

# CANADIAN TOURISM AIMS AT GAYS AND LESBIANS



Canada is now viewed as the world's most popular destination for gays and lesbians to take their holidays. They do not only arrive from the neighbouring United States, yet also arrive from Europe and other parts of the Americas. Canada is simply famous amongst gay and lesbian communities for its extremely welcoming attitude to these people and the friendliness levels have been compared with those in the Netherlands, France, Australia and Britain. In most other parts of the world, couples of the same sex are still frowned upon for even holding hands together in public. Indeed, 4 out of 5 gay Canadians believe that Canada is the number 1 country in the world for open-mindedness towards gay and lesbian communities.

Adopting such a policy is a very wise choice from the Canadians in terms of the country's economy. In the world's first ever survey tackling the spending habits of gay and lesbian people compared to those of straight people, shocking results were unearthed. It was revealed that gays and lesbians tend to spend as much as twice as much as their straight counterparts, the average gay spend being at \$1.166 per trip, whereas straight people splashed out an average of a mere \$627 per trip. The difference is rather significant. This increased tourism revenue was needed as Canada had been suffering a decline in the numbers of visitors from the US. The gay and lesbian travel market is now worth an estimated \$5.4 billion per year.

Amongst all 'gay friendly' destinations in Canada, Vancouver has been voted the most popular, again for welcoming attitudes and scenery. Some Vancouver travel agencies have even been trying to get gay and lesbian couples to make their wedding arrangements in Vancouver. Similarly, it is widely believed that is one of the world's few cities to really go out of its way to cater for gay and lesbian holidaymakers.

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