

Unama'ki - Cape Breton has a rich and diverse cultural history with vibrant industries tied to the creative economy including music, performing arts, motion picture / TV, arts & crafts, creative writing, photography, and more.

INDUSTRY FACTS

- › According to Statistics Canada, the cultural sector contributed nearly \$1 billion to the Nova Scotia GDP in 2021 and employed 12,751 people.
- › The musical roots of Unama'ki - Cape Breton run deep thanks to the Mi'kmaq, and continues today with prominent artists including the award-winning Sons of Membertou and Morgan Toney. The Island is also well-known as one of the major international centres for Celtic music with a deep-rooted fiddle style originally brought to prominence by artists like Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald. It continues today with famous fiddlers Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac. The genre even has a physical home and museum at the [Celtic Music Interpretive Centre](#).
- › Unama'ki - Cape Breton's music scene is a major contributor to the tourism economy, with 45% of respondents to a 2019 [Destination Cape Breton](#) survey indicating that they seek out live music as part of their experience. Beyond the traditional music that the Island is known for, Unama'ki - Cape Breton has an extensive history of producing successful popular music acts, including: The Rankin Family, Rita MacNeil, Bruce Guthro, Matt Minglewood, and the coal miner's choir ensemble The Men of the Deeps.
- › The Island celebrates and promotes live music with numerous annual festivals, including [Kitchenfest](#) (named after the Island's traditional musical gathering place - the kitchen), [Rock the Fiddle](#), [Cape Breton Jazz Festival](#), [INGObeach Pride](#), [Granville Green](#), [Makin' Waves](#), [Pirate Days](#), and the [Little Church in Big Baddeck](#) concert series. There are also celebrations of Acadian culture at the Festival Acadien de Petit-de-Grat and Festival de l'Escaoette, among others.
- › [Celtic Colours](#) is a world-renowned, Island-wide fall festival which attracts visitors for cultural experiences and Unama'ki - Cape Breton's famous fall colours. The 2023 festival contributed almost \$16 million of direct spending into the local economy, with 10,807 attendees, 7,282 of these being visitors, and nearly 19% of all visitors came from the United States.
- › The [Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative](#) supports musicians Island-wide with mentorship, education, gig opportunities, funding connections, and the newly-formed Cape Breton Music Industry Hall of Fame.

- › The artistry of live performance is celebrated on Unama'ki - Cape Breton through theatrical plays, dance, and comedy at a broad array of notable venues around the island including the [Membertou Trade & Convention Centre](#), [Strathspey Performing Arts Centre](#), [Theatre Baddeck](#), [Savoy Theatre](#), [Inverness County Centre for the Arts](#), [Louisbourg Playhouse](#), [Centre 200](#), [La Picasse](#), [La Place des Arts Père Anselme Chiasson](#), [Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre](#), [Gaelic College](#), [Highland Arts Theatre](#), and the [Boardmore Playhouse](#). The bustling live entertainment scene is also found Island-wide in community centres, churches, restaurants, clubs, and Royal Canadian Legions. In 2023, the inaugural [Cape Breton Comedy Festival](#) was launched to sold-out audiences at a variety of these island venues.
- › Unama'ki - Cape Breton is home to many talented artisans who produce a variety of fine arts and crafts. The [Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design](#), a charitable organization, is an integral and leading force in the educational, promotion, and economic development of the craft sector on the Island with a membership of more than 300 individuals and organizations. The Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design also produces an [Artisan Trail Map](#) that features the finest artisans on the Island along with a locator guide that pinpoints their studios and workshops.
- › The vibrant fine arts and crafts scene is also supported by a number of studios, workshops, and cultural centres including [Membertou Heritage Park](#), [Inverness County Centre for the Arts](#), [Flying Kite Artisan Shop](#), [Port of Sydney](#), [Mabou Farmers' Market](#), [Cape Breton Farmers' Market](#), Baddeck Farmers' Market, Isle Madame Public Market, Port Hawkesbury Farmers' Market, Louisbourg Market, Johnstown Landing Artisan & Farmer's Market, [Eltuek Arts Centre](#), [Sydney Makerspace](#), [Cape Breton University Art Gallery](#), [Custom House Arts Incubator](#), and [Friends United](#) amongst the vibrant and growing arts community.
- › Located in an intimate rural setting, the highly regarded [Cabot Trail Writer's Festival](#) is an annual celebration of writing, reading, storytelling, and the literary arts on Unama'ki - Cape Breton. The Island is also home to the well-established publisher [Breton Books](#), whose notable works include a diverse range of subjects including history, folklore, music, poetry, Christmas, short stories, biographies, children's books, CBU Press titles, and Cape Breton's Magazine. The Island is also home to [Boularderie Island Press](#).



