

Flying solo

Singles- and LGBTQ-friendly winter destinations.

by Doug Wallace

When you've made the decision to go it alone and head south for a little R&R by yourself, you want just the right environment. At these now-trending destinations, you'll feel comfortable in your own skin, safe travelling on your own and given the opportunity to meet others when you feel like it. If groups are not your thing and your BFF can't come, spend some quality time with the best travel companion in the world — you.



Willemstad, Curaçao

The southern Caribbean island of Curaçao has Dutch roots and keeps close ties with the European Union, so it's comfortable with the LGBTQ crowd. Capital city Willemstad is continually transforming its once-derelict neighbourhoods into little enclaves of arts and culture. The town's walkable Pietermaai District, once run-down and impoverished, is now an exciting blend of old and new, a hotbed of cocktail bars, high-end fusion dining, music and art. It's still a little shabby chic, but the architecture is stunning, with art deco buildings and colonial mansions enjoying a new lease on life as brasseries, boutique hotels, museums, shops and galleries. Use Pietermaai as a home base for your other Curaçao adventures. —curacao.com, pietermaaidistrict.com

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

The annual Caribbean Pride Week at the adults-only CHIC Punta Cana each September is rife with pool parties, celebrity DJs and nightly performances. The resort's social atmosphere keeps the party moving from day to night, with a mix of Las Vegas vibes and Miami style rolled into one. Facilities include a casino, a black jack station, an oxygen bar, a small nightclub and a mermaid pool, with glass windows on two sides so you can see what's going on underwater. Upgrade to Diamond Club status for perks like an exclusive beach area and a private lounge stocked with premium spirits. Off-resort excursions, many of them involving beer and bourbon, are worth the effort. —caribbeanpride.com, chicresorts.com



CURAÇAO PHOTO, COURTESY DOUG WALLACE; PUNTA CANA PHOTOS, COURTESY CHIC



Riviera Maya, Mexico

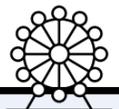
The five-star, adults-only UNICO 20° 87° Hotel Riviera Maya, a half an hour south of Playa del Carmen, bills itself as an “all-exclusive,” all-inclusive resort, with a laundry list of perks such as butler service, select spa services, 24-hour room service and free phone calls home all built into the cost. The resort promotes a social atmosphere, and guests are encouraged to mix but not for anything as mundane as beach volleyball or aqua fitness classes — think live music events, mixology classes and cool off-property excursions that take you into the real Mexico. The food is stellar. At Cueva Siete restaurant, one of four on the property, traditional Mexican dishes are given a modern twist by a rotating lineup of award-winning Mexican chefs. —unicohotelrivieramaya.com

RIVIERA MAYA PHOTOS, COURTESY UNICO; PANAMA PHOTO, COURTESY ERIC LINDBERG



Adventure Cruise, Panama

For a little unscripted, out-of-the-box fun, a weeklong, small-ship cruise through the Panama Canal could be just the ticket for your solo venture south. With adventure cruise experts Uncruise, you visit an Indigenous Darién Jungle community, hike through forest reserves, kayak through mangrove-filled coastal inlets and traverse the Panama Canal, seeing the country from both the Pacific and Caribbean coastlines. With a smaller crowd, itineraries are looser, and you connect easily with fellow travellers, sharing a relaxed cultural adventure. An afternoon playing volleyball on a totally deserted island can do wonders for body and soul. —uncruise.com, visitpanama.com



MYRTLE BEACH

Anchoring South Carolina's Grand Strand, a 100-kilometre string of sandy coastline, Myrtle Beach is renowned for its golf courses, beachfront boardwalk arcades and great restaurants. You can fly, drive or take the train, and enjoy two vacations in one: a cosmopolitan city escape with plenty to see and do, and a relaxing beach retreat if you'd rather step back and read a good book. —visitmyrtlebeach.com/plan/visitors-guide

BONUS TIP

Enjoy a quality Instagram moment on the Skywheel, one of the tallest Ferris wheels in the United States.

Road Trip, Ecuador

Adventure travel isn't just for the young; middle-aged young-at-hearts are flocking to eco-travel in droves. And small-group adventure in Ecuador is especially intriguing: embrace the Andes and the Amazon, enjoy hot springs and haciendas. Mineral-rich geothermal waters can be found in the town of Baños, which is as big on adventure sports as it is on spas. Head out on the hiking trails or venture to the Swing at the End of the World – a well-photographed wooden swing that looks out to active volcano Tungurahua. At one of the ecolodges in Yasuni National Park in the Amazon rainforest, visitors can interact with local communities, learn about their way of life, sample the food and just simply be at one with the jungle, which teems with wildlife. ■
 —gadventures.com



Good to Go

GOING OUT OF PROVINCE OR COUNTRY?

