

Gay Friendly

CANADA



ATLANTIC Halifax

QUEBEC
Black & Blue Montreal

PRIDE Coast to Coast

ALBERTA Edmonton

ONTARIO
Toronto, Ottawa

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Vancouver

Whistler, Kelowna
Harrison Hot Springs



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CANADA



We are thrilled to be publishing our 17th annual Gay Friendly Canada Guide in multi-media formats once again this year, after missing a year due to the global pandemic. However you choose to get your media, whether in print, or online, we have you covered. In addition to print, we also offer a downloadable online edition, a flip book edition, as well as a Kindle e-book edition on Amazon.

That said, many also enjoy 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. The business community has also stepped up in a big way by sponsoring LGBTQ+ events, and starting to feature LGBTQ+ people in their mainstream advertising. Considering how things were not so long ago, 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.

In a world where politicians in some places demonize the LGBTQ+ community for political gain, or others with anti-LGBTQ+ laws that punish, imprison and even kill LGBTQ+ individuals, Canada remains one of the most progressive countries in the world when it comes to LGBTQ+ 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. Canada is now known worldwide as a relatively safe destination for LGBTQ+ travellers, compared to many other countries around the world.

However, this was not always the case, but Canadian 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 elections, and in everyday society.

As a result of this, and the bravery and heroic efforts of our LGBTQ+ pioneers, today Canada hosts Pride events from coast to coast and we are happy to feature Pride locations across Canada in this edition. You can check out all the

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Cover Photo Credit:

ARTURO DÍAZ, Black & Blue, Montreal

details in our article on page 9.

We were also delighted to hear the recent announcement by the Canadian government that they will be investing \$100 million in an historic action plan to help fund LGBTQ+ community organizations over a five year term, and we look forward to seeing it in action in the years ahead.

With all of that said, we hope you enjoy our 17th annual edition. Right now is also a great time to visit Canada, or to just get out there to enjoy all we have if you call Canada home.



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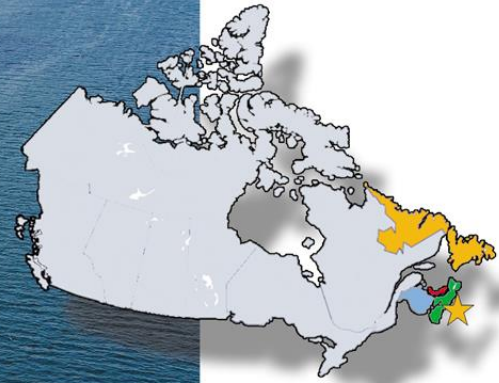


Photo Credit: Discover Halifax, Halifax Skyline

ATLANTIC

Halifax

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.

Halifax

Halifax, the capital of the province of Nova Scotia and largest city on Canada's Atlantic coast, is home to a thriving 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Halifax has a well-developed LGBTQ+ infrastructure and is home to Canada's fourth largest LGBTQ cultural festival, Pride Parade and Community Fair. Halifax Pride began in 1988 and expectations are that over 150,000 participants will join in the Halifax Pride Festival, which takes place JULY 20-30, 2023

In 2023 Halifax will also be the host city for the Unison Festival, which is a weekend choral festival featuring Canada's 2SLGBTQIA+ choruses. Every four years 22 choruses from across the country gather in a different location in Canada to celebrate a weekend of performances. The Women Next Door and the Halifax Gay Men's Chorus will be the host choruses this year and between 600 and 1000 attendees are expected.

Visit Discover Halifax's 2SLGBTQ+ pages for information and links to events, resources, allied businesses, Pride, Marriage and more.

Resources:

discoverhalifaxns.com/lgbtq
www.unisonfestivalunisson.ca
www.facebook.com/PridePEI
www.discovercharlottetown.com/events/pei-pride-festival
www.halifaxpride.com
www.fiertemonctonpride.com
www.facebook.com/frederictonpride
stjpride.ca



Photo Credit: Eva Blue - Tourisme Montreal

QUEBEC

Montreal

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 on the planet.

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 Club, and nearby Bar St. Matthews is popular with the levi/leather/bear scene. 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, is 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 in the world, 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 2023, BBCM is celebrating over three decades of producing this spectacular event which also coincides with the Carnaval des Couleurs Montreal conference, with the main events taking place on the Canadian Thanksgiving and US Columbus Day weekend in October, 2023. Partial proceeds from these annual events 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, the festivities run from August 3 – 13, 2023. Check out the following resources for more.

Resources:

- www.quebec-cite.com
- www.mtl.org
- www.fiertemtl.com/en
- www.arcencielquebec.ca
- www.bbcm.org
- carnavaldescouleurs.org



Credit: Arturo Diaz - Black & Blue Montreal



Photo Credit: Destination Toronto, Fireworks explode off the CN Tower at night

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, 2023, including the Pride Festival, June 23-25, 2023, with the Pride Parade taking place on June 25, 2023.

