

What's On

Destinations, Hotels, Bars, 2SLGBTQI+ events, and more!



CANADA



are thrilled to be publishing our 19th annual Gay Friendly Canada Guide in multi-media formats once again this year, for the convenience of our audience. 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. 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 2SLGBTQI+ network and infrastructure of organizations, events, hotels, restaurants, bars and nightclubs. The business community has also stepped up in a big way by sponsoring 2SLGBTQI+ events, and featuring 2SLGBTQI+ people their in mainstream advertising. Considering how things were not so long ago, it's 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 demonize the 2SLGBTQI+ places community as a distraction from real economic and societal problems for political gain, Canada remains one of the most progressive countries in the world when it comes to 2SLGBTQI+ 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 2SLGBTQI+ travellers, compared with many other countries around the world.

However, this was not always the case, and Canadian society has continued to evolve to the point where it is now 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 2SLGBTQI+ pioneers, today Canada hosts Pride events, Queer film festivals, Drag performances, and 2SLGBTQI+ cultural and sporting events from coast to coast.

Despite all of this, however, there is still a need to remain vigilante and

Features

Atlantic, Halifax - P4 Ouebec, Montreal - P5 Ontario:

Toronto - P6, Ottawa - P7

Alberta, Edmonton - P8 **British Columbia:**

Vancouver, - P9 Whistler - P12 Thompson Okanagan - P13 Harrison Hot Springs - P14 Aldesta Hotels & Resorts - P15

Front Cover Photo: Vancouver Pride Flags Credit: Gayvan.com

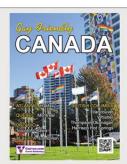
Back Cover Photo:

Toronto Skyline from Toronto Island

Credit: Gayvan.com

continue to stand on guard for equality for everyone.

With all of that said, we hope you enjoy our 19th annual edition. Right now is a fabulous time to visit Canada, or to just get out there to enjoy all we have if you call Canada home.



Gay Friendly Canada

Volume 19, December 2024









Gayvan.com Travel Marketing

1771 Robson Street, #354, Vancouver, BC, V6G 1C9 info@gayvan.com www.gayvan.com Managing Editor: Angus Praught Graphic Design: Daichan Nakagawa





Halifax - Credit: Discover Halifax - Halifax Skyline

ATLANTIC

Halifax

anada's east coast region 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 2SLGBTQI+ 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 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Halifax has a well-developed 2SLGBTQI+ infrastructure and is home to Canada's fourth largest 2SLGBTQI+ 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 17- 20, 2025.

In 2024, a couple of new 2SLGBTQI+ venues opened in Halifax, including Rumours HFX, STARDUST Bar + Kitchen, as well as pop-up Haven Dance & Night Club. Check out their links in our Resources section for additional information.

Visit Halifax Rainbow Encyclopedia, Wayves Magazine, StationDRG and Discover Halifax's 2SLGBTQI+ pages for information and links to events, resources, allied businesses, Pride, Marriage and more.

Resources:

discoverhalifaxns.com/plan/lgbthalifaxresources www.halifaxpride.com stationdrg.com www.stardustbar.ca gay.hfxns.org wayves.ca www.instagram.com/haven.hfx



Montreal - Credit: Tourisme Montreal

QUEBEC

Montreal

uebec, Canada's French speaking province is world-renowned for its delightful Joie-de-Vivre, old world charm, and some of the hottest 2SLGBTQI+ celebrations on the planet.

Quebec City

Quebec City, the lovely capital city, is often likened to a trip to Europe, without leaving North America. You can feel the history and romance of centuries in the cobblestone streets of Vieux-Québec (old Quebec), which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

2SLGBTQI+ nightlife in Quebec City is centred in the Saint-Jean-Baptiste neighbourhood, where the biggest and most famous Le Drague Cabaret Club is located. Bar St. Matthews, which is popular with the levi/leather/bear scene, and Sauna back Boys is also nearby. Rainbow flags are also seen at many other bars, pubs and businesses in the area, which regularly welcome 2SLGBTQI+ visitors. The Quebec City Pride Festival (Fête Arc-en-ciel de Québec) is a colourful four day event that happens over the Labour Day weekend every year, with drag queens, community march and parties galore!

