Gay Friendly
CANADA

IGLTA
Global Convention

ONTARIO
Toronto

ATLANTIC
Charlottetown

SASKATCHEWAN
Saskatoon

QUEBEC
Montreal

ALBERTA
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BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Canada remains one of the most progressive countries in the world when it comes to LGBTQ2+ rights and freedoms. Although not perfect and there is still work to be done, great progress has been made over the past sixty years or so.

Politicians such as then Justice Minister Pierre Trudeau worked to pass amendments into the Criminal Code, decriminalizing homosexuality in Canada in 1969, Quebec included sexual orientation in its Human Rights Code in 1977, MP Svend Robinson went public about being gay in 1988, the federal court lifted the country’s ban on homosexuals in the military in 1992, Bill C-33 added sexual orientation to the Canadian Human Rights Act in 1996, the Ontario Court of Appeal legally allowed same-sex marriages in 2003, soon followed by British Columbia in 2003, and across Canada in 2005, to name just a few of many milestones along the way.

However, this was not always the case, as the nation was reminded in late November, 2017, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made an historic apology to LGBTQ2+ Canadians. The reason for this apology was an effort to formally acknowledge and apologize for the historic wrongs that were perpetrated against LGBTQ2+ Canadians for decades, including imprisonment, public shaming, job and career loss, diagnoses of mental illness, and even electroshock therapy.

Following are a few excerpts from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s speech before Parliament:

“Now imagine, if you will, being told that the very country you would willingly lay down your life to defend doesn’t want you. Doesn’t accept you. Sees you as defective. Sees you as a threat to our national security.

Not because you can’t do the job, or because you lack patriotism or courage - no, because of who you are as a person, and because of who your sexual partners are.

Now imagine, Mr. Speaker, being subjected to laws, policies, and hiring practices that label you as different - as less than. Imagine having to fight for the basic rights that your peers enjoy, over and over again.

And imagine being criminalized for being who you are. This is the truth for many of the Canadians present in the gallery today, and those listening across the country.

This is the devastating story of people who were branded criminals by the government. People who lost their livelihoods, and in some cases, their lives.

These aren’t distant practices of governments long forgotten. This happened systematically, in Canada, with a timeline more recent than any of us would like to admit.

Mr. Speaker, today we acknowledge an often-overlooked part of Canada’s history. Today, we finally talk about Canada’s role in the systemic oppression, criminalization, and violence against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit communities.

And it is my hope that in talking about these injustices, vowing to never repeat them, and acting to right these wrongs, we can begin to heal.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s apology was well-received by many LGBTQ2+ Canadians. Our leaders, allies, and all of us must remain vigilant, to ensure that these hard won rights and freedoms are not attacked, eroded or rescinded by anyone in future.

As we move through 2018, Canada remains a beacon of hope for many LGBTQ2+ people around the world, whom are still being persecuted in their home countries, simply for being who they are.

Keep up the good work Canada!
The provinces of Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick make up this historic and culturally diverse region on Canada’s East Coast. Stunning parks, spectacular beaches, national historic sites, and the highest concentration of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Canada, are just some of the reasons to visit this dynamic region. Gros Morne National Park, Joggins Fossil Cliffs, Landscape of Grand-Pré, L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site, Mistaken Point, Old Town Lunenburg, and Red Bay Basque Whaling Station are highlights to consider for your itinerary.

As well, Parks Canada maintains the Atlantic Canada National Parks, Historic Sites and Marine Conservation areas, such as Terra Nova, Signal Hill, Sable Island, Halifax Citadel, L.M. Montgomery’s Cavendish and Fort Beauséjour - Fort Cumberland, to name just a few.

The rainbow flag also proudly flies throughout major cities, as well as in some of the delightful smaller urban centres throughout the summer months. It can be an added delight to schedule a visit to coincide with one of regions LGBTQ2+ Pride celebrations. Halifax is home to Canada’s fourth largest LGBTQ2+ cultural festival, Pride Parade and Community Fair, and colourful celebrations are also held in St. John’s, St. John, Moncton, Fredericton, Charlottetown, and Summerside, among others.

