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29 REASONS FOR LGBTQ TRAVELERS TO VISIT PHILADELPHIA IN FALL 2019
Bianca Del Rio, Randy Rainbow & Elton John Make Philly Appearances This Fall

PHILADELPHIA, July 29, 2019 – Philadelphia’s lively lineup of LGBTQ events keeps fall calendars popping from Labor Day through Thanksgiving. This autumn, Philly hosts a 20th-anniversary run of *Rent*, a visit from singing YouTube satirist **Randy Rainbow** and *RuPaul’s Drag Race* star **Bianca Del Rio** in a new one-woman show. On the concert scene Riot Grrrls **Sleater-Kinney** perform at The Fillmore Philadelphia, and the one-and-only **Elton John** appears for two nights at the Wells Fargo Center.

Fall also means the return of annual LGBTQ events, including **OutFest**, the nation’s largest National Coming Out Day celebration; **Fringe Festival**, always packed with an array of riveting LGBTQ-centric theatrical performances; moving storytelling performances in the **First Person Arts Festival**; and Henri David’s annual **Halloween Ball**.

Here’s a list of must-do LGBTQ happenings this fall in Philly:

Festivals, Block Parties & More:

- 1. Philadelphia Fringe Festival** – Eighteen days and thousands of live performances spotlight the creativity coming out of Philadelphia’s arts community. Shows take place in venues all over the city, run the gamut from straight plays to musical revues to scavenger hunts, and, this year, include LGBTQ performances that extend into Opera Philadelphia’s own cutting-edge festival. **September 5-22.**
 - **Late Night Snacks** – The Bearded Ladies reprise their Fringe Festival hit cabaret from last year, again featuring a rotation of sundry and sultry performers, pricing tickets on a sliding scale and encouraging guests to spend the evening—or just pop in for a cocktail. New this year: It takes place in a South Philly industrial space, with a run that extends past the Fringe Festival to coincide with Opera Philadelphia’s O19. **September 7-29.** 1316 Percy Street, (215) 413-1318, fringearts.com
 - **Un Poyo Rojo** – Argentina’s expressive duo brings a signature amalgam of dance, sport and sexuality in a performance designed to provide comic relief and to cut deep. **September 19-21.** Christ Church Neighborhood House, 20 N. American Street, (215) 413-1318, fringearts.com

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- **Let Me Die** – In this world premiere, rock-star baritone Joseph Keckler and cast reenact over-the-top death scenes from opera, combining them with original narratives and music for an absurdist, poetic and morbid meditation. The opera also extends beyond the Fringe Festival and into Festival O19. **September 21-28**. FringeArts, 140 N. Columbus Boulevard, (215) 413-1318, fringearts.com
- 2. **Festival O19** – In addition to the two performances above, Opera Philadelphia’s fall festival includes company premieres of Handel’s *Semele* (September 19-28) and fairytale-like *The Love for Three Oranges* (September 20-29), along with the much-anticipated world premiere of *Denis & Katya*, based on a true Russian tragedy (September 18-29). **September 18-29**. Various locations. (215) 732-8400, operaphila.org
- 3. **Philly AIDS Thrift 14th Anniversary Block Party** – One of fall’s quirkiest block parties returns for its 14th go-round right outside Philly AIDS Thrift in Queen Village. Out WXP DJ Robert Drake spins tunes, while attendees enjoy a carnival-like atmosphere featuring a moon bounce, games, food trucks, a pie-eating contest and the day’s main attraction, the Celebrity Dunk Tank. **September 21**. 710 S. 5th Street, (215) 922-3186, phillyaidsthift.com
- 4. **OutFest** – One of the world’s largest National Coming Out Day celebrations happens in the heart of the Gayborhood. The daylong fete shuts down 12 blocks to make room for carnival games, live performance stages and more than 150 food vendor and other booths, while bars shake up cocktails, serve beer on the street and host local DJs. **October 13**. 12th & Locust Streets, (215) 875-9288, phillygaypride.org
- 5. **AIDS Walk Philly** – AIDS Fund’s annual charity walk kicks off at Eakins Oval in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art before sending participants along a scenic, Schuylkill River-adjacent route along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The 5K walk begins and ends with a small festival at the starting line; that’s where attendees can grab hydrating drinks and check out panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt honoring those who lost their lives to HIV/AIDS. **October 20**. 2600 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, (215) 731-9255, aidswalkphilly.org
- 6. **First Person Arts Festival** – The citywide festival spotlighting and championing the storytelling arts returns for a two-week run that includes LGBTQ-centric works such as Penny Arcade’s *Bitch! Dyke! Fag! Whore! (or B!D!F!W!)*, showing during the festival’s first three days. The internationally toured show deals with AIDS, pornography and prostitution through erotic dance, comedy and audience participation. **November 3-17**. Various locations, including Underground Arts, 1200 Callowhill Street, (267) 402-2055, firstpersonarts.org

