



Gay Community

Outrageous and fabulous, Toronto's is full of passion, energy and the sweetest eye-candy around. A hotspot night and day and night, Toronto offers a world of arts, culture and vivacious nightlife with a vibrant gay village at the city's core.

The Village

Toronto is home to Canada's largest gay community and welcomes visitors from all walks of life. The Gay Village, or "The Village" as the locals call it, is a predominantly gay neighbourhood nestled amidst Toronto's downtown core. Centred at the intersection of Church and Wellesley Streets, the area is packed with cafés, restaurants, gay-oriented shops and a vast array of hot bars and nightspots.

Despite the many shops, people-watching remains one of the most popular Village pastimes. On any given day, hot boys and hot girls fill Church Street with energy, passion and opportunity. For even sweeter eye-candy, one must see the costumed revellers dressed to shock for Halloweek- a fun, frivol and wicked weeklong October celebration of costumed mayhem, free-flowing cocktails, fashion, entertainment and countless cute trick-or-treaters.

Proud of our Pride

But it gets even better. Each year at the end of June, Toronto plays host to Pride Week, one of the largest pride festivals in the world. This ten-day queer celebration turns streets into parades, parking lots into parties and draws a crowd of over a million supporters from across the globe. With concerts, galas, and cultural events throughout, the festival climaxes on the last day with the famous Pride Parade that takes over Toronto's Yonge Street and fills it with all the colours of the rainbow.

For those who can't make it to Pride, there are literally hundreds of other cultural events throughout the year - including Inside Out, Canada's largest lesbian and gay film and video festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, Taste of the Danforth, Fringe Festival, Word on the Street, or Folsom Fair North. A full line-up of festive stage shows run year-round from improv to off-Broadway and Canadian masterpieces to musical performances, so there's something for everyone.

When in Toronto one must explore the many museums and galleries that the city has to offer. The Royal Ontario Museum is home to thousands of years of diverse culture, while the Bata Shoe Museum has a much more specific focus. Opera and ballet offerings at the brand new Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts and Canadian art exhibits at the newly renovated Art Gallery of Ontario, from starchitect and Toronto-born Frank Gehry, are all just around the corner.

Nightlife

Renowned for Toronto's best parties, The Village pulses with energy. Week after week, it plays host to some of the world's biggest DJs with the friendliest social atmosphere. One of the best things about queer nightlife in Toronto is that it stretches far beyond the Village. Everyone's asking "Are they or aren't they?" as they party with open-

Queen's Quay Terminal at Harbourfront

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mindful, mixed crowds at bars throughout the city in neighbourhoods such as Little Italy, the Entertainment District and West Queen West.

Wining and dining

In Toronto, a world of food awaits anyone who wants to explore the cuisines of the city in one seating and experience Toronto's diversity. With 8,000 restaurants Toronto's culinary options are pretty unlimited from Indian and Asian fusion to French and Italian- Toronto will fill any belly before a night on the town. There are numerous culinary choices within the Village, Queer West Village and beyond with unconventional menus and street-side patios for people-watching. The contemporary cuisines and tasty creations of Toronto await event the most discerning foodies who will find nearly every kind of cuisine in the world represented.

Tie the knot in T.O.

Toronto is home to the first fully recognized same-sex marriage in North America. Getting married is just one of the fabulous reasons why many same sex couples choose to visit Toronto. Same sex marriages have been legal in Ontario since June 23, 2003. The Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto married the first same-sex couple in Canada and is a favourite spot to tie the knot. But like everything else in Toronto, there have lots of options such as City Hall weddings, Civic Centre weddings, or off site weddings. To marry in Toronto one must obtain a marriage license, have two witnesses join for the ceremony and obtain a marriage certificate after the ceremony.

Hit the road

The pride exhibited throughout the Toronto region extends across Ontario, giving the LGBT traveller a world of options beyond downtown. Opportunities to complement a Toronto adventure with a trip to the Niagara region, a truly diverse collection of historic communities, award-winning wineries and natural wonders comprising some of the quintessential Ontario experiences, are endless. A blend of urban and outdoor offerings, Niagara is a destination ripe with vibrant multicultural experiences, and is host to some of the best gay and lesbian events, sporting events, theatre, special events and pride celebrations in country.

Nestled against the dramatic shores of Lake Ontario are the quaint rural communities of Prince Edward County, another excellent trip from the city. This beautiful region is to Ontario what Salt Spring Island is to British Columbia: a progressive-minded collection of artists from all walks of life. Affectionately called The County, Prince Edward is a fertile creative ground, home to hundreds of local artisan shops, purveyors of antiques and crafts, glasswork studios, painters' galleries, pottery studios, sculptors' exhibits and museums. This area is also the provinces newest wine region, celebrating regional cuisine and wine with festivals and fairs, providing great opportunities to dine, sample, sip and buy – from roadside stands to fine restaurants.

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