Gay Friendly CANADA

DRAG Coast to Coast
ATLANTIC Charlottetown
QUEBEC Montreal

ONTARIO Toronto, Ottawa
ALBERTA Calgary
BRITISH COLUMBIA Vancouver, Victoria Harrison Hot Springs

Gayvan.com Travel Marketing
BAD BOY CLUB MONTRÉAL

MÉGA CÉLÉBRATION 30ᵉ ANNIVERSAIRE
MEGA 30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

XXX

BLACK & BLUE

CANADIAN THANKSGIVING & US COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND

MAIN EVENT
SUNDAY OCTOBER 11, 2020

INFO | TICKETS: BBCM.ORG

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www.gayvan.com
We are thrilled to be publishing our 16th annual Gay Friendly Canada Guide in multi-media formats, to reach audiences from various demographics, whether you consume your media the old fashioned way via print, online via the web, as an Amazon Kindle e-book, on your phone, or through social media outlets. So much has changed over the years, not only in media, but also how we interact socially.

Who knew a few years back that we wouldn’t need to go anywhere, or call anyone, to find out what’s going on with our friends and family, check out the latest upcoming events, world news, or meetup with someone via an app. It’s all right in the palm of our hand these days, and so many people rely on their handheld devices for a big part of their day to day lives.

That said, many still feel the need for hands-on adventure, and that’s where travel comes in. Canada has so much to offer from coast to coast, including an extensive LGBTQ+ network and infrastructure of organizations, hotels, restaurants, bars and nightclubs. Pride parades and festivals can be found in all of our major cities, as well as in many of our smaller communities, with more and more developing each year. It’s truly amazing to see major corporations, politicians, businesses, organizations, and people from all walks of life out on the streets waving the rainbow flag, and proclaiming Love is Love.

For LGBTQ+ travellers, Canada remains one of the most progressive countries in the world when it comes to LGBTQ+ rights and freedoms, which is high on the agenda for many. Although not perfect, and there is still work to be done, great progress has been made over the past sixty years or so. Canada is also a relatively safe destination compared to many other countries in the world these days.

However, this was not always the case, but society has continued to evolve to the point where it is now socially, legally and politically unacceptable to discriminate based on race, gender, or sexual orientation. Even indifference, or the unwillingness to engage with people of different mindsets, has swayed public opinion in political elections, or in everyday society.

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Drag has also evolved over the years, and can now be found on mainstream TV and streaming services, but there’s nothing like the real thing in seeing a show in person. We touch on this in this edition, and you can check out all the details in our article on pg 8.

With our milestone year marking 50 years of partial decriminalization of same sex relations nationwide, and the minting of the Equality Dollar by the Royal Canadian Mint for circulation across the country in hindsight, it’s a great time to visit Canada, or get out there to enjoy all we have if you live here.
Atlantic

Charlottetown

Canada’s east coast region, also known as the Maritimes, is made up of the provinces of Newfoundland/ Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. This historic and culturally diverse region includes stunning parks, spectacular beaches, national historic sites, and the highest concentration of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Canada.

Close to two and a half million people call this region home, spread out over rugged coastlines, scenic islands, pine forests, and delightful cities. Picture postcard perfect lighthouses dot the landscape, and some of the best seafood in the world on offer at all ports of call, are just some of the reasons to visit this dynamic region.

The rainbow flag also proudly flies throughout major cities, as well as in some of the delightful smaller urban centres throughout the summer months. Rainbow crosswalks are starting to appear where you may not expect them, and it can be an added delight to schedule a visit to coincide with one of regions LGBTQ+ Pride celebrations. Check out festivities in Halifax, Sydney, Amherst, Yarmouth, 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 2020 Charlottetown Festival, fabulous golf courses, and easy access to stunning beaches with the warmest salt water bathing north of Florida, are all why hundreds of thousands of visitors, and close to seventy major international cruise ships will visit Charlottetown in 2020. 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 26th year of festivities in 2020. 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 LGBTQ+ community. Naturally, this was welcomed by the local community, but also impressed many visiting tourists, who were pleasantly surprised. Pride PEI Festival 2020 takes place July 26 to August 2.

