



Gear up and get ready to drive some of the world's top LGBTQ+-friendly road trips. (Photo: Getty Images)

#### Road Trips

## Ready to Ride, Rainbow Road Warriors? 5 LGBTQ+-Friendly Road Trips That Dazzle

By *Kwin Mosby*

Go beyond classic U.S. road trips on your next vacay and hit the asphalt on some of the most scenic drives near or in LGBTQ+-friendly countries or cities, including Padua, Italy; Vancouver, British Columbia; Cape Town, South Africa; and Melbourne, Australia.

Consider adding these five road trips to your to-do list if you're an LGBTQ+ road tripper. Just remember to grab your shades, drop the top on your convertible and pack a healthy dose of excitement for the adventures that lie along the road ahead.

### Cape Town to Port Elizabeth, South Africa



Grab a designated driver and explore wine country. (Photo: Getty Images)

South Africa's warm and welcoming culture is just one reason why it's a popular destination among LGBTQ+ travelers. Rainbow road warriors should consider the 464-mile drive between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Take note, however: A designated driver will be necessary if you plan to visit one or more of the 65 wineries along Route 62.

Wine connoisseurs converge on picturesque wine towns, including Paarl, the largest town in the Cape Winelands, known for producing full-bodied reds, crisp whites and the region's popular shiraz.

Work off the calories you've imbibed with a two-day hike on Donkey Trail over the Swartberg Mountains, or check out the black wildebeest, leopard tortoise and Burchell's zebra at the [Klaasvoogds Game Reserve](#).

### The Great Ocean Road, Victoria



Be sure to pull over and explore idyllic beaches along the Great Ocean Road. (Photo: Getty Images)

In Australia, the famed Great Ocean Road along the southern coast connects Torquay and Allansford in Victoria. It's an easy two-hour drive, but you may spend most of your time hopping out of the car to take Instagram-worthy photos using the blue waters of the Southern Ocean as the backdrop.

Start your road trip in Torquay and traverse Australia's most stunning coastline, also known as Shipwreck Coast, stopping to check out the limestone rock formation known as Twelve Apostles (though only eight remain), explore Port Campbell National Park, visit a 19th-century shipwreck at Loch Ard Gorge, and then make a pit stop at Gibson Beach, accessible via Gibson Steps, a rocky staircase.

While you're in the area, spend a couple of days in Melbourne, where LGBTQ+ travelers converge on the city for events like the [Melbourne Queer Film Festival](#), [Midwinta Gala](#) and [Midsumma Festival](#), the city's answer to Sydney's Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras.