Extended Health Care travel coverage gives you peace of mind.

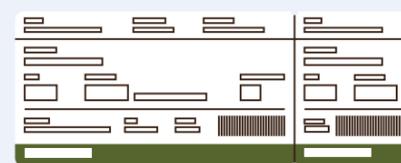
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If you have to cancel your trip due to a medical emergency, the trip cancellation benefit is there for you. The Extended Health Care plan covers you for up to \$6,000 per insured person per trip for prepaid, non-refundable travel costs.

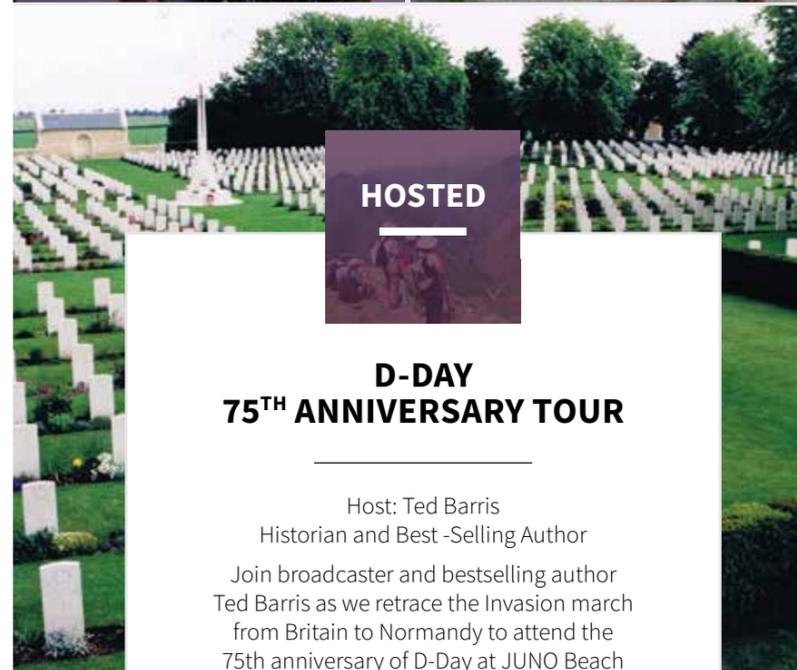
If you do have to cancel your trip, contact Allianz before your planned departure date and within 48 hours of cancelling.



When you travel, keep proof of departure from your province of residence, in case you have a medical emergency. Each insured traveler needs their own proof of departure. Airplane boarding pass, duty-free receipt, signed credit card receipt or credit card statement are all accepted documents.



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HOSTED

D-DAY 75TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

Host: Ted Barris
 Historian and Best-Selling Author

Join broadcaster and bestselling author Ted Barris as we retrace the Invasion march from Britain to Normandy to attend the 75th anniversary of D-Day at JUNO Beach in France. We are pleased to have Ted Barris lead a unique tour following the steps of Canadians as they participated in the greatest amphibious invasion operation of the Second World War to launch the liberation of northwest Europe.

🚗 Visits to:

London - Bletchley Park - Portsmouth - Normandy - Deauville - 75th Anniversary D-Day Observances - Arromanches - D-Day Invasion Area - Battle of Normandy - Paris

📍 **\$5,395*** p.p.

9-night tour

Departs Toronto:
 May 31, 2019

Group size: 55 maximum

HOSTED

PORTUGAL CULINARY TOUR

As part of our culinary series, our Porto to Lisbon tour is not to be missed. This tour is a week full of Portuguese treats and traditional cuisine to learn about, taste and enjoy. In addition to feasting on local specialties, we will also travel through the peaceful and quaint countryside passing olive groves and vineyards famous for wine and of course, port.

The Douro Valley, home to Port wine production, will be a key feature of the tour.

🚗 Visits to:

Lisbon - Porto - Douro Valley - Pinhao - Lamego - Viseu - Coimbra - Obidos - Sintra - Cascais - Estoril

📍 **\$4,895**** p.p.

9-night tour

Departs Toronto:
 Oct. 17, 2019

Group size: 24 maximum



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