collaborative Marketing Program over \$50K at the Ontario Tourism Awards Ceremony in 2021.

The program involved managing the expectations and involvement of +80 destination partners, 9 sector organizations, 18 media outlets, 3 levels of government and 2 charitable partners. Collectively over 1100 small food tourism businesses were featured at no cost to the operator.



PHOTO & VISUAL ASSET LIBRARY

In the later months of 2021, the CTA creative team went in market six times to capture content to further support future promotions of the Great Taste of Ontario and participating partners. Assets gathered are being edited and catalogued into a media hub which will be made available to partners, media and those looking to leverage the assets to promote food tourism in Ontario.

To date, over 6000 photo and video assets were captured, and the following destinations were visited:

- Trip 1: Bracebridge / Almaguin Highlands / North Bay / Sudbury
- Trip 2: Ottawa Valley / Ontario's Highlands
- Trip 3: Caledon / Halton Hills / Hamilton / Burlington
- Trip 4: Windsor / Essex County / London
- Trip 5: York Region / Durham Region
- Trip 6: Simcoe County / Barrie / Blue Mountain Village / Owen Sound

CHARITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

As a result of the program activities, \$20,000 dollars were donated to both Second Harvest and FoodShare to help address food insecurity in Ontario.



Resources & Legacy Materials

As part of the Great Taste of Ontario, several resources and materials were created for the industry. They included:

A digital **Partner Portal** where all information associated with GTOO, Safe Travels Stamp, and Relief Efforts could be always accessed by partners

“A Guide to Good Food Content” for partners and their staff to help tell more meaningful food and travel stories online.

French language applications and information for Feast On® Certification program

On-boarding toolkits for destination partners and stakeholders to leverage program activities.

Digital passport embed procedures to assist destination partners in leveraging their participation on their own terms.

A **Culinary Cultural Diversity in Ontario Survey** was conducted to better understand the need for specific programming dedicated to increasing representation of diversity within the Ontario culinary tourism industry.



Cultural Culinary Communities

An additional legacy of the GTOO is the Cultural Culinary Communities (CCC) Program. The CCC is an awareness program that celebrates the diversity of the culinary tourism value chain across Ontario.

The program will showcase the diversity that exists within the culinary tourism landscape and promote inclusivity within the tourism and hospitality sectors. It will celebrate the importance of the 250+ cultures behind Ontario's food and drink landscape.

The CCC will provide much needed accessibility and awareness to underrepresented voices to tell their stories on their terms and include platforms to inspire, educate and unite all people while inviting each guest into unique cultural culinary communities.

The program will be piloted throughout specific destination in 2022.

The CTA will produce resources and experiences that will educate and encourage a more diverse stakeholder base from the culinary tourism value chain to become better engaged in culinary tourism, and therefore further advance the participation of multicultural communities in the tourism sector.



Feast On® Gift Vouchers

A custom-made, open-loop digital gift voucher platform was designed, developed and launched to drive more business to foodservice operators that are committed to supporting local food. The vouchers are a legacy product of the program and will be used for future prizing.

Available in \$25 denominations with no expiry date, vouchers are redeemable at participating Feast On® certified restaurants.

On-boarding of venues is on-going and will continue into 2022. There is no additional cost for Feast On® Certified businesses to participate in the program.



The Future of the Great Taste of Ontario

We recognize that reopening does not mean recovery – especially for Ontario's tourism and hospitality sectors. That's why as recovery evolves, so does the Great Taste of Ontario.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

While travel sentiments were at an all time low, Ontarians were still hungry for local food and drink content from their communities. Interest in local food and independent businesses is at a record high.

Storytelling is a powerful vehicle for connecting people to the destinations they visit (or plan to visit!).

As we tell more diverse stories, we're not always met with openness. Ontario's DMOs, their employees and storytellers at large, need to be provided with the right tools to navigate negative and prejudiced feedback.

Capacity remains an on-going issue for tourism and hospitality businesses, as well as DMOs, RTOs and Sector Organizations as their operations have altered during the pandemic.



