



# Sip & Savour

A Lanark County Tourism Association Project with support from Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization & the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport

This document is intended as a guiding document for the Lanark County Tourism Association, stakeholders, and tourism operators for the Lanark County Sip & Savour Trail.



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## Overview

The Lanark County Sip & Savour Trail is a Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA) program for visitors that will highlight the best that Lanark County has to offer in food and drink experiences, including (but not limited to): restaurants, breweries, distilleries, cideries, wineries, chocolateries, coffee roasters, farmers' markets, farms, specialty food stores, culinary courses, tours, hotels, bed and breakfasts, classes, inns, roadside stands, food trucks and more.

The Sip & Savour Trail will relay the story of the food and drink culture in Lanark County, sharing the story of the path food takes from farm to plate, along with the narratives of the people who make and sell food and drink experiences in the County. Any business offering a food or drink experience\* within Lanark County, including the Town of Smiths Falls, is invited to apply to participate in the program.

The trail is created in partnership with the Ontario Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), through the Tourism Development Partnership Program funding. The project fits with OHTO's strategy to support projects that create and enhance tourism offers and build a greater emotional connection with visitors, as well as increasing length of stay, per person spending and visitor satisfaction.

*\*for the purpose of this project, a food and drink experience is defined as an experience in which visitors can learn about, participate in, or consume food and drink that reflects the local heritage and culture of Lanark County.*

## Trail Vision

The vision for the Sip & Savour Trail is a comprehensive trail that will make it easier for visitors to experience and learn more about the food and drink culture in Lanark County. Administered by the Lanark County Tourism Association, the trail will be a one-stop-shop for visitors that will assist the visitor in the following ways:

1. Make it easier for them to identify culinary tourism offerings within Lanark County.
2. Provide all the relevant information needed for the visitor both during the trip planning process, and upon arrival.
3. Highlight the "best of the best" food and drink experiences in Lanark County.
4. Give the visitor a sense of confidence that the selection has been previously vetted and the reassurance the experience will be a positive one.
5. Create an exclusive feel for visitors, and the impression that they are being invited to share in the edible secrets of Lanark County.

The goal is also to provide a platform for visitors with information on overnight accommodations and other experiences that will create a well-rounded visit to Lanark County. This will contribute to the overall goal of increasing visitor spending and encouraging overnight visits to the region since it will link the culinary experiences with places to stay and encourage more spending.

*To support our vision of the trail as the best of the best of food and drink experiences in Lanark County, we will be targeting businesses that have something unique to offer the visitor, from a food and drink perspective. This will help to set the Sip & Savour Trail apart as an elite and desirable forum for the visitor to experience something unique to Lanark County.*

The value for participating businesses is three-fold: Firstly, it provides businesses with a marketing tool previously unavailable to them; secondly, it provides them with the opportunity to partner and engage

with other likeminded businesses owners in the region; and thirdly, it elevates their offerings by providing a pre-vetted experience for customers, creating an exclusive feel for the visitor.

The Sip & Savour Trail will be presented to visitors through both online and through printed marketing materials. Through the stakeholder engagement process of the Sip & Savour Trail development, online materials were identified as a necessity to provide the visitor with the information needed during the trip planning process.

According to market analysis by TAMS, in 2006, 78 per cent of Canadian travellers consulted a website during the trip planning stage. Since that time, there has been a digital revolution and internet usage has massively increased, which would make the number of visitors who turn to a website in the first stages of trip planning even more statistically relevant.

Further, an effectively presented online presence is also important in order to engage with the younger and more internet-friendly visitor who looks to the internet as their primary (and often sole) source of information for trip planning and traveling.

Conversely, also identified in the stakeholder engagement process was the need for printed marketing materials that will target the visitors who have arrived in the region and are wondering what food and drink experiences are available to them. This will also garner opportunistic interest from the visitor who hadn't planned on a food and drink experience prior to their arrival to the region, but who, with the resources in hand may decide to alter their travel plans.

