

# OUR STORY

## OKI!

Welcome to the beautiful prairies that we, the Niitsitapi, *the real people*, have called home since time immemorial. We offer you the opportunity to get to know our people, explore our land, and to live and enjoy unique cultural experiences. Our territory is vast and spans from the great prairies to the mountains. It has been our ancestral home for thousands of years which reaches beyond the eastern mountain slopes in Montana and Alberta across to Saskatchewan's Great Sand Hills, and vertically across Alberta and Saskatchewan from the North Saskatchewan River down to Montana's Yellowstone River. The Blackfoot Confederacy, also known as Siksikaitsitapi, is made up of four Nations: Kainai/Blood Tribe, Siksika (Blackfoot), Piikani (North Peigan), and Aamskapi Pikuni (South Peigan/Blackfeet).

The map you hold in your hands has been produced using a grassroots and collaborative approach that recognizes and supports our four Nations' entrepreneurs, artists, businesses, chefs, and cultural & historic sites. As you travel our region, you can use this map to guide you through the land and sites with a Blackfoot perspective. Whether you are starting in Calgary and heading west into the mountains, seeking a prairie adventure in Southern Alberta, or heading into Waterton Lakes and Glacier National Parks, we encourage you to explore our land, create meaningful experiences, listen to our stories, and immerse yourself in our rich and vibrant culture. Discover why we are proud to call this region home.

# OUR LAND

## WHERE THE PRAIRIES MEET THE MOUNTAINS

We are blessed to live on such beautiful lands that include awe-inspiring natural features like mountains, foothills, badlands, rivers, and lakes. As you explore our region, we ask of you to respect our sacred sites and apply 'leave no trace' principles to help us further protect and preserve our lands for the next generations.

The UNESCO-designated Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park is a powerful place for our people, a sacred site that has petroglyphs over 3,000 years old on sandstone hoodoos, which stand out amongst the natural beauty of the Milk River that flows through the park.

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site is another important UNESCO attraction, as it is not only a place where the prairies and mountains begin to meet to form a 33-foot-high cliff jump, but is also a place that sustained our people for thousands of years as a vital buffalo harvesting site. It should be noted that while both of these UNESCO World Heritage Sites are comprised of Blackfoot culture and history, they are not owned or managed by Siksikaitsitapi.

Moving into the mountainous region of our lands, you will pass through the gateway known as Waterton Lakes National Park, which promises stunning landscapes, like the famous Red Rock Canyon, and brilliant blue lakes. Bordering Waterton is Glacier National Park that crosses over the medicine line (the Canada/USA border) into the United States of America, where visitors can drive the Going-to-the-Sun Road for beautiful vista views and take in the natural marvels of the glaciers. On the border of Glacier National Park, you can find another Blackfoot sacred site, Ninaistako, also known as Chief Mountain. Chief Mountain is a geological phenomenon that has a rapid 5,000 altitude gain and is visible for miles around.

# OUR CULTURE

## SHARING THE BLACKFOOT SPIRIT

The Blackfoot people, known affectionately as the Children of the Plains, have a multitude of cultural aspects and ways of being that are intricately connected to the land. Our culture is a rich tapestry woven from thousands of years of traditions, spirituality, and connection with the land that has been passed onto those who are here now.

Come and learn the real story and cultural traditions of our people through inter-cultural events, like annual powwows hosted in each Nation in the spring and summer months, where travelers can witness a communal celebration of singing, drumming, and dancing by some of the most talented of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

Bear witness to Canada's own "Stonehenge" at the Majorville Medicine Wheel (Iniskim Umaapi), a significant Blackfoot site consisting of a rock cairn that dates back 4,500 years. Are you interested in games? Visitors of all ages can take part in a fast-paced and exciting competition known as Handgames, which tests skills of observation, teamwork, and intuition.

We invite you to immerse yourself in our Blackfoot lifestyle and learn our culture and traditions, however we ask you to offer respect, gratitude, and kindness. Some of our sacred sites are only for our Blackfoot Confederacy members. If you are unsure, always ask and we will kindly share information and what is available for visitors.

# OUR EXPERIENCE

## UNIQUELY BLACKFOOT

Visitors touring the Blackfoot Confederacy will have the privilege of learning and seeing first-hand the beauty and uniqueness of our Blackfoot culture, art, history, and skills. The vastness and diversity of our region means that travellers have the chance to experience the mountains, the prairies, and the badlands from a Blackfoot perspective. There are a multitude of sites and experiences that are immersive, experiential, and fun for all travelers interested in understanding the intricacies of the current and historic ways of life of the Blackfoot.

