

tourism
calgary



2021 Annual Report

We acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). We also acknowledge that this territory is home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.



We work, play, and reside on this sacred gathering place known as Moh'kinsstis, which today we refer to as the City of Calgary.

Year in review



As we look back at 2021, we are grateful to have gone through it all and come out the other side with our resilient partners and a tourism community that stands together. Despite the challenges, which were many with constant ebbs and flows, Calgary's community spirit shone through. We found a way to navigate the waves and deliver experiences in new and creative ways. As a result, we can be proud of the success stories that emerged in the midst of chaos.



Calgary hosted two major sport bubbles which boosted our visitor economy in a time of dire need. At the same time, these events showcased Calgary as an ultimate host city, full of ultimate hosts. In 2021, a new winter festival took shape in the form of Chinook Blast, creating outdoor spaces for Calgarians to have fun while exploring the city and embracing winter. In the summer of 2021, The Calgary Stampede returned, employing thousands of frontline employees and bravely becoming Canada's first large scale event since the start of the pandemic.

These hosting and event successes did not go unnoticed. They helped put Calgary at the forefront of destinations ready to welcome back visitors and demonstrated that we were a city actively trying to revive its visitor economy. With Calgary in the spotlight, we set the stage as Tourism Calgary pushed down the road of our [Covid-19 Response & Recovery Plan](#) – toward recovery and a restart for our visitor economy.

Cindy Ady, CEO
Tourism Calgary



Resilience

Tourism Calgary never stopped supporting its industry partners and the tourism community. In April 2021, fewer than 40 per cent of our industry partners were open. Given the circumstances, it was especially important to stay connected and strong. As a show of support for the second consecutive year, Tourism Calgary waived partnership dues.

As 2021 moved on, we pushed toward the recovery piece of our Covid-19 Plan and what that could look like for our industry. We put the focus on building a strong and resilient foundation for the future; one that drives business and enhances the visitor economy.

Calgary has big milestones on the horizon, with: the realization of the Culture & Entertainment District, including the BMO Centre expansion opening in 2024; and the advancement of Calgary's Downtown Strategy, including the Glenbow and Arts Commons expansions.

Building a resilient foundation means preparing for **growth**, and **ultimately** being well-positioned for **the future**.

With that in mind, we created the Destination Experience and Services team at Tourism Calgary. Destination Experience and Services is comprised of six business units: Visitor Experience, Frontline and Visitor Engagement, Events and Hosting, Event Services, FAMs & Site Visits and Partner Engagement.

This group is focussed on activating our community and ensuring that Calgary's community spirit shines through in everything we do. The primary objective for this department is to provide exceptional service to our customers and their audiences – ultimately creating more referrals for our destination. Creating this new department ensures that as business comes back, we have the tools and team in place to engage directly with visitors, meeting planners, events right holders and their audiences, referring and promoting Calgary tourism providers and experiences.



Creativity

Digital Pilot

Seeing the need to do things creatively, in 2021 we launched a digital pilot with the support of the Alberta government. We created a range of new tools and resources to enhance the customer journey from end-to-end, showcasing Calgary as an Ultimate Host City.

New programs included:

- a centralized visitor hub
- 7-day a week Live Chat concierge service (during the summer)
- a bricks-to-clicks strategy utilizing QR codes at high traffic areas throughout the city

2021 Key Highlights

As activators, Destination Experience and Services leverages its digital platforms like our virtual concierge, to provide personalized trip planning advice for Calgarians hosting out of town guests, and travellers considering a trip to our city. We also drive incremental spend and exploration in-market, with a focus on creating shareable moments.

Birth of a Festival

We could not have been happier with the inaugural celebration of Chinook Blast. Tourism Calgary is proud to have played key role in creating this new winter festival, which provided an opportunity for the community to embrace winter and show that Calgary spirit.

What better way to give winter a boost, than with the only festival held during a pandemic lock down. Chinook blast offered a safe, fun, outdoor experience which attracted more than 390,000 people. The energy will continue to grow as we make Chinook Blast a permanent winter festival that will expand and flourish in future years.