Printed marketing materials will give stakeholders a physical product to hand to visitors that will help them to navigate and orient themselves in the region, and also provide an opportunity for interaction with food and drink destinations.

#### *Trail Branding*

The trail will be branded with an eye towards a fresh, progressive look that has an enduring style not likely to quickly become outdated. The trail will be marketed online through social media forums, and printed material will be distributed through the designated business and tourism destinations within the County.

Participating businesses should feel they are receiving a beneficial and exclusive service to support their needs. For viability from the LCTA's perspective as well as the visitor's perspective, the trail should have a minimum of 15-20 destinations on the trail.

The following defines the vision of what the completed trail will look like for the visitor, as presented through both the website and printed materials:

#### *Website Branding:*

The website, tentatively registered as [www.ediblelanark.ca](http://www.ediblelanark.ca) will be developed by a professional website designer with experience in creating integrated mapping on websites. The website will be geared to cater to:

- a) Visitors looking to follow a mapped trail, choosing where to enter and exit the trail.
- b) Visitors looking for a thematic experience, ie. Brewery or craft alcohol only, or foodie experiences only.

- c) Visitors looking for food and drink options within a specific region (ie. Mississippi Mills, Carleton Place, Perth, Smiths Falls, etc.).

The vision for the website will include:

- A single, comprehensive trail that visitors can choose where to enter and depart, according to their time constraints, with mapping showing all destinations. The mapping will have the option of filtering to show only certain destinations, such as:
  - Farmgates;
  - Farmers' Markets;
  - Restaurants;
  - Coffee Roasters/Tea Rooms/Cafés;
  - Chocolateries;
  - Breweries/Distilleries etc.; and,
  - Artisan Food Producers.
- Regional mapping that separates the regions of Lanark County by municipality, detailing where food and drink experiences are found. This will allow the visitor to follow the trail based on their destination.
- A limited selection of proposed thematic routes that will focus on a theme but with additional information/destinations that would be relevant for the visitor. This would allow the visitor to choose the route/tour that would most appeal to their particular interests/tourism style. This component of the trail may roll out in Phase 2 of the project, once participation has been determined. Routes could be tentatively themed (dependant on qualifying trail participants) as:
  - Chocolate Lovers Tour (focus on chocolateries destinations);
  - Booze and Brews Tour (breweries, distilleries, cideries);
  - Mmmple Tour (maple destinations, not just sugarbushes, but also destinations that carry maple inspired dishes/products) \*Lanark County Maple Routes as guide;
  - Locally Yours Tour (dining destinations with a focus on using local ingredients);
  - Sweets and Treats Tour (ice cream, dessert, candies, bakeries);
  - Eat 'n Play Tour (for the outdoor adventure lover, could be focused only on cycling, paddling, golf);
  - Of Yore Tour (historical experiences and food and drink experiences that highlight these); and,
  - Art Lovers Tour (for art lovers, including plays and dramatic performances/tours with food and drink experiences that are nearby/compatible).
- A blog component to share stories about food and drink experiences along the trail.
- Storytelling of the businesses, business owners, and their role/significance in the Lanark County food and drink culture.
- A section with information on accommodations/packaging opportunities.
- Information on gathering places near participating businesses to provide a fully rounded experience for the visitor (ie. parks/museums).

#### *Marketing Materials:*

The trail will also include printed marketing materials that can be distributed from trail destinations and tourism centres in Lanark County. The marketing materials will feature a single, comprehensive map

identifying all the Sip & Savour Trail destinations in Lanark County, with a listing of the destinations that includes: business name, address, contact information, website, and identifiers describing what experiences can be found at that location.

### *Criteria for Inclusion*

Applications to the Sip & Savour Trail will be juried by a committee of no less than three and a maximum of five stakeholders, including a minimum of one representative from LCTA, one representative from Lanark County, and one LCTA tourism operator currently in good standing.

