

THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL

## A SENSE of PLACE

INDIGENOUS-OWNED *travel*  
companies offer a more meaningful  
way to SEE the WORLD

On a crisp spring day at Sydney Harbor, a tour guide directed her clients to gaze not at the white sails of Sydney Opera House but in the opposite direction, to the land where the city's lush Royal Botanic Garden is located. That is the spot, she explained, where the Eora people (the name for coastal Aboriginal clans who settled in and around Sydney) first spotted British ships in 1788. Their arrival began the erasure of a 65,000-year-old civilization, the oldest living culture in the world. For the clients of **Dreamtime Southern X**, this recent tour was a fascinating look at Sydney, shown through the eyes of Australia's first residents.

Founded by Djungutti-Djirringanj elder Margret Campbell in 1993, Dreamtime Southern X is one of the country's first travel companies to be wholly owned and operated by Indigenous people. It offers meaningful, historically accurate tours that talk about the importance of kinship systems and the devastating impact of colonialism on Aboriginal culture and community. Campbell has inspired many similar businesses throughout Australia, including Wajaana Yaam Adventure Tours, an ecotourism company that leads stand-up paddle-boarding expeditions around idyllic Coffs Harbour, and Explore Byron Bay, which offers experiences in the popular surf destination and its surrounding areas.

The Northern Hemisphere is also seeing a boom in Indigenous-focused tours. "There is a reckoning with the past here in North America, and it's time for people to learn and understand [this] history," says Marc Telio, founder of the Vancouver-based Entrée Destinations, which recently partnered with Destination Canada to create 20 itineraries called the Stories of Canada, many of which highlight Indigenous perspectives. One such experience includes sleeping under the stars in dome-shaped tents with clear ceilings at Métis Crossing, a cultural center on the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta. In 2018, Michela Carrière, a Cree-Métis writer and herbalist, founded **Aski Holistic Adventures**, which is based at Big Eddy Lodge in the wilds of Saskatchewan. Located at a traditional Cree fishing spot, the lodge was built in the 1940s by Carrière's grandfather and is now home base for her camping retreats.

Last spring, the nonprofit **Visit California** launched an online hub that showcases more than 600 cultural sites, events, and Indigenous-owned companies. From the Yurok tribe alone, there are fishing guides such as Pergish Carlson of Blue Creek Guide Service, as well as river trips in traditional dugout canoes, like Redwood Yurok Canoe Tours. These experiences, says Carrière, allow travelers to feel more connected to the world and to themselves. "What you experience on a canoe trip or a snowshoeing adventure, immersed in the outdoors and learning about Indigenous beliefs, is transforming," she says. "Nature and knowledge are healing." HB

From top: Margret Campbell of Dreamtime Southern X teaching Aboriginal history and performing a smoking ceremony in Sydney; Michela Carrière of Aski Holistic Adventures in Saskatchewan; a guest cabin at Aski Holistic Adventures; Redwood Yurok Canoe Tours on California's Klamath River; on the Shadow of the Me-Wuk Trail in Tuolumne County, California