### San Jose to Quepos, Costa Rica

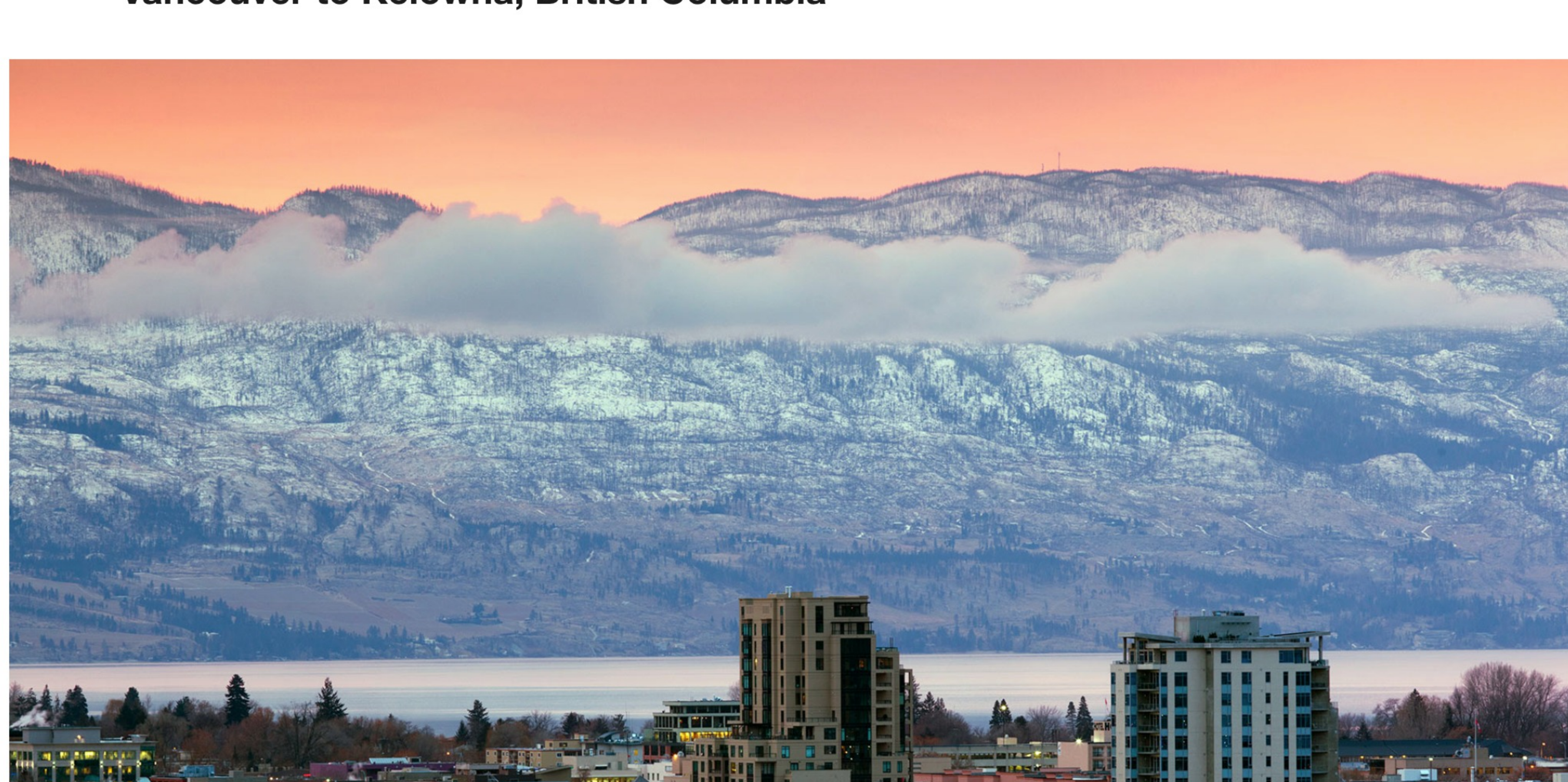
Nature lovers will enjoy this road trip that starts in Costa Rica's capital, San Jose, a bustling metropolis with myriad cultural sights and a lively LGBTQ+ community. The nightlife is also worth a mention, including [La Avispa Discoteque \(The Wasp\)](#), a popular watering hole open for nearly 50 years.

Rent a vehicle with a sturdy suspension to handle the bumpy roads and random potholes ahead. First, head north on a three-hour drive to San Carlos to witness the natural grandeur of Arenal, one of five active volcanoes in Costa Rica.

After a hike over the lava fields and through the rainforest, at the base of the volcano, consider taking a relaxing dip in one of the 12 hot springs located outside of Arenal National Park.

Next, head south along Route 34, hugging the country's Pacific coast and enjoying views of pristine beaches as you pass through small towns and lush rainforests. The small but hip town of Quepos is your final destination. It's home to gay-friendly Manuel Antonio Beach, where surfing, horseback riding, nature hikes and catching some rays are the favorite pastimes for locals and tourists.

### Vancouver to Kelowna, British Columbia



Kelowna offers the opportunity to experience nearby wine country. (Photo: Getty Images)