To be eligible, operators must:

1. Be a member of the Lanark County Tourism Association in good standing for the years 2019-2021, payment due in advance. (Please note additional marketing fees may apply)
2. Be located in Lanark County (within the municipalities of Beckwith, Carleton Place, Drummond North Elmsley, Lanark Highlands, Mississippi Mills, Montague, Perth, Tay Valley and Smiths Falls).
3. Present offerings that appeal to the visitor as a food and drink tourism experience\*(as defined by the LCTA).
4. Offer the featured experience as described for a minimum of three years to coincide with the promotion.
5. Participate in the promotional efforts and programs (detailed below in Deliverables).
6. Have regular hours that can be relayed to the visitor.
7. Have a Tripadvisor presence which is active and in good standing.

Applications to be part of the Sip & Savour Trail for accommodations or attractions will require different criteria for eligibility. Accommodations wishing to be part of the trail will be required to either:

1. Offer a food and drink experience through their establishment (ie. Hotel restaurant/bar/lounge etc.), OR
2. Have partnered with a food and drink destination also on the trail to create a package opportunity.

Intake for all applications will take place beginning in November 2018, with the program rolling out to the public in June 2019. The program will span from January 2019 to January 2022, at which point there will be an opportunity for new applications to be received and processed for another three-year term.

Applications can be accepted once the program has been rolled out, however any destinations added to the trail will be added on a quarterly basis, and won't be added to the printed marketing materials until the program is renewed in January 2022.

Food-centred events and tours will also be able to apply for inclusion on the tour. Additional fees and restrictions may apply.

## *Deliverables*

A project of this scope should have a clear understanding between all participating parties, including the LCTA who will deliver the program, and operators, as destinations on the trail. The commitments for both parties will be described in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into by the LCTA and participating operators, upon acceptance as a trail destination. A draft outline of the commitment contained in the MOU and entered into by both parties is listed below:

The LCTA will commit to:

- Sign the Sip & Savour Memorandum of Understanding;
- Develop the trail, as described;
- Providing a visual identifier for the business in the form of a sign or decal (additional costs may apply);
- Managing the online presence for the trail;
- Coordinate the printing of the trail marketing materials (additional costs may apply);
- Commit to a minimum three-year marketing campaign; and,
- Process applications for trail destinations.

The business owner will commit to:

- Sign the Sip & Savour Memorandum of Understanding;
- Maintain regular hours, as advertised on the website;
- Create a Sip & Savour signature dish on menu (for restaurants, cafes only);
- Promote trail to visitors;
- Distribute swag as needed;
- Engage with visitors for contests and promotions related to the trail;
- Communicate with, and educate staff about trail;
- Maintain the experience component identified on the trail for the three years of the program;
- Contribute to the Ultimate SAS Giveaway (see marketing); and,
- Be open to partnership opportunities to enhance the trail experience for visitors.

## *Key Milestones/Goals*

To ensure a successful program, there are certain key milestones or goals that must be achieved. They include:

- Finalize program guidelines/framework with partners (Fall 2018).
- Source participants (minimum 15-20, no maximum) (Winter 2018-19).
- Jury applications, finalize destinations for 2019-2022.
- Develop website/branding (Winter 2018).
- Develop marketing materials (Early 2019).
- Roll out marketing campaign summer 2019 (based on marketing plan) (May-June 2019).

## *Communication Plan*

Information relating to development and progress of the Sip & Savour Trail will be communicated to trail stakeholders, trail partners, trail destinations and LCTA members. Communication will include updates on the trail program development, and once the trail is active, on progress and performance measures.

Information will be relayed by the designated communication specialist for the Sip & Savour Trail program through:

- Newsletters;
- Email (lists generated from LCTA members and those who have indicated an interest in the program);
- Stakeholder and partner third-party dissemination;
- Local media (media releases, interviews);
- Social media (a designated closed-group Facebook page will be created); and,
- Annual Reporting.