Get to know the prairies by spending a night at one of our tipi camps, with the opportunity to learn traditional games, pick medicine, and have a fireside chat with an Elder. Step back in time with a visit to ancient tipi rings, historical places that tell the story of how the Blackfoot lifestyle and worldview was shaped by following the buffalo's migrations. Explore the mountains with our engaging Blackfeet guides, who will not only take you to some of the most breath-taking views, but can also give priceless insights into the Blackfoot relationship, histories, and stories of the flora, fauna, and mountains.

Don't forget to stop by our Blackfoot owned and run shops, throughout our region to take home one-of-a-kind gifts of art, jewelry, and clothing for friends and family! Visiting our cultural centres such as Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, Blackfeet Heritage Center & Art Gallery, and Paahotmahksikimi Cultural Centre, is also an excellent way to read and reflect on the history and culture of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

On our maps you will find custom symbols that highlight our attractions, tourism experiences, places of interest, and Blackfoot-owned businesses for a truly unique Blackfoot experience!

# THE BLACKFOOT HAVE BEEN PLACED ON THIS TERRITORY BY CREATOR AND TRAVELED THROUGH THEIR TERRITORY WITH PURPOSE AND INTENT.

THE BLACKFOOT PEOPLE FOLLOWED A SEASONAL ROUND CALENDAR AND MAINTAINED DEEP CONNECTIONS WITH ALL LIVING BEINGS. THE BLACKFOOT PEOPLE UTILIZED THE DIVERSE OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THEIR EXTENSIVE TERRITORY. WHILE EACH NATION IS UNIQUE, THEY SHARE HISTORY, STORIES, WAYS OF LIFE AND ARE ALL ROOTED IN A STRONG FOUNDATION OF CULTURAL VALUES AND LANGUAGE.

# SIKSIKA NATION

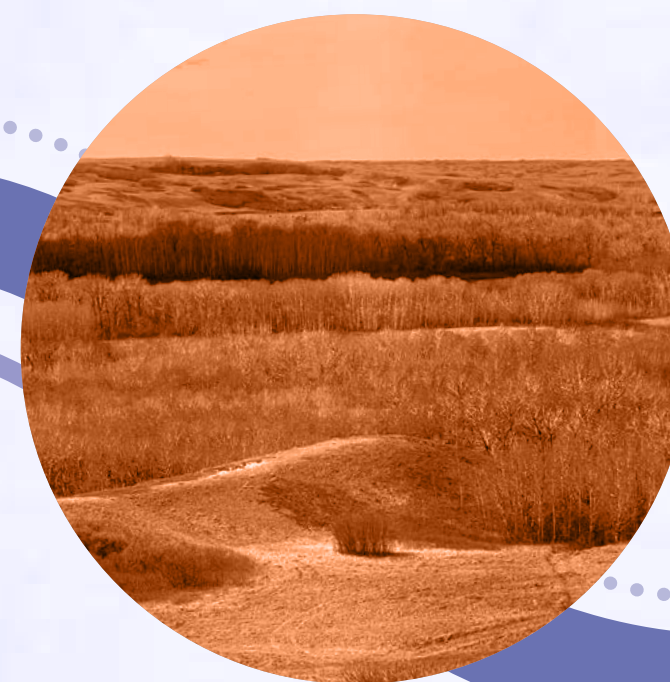
## A MIX OF ART, HISTORY, & PRAIRIE LIFE

Oki Niksokowaiks - Welcome to Siksika, situated on the spectacular prairie land of Southern Alberta which boasts rolling hills, beautiful skylines, and a vast array of flora and fauna. Visitors will have a chance to explore and connect with the land through activities like fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. There are also many opportunities to learn about Niitsitapi culture through powwows, Sundance (Okani), rodeos, and at beautiful cultural centres, like Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, the historic site of the signing of Treaty No.7.

### EXPERIENCES:

- Visit the iconic Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park
- Partake in engaging cultural and land-based experience with our knowledgeable guides
- Horseback ride through our beautiful landscape
- Experience the mighty Bow River and the ancient Badlands
- Shop for a unique souvenir by supporting our local artists specializing in unique clothing brands, jewellery, beading, blankets, and more

Siksika Nation is located one-hour's drive east from the city of Calgary, and three kilometres south of the Trans-Canada Highway 1.



# PIIKANI NATION

## PIIKANISSINI – OUR WAY OF LIFE

Experience Piikanissini, the way of life of the Piikani, which sets out the inherent values and principles of the Akaa Piikani, the ancient Piikani people. Our people maintain a close working relationship with the land from ranching to agriculture, as well as spiritual and recreational activities. Piikani has a landmass of over 46,000 hectares of territory and the Nation was geographically divided by the creation of the medicine line (CAN/USA border) into North Piikani and South Piikani. The Piikani are actively maintaining our unique language, spirituality, and culture as a people. Piikani is a great stop on your adventure to Waterton Lakes National Park.