Resources:
discoverhalifaxns.com/plan/lgbtq-resources
gay.hfxns.org
www.facebook.com/PridePEI
www.discovercharlottetown.com/events/pei-pride-festival
www.halifaxpride.com
www.fieratemonctonpride.ca
www.facebook.com/frederictonpride
www.stjohnspride.ca
www.gaytourismpei.com
QUEBEC

Quebec, Canada’s French speaking province is world-renowned for its delightful Joie-de-Vivre, old world charm, and some of the hottest LGBTQ+ celebrations anywhere.

Quebec City
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.

LGBTQ+ nightlife in Quebec City is focused in the Saint-Jean-Baptiste neighbourhood, anchored by the largest and most famous Le Drague Cabaret. Nearby Bar St. Matthews is popular with the levi/leather/bear scene, and there are also three gay saunas in town. Rainbow flags are also visible at many other bars, pubs and businesses in the area, welcoming LGBTQ+ visitors on a regular basis. 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 is the largest city in the province, and the second largest French-speaking city in the world. Montreal’s Gay Village, Le Village, one of the largest in North America, is centred along St. Catherine Street East, and is packed with bars, pubs, clubs, saunas, restaurants, shops, guesthouses, and more.

World-renowned as one of the sexiest gay party destinations on the planet, Montreal is the sophisticated host to a long list of world-class events, including the annual Black & Blue Festival, put on by the Bad Boy Club Montreal (BBCM), attracting thousands of people from around the world. In 2020, BBCM is celebrating its 30th anniversary, XXX Black & Blue, with the main event taking place on the Canadian Thanksgiving and US Columbus Day weekend on October 11, 2020. Partial proceeds from this annual event will continue to benefit the BBCM Foundation, which provides direct assistance to people living with HIV / AIDS, as well as gay and lesbian organizations in Montreal.

Fierté Montréal Pride is the largest LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ travellers. Festivities run from August 6 – 16, 2020.

Resources:
fiertemtl.com
www.arcencielquebec.ca
www.mtl.org
www.quebec-cite.com
www.bbcm.org
ONTARIO

Toronto

Toronto, the largest city in Canada, rivals cities like New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco as a major destination for international LGBTQ+ travelers, and its annual Pride celebrations are second to none. Over five million residents call Toronto home, including the largest LGBTQ+ population in Canada.

Church-Wellesley Village, the original gay village, is an urban destination with the largest percentage of LGBTQ+-owned and welcoming businesses in Canada. Home to renowned LGBTQ+ bars and clubs, bookstores, saunas, cafes, restaurants, and community organizations, Church-Wellesley is home base for many, and often the first stop for LGBTQ 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 – 30, 2020, including the Pride Festival, June 26-28, 2020.

The West Queen West Art & Design District, known locally as the Queer West Village, is Toronto’s second neighbourhood of interest to the LGBTQ+ 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 Queer West Film Festival, Toronto Queer Arts and Culture Festival (Queer West Fest. 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 LGBTQ+ Torontonians. Somewhat more laid-back than the Church Wellesley Village, these LGBTQ+ welcoming neighbourhoods offer a wide range of restaurants, pubs, shopping and nightlife.

Canada’s largest LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ community. It was also the site for the Royal Canadian Mint’s official launch of the Equality Dollar coin in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the partial decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada.

The ArQuives, Canada’s LGBTQ2+ Archives, launched their new name and logo last year, along with a new online database that will allow the public to search their diverse collection of records. They also offer tours of their Jared Sessions House where they provide their public programs, as well as walking tours of Toronto’s LGBTQ2+ historical neighbourhoods, and presentations about their collections.

Resources:
www.seetorontonow.com
www.pridetoronto.com
www.queerwest.org
www.the519.org
arquives.ca
www.gayvan.com
Ottawa, Canada’s stylish and attractive capital city, is the fourth largest city in the country. The impressive Gothic Revival styling of the buildings on Parliament Hill is complemented by the contemporary styling of the National Arts Centre, National Gallery of Canada, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Canadian Tribute to Human Rights Monument, the stunning Rideau Canal and other national institutions of interest.

Ottawa is also the seat of national government, where Canada’s first legalized same-sex marriage was proclaimed into law nationally, on July 20, 2005, and continues to be the main centre where any legal discussions take place, and all new legislation is passed.