## *Marketing Plan*

The marketing plan for the Sip & Savour Trail will specifically target the Ottawa and surrounding area market. The Rustic Roamer and Memory Maker Connected Explorer profiles, as defined by the OHTO, will be the intended audience for the trail.

The Rustic Roamer prefers to wander in and out of small towns, and enjoy authentic, unscripted, organic experiences. Their desired experiences include themed driving routes, micro-breweries, charming B&Bs, hidden gems and local hotspots, discovering small towns and local characters, and local eateries and cafes.

The Memory Maker, on the other hand, looks for experiences that can evolve into a time-honoured tradition they can enjoy again and again. Their experiences include frequenting the same places each season, and picture-perfect opportunities.

The Sip & Savour Trail will target these personality profiles for visitors between the ages of 18-54, within Ottawa and surrounding areas, and with the following interests:

- Food and drink;
- Travel; and,
- Outdoor activities.

### *Marketing Venues:*

The Sip & Savour Trail will be marketed through organic and paid online advertising venues, including:

- Paid social media campaign (including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter);
- Paid content marketing (through native content/advertorials); and,
- Organic content marketing (distribution of blog content through social media).

Marketing will roll out beginning in May 2019, and will continue until October 2019, at which point the effectiveness will be assessed before planning for the 2020 campaign. While visitation on the trail can

technically take place year-round, for the first three years of the program it's recommended that advertising be geared to the high tourism summer season only.

Organic advertising will take place through the partnership opportunities with participating businesses, expanding the LCTA's organic reach exponentially. By linking, or tagging, tourism organizations, businesses, and stakeholders, word of the Sip & Savour Trail will spread naturally, through unpaid channels.

Content marketing will take place through paid advertising channels like the Ottawa Citizen (Native Content) and Metroland Media (Advertorials). Content contained on the website blog can also be used to promote the trail; content will be created in-house through LCTA. In addition, content can be leveraged through OHTO and provincial tourism partners for a robust content marketing platform.

*Promotions:*

In addition, organic promotion can be enhanced through social media contests. One of those contests will be held on Instagram, and will encourage visitors of the trail to post their photos on Instagram, using a set hashtag. A winning photo will be selected each month of the photos posted within that time period, and they will receive Sip & Savour swag. Swag will include t-shirts, glasses, and hats.

An annual winner will be selected, based on the quality of the photo tagged in the previous year, and they will be named the winner of the "Ultimate SAS Giveaway," and will receive a complimentary stay at a local overnight accommodation, and various freebies from participating businesses. Total expected value of the SAS Giveaway should exceed \$500. The quality of the offerings will encourage visitors to take their best photos, and will help garner investment from the visitor, and also help to spread the word of the Sip & Savour Trail among the social media forums.

A passport program could be considered as a future promotional program, a promotion that would also assist in tracking usage of the trail.

**In order for the program to be viable, it's important that the businesses who take part offer a high quality of experience and service, and that there is a minimum of 15-20 participating businesses.**

## Appendix A: Draft Application

Business Name:

Contact Name:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

Type of business:

Hours of operation:

Do you have a Tripadvisor presence? Yes or No

Please provide a description of your proposed food and drink tourism experience:

*\*Please note that LCTA defines a food and drink experience as an experience in which visitors can learn about, participate in, or consume food and drink that reflects the local heritage and culture of Lanark County.*

Please explain what your experience will offer visitors, and how it is unique. How will the visitor benefit? How will the trail benefit from its inclusion?

For restaurants/eateries, please provide a name and description of the Sip & Savour Trail menu item that will be featured by your business (photo will be required at a later date).

For accommodations, please outline the food and drink experience you will be offering and/or the food and drink destination with whom you will be partnering for the duration of the Sip & Savour Trail 2019-2021.

Please sign and date your application. Please note that if your application is accepted you will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between your business and LCTA, defining the mutual responsibilities of each party.

Signature:

Role/Responsibility:

Date:

*Appendix B: Draft Memorandum of Understanding*  
To be created, based on feedback from partners/stakeholders.

