



TRAVEL

## Why You Need To Visit Denver Right Now

With its cultural offerings, food scene, and LGBT-friendly attitude, if the Mile High City isn't on your radar, it should be.

by Bryan van Gorder 7/14/2017

---

An estimated 350,000 people poured into Denver's Civic Center Park a few weekends ago for the city's annual PrideFest, making it the largest event in its 41-year history. What left an impression, however, wasn't the size of the crowd but its enthusiasm.

Perhaps too much enthusiasm, based on the embarrassed expression worn by one gay teenager as he watched his mom and dad excitedly cheer along to the drag performance happening on the Main Stage. Of course, the whole point of Pride has been so that some day all gay teens could be mortified by their uncool parents at Pride, and that it would be normal. And here, in Denver, it felt normal.

So why doesn't Denver rank higher on many LGBT travelers' destination lists? It should.



Photo by WestEnd61/Getty Images

A recent [Gallup analysis](#) of census data revealed Denver ranks ninth in percentage of residents who identify as LGBT.

For the past decade, the Mile High City has experienced a population boom; last year alone the U.S. Census Bureau reported the city added an average of 1,000 new residents each month. And, in this case, change has been very good. The populace is young, well-educated, and physically fit (in fact, the fittest in the country.) They also donate more public funding to the arts than any other in the U.S.



Photo By Joe Amon/The Denver Post via Getty Images

The Denver Art Museum houses more than 70,000 works across 10 permanent collections as well as rotation exhibitions throughout the year. Currently on view through October 22, *Mi Tierra: Contemporary Artists Explore Place* features site-specific installations by emerging Latino artists like Gabriel Dawe, who created "Plexus no. 36" (above) using thread. The artist chose the medium in response to his grandmother telling him as a child that sewing was for girls.

For those who can't get enough visual stimulation, the nearby *the ART* boutique hotel has a stunning collection of its own on display throughout the property. Purported to be worth more than the building itself, the collection contains original works from Sol Lewitt, Frank Gehry, Deborah Butterfield, Ed Ruscha, and many more. The spacious rooms also come with stunning views, an Illy espresso machine, and snacks.





Every July, CinemaQ, Denver's LGBT film festival offers a full line up of features and documentaries for cinephiles to enjoy. The 2017 program included *The Death and Life of Marsh P. Johnson*, *Tom of Finland*, *Rebels on Pointe* and a special "Film on the Rocks" showing of *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* at the Red Rocks Amphitheater.



Photo by Jason G. Bahr/Getty Images

Possibly one of the most spectacular concert venues anywhere, The Red Rocks Amphitheater, brings legendary acts from all musical genres to its stage each summer and early fall. During the day time, fitness enthusiasts can be found running up and down its 70 rows of stadium seating or hiking along the two trails within the surrounding park that offer spectacular rock formations, valleys and a natural meadow along the way.

When it comes time to pick up souvenirs for everyone back home, stop into Rockmount Ranch Wear. The company has been an innovator in western wear for three generations and has been worn by everyone from Cary Grant to Queen. Rockmount also provided the wardrobe for *Brokeback Mountain*.



 **snoozeameatery**  
Snooze, an A.M. Eatery [Follow](#)

snoozeameatery in case you're wondering, we ARE open for 4th of July and we'd love to see you!  
#MySnooze

...

...

...

#Repost @ttmharrison

...

Blackberry subLIME pie pancake. Breakfast or dessert? Hard to say when it comes to @snoozeameatery. 🍓🍓🍓  
#zagat #foodgawker #thekitchn #feedfeed #buzzfeed #drollclub #forkfeed  
#yahoofoods #Wetryitordiet #foodienation #dailyfoodfeed #eeeeeats #citymenu #f52grams #foodie #buzzfeedfood #instayum #myfab5

♡ 💬

**516 likes**

2 DAYS AGO

Add a comment... ...

Denver also has an incredible food scene. Start your day with breakfast at the aptly named Snooze an A.M. Eatery. Although they have expanded to numerous locations in four states, Denver is where it all started. Chow down on chilaquiles benedict or a pancake flight and know that your dollars also help the local area. Each Snooze pairs up with local charities—including some that service the LGBT community—as part of their company mission.

Grab lunch at one of Denver's trendy collective eateries, a concept akin to an upscale food court without the mall. At [Avanti Food & Beverage](#), for instance, with its seven mini-restaurants, you can easily order a spicy fried chicken sandwich from The Regional, some polenta fries with sweet pepper ketchup from Chow Morso, and then meet back up with your friends to compare and share your finds.





Photo courtesy of Mr. Tuna

For dinner, head to Mr. Tuna from Chef Troy Guard for satisfying dishes like the duck confit roti taco (above), spring pea agnolotti with burrata and sorrel, or diver scallop with root vegetable hash. (The portions are big think about sharing.)

For something altogether different head to *Ophelia's*, a restaurant and live music venue housed in a former brothel. There are plenty of great options from the spicy lamb merguez flatbread with fried chickpeas and Syrah onions, the kicky dry rub ribs, or the 600-degree asparagus. On the way out, in lieu of a dinner mint, grab a condom from the hostess stand.



Finish off your night along Colfax Avenue where you will find a few of Denver's many gay bars. Two-step into Charlie's Nightclub, a country-western meets top 40 mash up of a saloon; X Bar, with its weekly events like Thursday night Lip Synch Battle, dancing during DTF Fridays, or the Sunday GoGo Carnival beer bust.

For more information on Denver and all it has to offer LGBT travelers, visit [Denver.org](http://Denver.org).