Chinook Blast 2021 Key Highlights

- 10 founding civic partners
- Featured 120+ local artists
- 50+ local businesses supported operations, logistics, programs & marketing
- 100% LOCAL partnerships and volunteers

 **WATCH THE VIDEO**

<https://youtu.be/oBhguZOFhOg>

Sport Bubbles

If we wanted to host events, we had to get creative – so we created safe bubbles for world-class sporting events.

Calgary hosted two major bubbles in 2021:

- the 3-month Curling Bubble, and
- the IIHF Women's World Hockey Championships

The two sport bubbles helped to deliver 21 total hosted events with a combined economic impact of \$75 million dollars on the local economy.

- The event broadcasts showcased Calgary to millions of domestic viewers.





Recovery

Building a solid foundation for growth has prepared us for the recovery of our visitor economy – and we are looking forward to roaring back to business. 2021 showed the power of never giving up and leveraging whatever strengths we could find. We continued campaigns to available target markets to generate demand from locals and national visitors as restrictions permitted – and we set ourselves up for the future.

Staying Connected Around the Globe

In 2021, Tourism Calgary's Travel Trade team

- participated in 10 virtual tradeshows in Europe, Asia, Australia, the U.S., Mexico and Canada
- engaged with travel agents globally by conducting virtual trainings throughout the year
- continued to activate in our primary markets of the U.S., UK, Germany and France; as well as in our secondary markets of Australia and Mexico and tertiary Asian markets

20 tour operators committed to joint marketing activities with Tourism Calgary in 2021 moved the funds to launch and execute in 2022.



Sport, Culture & Major Events

While Calgary led Canada in hosting events in 2021, the Sport and Major Event team also had a very strong year selling future events. Building on the reputation of a welcoming host city, the team was able to secure 46 events (for the year and future years).

2021 Key Highlights

- Projected economic impact \$123 million
- ROI 37:1

Meetings & Conventions

In 2021, the Meetings sector was very slow with corporate travel restrictions remaining a significant barrier for in-person events. The sales team continued to push hard in marketing Calgary to a global network of meeting planners, corporations, and associations to attract and secure large conferences that bring significant economic impact to the city. Sales were strong in a challenging time, with 52 events secured, the majority for future years.

2021 Key Highlights

- Projected economic impact \$45.7 million
- ROI 43:1



Recovery



Return of an Icon

Tourism Calgary was proud to support the return of our largest partner in 2021 – The Calgary Stampede. Providing a much-needed boost to the visitor economy, the Calgary Stampede marked Canada’s first large-scale event since the start of the pandemic.

2021 Key Highlights

- 65,000 room nights sold during Stampede
- Non – local attendance 30% (up from 19% in 2019)
- First time visitors 23% (up from 7% in 2019)

A Win-Win Partnership

We are proud to work closely with our partners and collaborate to find ways to leverage our strengths and lift each other up. Effective fall 2021, SAIT began including Tourism Calgary’s online destination learning program – the White Hat Academy, as a mandatory component in its Travel and Tourism Hospitality program. With a growing audience of international students, the White Hat Academy is the ideal platform to showcase the wide range of experiences available in Calgary.

2021 Key Highlights

- Even in the midst of a pandemic, 2021 saw 200 people graduate from our White Hat Academy – becoming certified ambassadors for our city.





Together

Our longer-term destination strategy propels us forward with a commitment to being Ultimate Hosts in the Ultimate Host City. Together we made it through 2021, true to our Calgary spirit, and managed to showcase our city's hosting capabilities nationally and around the globe.

With the expansion of the BMO Centre, Calgary will have the largest convention facility in Western Canada and second largest in the country. Along with the TELUS Convention Centre downtown, we are positioned to attract an impressive mix of large meetings and conventions to our city – and we already see that business returning.

High-profile sporting and other major events are already on the books, and our proven hosting ability is a valuable asset as we attract these types of events with significant economic impact for our community.



Calgary has a lot to **look forward to**, and **Tourism Calgary partners** are ready to welcome guests and visitors – regardless of why they're here – with a **show of warm hospitality, outstanding service, and memorable experiences.**

That's the **spirit**, Calgary!

That's
the
Spirit

The background consists of several overlapping, wavy, organic shapes in various shades of blue, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors range from a light, airy blue to a deeper, more saturated blue.

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