Ottawa’s burgeoning LGBTQ+ Village is focused centrally downtown in a six block area centred around Bank Street, and includes the Centretown Pub (CP to locals), Edges, T’s Pub, and Swizzle, as well as the Lookout Bar & Nightclub in the Byward Market, which is also located downtown.

Year-round festivals abound in the capital region, including Capital Pride. In January 2020, Capital Pride announced the appointment of its first-ever Executive Director, Osmel Guerra Maynes, who had previously held senior management positions in Vancouver and Toronto. The annual Capital Pride Festival will be celebrating 35 years of being Ottawa’s most colourful festival in August, 2020.
A lot has changed since Ted Nordhe was the first monarch in Canada’s drag community. In the 1950s, Nordhe was the founder of the Imperial Court System of Canada, and is also known as the Empress of Canada. The Vancouver chapter, The Dogwood Monarchist Society, is regarded as the Mother Court of Canada, and is part of the part of the International Court System, with chapters in Vancouver, Surrey, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton/Niagara, London, and Halifax. The International Court System has over seventy chapters in the USA, Canada, and Mexico, with each court electing Monarchs annually, including an Empress, an Emperor, and/or an Empress (gender neutral). Monarchs have mandates of raising funds for charity throughout their year, by way of hosting numerous fundraising events, and culminating in a glamorous Coronation Ball at the end of their reign.

Drag queens are also the highlight of many regular and special shows in bars from coast to coast throughout the year, at locations such as Menz and Mollyz Bar in Halifax, Cabaret Mado in Montreal, Le Drague Cabaret Club in Quebec City, The Lookout Bar in Ottawa, Woody’s, Crew & Tangos, and El Convento Rico in Toronto, Lavish Nightclub in London, Absinthe Hamilton, Fame Nightclub in Winnipeg, Divas Nightclub in Saskatoon, Twisted Element and Lolita’s Lounge in Calgary, Evolution Wonderlounge in Edmonton, The Junction, Celebrities Nightclub and 1181 in Vancouver, and Paparazzi Nightclub in Victoria, to name a few.

Drag has also gone corporate in a big way in Canada, with major banks and corporations hiring drag queens to represent them in pride parades, at signature events, and on staff as diversity advisers. Brand name hotel chains have hired drag queen ambassadors, and some airlines have hired representatives in drag for special promotions.

RuPaul has also taken drag to the mainstream worldwide with RuPaul’s Drag Race, and Canada is now also very much part of the action, with many stars from the show touring across Canada, and venues hosting regular viewing events. Canada’s Brooke Lynn Hytes was the first Canadian on the show, and took second place in season eleven. It was also announced last fall that Brooke Lynn Hytes will be a permanent judge on Season 1 of the Canadian series, Canada’s Drag Race, along with supermodel Stacey McKenzie, and Canadian actor Jeffrey Bowyer-Chapman. The series will air on Bell Media’s streaming platform Crave and OutTV in Canada in 2020.

Resources:
International Court System: internationalcoursystem.org
Canada’s Drag Race: www.youtube.com/dragraceoncrave
OUTtv: outtv.ca
Alberta

Alberta, home to over four million Canadians, is blessed with the rugged mountain peaks of the Canadian Rockies, sparkling modern cities with state-of-the-art transportation and communication systems, as well as fully developed tourism infrastructures, which are convenient starting points for amazing natural, sporting and cultural adventures.

The LGBTQ+ community is open and visible in Alberta, with celebrations in major centres like Calgary and Edmonton, but also in smaller urban areas and mountain resorts, such Jasper, Lethbridge, Red Deer and Banff, all of which have installed rainbow crosswalks in recent years in celebration of Pride.

The Pride Centre of Edmonton is a registered charitable organization that provides a variety of events, programs and services for LGBTQ2S+ people, their allies, and the broader community in the Greater Edmonton area.

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, with a young, diverse working population.

Calgary is also home to Mark Tewksbury, Olympic Gold Medalist in the 100 metre backstroke at the 1992 Summer Olympics. Mark was the first Canadian Olympian to openly identify as gay, and among other things, is now a motivational speaker and co-founder of Great Traits, a professional development company offering high performance applied leadership training in Toronto and Calgary.