**Charlottetown**

Celebrated as the Birthplace of Confederation, as a result of the Charlottetown Conference back in 1864, historic Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, is a popular international tourist and cruise ship destination.

A year-round schedule of events at the stylish Confederation Centre of the Arts, the 2018 Charlottetown Festival, fabulous golf courses, and easy access to stunning beaches with the warmest salt water bathing north of Florida, are also why hundreds of thousands of visitors, and close to seventy major international cruise ships will visit Charlottetown in 2018. To accommodate this influx of international visitors, Charlottetown offers a wide array of accommodation, amenities and services, and a thriving culinary scene, comparable to larger cities in other parts of the world.

The Pride PEI Festival, which is now a signature summer event, will celebrate its 24th year of festivities in 2018. To highlight this celebration, starting in 2016 the City of Charlottetown painted four rainbow crosswalks at one of the busiest intersections downtown, as an outreach to the LGBTQ2+ community. Naturally, this was welcomed by the local community, but also impressed many visiting tourists, including the team from Gayvan.com during our visit in summer of 2017.

**Resources:**

www.pridepei.com

www.halifaxpride.com

www.fiertemonctonpride.ca

www.facebook.com/frederictonpride

www.stjohnspride.ca

www.gaytourismpei.com

www.discovercharlottetown.com
QUEBEC

Quebec, known to many as Canada’s French speaking province, is celebrated for its flamboyant Joie-de-Vivre, old world charm, and some of the hottest LGBTQ2+ celebrations on the planet.

A visit to Quebec City, the charming capital city, is often compared to a visit to Europe, without leaving North America. Centuries of history and romance can be felt throughout the cobblestone streets of Vieux-Québec (old Quebec), which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

LGBTQ2+ nightlife and events are also alive and well in this charming city with over 400 years of history. The Quebec City Pride Festival (Fête Arc-en-ciel de Québec) is a colourful four day event that takes place over the Labour Day weekend each year, complete with drag queens, community march and parties galore!

Montreal

Montreal, Quebec’s sexy metropolis is the largest city in the province, and the second largest French-speaking city in the world. Sophisticated host to a long list of world-class events, including the annual Black & Blue Festival, put on by the Bad Boy Club Montreal (BBMC), attracting thousands of people from around the world.

While turning 375 years young in 2017, Montreal was host city for the first ever Canada Pride, plus a Human Rights Conference, creating a legacy for LGBTQ2+ Canadians, with plans to hold the event in a different city across Canada every four years.

Montreal Pride is the largest LGBTQ2+ francophone celebration of Pride in the world. With over 200 activities anchored by their world-renowned gay village, Le Village, this event is high on the list for many international LGBTQ2+ travellers. Festivities run from August 9 – 19, 2018.

Resources:
www.fiertemontrealpride.com
www.arcencielquebec.ca
www.tourisme-montreal.org
www.quebecregion.com
www.bbcm.org

Aires Libres, Credit: © Canadian Tourism Commission
Toronto

Toronto, the largest city in Canada, rivals cities like New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco as a major destination for international LGBTQ2+ travelers, and its annual Pride celebrations are among the best in the world. Over five million residents call Toronto home, including the largest LGBTQ2+ population in Canada.

Also home to a thriving film and TV industry, the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) attracts A-list Hollywood stars, and is highly regarded in the entertainment world. Further attention focused on the city in 2017, with the announcement that Meghan Markle, Toronto-based star of the hit TV series SUITS, was engaged to be married to Britain’s Prince Harry in May, 2018.

Host to a multitude of other international and LGBTQ2+ events, Toronto was the city of choice for the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) Global Convention in 2009, WorldPride in 2014, and the Pan Am Games in 2015. IGLTA will return to Toronto once again in May 2018, for their 35th annual Global Convention (see next page for details).

