

TORONTO, MONTREAL AND OTTAWA JOIN TOGETHER FOR TRI-CITY TOURISM PUSH

City Friends with Benefits is a first-of-its-kind campaign reviving the excitement of city escapes

TORONTO, August 27, 2021 – Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa have set their friendly rivalries aside to create a new campaign aimed at reviving the excitement of travelling to three of Canada’s largest and most vibrant cities. The new campaign, ***City Friends with Benefits***, comes from Ottawa Tourism, Tourisme Montréal and Destination Toronto – the Destination Marketing Organizations for each respective city – marking the first time the three organizations have worked collectively on a campaign. The invitation to visit comes as the tourism industry and urban destinations begin the slow recovery process after nearly two years of impact from COVID restrictions.

City Friends with Benefits is an invitation for travellers from each city to escape their home town and visit the other cities. The campaign is a playful and cheeky take on the notion of “friends with benefits,” purposely light-hearted in contrast to the isolation and confinement over the course of the pandemic.

Anchoring the campaign is the release of a new song - [The City Friends with Benefits Song \(Escape\)](#). The track is a re-write and reworking of the iconic and undeniably catchy “Escape (The Pina Colada Song)” featuring all-Canadian talent that entices residents to plan their next city escape. The tongue-in-cheek single comes with a newly-produced video that captures the spirit, vibe and personality of each city while simultaneously being self-aware of the playful relationship between the destinations, and being stuck at home during the pandemic.

“This is an unprecedented campaign for an unprecedented time. *City Friends with Benefits* is an escape from the norm at a time when *escaping* is top of mind for all of us,” said Scott Beck, President and CEO, Destination Toronto. “We’re ecstatic to welcome back visitors from Ottawa and Montreal, and I know so many of us in Toronto can’t wait to visit those great cities. We couldn’t ask for two better destinations to be our ‘friends with benefits.’”

Adding incentive for locals to escape to the nearby cities are travel offers from Air Canada and VIA Rail, both offering 20 percent off travel between the three destinations.

“Now is the best time to team up and showcase what our cities have in common,” said Yves Lalumière, President and CEO of Tourisme Montréal. “With this innovative campaign, we are excited to share all the experiences we have to offer with people of Ottawa and Toronto. We know how to bring out the best of Montréal and can’t wait for you to see it.”

The integrated *City Friends with Benefits* campaign includes media channels such as Instagram, Facebook, digital and out-of-home advertising, as well as Spotify, TikTok and YouTube - a unique strategy for a tourism campaign, relying on music industry marketing best practices for a track and video launch.

“The friendship along the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal corridor is real, though the ability to catch up in person has been challenged by the pandemic,” said Michael Crockatt, President and CEO of Ottawa Tourism. “If you’re looking for an escape from your day-to-day, or a fun flirtation with another urban centre, this campaign will provide all the temptation you need!”

To find out more about the campaign, visit the dedicated campaign site, CityFriendsWithBenefits.ca.

ABOUT OTTAWA TOURISM

[Ottawa Tourism](#) provides destination development and marketing, strategic direction, and leadership in cooperation with its members and partners, welcoming leisure travellers, business travellers, group tours, and conventions to Ottawa and Canada's Capital Region. Its goal is to support the local tourism economy, fueled by an estimated 11 million visitors annually in recent years and with \$3 billion in typical economic output for Ottawa, generating community wealth through tourism. Ottawa Tourism's vision is to offer the complete capital experience, tell the story of Canada, and get people talking.

ABOUT TOURISME MONTRÉAL

Tourisme Montréal is a 100-year-old private, non-profit organization that works to position Montréal as an international-calibre leisure and business travel destination. Uniting nearly 1,000 businesses and organizations working directly or indirectly in tourism, Tourisme Montréal plays a leading role in the management and development of Montréal's tourism business, and makes recommendations on issues surrounding the city's economic, urban and cultural development. For more information, go to www.mtl.org.

ABOUT DESTINATION TORONTO

Toronto's visitor economy is a vital economic engine for the city, generating more than \$10 billion in economic activity and supporting 70,000 jobs in 2019. Destination Toronto's mandate is to reflect the breadth and diversity of Toronto's people, places and culture to inspire residents and visitors to meet, visit and explore our city. Operating in partnership with the City of Toronto, the Greater Toronto Hotel Association and the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Destination Toronto markets and promotes the city to global travellers, attracts and supports major meetings and events, and supports local businesses to maximize the opportunities of visitor spending. For more information please visit DestinationToronto.com.

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