### EXPERIENCES:

- Sleep under the stars in an authentic tipi and participate in rich cultural experiences at our Tipi Camps
- Discover our ancient tipi rings
- Learn about plant medicines
- Support our talented artists
- Partake in our local events and festivals

Piikani Nation is located about a one-hour drive west from Lethbridge along Highway 3, or a two-hour drive south of Calgary along Highway 2.



# KAINAI NATION/ BLOOD TRIBE

## A BALANCED WAY OF LIFE

Historically, Kainai had territory which stretched beyond the Rocky Mountains all the way to the Great Sandhills in present-day Saskatchewan. Today, Kainai is the largest reserve in Canada with many of its members living on-reserve. Kainai is home to a variety of talented artists and chefs providing visitors with tasty bites and unique shopping opportunities. From community gardens to wagon rides to beautiful cultural centres to rodeos and storytelling experiences, Kainai has something to offer for everyone. Kainai is another great stop on your adventure to Waterton Lakes National Park.

### EXPERIENCES:

- Connect with the spirit of Waterton at the Paahotmahksikimi Cultural Centre
- Have a unique cultural experience while partaking in a wagon ride across our beautiful landscape
- Hike and explore the Kananaskis region while learning about the Blackfoot history and culture
- Participate in hands-on workshops including hide tanning and drum making
- Request a visit at our community garden and learn how the Kainai value and live in a clean, healthy, and protected environment
- Book a dinner or host an event by supporting our local chefs

Kainai Nation is located about a 40-minute drive southwest from Lethbridge, or a two-hour drive south of Calgary along Highway 2.



# AAMSKAPI PIKUNI NATION

## THE PLACE WHERE WE GET OUR FOOD

Aamskapi Pikuni, also known as the Blackfeet or Southern Peigan, reside in Montana, with 1.5 million acres of territory. The people of Aamskapi Pikuni describe the area as "the place where we get our food. This territory contains over 50% of the natural biodiversity left in the state. Our Nation has an abundance of natural resources, including forestlands, oil and gas reserves, and is home to many species of fish and wildlife. It is a summer and winter playground of hiking, camping, boating, fishing, hunting, and much more. In the reservation's town of Browning, visitors can experience and support a wide range of local businesses, including accommodations, heritage centres, museums, galleries, restaurants, shops, and more. To become immersed in the local culture, the ideal time to visit is during the annual North American Indian Days celebration which is held in Browning the second weekend in July, or Heart Butte Indian Days the second weekend in August. Aamskapi Pikuni provides an excellent gateway to access Glacier National Park.

### EXPERIENCES:

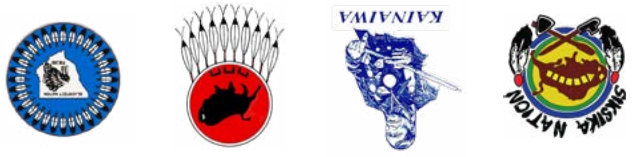
- Be in awe of the mighty Chief Mountain, known as Ninaistako
- Partake in a unique experience with a renowned Blackfeet interpretive tour company
- Explore Glacier National Park with one of our talented cultural guides
- Stay in one of our many lodgings that cater to all types of travelers
- Sample an espresso at one of our cafes in Browning or Babb
- Shop local and support our artists and food vendors at the People's Market at the Bison Creek Ranch

Aamskapi Pikuni Nation is located about a 1.5-hour drive south from Kainai, and is only 35 minutes from Glacier National Park.

NINASTAKO OR CHIEF MOUNTAIN IN ENGLISH, IS KNOWN AS THE BACKBONE OF THE WORLD, AS ATOP THE MOUNTAIN, THE WHOLE ROCKY MOUNTAIN EAST SLOPES ARE VISIBLE. ACCORDING TO BLACKFOOT STORY, NINASTAKO IS THE HOME OF OF THUNDER.

"WHEN HE STOLE THE WIFE OF A BLACKFOOT MAN, HE TOOK HER TO HIS HOME INSIDE THIS MOUNTAIN. RAVEN CAME FROM HIS HOME AT CROWNEST MOUNTAIN AND FOUGHT WITH THUNDER ON THE SLOPES OF NINASTAKO."