Church-Wellesley Village, the original gay village, is an urban destination with the largest percentage of LGBTQ2+-owned and welcoming businesses in Canada. Home to renowned LGBTQ2+ bars and clubs, bookstores, saunas, cafes, restaurants, and community organizations, Church-Wellesley is home base for many, and often the first stop for LGBTQ2+ visitors setting out to explore the city. It is also home base for Toronto’s extensive Pride celebrations, now known as Pride Month, taking place June 1 – 24, 2018.

The West Queen West Art & Design District, known locally as the Queer West Village, is Toronto’s second neighbourhood of interest to the LGBTQ2+ community. Home to broadcasters, gay-welcoming bars, restaurants, shops, cafes, design houses and galleries galore, Queer West Village is welcoming to everyone, regardless of age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The Gay West Community Network Inc., also known as “Queer West”, organizes the annual Queer West Film Festival, Toronto Queer Arts and Culture Festival (Queer West Fest) and Smash Words Festival. They also produce OUTexpressions, an online publication with listings of some of the hottest events and places in town.

Queer East Toronto, which includes Leslieville, The Beaches and Greektown, are also becoming popular areas for LGBTQ2+ Torontonians. Somewhat more laid-back than the Church Wellesley Village, these LGBTQ2+ welcoming neighbourhoods offer a wide range of restaurants, pubs, shopping and nightlife.

Canada’s largest LGBTQ2+ Centre, The 519, is located at 519 Church Street in the Church-Wellesley Village. This registered charity is an agency of the City of Toronto and works in partnership with community businesses and sponsors, to provide a broad range of services, programs and meeting spaces for the LGBTQ2+ community.

Resources:
www.seetorontonow.com
www.pridetoronto.com
www.queerwest.org
www.the519.org
outtv.ca
www.dailyxtra.com
www.gayvan.com
Canada has been host to this prestigious annual convention several times in the past, including Vancouver in 1989, Montreal in 1998, Vancouver in 2004, and Toronto in 2009. Toronto will once again be host city for the 35th IGLTA Annual Global Convention, May 9 – 12, 2018.

“The IGLTA Annual Global Convention is the world’s premier educational and networking event for LGBTQ tourism professionals. The 35th edition of the conference will connect gay, lesbian and gay friendly travel and tourism suppliers and buyers through its hosted buyer and scheduled appointment program, numerous educational workshops and networking receptions.”

“Founded in 1983 by a dedicated group of 25 travel agents and hotel owners, IGLTA has expanded exponentially as LGBTQ rights and visibility has grown around the world. The original name was IGTA; the "L" was added in 1997. Today, the association has a truly global presence with member businesses in more than 80 countries. IGLTA represents LGBTQ and LGBT-friendly accommodations, destinations, service providers, travel agents, tour operators, and events, as well as the LGBTQ travel consumers they wish to serve.”

Highlights will include one day of Pre-Convention events, with a Buyer/Supplier Marketplace and luncheon, followed by a three day full convention schedule. Day One will include Association announcements and reports, a Networking Luncheon, General Session, Educational Breakout Sessions, and the official Opening Session, where many long-time members can reconnect with fellow members they have known over the years, as well as meet newcomers and first time attendees. Day Two will continue with General Sessions, a Networking Luncheon, Media Networking, and a Night Out on the Town. Day Three will include Educational Breakout Sessions, a General Session with closing remarks, and the final Closing Reception, before delegates head back home, around the world.
Saskatchewan

Scenically straddling the South Saskatchewan River, the city of Saskatoon is the largest city in the province of Saskatchewan, with a metropolitan population of over 260,000. Centrally located in Western Canada, Saskatchewan is bordered by Manitoba to the east, Alberta to the west, and the USA to the south.