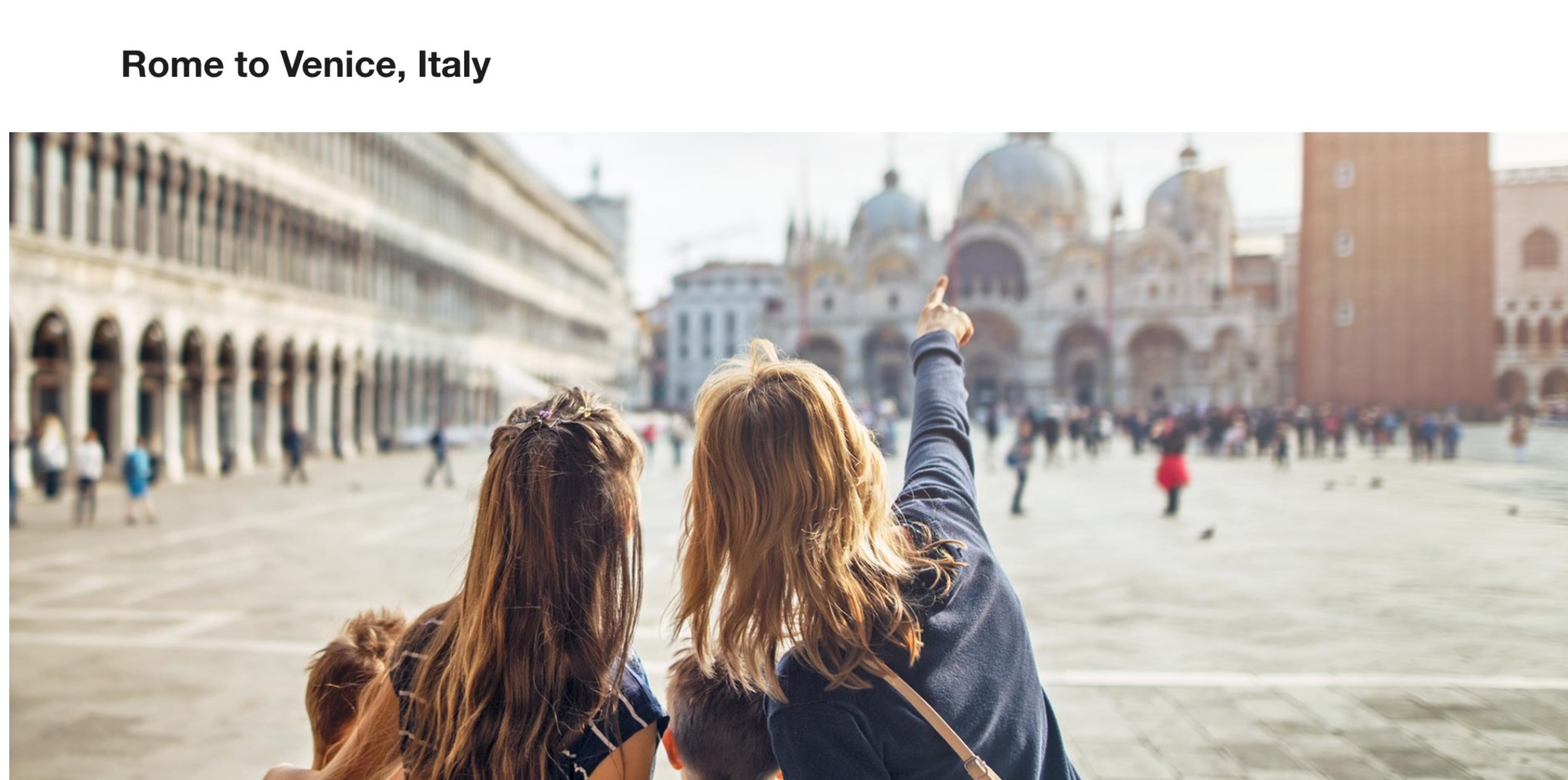
While you're in Vancouver, brave a walk across the swaying Capilano Suspension Bridge perched almost 230 feet above a river, or keep your feet planted on solid ground and visit Davie Village, the city's gayborhood.

Before your road trip begins, experience Vancouver's diverse food scene and try unique restaurants such as [Forage](#), where Chef Welbert Choi conjures up dishes prepared with locally farmed, seasonal and foraged ingredients paired with local wine, beer and spirits.

Hit the road and drive four hours east to Kelowna, a small city near Okanagan Lake and nestled between the majestic Rockies and Cascade mountain ranges. Known as the "Napa of the North," the region has more than 40 wineries within a 20-minute drive. Go wine tasting at the [Cedar Creek Estate Winery](#) — one of the best in the region — to sample their Estate Chardonnay, Estate Syrah, Estate Merlot and Platinum Rosé.

LGBTQ+ wine connoisseurs can plan for an autumn trip for [OUT in the Valley](#), Okanagan Valley's newest and "queerest" wine festival. The city also hosts two annual Pride events, including [Kelowna Pride](#) in June.

### Rome to Venice, Italy



See the sights in Venice. (Photo: Getty Images)

Even though LGBTQ+ people still face some legal challenges in Italy, the country is slowly making strides to protect their rights, recently recognizing adoptions abroad by same-sex couples. This trip is not ideal for a family with antsy kids, but adults will enjoy this journey. This six-hour drive could be knocked out quickly, but stopping to take in the sights between these two cities will be worth the extra time.

Visit Rome's historic sites and nearby Vatican City before continuing your journey north and through both well-known and lesser-known towns on this multiday drive. Marvel at the hill town of Assisi, tuck into traditional meals of *ribollita*, *lampredotto* and *bistecca alla Fiorentina* in Florence, and stop to take a photo in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Romantics can park their car in Verona to see the famous balcony featured in Shakespeare's classic, "Romeo and Juliet." Afterward, visit Padua, known for its friendly LGBTQ+ community and a gay beach on the Brenta river. At night, socialize with the locals at Piazza delle Erbe before starting a bar crawl to fun spots such as the [Flexo Club](#) and [Anima Underground](#).

As you approach your final destination, Venice, leave your car on the mainland to avoid expensive parking fees in Piazzale Roma or Tronchetto. Let someone else do the work. Allow a gondolier to take you on a fun ride through the canals, and go shopping at Ca' del Sol to pick up an exquisite handmade Venetian mask to commemorate the end of your journey.