In 2020, the Calgary Queer Arts Society is marking twenty one years since the start of the Fairy Tales Queer Film Festival back in 1999, as well as their later endeavours such as the OUTReels Diversity Education Program, Youth Queer Media Program.

Calgary Pride will celebrate its 30th year in 2020, and although at press time the dates had not yet been announced, historically it is usually in the last week of August, overlapping into September when necessary. Check the Calgary Pride web site to confirm dates for 2020.

www.calgarypride.ca
www.calgaryqueerartsociety.com
pridecentreofedmonton.ca
thegreattraits.com

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

Vancouver

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1 800 SANDMAN (726 3626) or visit
Gleaming glass towers accentuate the dramatic skyline of Vancouver, contrasting with a pristine backdrop of rugged coastal mountains on Canada’s pacific coast. This modern metropolis is home base for over 2.5 million ethnically diverse people, and is recognized on many global lists as one of the most beautiful places, with one of the highest qualities of living on earth. It’s also where Western Canada’s largest LGBTQ2+ community calls home.

Nine major beaches meander around the city, many with long stretches of gorgeous sandy beaches, which are easily accessed via the stunning 28 kilometre Seawall, by car, bicycle, or on foot. Some also boast Canada’s longest stretches of subtropical looking palm trees, which are an unexpected surprise for many. A fab way to top off a busy day is to sit beneath the palm trees to watch the sunset at English Bay or Sunset Beach, before heading up the hill a few blocks to Vancouver’s world-renowned Davie Village.

Davie Village, in Vancouver’s spectacular West End is considered to be the heart of Vancouver’s LGBTQ2+ community, and is home to the majority of Vancouver’s gay entertainment venues and businesses. This 24/7 neighbourhood includes a wide assortment of reasonably priced restaurants featuring cuisine from around the globe, friendly pubs with patios, dance clubs, coffee shops, hotels, saunas, and more.

The City of Vancouver and the West End Business Improvement Association (WEBIA) have worked closely with the community over the years to develop welcoming enhancements to the neighbourhood, including the iconic rainbow crosswalks at Davie and Bute streets, rainbow banners along the street posts, and computerized strings of multi-coloured LED lights above the sidewalk stretch of Davie Village.

At the heart of the village is Jim Deva Plaza, right next to the rainbow crosswalks, which honours one of Vancouver’s gay pioneers and community heroes. A stylish aquamarine speaker’s corner is also a very fitting tribute to Jim, as many who knew him would agree. Just steps away from his legendary Little Sister’s Book & Art Emporium, this is also where many begin their visit to LGBTQ2+ welcoming Vancouver.

Events galore highlight Vancouver’s LGBTQ2+ annual calendar, and 2020 will be no exception. One of the first major events of the summer season is the Queer Arts Festival, with 11 days of visual art, performance, theatre, music, dance and literary events, making it one of the top queer arts festivals in the world.

The Vancouver Pride Society will celebrate the 42nd Anniversary of Pride in 2020. Pride festivities stretch out over more than a month long schedule, kicking off with East Side Pride in June, and culminating with the Pride Parade and Sunset Beach Festival on Sunday, August 2, 2020. The annual Pride Parade is the largest parade in the city, and with official city status, attracts estimated crowds of hundreds of thousands of spectators each year. Be sure
to plan well in advance, as hotels and the best event tickets sell out every year.

The Vancouver Queer Film Festival, the largest queer arts event in Western Canada will celebrate its 32nd iteration from August 13 - 23, 2020. With a strong focus on Canadian filmmakers and telling stories of queer, trans, and two-spirit communities, as well as featuring a documentary shorts program, these films screen amongst films which premiered at Sundance, Cannes, Berlinale and other internationally recognized festivals.

**Hollywood North**

Vancouver has a thriving film and TV industry, and is the third largest production centre in North America, after California and New York. Estimates we’ve heard mention over 450 productions last year, and the industry employed more than 70,000 people, with close to 4.0 billion dollars in total spending.

Vancouver doubles for many other cities throughout the year due to an abundance of diverse landscapes, buildings and neighbourhoods, including New York, Chicago, London, San Francisco, Seattle, and more.

What’s not as commonly known is that Vancouver has been a filming location for many LGBTQ2+ shows and scenes over the years. Many productions have featured LGBTQ2+ situations and characters on screen, creating visibility and public awareness.