Saskatoon is also home to a vibrant LGBTQ2+ community, and has been actively building awareness, not only nationally, but internationally as an LGBTQ2+ welcoming destination in recent years. Previous host city for the 2015 Fierté Canada Pride and InterPride Region 7 Conference and Annual General Meeting, Saskatoon is also confirmed as host city for the October 2018 InterPride World Conference and AGM.

The city hosts over a week of Pride Celebrations each June, complete with an official flag-raising, and an extensive list of community events including First Nation Pride, a Pride Market, Pride in the Park, the Pride Parade, and much more.

Also a city of firsts, OUTSaskatoon opened Canada’s first LGBTQ2+ long-term youth group home in 2017, and Saskatoon was the only city in Canada to make the New York Times’ list of 52 places to visit in 2018, for its new Remai Modern art museum.

2018 InterPride World Conference & AGM

“October 4th - 7th 2018, Pride organizers from around the world will gather in Saskatoon Saskatchewan for the 2018 InterPride AGM and World Conference. InterPride is the international organization that ties Prides together globally. Member organizations of InterPride create Pride events, organised by hundreds of thousands of amazing volunteers from every corner of the globe. The conference is an amazing opportunity for attendees to network with other Pride organizers, attend various workshops and seminars to improve their events and strengthen their organization. To learn more about InterPride and this year’s AGM and World Conference, visit www.InterPride.org”

www.saskatoonpride.ca
www.outsaskatoon.ca
www.tourismsaskatoon.com/rainbow
www.tourismsaskatchewan.com
www.interpride.org
ALBERTA

Alberta, home to over four million Canadians, is one of Canada’s four western provinces. The rugged mountain peaks of the Canadian Rockies provide a stunning backdrop for award-winning national parks, spectacular lakes, freshwater rivers, ancient glaciers, and vast desert badlands. Sparkling modern cities are starting points for amazing adventures of all kinds. State-of-the-art transportation systems that link to major world centres make getting here convenient, whether travelling from within Canada, or visiting from abroad.

The LGBTQ2+ community is open and visible in Alberta, with large celebrations in major centres like Calgary and Edmonton, but also in smaller urban areas and mountain resorts, such as Jasper, Lethbridge, Red Deer and Banff, all of which have recently installed rainbow crosswalks in celebration of Pride. Openly gay Edmonton Centre MP Randy Boissonnault was elected in 2015, and in 2016 given a new role as special adviser to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on LGBTQ2+ issues.

Calgary

Calgary, Alberta’s largest city, has played host to a Winter Olympics, and is world-famous for its annual rodeo festival, The Calgary Stampede. Canada’s oil industry calls Calgary home, and a growing high tech sector is contributing to the downtown core of striking modern skyscrapers.

Calgary Pride will begin celebrations for its 28th year in late August, 2018, with expectations of more than 65,000 spectators and 5,000 participants for the Calgary Pride Parade, showcasing over 175 businesses, politicians and community groups. Calgary’s Pride Festival outgrew its former location in recent years, and now takes place in Prince’s Island Park in the heart of downtown.

www.edmontonpride.ca
www.calgarypride.ca
www.travelalberta.com

www.visitcalgary.com
www.exploredmonton.com
www.wem.ca
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vancouver

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1 800 SANDMAN (726 3626) or visit
Vancouver, Canada’s gateway to the Pacific is a stylish, modern metropolis that is home to a diverse population of over 2.4 million residents. Consistently ranked as one of the most liveable and beautiful cities in the world, it’s also home base for the largest LGBTQ2+ community in Western Canada.