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.

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.

Toronto Queer Film Festival: "Established in 2016, the Toronto Queer Media & Arts Centre (TQFF) is a collectively-run, artist-run, nonprofit organization located in Toronto, Ontario. TQFF was formed to provide community art exhibition space for experimental, contemporary, and/or social justice themed film and video art by queer filmmakers." Visit their website for additional festival information.

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 services, programs and meeting spaces for the LGBTQ+ community. For example, in cooperation with the city of Toronto, The 519 and Homes First Society is opening its first dedicated shelter for 2SLGBTQ+ adults to provide temporary housing to 2SLGBTQ+ refugees with a focus on trans women, as outlined in a November 2022 news release by the city.

Another valuable Toronto-based resource is The ArQuives, Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives, which launched an 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.

Resources:

www.destinationtoronto.com
torontoqueerfilmfest.com
www.the519.org

www.pridetoronto.com
www.queerwest.org
arquives.ca



Photo Credit: Destination Canada

Ottawa

Resources:

- capitalpride.ca
- www.ottawatourism.ca
- www.suitedreams.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 where 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 was officially recognized in 2011 and is focused centrally downtown in a six block area around Bank Street. The Village is where you will find queer-owned businesses, bars and nightclubs, restaurants, rainbow coloured crosswalks, and an entertainment hub with live entertainment, as well as a community fair and beer garden during the annual Pride festivities.


Year-round festivals abound in the capital region, including the Fierté Capital Pride Festival, which is one of Ottawa’s most colourful festivals, held in August each year with 8 days of events, a festival weekend with multiple stages, the Capital Pride Parade, and an official Pride Guide. Check their website for 2023 details.

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Photo Credit: Travel Alberta - Sameer Ahmed @sameer.design

ALBERTA

Edmonton

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 as Jasper, Lethbridge, Red Deer and Banff, all of which have installed rainbow crosswalks in recent years in celebration of Pride.

Edmonton

Alberta’s capital city, Edmonton, is the northernmost major North American city, with a metro population of over 1.3 million residents. Known unofficially as Festival City, Edmonton boasts over 100 annual festivals year round.

The Edmonton Pride Festival is a colourful part of the city’s annual festival calendar, and proudly celebrates a ten day schedule of events. Contact them for opportunities to engage with the community as a vendor at the festival, to nominate someone for an Edmonton Pride Award, or to join a pride planning committee. Visitors can check out their web site, and social media outlets to get all the details to help plan your visit for 2023.

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

One unique addition to any Edmonton itinerary is a visit to the LGBTQ+ friendly West Edmonton Mall. When first built, it was the largest mall in the world. An extensive list of attractions includes Galaxyland, the world’s largest indoor amusement park, World Waterpark, with the world’s largest indoor wave pool, Santa Maria, an exact replica of Christopher Columbus’ flagship, theatres, restaurants, nightlife, and shopping galore!

Resources:

- exploredmonton.com
- pridecentrefedmonton.ca
- www.visitcalgary.com
- www.calgaryqueerartsociety.com
- edmontonpridefest.com
- www.travelalberta.com
- www.calgarypride.ca
- www.wem.ca



Photo Credit: Travel Alberta, World Waterpark, West Edmonton Mall



Photo Credit: © Montréal Pride, André Bilodeau

PRIDE Coast to Coast

As a result of the bravery and heroic efforts of our LGBTQ+ pioneers, today Canada hosts Pride events from coast to coast, in all major cities, and also in some places where you would least expect it not so long ago. Organizations such as Fierté Canada Pride now include delegates at their annual AGM from over 75 Pride organizations from across Canada: fiertecanadapride.org

For travel reference and convenience sake, following is a list of locations and websites for Pride events in 2023, which are always a great addition to any travel plans. We'll start on the east coast and work our way west. Although space will not allow us to include all known events in this article, we will include them on Gayvan.com's online Pride pages, which are an ongoing work in progress.