Montreal

Montreal is the province's largest city, and the world's second largest French-speaking city. Montreal's Gay Village,

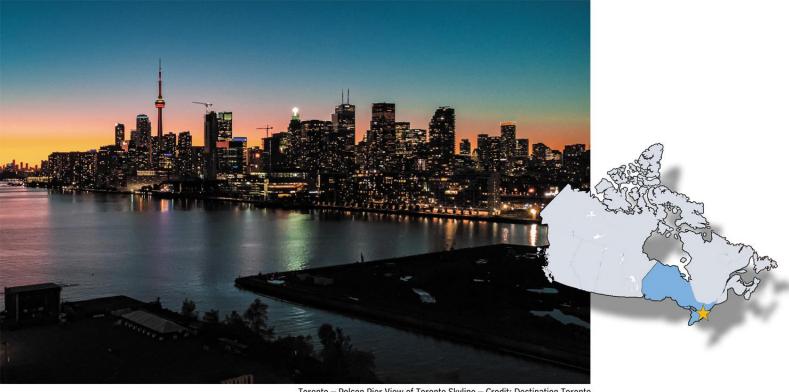
Le Village, is one of the biggest in North America, and is along St. Catherine Street East, where you can find bars, pubs, clubs, saunas, restaurants, shops, guesthouses, and more.

Popular places include Aigle Noir, Le Stud, GI Joe, Stock Bar, Le Cocktail, Bar Taboo, Complexe Sky, Oasis, Campus, Club Unity, District Video Lounge and Sauna Centre-Ville.

Known worldwide 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 Festival Fierté Montréal Pride, one of the world's largest 2SLGBTQI+ francophone celebrations of Pride. With over 200 activities based on their world-renowned gay village, Le Village, the festivities run from August 1 - 10, 2025. Check out the following resources for more.

Resources:

www.quebec-cite.com www.mtl.org www.fiertemtl.com/en www.arcencielquebec.ca fiertedequebec.ca www.villagemontreal.ca



Toronto - Polson Pier View of Toronto Skyline - Credit: Destination Toronto

ONTARIO

oronto, Canada's biggest city and fourth largest in North America, competes with cities like New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco as a major destination for international 2SLGBTQI+ travelers, and its annual Pride celebrations are unmatched. Toronto is home to more than six million people, including the largest 2SLGBTQI+ population in Canada.

Church-Wellesley Village, the first gay village, is an urban destination with the largest proportion of 2SLGBTQI+ owned and welcoming businesses in Canada. It has famous 2SLGBTQI+ bars and clubs, bookstores, saunas, restaurants, and community organizations, and it is also where many 2SLGBTQI+ Torontonians live. 2SLGBTQI+ visitors often use this as a starting point when they want to explore the city.

Toronto's extensive Pride celebrations, now called Pride Month, will happen from June 1-30, 2025, with over 800 artists, 10 stages, over 100 community events and more than 3 million attendees. The Pride 2025 Festival Weekend will take place June 26-29, 2025, with the Pride Parade on June 29th. Check Pride Toronto's website for additional details for 2025.

The West Queen West Art & Design District, known locally as the Queer West Village, is Toronto's second neighbourhood of interest for the 2SLGBTQI+ community. It has broadcasters, gay-welcoming bars, restaurants, shops, cafes, design houses and galleries galore.

Some galleries have relocated to the residential and industrial Lower Junction Triangle in recent years, anchored by the multi-floor MOCA Toronto. Queer East Toronto, which includes Leslieville, The Beaches and Greektown, are also becoming popular areas for 2SLGBTQI+ Torontonians. They

Toronto

are more relaxed than the Church Wellesley Village, and these 2SLGBTQI+ welcoming neighbourhoods have a wide range of restaurants, pubs, shopping and nightlife.

Toronto Queer Film Festival: "The Toronto Queer Media & Arts Centre (TQFF) is a collectively-run, artist-run, nonprofit organization in Toronto, Ontario. TQFF started in 2016 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 more festival information.

Canada's largest 2SLGBTQI+ Centre, The 519, is at 519 Church Street in the Church-Wellesley Village. This registered charity is an agency of the City of Toronto and works with community businesses and sponsors, to provide a wide range of services, programs and meeting spaces for the 2SLGBTQI+ community. The 519 and Homes First Society opened Pacewood, their first shelter dedicated to 2SLGBTQI+ newcomers who have arrived through a refugee pathway. The space prioritizes trans, gender diverse and non-binary persons.

Another valuable Toronto-based resource is The ArQuives, Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ Archives, which launched an online database that lets the public search their diverse collection of records. They also offer tours of their Jared Sessions House where they have their public programs, as well as walking tours of Toronto's 2SLGBTQI+ historical neighbourhoods, and presentations about their collections.

www.vohomo.ca

Resources:

www.destinationtoronto.com www.pridetoronto.com torontoqueerfilmfest.com www.queerwest.org www.the519.org arquives.ca



Parliament Hill - Credit: Ottawa Tourism

Ottawa

ttawa, the elegant and appealing capital city of Canada, is the country's fourth biggest city. The buildings on Parliament Hill have a remarkable Gothic Revival style that is complemented by the modern style 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 beautiful Rideau Canal and other national attractions of interest.