The impressive Coast Mountains frame Vancouver’s spectacular setting, with striking glass towers in the downtown core juxtaposed with dramatic west coast natural scenery and parkland. Nine major beaches meander 18 kilometres around the city, many with long stretches of gorgeous sandy beaches, and some highlighted by long stretches of sub-tropical looking palm trees.
The world’s longest continuous waterfront path, the Vancouver Seawall, winds for 28 kilometres from the Vancouver Convention Centre downtown, all the way to the fabulous beaches of Spanish Banks. Bike lanes and pedestrian paths keep things running smoothly along the way, passing by upscale yacht clubs, seaside hotels and numerous restaurants and pubs. Take in the wonders of Stanley Park, the Lion’s Gate Bridge, Third Beach, Second Beach, or continue on to English Bay Beach, Sunset Beach, Granville Island, David Lam Park, and more.

The iconic sails of Canada Place are recognized symbols of Vancouver, highlighted for special events with dramatic lighting to fit the occasion, including rainbow colours for the annual Vancouver Pride Parade and Festival.

2018 will be a fantastic time to visit Vancouver, and Vancouver’s stylish state-of-the-art airport (YVR) is one of the first impressions for visitors to the region. Voted #1 Airport in North America for the eighth consecutive year by Skytrax World Airport Awards in 2017, the sheer glass walls throughout YVR highlight the stunning natural setting on arrival.

Vancouver’s LGBTQ2+ community is an active and integrated part of Vancouver’s cultural mosaic. Proudly represented in the political spectrum, tourism industry, civic calendar of events, and all walks of business, LGBTQ2+ Vancouverites enjoy this fabulous destination the same as everyone else.

In 2018 Vancouver Pride will celebrate its 40th Anniversary. The Vancouver Pride Society organizes the annual Vancouver Pride Parade and Pride Festival @ Sunset Beach, in addition to other events throughout the year, such as the Unicorn Ball, and Stand Out Awards. The
annual Pride Parade is the largest parade in the city, and with official civic status, attracts an estimated hundreds of thousands of spectators each year. Pride festivities stretch out over a month-long schedule, culminating with the parade and festival on August 5, 2018. Be sure to plan well in advance, as hotels and the best event tickets sell out every year.

2018 will also be the 30th Anniversary of the Vancouver Queer Film Festival (VQFF), which is the largest Queer media event in Western Canada. The VQFF presents over 75 films each year, in addition to workshops, performances and parties. VQFF also spearheads OUT in Schools, to engage youth through film. Passes and Six Pack ticket packages are available online and Festival dates run August 9-19, 2018.

Visitors to Vancouver’s Davie Village will see the ongoing community improvements to the neighbourhood, with ongoing joint projects of the West End Business Improvement Association (WEBIA), the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Pride Society, and various community organizations. One of the most recent additions is the new Heart of Davie Village neon sign, welcoming visitors to the Village. Jim Deva Plaza anchors Davie Village, with year-round events and iconic speaker corner, highlighted by the now world-famous rainbow crosswalks. Situated in Vancouver’s West End, with easy access from all major downtown hotels, and just steps from some of Vancouver’s most gorgeous beaches, Davie Village is a must-see part of any Vancouver itinerary. A focal point for Vancouver’s LGBTQ2+ community, Davie Village is also a great starting point for LGBTQ+ travelers to the city.

Resources:
www.tourismvancouver.com
www.vancouver.ca
www.westendbia.com
www.vancouverpride.ca
www.aboriginalbc.com
www.gayvan.com
www.queerfilmfestival.ca
www.gaywhistler.com
Beyond Vancouver

Vancouver, the point of entry for many international travelers arriving in Canada and British Columbia, is a world-class destination in its own right, but also the starting point for exciting adventures in other destinations within the province. Extensive modern transportation options provide easy access to nearby Harrison Hot Springs, the capital city Victoria on Vancouver Island, world-renowned Whistler Blackcomb, and sunny towns and vineyards of the Thompson Okanagan, as well as the fabulous Sparkling Hill Resort. The lush rainforests of Haida Gwaii in the Queen Charlotte Islands, Kelowna, Tofino, Bella Bella and Bella Coola, are just some of the sixty five fabulous adventure destinations just a short flight away via regional Pacific Coastal Airlines.