Newfoundland and Labrador

St. John's Pride: stjohnspride.ca

Nova Scotia

Halifax Pride: halifaxpride.com

Prince Edward Island

Pride PEI: facebook.com/PridePEI

New Brunswick

St. John Pride: facebook.com/saintjohnpride

Québec

Québec City Pride: fetearcenciel.ca
Montréal Pride: fiertemtl.com/en

Ontario

Ottawa Capital Pride: capitalpride.ca
Pride Toronto: pridetoronto.com
Pride Niagara: prideniagara.com

Manitoba

Pride Winnipeg: pridewinnipeg.com

Saskatchewan

Regina Pride: queencitypride.ca
Saskatoon Pride: saskatoonpride.ca

Alberta

Calgary Pride: calgarypride.ca
Edmonton Pride: edmontonpridefest.com

British Columbia

Vancouver Pride: vancouverpride.ca
Whistler Pride: whistlerpride.com
Victoria Pride: victoriapridesociety.org

Nunavut

Iqaluit Pride: facebook.com/groups/419262831545970

Northwest Territories

Yellowknife Pride Festival: facebook.com/yellowknifepride

Yukon

Yukon Pride Festival: <https://www.queeryukon.com>



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BRITISH COLUMBIA

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theburrard.com

Vancouver

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 kilometer Seawall, by car, bicycle, or on foot. Some also boast Canada's longest stretches of subtropical looking palm trees, which are a



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 by many 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.

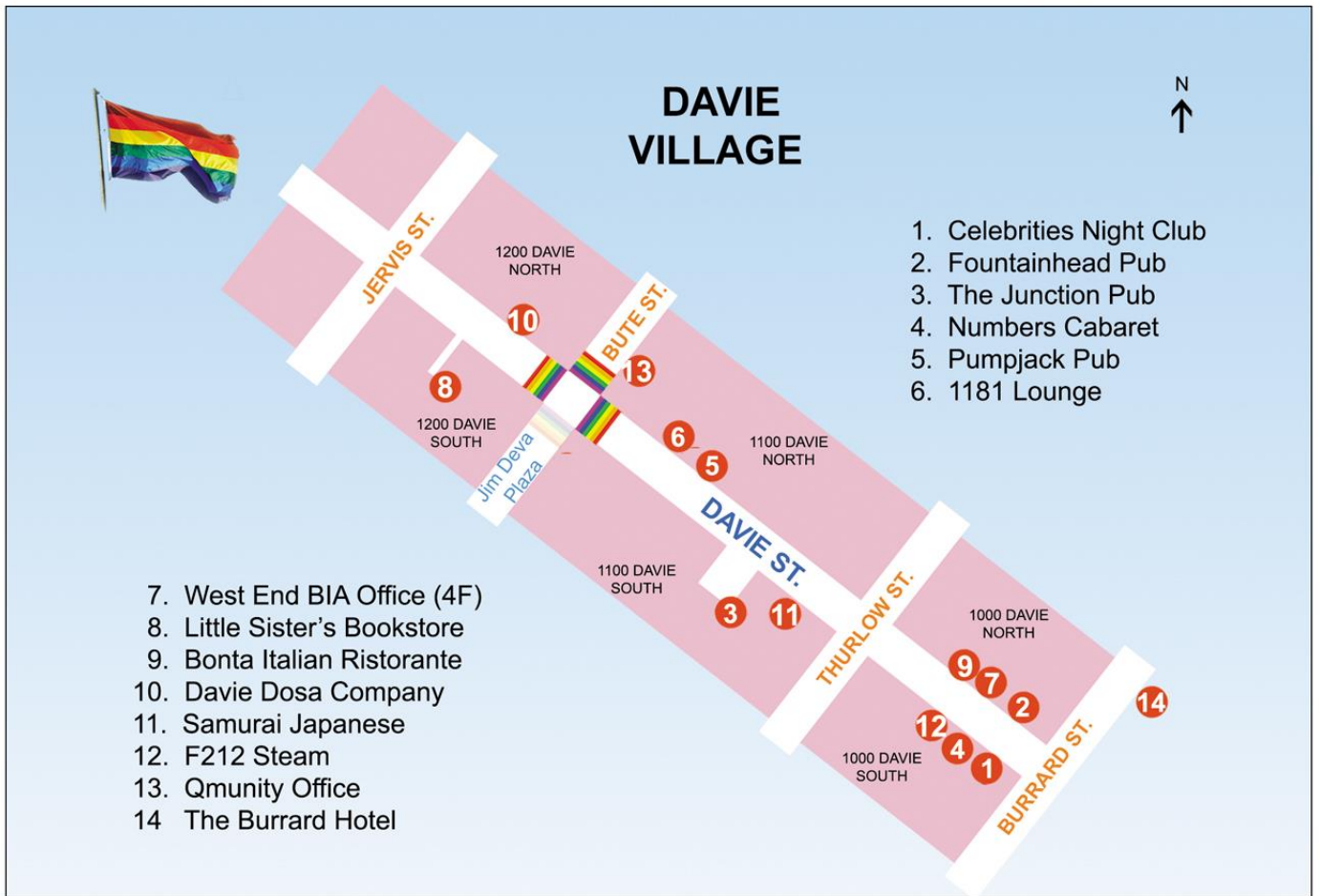
At the heart of the village is Jim Deva Plaza, right next to the rainbow crosswalks, which honours one of Vancouver’s gay pioneers and community heroes. A stylish aquamarine speaker’s corner is also a very fitting

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 LGBTQAI2S+ annual calendar, and 2023 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 produces the annual Pride Parade and Festival at Sunset Beach and 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 6, 2023. 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 Pride Society has also announced the organization’s bid to host Canada Pride in 2024. The bid, centering sustainability, will be presented at the Fierté



Canada Pride (FCP) Annual General Meeting in Kelowna in March, 2023, where FCP members will then vote for the 2024 host city. .