Ottawa is also the home of the national government, where the first national law that legalized same-sex marriage was announced on July 20, 2005, and where any legal debates and new laws are made.

Ottawa's thriving 2SLGBTQI+ Village was officially acknowledged in 2011 and is located in the downtown core in a six block area around Bank Street. The Village is where you can find queer-owned and operated businesses. bars and nightclubs, restaurants, rainbow coloured crosswalks, and an entertainment hub with live shows. The Village also hosts a community fair and a beer garden during the annual Pride celebrations.

The capital region has festivals all year long, including the Fierté Capital Pride Festival, which is one of Ottawa's most colourful festivals, held in August every year. Their Board of Directors and Festival Operations Committee organize 8 days of events including public art installations, a festival weekend with multiple stages, the Capital Pride Parade, and the official Pride Guide. Check their website for 2025 details.

Resources:

capitalpride.ca ottawatourism.ca/en www.suitedreams.com





Night view of Edmonton Cityscape with Walterdale Bridge - Credit: Sameer Ahmed @sameer.design

ALBERTA

Edmonton

lberta, 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 2SLGBTQI+ 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.

Edmonton

Alberta's capital city, Edmonton, is the northernmost major North American city, with a metro population of over 1.4 million residents. Known unofficially as Festival City, Edmonton boasts over 100 annual festivals, including Pride.

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 2025.

The Pride Centre of Edmonton is a registered charitable organization that also provides a variety of events, programs and services for 2SLGBTQI+ people, their allies, and the broader community in the Greater Edmonton area.

One unique addition to any Edmonton itinerary is a visit to the 2SLGBTQI+ 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:

exploreedmonton.com
edmontonpridefest.com
pridecentreofedmonton.ca
www.travelalberta.com
www.visitcalgary.com
www.calgarypride.ca
www.calgaryqueerartssociety.com



BRITISH COLUMBIA



Vancouver

ancouver, Canada's jewel on the Pacific has a dramatic skyline of gleaming glass towers, set against a dramatic backdrop of rugged coastal mountains. This modern city's metro area is home to over 2.6 million ethnically diverse people, and is ranked on many global lists as one of the world's most beautiful places, with one of the highest qualities of living. It's also where the largest 2SLGBTQI+ community in Western Canada lives.

Nine major beaches curve around the city, many with long stretches of gorgeous sandy beaches, which are easily reached via the stunning 28 kilometer Seawall, by car, bicycle, or on foot. Some also have Canada's longest stretches of subtropical looking palm trees, which are an unexpected surprise for many. A great way to end a busy

day is to sit under the palm trees to watch the sunset at English Bay or Sunset Beach, before going up the hill a few blocks to Vancouver's world-famous Davie Village.

Davie Village, in Vancouver's fabulous West End, is seen by many as the heart of Vancouver's 2SLGBTQI+community, and is where most of Vancouver's gay entertainment venues and businesses are located. This 24/7 neighbourhood has a wide assortment of reasonably priced restaurants with cuisine from around the world, cozy 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 make the neighbourhood more welcoming, 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 centre 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, where many start their visit to 2SLGBTQI+ welcoming Vancouver.

East Vancouver's Commercial Drive, known locally as The Drive, is home to Little Italy, Italian Day and the annual Dyke March. The Eastside Culture Crawl, which showcases hundreds of artists who open their personal studios to the public each fall, and Eastside Studios opened their latest event venue, The Birdhouse, where queer nightlife and art organizers host an ongoing calendar of events and fundraisers.