Harrison Hot Springs

Harrison Hot Springs is just a ninety minute drive from Vancouver by car, and can also be easily accessed by bus, boat or seaplane. Whether visiting for a day trip, or an extended adventure, Harrison Hot Springs is a delightful addition to any BC itinerary.

An all-seasons destination situated in the gorgeous Fraser Valley of southwestern BC, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs sits on beautiful Harrison Lake, and is a great place to escape and unwind from the fast-paced city life, or the rigors of travel.

Spring is a great time for spectacular outdoor adventures, with a wide range of options, including high tech geocaching, helicopter tours, or scenic golfing, to name a few.

Seemingly endless summer hiking opportunities await you throughout the region, in addition to seasonal favourites such as paragliding, river rafting, or riding the gondola over the Fraser River at Hell’s Gate.

An amazing site to see are the thousands of Sockeye Salmon returning to their regional spawning grounds each fall, and it’s also harvest season, with vast fields of corn and other produce spread out over the magnificent landscape.

Skiing, boarding, tubing or snowshoeing are all fabulous options during the winter months, and the village’s namesake, Harrison Hot Springs, is a great way to start the day, or as a final reward after a day of adventure. Two hot springs options surface near the shores of Harrison Lake, with a public pool open for all, year-round, and the signature resort offers multiple pools, exclusively for guests.

Want to get away from the crowds and find some quiet “us” time? Harrison Hot Springs is just 90 minutes from Vancouver. Hike, bike, paddle then soak in the hot springs and repeat.

www.tourismharrison.com
**Sparkling Hill Resort**

The dazzling Sparkling Hill Resort is a world-class health and wellness retreat, positioned atop a hill overlooking BC’s stunning Lake Okanagan, near the town of Vernon. 3.5 million Swarovski crystals adorn this spectacular resort, and if rainbows are your thing (as they are for many of us), there are plenty of gleaming reflections to satisfy.

A creation by the Austrian Swarovski crystal family, this luxurious resort’s fabulous location is shown off with floor to ceiling windows in the contemporary designed guest rooms and public areas, offering bird’s eye mountain and spectacular lake views.

The concept of whole body wellness is evident with the full range of amenities on offer at the resort in the luxurious Kurspa and Wellness Retreat at Kurspa. Amenities include four nature-themed experience showers, outdoor infinity pool, indoor salt water pool, hydrotherapy, and more.

Luxury is one thing and relaxation is another. Experience both at the same time; treat yourself and your number one to a romantic weekend, or arrange a well-deserved corporate retreat for your colleagues.

The Okanagan Valley is renowned for its vineyards, and nothing compares quite like sharing a bottle in a two-person soaker tub, overlooking the valley of origin, with sparkling crystals overhead.

There are numerous options for getting there, including a five hour drive from Vancouver, daily commercial flights to regional airports, and more upscale arrangements are available nearby for private jet or helicopter.

**Resources:**
www.tourismharrison.com
www.sparklinghill.com
www.pacificcoastal.com/gaycanada
www.tourismvancouver.com
www.gayvan.com

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**Couples Escape Package**

Experience two nights of luxury accommodation, daily three-course dinner for two at PeakFine restaurant, a special welcome cocktail for two at Barrique & Java, and two $150 vouchers for KurSpa treatments or products.

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  - 4 nature themed experience showers
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  - Kneipp hydrotherapy
  - Keiser-equipped fitness studio
  - Tea and serenity relaxation rooms

www.sparklinghill.com/romance
Tyler Alan Jacobs
Fashion designer, dancer
Pronouns: He, him
Identifies as: Two-spirited, Squamish First Nations

Favourite Vancouver Neighbourhood:
West End

“Two-spirited is when one has the male and the female spirits... we are here and we’re standing strong; we’re showing the people that it is OK.”

tourismvancouver.com/lgbtq2