Great Taste of Ontario 2.0

We're keen to relaunch the program in April 2022.
Partnership pricing is based on your annual budget.

Organizations with an annual budget under \$1.5 million per year

\$4000.00+hst

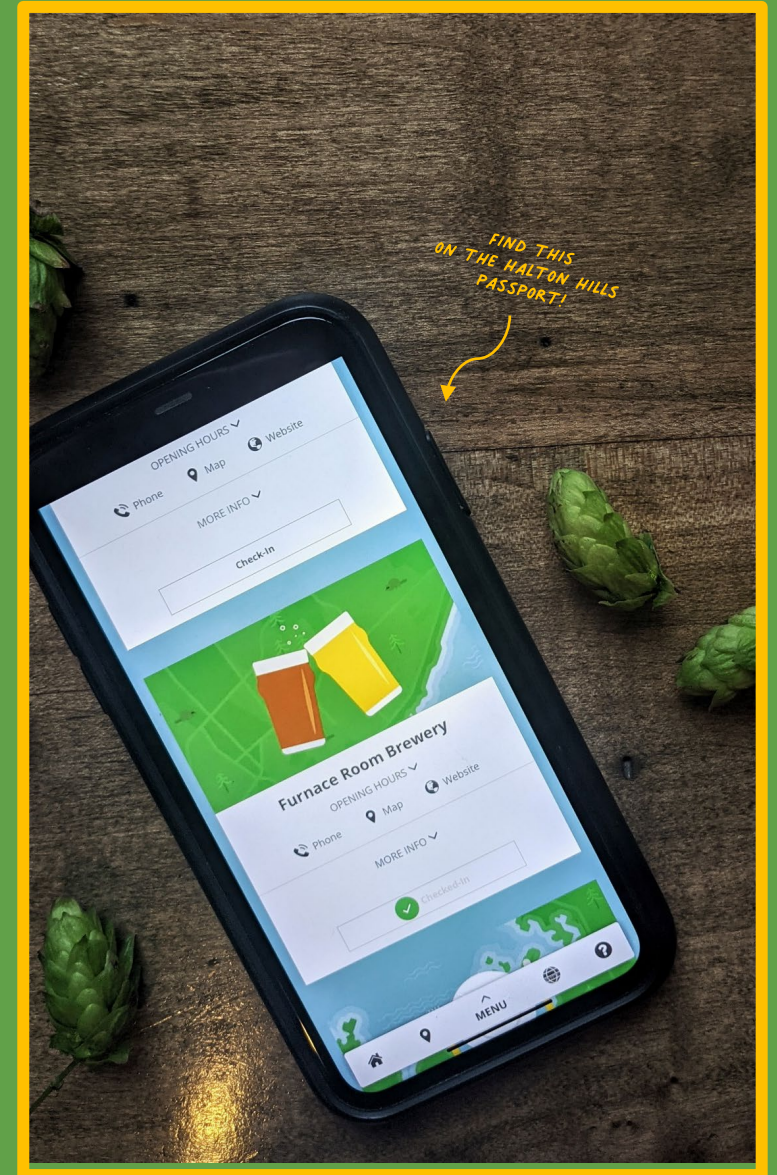
Organizations with an annual budget between \$1.5 - \$2.5 million per year

\$8000.00+hst

Organizations with an annual budget over \$2.5 million per year

\$16,000+hst

There are a number of RTO partnership programs in the works to help with DMO participation as well.



Great Taste of Ontario 2.0

Partners in the **2022 program** will receive previous program benefits as well as these new additions:

- Consumer loyalty redemption prizes for \$25 Feast On gift vouchers. These prizes give back to the restaurant industry.
- Photos added to all Bandwango passport business listings to enhance experience for the user.
- Continued opportunity to submit or commission content to be published on OntarioCulinary.com to inspire passport downloads.
- Seasonal contesting to continue to provide value adds for industry (not discounts).
- Guaranteed mention of each participating region in one of four Great Taste of Ontario Special Reports created in partnership with the Globe & Mail to ensure more diverse stories are told.
- Access to all brand assets including custom fonts, iconography, logos and photography and video through the new media hub



Thanks for reading!