Events galore highlight Vancouver's 2SLGBTQI+ annual calendar, and 2025 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 Vancouver Pride Parade and Vancouver Pride Festival, with festivities that now stretch out over more than a month long schedule, starting with East Side Pride in June, and ending with the Pride Parade and Pride Festival on the Sunday of the BC Day long weekend, which falls on August 3, 2025. The annual Vancouver Pride Parade is the biggest parade in the city, and with official city status, draws estimated crowds of hundreds of thousands of spectators each year. A new parade route now launches from the intersection of Denman and Davie streets, near English Bay, and proceeds about four kilometres down Beach Avenue and Pacific Street to Concord Community



VANCOUVER FILM FESTIVAL VANCOUVER OUT ON OUT IN SCHOOLS QUEER FILM FESTIVAL VANCOUVER OUT ON SCHOOLS QUEER FESTI OUT OF SCHOOLS TILL VANCOUVER OUT ON SCHOOLS TILL VANCOUVER FESTI VANCOUVER FESTI SCR VANCOUVER OUT ON SCHOOLS TILL OUT OF SCHOOLS TILL VANCOUVER OUT ON SCHOOLS TILL SCR VANCOUVER FESTIVAL OUT OF SCHOOLS TILL OUT OF SCHOOLS TILL VANCOUVER FESTIVAL OUT OF SCHOOLS TILL OUT OF SCHOOLS

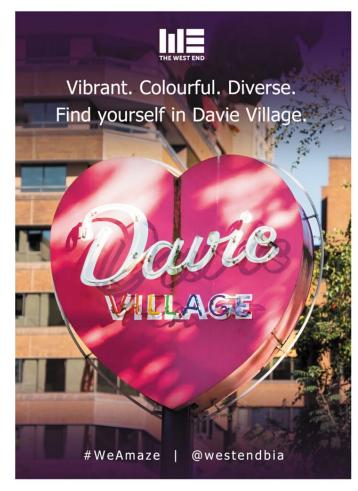
Park near Science World, which is also the new Vancouver Pride Festival location.

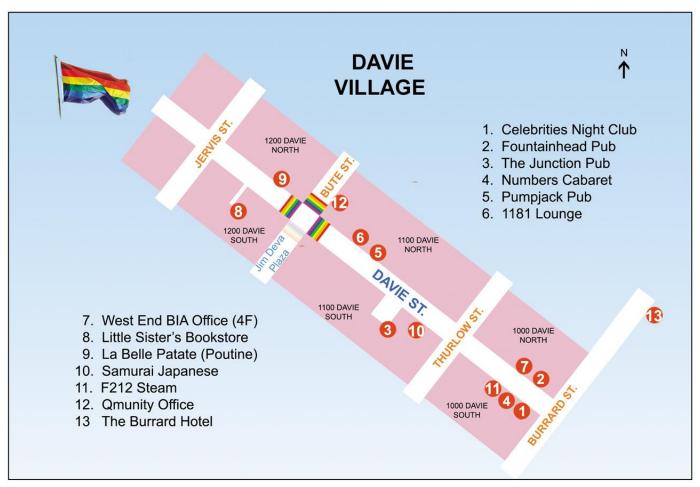
The Vancouver Queer Film Festival, the largest queer arts event in Western Canada will celebrate its 37th festival with new festival dates in 2025. With a strong focus on Canadian filmmakers and telling stories of queer, trans, and two-spirit communities, as well as featuring a documentary shorts program, these films screen amongst films which premiered at Sundance, Cannes, Berlinale and other internationally recognized festivals.

As you can see, Vancouver's 2SLGBTQI+ community is an active, visible 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. 2SLGBTQI+ Vancouverites enjoy this fabulous destination just the same as everyone else.

Resources:

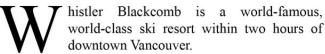
www.destinationvancouver.com westendbia.com vancouverpride.ca queerfilmfestival.ca queerartsfestival.com www.gayvan.com







Whistler Pride Parade - Credit: Gayvan.com



Whistler Blackcomb is world-class in every way, with a wide range of accommodations, great restaurants and pubs, a lively nightlife scene, and shopping galore. It is best known for its amazing skiing and snowboarding, but it is also a full service, year-round destination. Amazing golf courses, awesome river rafting, picturesque horseback riding, exciting zip lining, and many other thrilling outdoor adventures, including the stunning Peak 2 Peak Gondola are some of the wonderful options available.

It is rated as the No. 1 Ski Resort by many international media, and has received accolades such as: 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 one of the top 2SLGBTQI+ ski events in the world, and that is why visitors from all over the world are on the guest list. A fantastic lineup of events this year will include The Welcome Party, Daily Guided Ski and Ride groups, Drag Bingo, a Comedy Night, Sip N' Dip At Scandinave Spa,



Whistler Blackcomb

Thursday T-Dance, Throwback Thursday, Splash Pool Party, Friday T-Dance, Furrocious, Saturday T-Dance, Snowball-The Main Event, and more!

It is best to plan ahead to book the host hotel, or pick from a wide range of accommodation via Tourism Whistler. It is also highly recommended to book your event tickets in advance, or buy 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 excited to attend the Whistler Pride & Ski Festival again as they celebrate their 32nd Whistler Pride & Ski Festival, January 19-26, 2025. See you in Whistler!