From "The Story of the Blackfoot People: Niitsitapiisinni", by The Blackfoot Gallery Committee of the Glenbow Museum



VIŠIT SIKSİKAITŠITAPI COUNTRY  
 SIKSİKA • KAINAI/BLOOD TRİBE  
 PİİKANI • AAMSKAPI PİKUNI

# DESTINATION BLACKFOOT

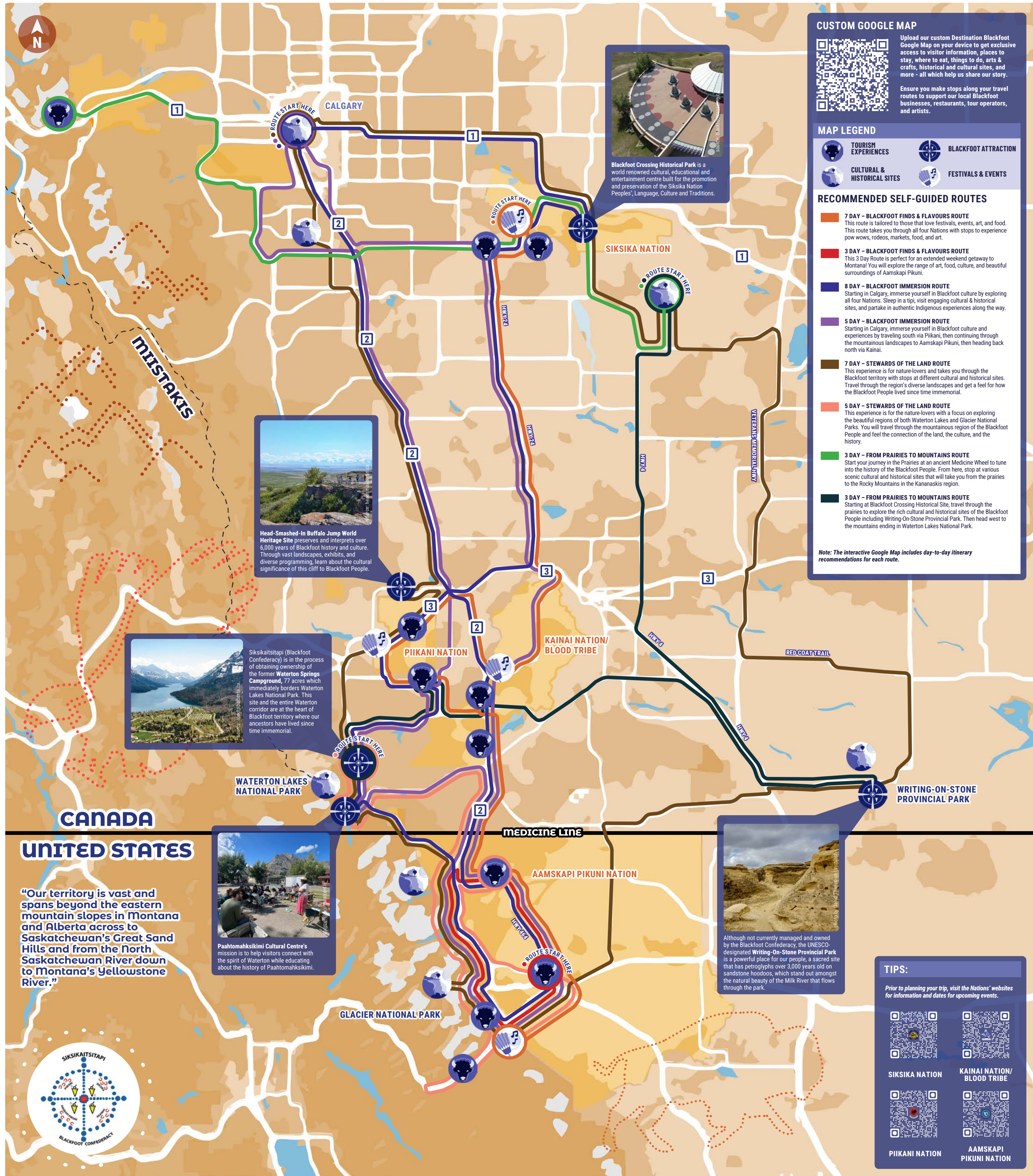
THE REAL  
 LAND.  
 THE REAL  
 PEOPLE.



This map was a project initiated by the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council in collaboration with the Nations of Siksika, Piikani, Kainai/Blood Tribe, and Aamskapi Pikuni. We are grateful for all of the hard work and contributions made by all those involved including the community liaisons, tour operators, businesses, organizations, community members, and youth that shared their voices with us.