A few examples of this include the original L Word
series, the X Files, Riverdale, The Hundred, Chilling Adventures of Sabrina, Batwoman, Supergirl, Arrow, Legends of Tomorrow, Timeless, Supernatural, The Flash, BH90210, and even Deadpool is said to be pansexual!

So why not visit Vancouver, and check out spaces around town to see where you favourite show was shot, or invest in a pass for the Vancouver Queer Films Festival, the Latino Film Festival, or the Vancouver International Film Festival, to name a few. There’s also a pretty good chance that you may even come across a live action set on the streets throughout the city.

As you can see, 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, film and TV industries, and all walks of business. LGBTQ2+ Vancouverites enjoy this fabulous destination the same as everyone else. Tourism Vancouver says it best: You Belong in Vancouver!

Resources:
www.tourismvancouver.com
westendbia.com
www.vancouverpride.ca
queerfilmfestival.ca
queerartsfestival.com
www.gayvan.com
Victoria, British Columbia's capital city is located on the southernmost tip of spectacular Vancouver Island. This gorgeous city is known for its old-world charm, decidedly British flavour, world-class hotels, decadent dining, wine, seafood, and some of the best microbreweries on the west coast. Dramatic architecture surrounding the world-famous Inner Harbour, was designed by Francis Rattenbury, near the turn of the 19th century and includes the magnificent BC Legislative Buildings, the Crystal Garden, and the Fairmont Empress Hotel.

Other highlights include; a wide range of visitor attractions, antique shopping, art galleries, great outdoor adventure travel, second highest number of restaurants per capita in North America, and gardens, gardens, gardens!

Victoria is also home to the Royal BC Museum, one of the foremost cultural institutions in the world. Housing British Columbia's provincial museum and archives, the RBCM also offers a state-of-the-art IMAX Theatre, is host to ever-changing exhibits of interest and the Royal BC Museum and BC Archives website is a great resource. The Royal BC Museum now also co-hosts a major Night Shift: Pride event at the museum during Pride week complete with bar service, drag show, DJ’s and a large dance floor, in cooperation with the Victoria Pride Society.

The rainbow flag is flown proudly in Victoria, front and centre on the Legislature grounds for Pride. Pride festivities in Victoria now span over ten days, including a colourful parade with over 100 entries, and a large outdoor festival, with vendor booths, beer gardens, and two live performance stages. A relatively small, but active LGBTQ+ nightlife scene includes one main nightclub, as well as several mainstream clubs that host LGBTQ+ events in the downtown core. A year-round calendar of events include community events, fundraisers, theatre, drag extravaganzas, and more. Pride events now also take place in the weeks leading up to Pride, and festivities are expected to be bigger and better than ever during Pride Week, June 28 – July 5, 2020. The Victoria Pride Parade and Pride Festival will take place on Sunday, July 5, as they celebrate 27 years of Pride.

Resources: victoriapridesociety.org
www.tourismvictoria.com
royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

What’s On

Destinations, Hotels, the hottest LGBTQ+ events, and more!

@GayVanTravel
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gayvan.com

www.linkedin.com/company/1499206/admin
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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.

With hotels, motels, B&B’s and accommodations to suit every budget, Harrison Hot Springs is an all-seasons destination situated in the gorgeous Fraser Valley of southwestern BC. The Village 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.

Summer provides seemingly endless hiking opportunities, in addition to seasonal favourites such as paragliding, watersports, river-rafting, or riding the gondola over the Fraser River at Hell’s Gate.

Fall sees the amazing spectacle of thousands of Sockeye Salmon returning to their regional spawning grounds, and it’s also harvest season, with vast fields of corn and other produce spread out over the magnificent landscape.

Winter delights include skiing, boarding, tubing or snowshoeing, and the village’s namesake, Harrison Hot Springs, is a great way to start the day, or as the 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.

[Website: www.tourismharrison.com]
Daichan Nakagawa & Angus Praught
Co-owners of Gayvan.com Travel Marketing
Pronouns: He/Him
Identifies as: Gay

Favourite Vancouver Neighbourhood:
West End

“The LGBTQ2+ community is part of the cultural mosaic of the city.”

tourismvancouver.com/lgbtq2