

3 Ways to Make Your Trip Gay -- Even If You're Straight

Posted: 5/02/14 | By: Mark Chesnut



In my last post, I highlighted 5 reasons why gay travel is great for straight people, based on a presentation that I made about the topic at the New York Travel Festival, an international tourism conference in New York City.

If you read that post or watched that video, you already know some of the basic reasons why more straight travelers are enjoying gay travel experiences. So how do you do it? How do you add a bit of gay flair to your next vacation, and know that you'll feel welcome, regardless of your orientation?

It's relatively easy.

1. Search the Listings.

To find LGBT-owned and straight-friendly accommodations, travel agents, airlines and tour operators, try these sites:

- International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association
- TAG Approved
- Purple Roofs

Purple Roofs even lists the orientation of the owners for many small hotels, and the types of guests and customers that usually stay at each property.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-chesnut/3-ways-to-make-your-trip-_b_5256805.html?utm_hp_ref=lgbt-travel

2. Check out the Big Brands.

Yes, you can travel with big, brand-name hotels, tour companies and even airlines and still go gay-friendly. Hip hotelier Kimpton Hotels, for example, has a gay travel section on its site, and super-big hoteliers, including Marriott International and Hilton Hotels, also feature gay travel information on their sites. Preferred Hotels & Resorts -- which represents more than 650 independent hotels around the world -- has a bunch of properties in its Preferred Pride collection, which are designated gay-friendly hotels.

Likewise, airlines -- including American Airlines and Delta -- post information about their gay travel offers, as well as their equality in the workplace. Aeromexico Vacations offers LGBT travel packages in Mexico, and Air New Zealand has even staged all-gay flights and an in-flight same-sex wedding.

3. Investigate your Destination.

Some countries and cities make it easy to find out how gay-friendly and progressive they are. Cities like San Francisco, New York, London and Greater Fort Lauderdale have LGBT sections on their tourism Websites that provide suggestions about activities, attractions, restaurants and hotels.

In Latin America, Puerto Vallarta and Cancun are now actively courting gay travelers (Cancun's convention and visitors bureau just joined the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association last year). But Mexico City is one of the truly groundbreaking destinations in Latin America when it comes to providing helpful, super-detailed gay travel information. The Mexico City tourism Website has a 50-page, downloadable gay guide, free and available in English or Spanish, with tons of great information about the coolest neighborhoods in the city. It was my bible during my most recent visit, and it's a great resource for anyone, gay or straight (who doesn't like hip restaurants, cool art galleries and great nightlife?).

Other Latin America destinations, like Puerto Rico and Argentina, are gay-popular but don't post much information on their official tourism Websites -- but on independent sites, you can still find gay-friendly Latin America listings like gay bars in Panama and the five biggest gay destinations in Latin America (both of which I featured on my own blog).

Some independent gay hotels promote their straight-friendliness right on their own Websites. If you look at the very first page for The Highlands Resort in California's Russian River Valley, you'll see a message that it's a "gay and lesbian (straight-friendly) retreat." The description notes that most of its guests -- about 98 percent -- are gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual. But it adds this note too: "You do not need to be G, L, T or B. You just need to be comfortable around folks who are."

And that's what we all want when we travel, isn't it? To be comfortable -- and to have a great vacation.