Resources:

www.whistlerpride.com www.whistler.com





Discover the Thompson Okanagan: A Haven for All Travellers

I hompson Okanagan, where British Columbia's beauty comes to life, and everyone feels at home. It's a place that's as generous with its views as it is with its welcome. Let's take a closer look at what makes each place within the Thompson Okanagan a destination to experience.

In Kamloops, outdoor lovers will find their happy place with trails for biking and spots for taking in the natural beauty. Looking for a quiet retreat? Vernon's lakes are perfect for some downtime in the great outdoors.

In the vibrant heart of wine country, Kelowna combines the sophistication of gourmet food and fine wines with the energy of festivals and music, all set against serene vineyard views. Penticton provides a change of pace, inviting you to relax with its craft beers and scenic paths, perfect for a leisurely ride or stroll. Meanwhile, Osoyoos offers a stunning contrast with its unique desert landscape and rich cultural tapestry.

Visit the Thompson Okanagan for some unforgettable sights, friendly local vibes, and moments that you'll carry with you for a lifetime. Visit our website (www.travellingout.ca) for more information on each region, trip ideas, events, and more.





short drive from Vancouver by car, bus, boat or seaplane will take you to Harrison Hot Springs, a charming destination for any BC itinerary. You can find a variety of lodging options to fit your budget in this all-year-round village located in the stunning Fraser Valley of southwestern BC. The village overlooks the scenic Harrison Lake, where you can relax and enjoy a break from the busy city life or the stress of traveling.

Spring offers many exciting outdoor activities, such as high tech geocaching, helicopter tours, or scenic golfing, among others.

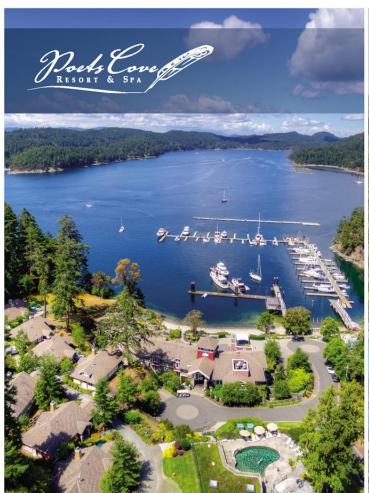
Summer is perfect for hiking, as well as other popular activities like paragliding, watersports, river-rafting, or taking the gondola over the Fraser River at Hell's Gate.

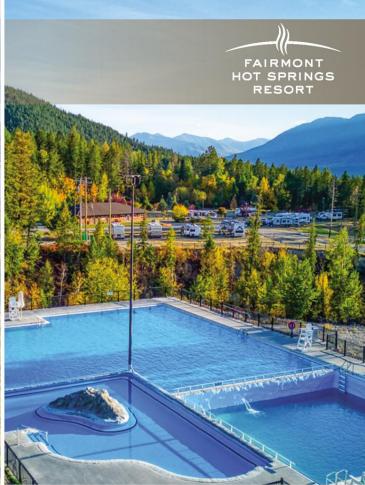
Fall is the time to witness the incredible sight of thousands of Sockeye Salmon coming back to their regional spawning grounds, and to enjoy the harvest season, with fields of corn and other crops covering the beautiful landscape.

Winter brings fun and adventure with skiing, boarding, tubing or snowshoeing, and the village's namesake, Harrison Hot Springs, is a great way to start or end your day. You can choose from two hot springs options near the shores of Harrison Lake, a public pool open all year, or a signature resort with multiple pools, exclusively for guests.

www.tourismharrison.com











ALDESTA HOTELS & RESORTS

Aldesta Hotels proudly presents their resort collection: Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa, Poets Cove Resort & Spa, and Fairmont Hot Springs Resort & Spa.

Discover unforgettable experiences in stunning destinations. Fairmont Hot Springs Resort & Spa features Canada's largest natural hot spring pools, 3 golf courses with breath taking views, diverse dining, and a beginner-friendly ski hill. Just 90 minutes from Vancouver, Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa offers outdoor adventures, therapeutic hot spring pools and the nostalgic Copper Room dining and dance experience. Poets Cove Resort & Spa, on Pender Island, provides a secluded island retreat with stand-alone cottages with private hot tubs, and promising romantic sunsets.

Aldesta Hotels curates diverse experiences, celebrating love, diversity, and the unique charm of each property.



aldestahotels.com | 1.888.870.8889