We also would like to acknowledge ITA for their continued support to grow Indigenous tourism in Alberta as well as Kimmy Houle for her dedication and passion for driving tourism development forward.

Developed by:  
 canodian ecotourism services



**CUSTOM GOOGLE MAP**

Upload our custom Destination Blackfoot Google Map on your device to get exclusive access to visitor information, places to stay, where to eat, things to do, arts & crafts, historical and cultural sites, and more - all which help us share our story.

Ensure you make stops along your travel routes to support our local Blackfoot businesses, restaurants, tour operators, and artists.

**MAP LEGEND**

- TOURISH EXPERIENCES
- CULTURAL & HISTORICAL SITES
- BLACKFOOT ATTRACTION
- FESTIVALS & EVENTS

- RECOMMENDED SELF-GUIDED ROUTES**
- 7 DAY - BLACKFOOT FINDS & FLAVOURS ROUTE**  
 This route is tailored to those that love festivals, events, art, and food. This route takes you through all four Nations with stops to experience pow wows, rodeos, markets, food, and art.
  - 3 DAY - BLACKFOOT FINDS & FLAVOURS ROUTE**  
 This 3 Day Route is perfect for an extended weekend getaway to Montana! You will explore the range of art, food, culture, and beautiful surroundings of Aamskapi Pikuni.
  - 8 DAY - BLACKFOOT IMMERSION ROUTE**  
 Starting in Calgary, immerse yourself in Blackfoot culture by exploring all four Nations. Sleep in a tipi, visit engaging cultural & historical sites, and partake in authentic Indigenous experiences along the way.
  - 5 DAY - BLACKFOOT IMMERSION ROUTE**  
 Starting in Calgary, immerse yourself in Blackfoot culture and experiences by traveling south via Piikani, then continuing through the mountainous landscapes to Aamskapi Pikuni, then heading back north via Kainai.
  - 7 DAY - STEWARDS OF THE LAND ROUTE**  
 This experience is for nature-lovers and takes you through the Blackfoot territory with stops at different cultural and historical sites. Travel through the region's diverse landscapes and get a feel for how the Blackfoot People lived since time immemorial.
  - 5 DAY - STEWARDS OF THE LAND ROUTE**  
 This experience is for the nature-lovers with a focus on exploring the beautiful regions of both Waterton Lakes and Glacier National Parks. You will travel through the mountainous region of the Blackfoot People and feel the connection of the land, the culture, and the history.
  - 3 DAY - FROM PRAIRIES TO MOUNTAINS ROUTE**  
 Start your journey in the Prairies at an ancient Medicine Wheel to tune into the history of the Blackfoot People. From here, stop at various scenic cultural and historical sites that will take you from the prairies to the Rocky Mountains in the Kananaskis region.
  - 3 DAY - FROM PRAIRIES TO MOUNTAINS ROUTE**  
 Starting at Blackfoot Crossing Historical Site, travel through the prairies to explore the rich cultural and historical sites of the Blackfoot People including Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park. Then head west to the mountains ending in Waterton Lakes National Park.

*Note: The interactive Google Map includes day-to-day itinerary recommendations for each route.*

**TIPS:**

Prior to planning your trip, visit the Nations' websites for information and dates for upcoming events.

SIKSIKA NATION      KAINAI NATION/  
 BLOOD TRIBE

PIİKANI NATION      AAMSKAPI  
 PİKUNI NATION



**“Our territory is vast and spans beyond the eastern mountain slopes in Montana and Alberta across to Saskatchewan’s Great Sand Hills and from the North Saskatchewan River down to Montana’s Yellowstone River.”**

Paatomahksikimi Cultural Centre's mission is to help visitors connect with the spirit of Waterton while educating about the history of Paatomahksikimi.

Siksikaitšitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) is in the process of obtaining ownership of the former Waterton Springs Campground, 77 acres which immediately borders Waterton Lakes National Park. This site and the entire Waterton corridor are at the heart of Blackfoot territory where our ancestors have lived since time immemorial.

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site preserves and interprets over 6,000 years of Blackfoot history and culture. Through vast landscapes, exhibits, and diverse programming, learn about the cultural significance of this cliff to Blackfoot People.

Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park is a world renowned cultural, educational and entertainment centre built for the promotion and preservation of the Siksika Nation Peoples', Language, Culture and Traditions.

Although not currently managed and owned by the Blackfoot Confederacy, the UNESCO-designated Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park is a powerful place for our people, a sacred site that has petroglyphs over 3,000 years old on sandstone hoodoos, which stand out amongst the natural beauty of the Milk River that flows through the park.

Photo by Christopher Zamallo, Priscilla Di Prezioro/Unsplash