- › The beautiful landscapes of Unama’ki - Cape Breton have proven to be an inspirational home to numerous authors including: Lesley Crewe, Rita Joe, Morgan Murray, Kate Beaton, Tom Ryan, Bill Conall, David Muise, Frank MacDonald, Rebecca Silver Slayter, Ronald Caplan, Alistair MacLeod, Mary Munson, and Patricia O’Neil.
- › Unama’ki - Cape Breton celebrates its’ diverse and unique history with an exciting and colourful mix of museums and heritage sites, including: the [Highland Village Museum](#) illustrating the culture and history of Nova Scotia Gaels, the [Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic](#) which brings you back to New France between 1713 and 1758, [The Centre de la Mi-Carême](#) celebrating Acadian traditions, and the [Cape Breton Miners Museum](#) honouring the region’s long and rich coal mining history.
- › According to the [Canadian Media Producers Association’s 2022 Profile report](#), the TV and motion picture industry spent \$249 million on production in Atlantic Canada in 2022. The industry is supported locally by the Cape Breton Partnership, [Screen Nova Scotia](#), [the Unama’ki Motion Picture Cooperative](#), [Cape Breton Film](#), [Spectra17 Films](#), [Telile Community TV](#), [Eastlink Community TV](#), and [NovaStream](#).

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- › **Location:** The scenic beauty of Unama’ki - Cape Breton including beaches, rivers, lakes, oceans, hills, forests, and breathtaking highlands provides unparalleled creative inspiration for all artistic disciplines including musicians, writers, visual artists, photographers, theatrical producers, and filmmakers.
- › **Arts & Culture:** The vibrant, exciting and active arts & culture scene of the Island ensures that creative artists have substantial peer-to-peer support and feel welcomed into the Island’s creative community.
- › **Quality of Life:** Beyond the economic impact of the creative sector, it also provides a higher quality of life for visitors and residents of the Island.
- › **Creative Industry Support:** Creative entrepreneurial ventures are supported by the Cape Breton Partnership, through the dedicated, island-wide efforts of the Creative Economy Development Officer. For more information, contact: bill@capebretonpartnership.com
- › **Unama’ki - Cape Breton Culture Sector Team:** Comprised of stakeholders in the arts/culture/heritage sector on the Island, this group works in conjunction with the Cape Breton Partnership to foster, celebrate, and advocate for the creative economy.
- › **Community Support:** Unama’ki - Cape Breton is known as “the Creative Island”, and is home to tremendous community support for the sector with strong attendance at events and performances and through purchasing and consuming the goods and services the sector provides.
- › **Government Support:** The arts/culture/heritage sector on Unama’ki - Cape Breton is made possible through a variety of funding programs from the municipal, provincial, and federal governments.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- › **Creative Entrepreneurs:** With a flourishing arts/culture/heritage scene and extensive industry support, Unama'ki - Cape Breton is the ideal place for creative entrepreneurs to bring their business to fruition. This includes creative entities (both individual artists as sole proprietors and corporations), such as recording studios, rehearsal studios, music schools, song publishing companies, live production companies, theatrical producers, art galleries, photography studios, artisan studios, and artisan retail shops.
- › **Festival and Event Promoters:** With a year-round base of supportive residential consumers and substantial tourism from around the world, the Island is home to a wide variety of artists including musicians, actors, comedians, dance troupes, creative writers, and talented artisans. Unama'ki - Cape Breton is the ideal location for promoters of festivals and special events including music, theatre, film, literary, and visual arts.
- › **Motion Picture / TV Production:** With a wide array of scenic options and filming locations, government incentives for content creators, and a variety of support organizations and businesses, Unama'ki - Cape Breton provides investment opportunities for a variety of content creators including motion pictures, television series, and digital streaming services. With the industry developing at a rapid pace there is also a sizeable investment opportunity for a year-round motion picture / TV production studio.

WEB RESOURCES

- › [Cape Breton Partnership](#)
- › [EntrepreneurCB.com](#) is a comprehensive database of business tools, programs, and resources that are developed and maintained by the Cape Breton Partnership to support your business in various stages.
- › [Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design](#)
- › [Arts Nova Scotia](#)
- › [Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage](#)
- › [Visual Arts Nova Scotia](#)
- › [Nova Scotia Potters Guild](#)

4 of 4

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