The Vancouver Queer Film Festival, the largest queer arts event in Western Canada will celebrate its 35th iteration from August 10 - 20, 2023. 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.

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. Perhaps Destination Vancouver says it best: You Belong in Vancouver!

Resources:

- www.destinationvancouver.com
- westendbia.com
- vancouverpride.ca
- queerfilmfestival.ca
- queerartsfestival.com
- www.gayvan.com



Photo Credit: Gayvan.com Travel Marketing



Whistler Blackcomb

Whistler Blackcomb is a world-renowned, world-class ski resort located within two hours of downtown Vancouver.

Whistler Blackcomb is world-class in every sense, with a wide range of accommodations, excellent restaurants and pubs, a thriving nightlife scene, and shopping galore. Most commonly known for its awesome skiing and snowboarding, Whistler Blackcomb is also famous as a full service, year-round destination. Stunning golf courses, incredible river rafting, scenic horseback riding, thrilling ziplining, and a multitude of other exciting outdoor adventures, including the breathtaking Peak 2 Peak Gondola, are just some of the fabulous options available.

Consistently rated as the No. 1 Ski Resort by many international media, accolades include; Top Canadian Ski Resort, Best Ski Resort in Canada, Best Ski Resort in the World, No. 1 Ski Resort for Apres Ski, No. 1 Overall Resort, and more.

Whistler Pride & Ski Festival is also rated as one of the top LGBTQ+ ski events in the world, and this is why the guest list includes visitors from all over the planet. A

fabulous lineup of events again this year will include The Welcome Party, Daily Guided Ski and Ride groups, An Evening with Bianca Del Rio, The Ryan and Amy Show, Sip N' Dip At Scandinave Spa, Thursday T-Dance, Throwback Thursday, Splash Pool Party, Friday T-Dance, Furrocious, Saturday T-Dance, Snowball-The Main Event, and more!

Best to plan ahead to book the host hotel, or choose from a wide range of accommodation via Tourism Whistler. Also highly recommended to book your event tickets in advance, or purchase a full Week Pass or Weekend Pass to get express entry to all your favourite events.

The Gayvan.com team visits Whistler Blackcomb every year, and we are thrilled to attend the Whistler Pride & Ski Festival once again as they celebrate their 30th Whistler Pride & Ski Festival, January 22-29, 2023!

Resources:

www.whistlerpride.com

www.whistler.com

www.whistlervillageinnandsuites.com

Whistler Village Inn + Suites

www.whistlervillageinnandsuites.com

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Credit: tourismkelowna.com – Nic Collar Film



Kelowna

Kelowna is the largest city in the Okanagan Valley and located a short and scenic 4 hour drive from Vancouver, or a 1.4 hour drive from the USA and Canada border.

Rural and urban; nature and culture; playtime and downtime: Kelowna isn't just one destination. It's a whole bunch of them, located in one uniquely beautiful place.

Panoramic natural beauty surrounds the lakeside city of Kelowna. As the largest metropolitan cluster located in the valley, you'll find vineyards, orchards, and beaches surrounding a lively city with a soulful urban vibe that offering a variety of arts, entertainment, and festivals as well as a mix of interesting shops ranging from boutique-indie to national faves.

Just 10 minutes from the bustling downtown heart of the

city, you can be hiking to a tri-pod worthy vista, challenging yourself on single-track mountain biking trails, standing in an orchard picking fruit right off the trees, enjoying a wine tour, or teeing off on one of 18 local golf courses. Is chilling on the beach is more your style? If so, then Kelowna's got you covered with more than 30 in the area!

Kelowna's vibrant LGBTQ+ community is active and visible, and the Kelowna Pride Festival takes place in June with a full lineup of events, including a Pride Week launch, Trans March and Social, Pride March and Festival in the Park, and more. Kelowna will also be the host city for the 2023 Fierté Canada Pride National Conference & AGM, March 9 – 12, 2023, which will see delegates from 75 Pride organizations from across Canada, hosted by Kelowna Pride. www.tourismkelowna.com www.kelownapride.com

**A Warm Welcome
Awaits in Kelowna**

KELOWNA
Okanagan Valley, BC



**Rainbow
Registered**



Credit: Explore Harrison - @coastalexemplification



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.

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.

www.tourismharrison.com

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HARRISON RIVER VALLEY

tourismharrison.com

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