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Blacks in Travel & Tourism Partners with Black-Owned Receptive Tour Operator for U.S. Black Cultural Heritage Road Trip

Initiative to Amplify Black Businesses, Culture, and History through Transformative Experiences and Storytelling

Washington, DC – May 18, 2021: The National Blacks in Travel & Tourism Collaborative (BTT) working in partnership with the Cultural Heritage Alliance for Tourism, Inc. (CHAT), a Black-owned receptive tour operator based in Miami, FL, is launching the Black Cultural Heritage Road Trip on May 30. The Black Cultural Heritage Tours (BCHT) team will travel throughout the United States curating local, immersive Black cultural heritage tour itineraries and experiences through connections with the people and places that have shaped Black communities from the past to the present.

“As the only Black-owned receptive tour operator in the U.S., our mission is to create inclusion and engagement of local Black cultural heritage community assets in the multibillion-dollar tourism industry, spurring economic growth and sustainability for small businesses and cultural institutions in underserved Black communities,” said Stephanie Jones, president of CHAT and founder of BTT.

The BCHT itineraries aim to illuminate, amplify, protect, and preserve cultural heritage throughout the United States through storytelling and authentic local experiences that are life-affirming and sustainable.

Many travel and tourism brands and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) understand and agree that more needs to be done to make the industry more diverse and inclusive. Equitable opportunities for small, local Black- and Brown-owned businesses, attractions and residents should be shared and created for all to participate and profit as the industry recovers and rebounds. These Black cultural heritage tour itineraries are another example of how the National Blacks in Travel and Tourism Collaborative is working to level the playing field as well as supporting sustainable diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts of DMOs and travel brands.

“We have been working in partnership with BTT for several months now to launch a multicultural content strategy that will amplify small Black businesses through our various marketing channels to international visitors,” said Tom Garzilli, CMO of Brand USA “Brand USA hopes that every DMO will see the importance and value of amplifying their local Black cultural heritage assets by including them in their marketing strategy and attract visitors who are seeking new, diverse tour products and experiences in U.S. destinations.”

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“Traveling through America provides an enriching experience, yet for complete, accurate, and authentic storytelling, we must diversify our industry to include more Black- and Brown-owned travel businesses,” said Catherine Prather, president of the National Tour Association. “I am excited and honored to collaborate with BTT on behalf of the NTA community because bringing light to our rich multicultural heritage makes our industry stronger and further supports not only the intrinsic value, but also the economic power of travel—for everyone.”

CheapOair is supporting the road trip in conjunction with the launch of the first-of-its-kind page on their [Miles Away](#) blog dedicated to spotlighting cultural heritage travel. As part of an initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in worldwide travel, future stories on the blog will spotlight these lesser-known opportunities to explore destinations and cultural heritage within the U.S. and abroad.

“Highlighting cultural heritage tourism allows our customers to enjoy great travel experiences, and at the same time contribute to the economies of the diverse communities they visit,” said Werner Kunz-Cho, CEO of Fareportal, the corporate owner of online travel agencies [CheapOair](#) and [One Travel](#).

The BCHT team will work with DMOs and connect with small Black- and Brown-owned businesses, cultural institutions and community organizations to uncover and amplify the rich, complex, and diverse local stories, attractions and experiences that culturally curious travelers often seek when visiting destinations.

“This effort fully supports our destination’s intent to attract more diverse audiences to come discover the rich Black history and culture we have to offer,” said Evelyn Lopez-Kelley, Director of Leisure Sales, St. Augustine, Ponte Verda & the Beaches Visitors & Convention Bureau. “We look forward to our partnership with BTT and hosting them on the road trip.”

The goal of the road trip is to connect and curate Black cultural heritage tour itineraries throughout the U.S. for domestic and international travelers, tour operators, destination management companies and travel advisors. The focus on Black tour operators, restaurants, hotels, museums and other tourism-related businesses will provide an economic benefit to help these businesses and communities thrive. The team will also document their travels to produce content that spotlights businesses, locals, attractions and neighborhoods they visit.

“What’s unique about these tour itineraries and our approach is that our product development team understands Black culture and how Black history should be shared: with authenticity and balanced perspectives by those with real-life stories of pain and triumph, and connections to the Black experience in the U.S.,” said Kelly McCoy, BCHT’s Tourism Development Consultant.

“This very important and timely initiative will help showcase rich Black history and culture in our destination as well as throughout the U.S.,” said Lisa Catron, Global Travel/Trade Director, Memphis Tourism. “We look forward to hosting the BCHT team and connecting them with local Black businesses and attractions to include on the tour itinerary.”

Black cultural heritage tour itineraries in development for the six-month road trip throughout the U.S. include: Florida (May 30-June 5); Southeast (GA, NC & SC) June 15-25; Northeast (NY, NJ & PA) in July; South I (AL, MS & LA) and South II (TN, KY & AR) in August; Midwest (MI, IL,

IN & OH) in September; West I (SW CA, AZ & NM) in October. More regional itineraries will be added and announced at a later date.

About Black Cultural Heritage Tours (BCHT)

Powered by Cultural Heritage Alliance for Tourism, Inc. (CHAT), Black Cultural Heritage Tours curates local and immersive Black cultural heritage tour itineraries, experiences, and connections to the people and places that have shaped community and culture from the past to the present. As the only Black-owned receptive tour operator in the U.S., CHAT's focus on Black-owned businesses and attractions levels the playing field for small businesses while creating transformative experiences for culturally curious travelers to learn about history and celebrate the rich diversity of Black culture in the U.S. and all over the world. Learn more at www.experienceblackculture.com

About the National Blacks in Travel & Tourism Collaborative (BTT)

The National Blacks in Travel & Tourism Collaborative (BTT) is powered by the Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance, Inc., a 501c3 non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. BTT's mission is to facilitate the development of a thriving Black tourism ecosystem to ensure Black travel and tourism businesses are full participants in the travel industry. Working in collaboration with a diverse group of national travel & tourism organizations, small businesses, educators, media and influencers, DMOs and other industry leaders, we curate and implement initiatives designed to increase diversity, equity and inclusion, eliminate racial inequalities, and create economic opportunities to advance Blacks in travel and tourism. BTT strives to level the playing field to advance Blacks in travel and tourism businesses. www.blacksintourism.org