

TOUR OPERATORS

Road trip will develop Black culture and heritage tours

By Jeri Clausing   | May 18, 2021



Stephanie Jones, second from right, with fellow tour guides. Photo Credit: Black Cultural Heritage Tours

The National Blacks in Travel and Tourism Collaborative (BTT) and the Cultural Heritage Alliance for Tourism (CHAT), a Black-owned tour operator based in Miami, are launching a national road trip to develop more Black culture- and heritage-focused tours and promote minority travel businesses.

The Black Cultural Heritage Road Trip launches May 30 in Florida and will run over the next six months to destinations across the United States.

The goal, the groups said, is to curate tour itineraries throughout the U.S. for domestic and international travelers, tour operators, destination management companies and travel advisors.



Stephanie Jones

"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," Stephanie Jones, president of CHAT and founder of the BTT, said in a press release announcing the initiative.

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Kelly McCoy, the Road Trip's tourism development consultant, said the itineraries will take a unique approach in how 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."

CheapOair is supporting the road trip in conjunction with its Miles Away blog, which is dedicated to spotlighting cultural heritage travel.

Also backing the initiative are groups like Brand USA, the National Tour Association (NTA) and local DMOs.

"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 NTA president Catherine Prather. "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."



A group of Black Cultural Heritage Tour participants at the Caribbean Marketplace in the Little Haiti neighborhood of Miami. Photo Credit: Black Cultural Heritage Tours

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