Drag & Such:

7. **Nina West** – The *RuPaul’s Drag Race* contestant who nabbed the Miss Congeniality title in the season 11 finale offers the consummate showgirl performance, with a wardrobe of campy, over-the-top costumes to boot. **September 8**. Tabu Lounge & Sports Bar, 254 S. 12th Street, (215) 964-9675, tabuphilly.com
8. **GayBINGO!** – A troupe of fab drag queens leads this monthly bingo night that benefits AIDS Fund Philly. Each romp has a different theme—usually with a silly twist—and features cash prizes and live musical numbers. **September 14, October 12, November 9**. Congregation Rodeph Shalom, 615 N. Broad Street, (215) 731-9255, aidsfundphilly.org
9. **The Rainbow Connection: A Tribute To The Muppets** – Two-time *RuPaul’s Drag Race* contender Mimi Infurst and a band of gender-bending instrumentalists meet up for an adults-only songfest dedicated to The Muppets. The setlist includes ditties from The Muppet movies, *Fraggle Rock* and *Sesame Street*, plus a guaranteed handful of Miss Piggy references. **September 27**. Franky Bradley’s, 1320 Chancellor Street, (215) 735-0735, frankybradleys.com

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10. **Bianca Del Rio** – The witty *RuPaul's Drag Race* winner (season 10) and self-proclaimed “Clown in a Gown” brings her latest comedy tour, *It's Jester Joke*, to the Avenue of the Arts. Irreverent Rio spills the tea on her latest travel adventures and offers her trademark tell-it-like-it-is commentary on politics, social media and pop culture. **October 2.** Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, 300 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999, kimmelcenter.org
11. **Martha Graham Cracker Cabaret** – One of Philadelphia's most beloved drag queens sashays onto stage for a two-night show that should satisfy every one of her fans. The first night finds the diva singing with a full band and string quartet. On night two, Ms. Graham Cracker presents a more stripped-down affair with her regular band and a slew of top-secret special guests. **October 24-25.** FringeArts, 140 N. Columbus Boulevard, (215) 413-1318, fringearts.com
12. **Rocky Horror Drag Queen Show** – This movie classic gets the full drag treatment courtesy of *RuPaul's Drag Race* alum Mimi Infurst and a cast of talented queens, lip-syncing the 1975 rock-and-roll fantasy film in its entirety. **October 26.** Punch Line Philly, 33 E. Laurel Street, (215) 606-6555, dragdiva.com
13. **Todrick** – Todrick Hall, who's choreographed Beyoncé and appears regularly as a panelist and mentor on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, hits Philly on the heels of his three-part EP release *Haus Party*, which he called a “love letter to the LGBTQ community.” Audiences can expect a dazzling, tightly choreographed spectacle featuring fierce drag, outlandish costumes and some of the best voguing this side of *Pose*. **November 11.** The Fillmore Philadelphia, 29 E. Allen Street, (215) 309-0150, thefillmorephilly.com

Halloween:

14. **Pride Night at Terror Behind the Walls** – Each year, Eastern State Penitentiary turns the historic prison into a multi-attraction house of horrors. One night is dedicated to scaring the pants off (not literally) LGBTQ guests. Afterwards, relieved survivors can toast gay Christmas at an after-party in The Speakeasy at Al Capone's Cell. **October 9.** Eastern State Penitentiary, 2027 Fairmount Avenue, (215) 236-3300, terrorbehindthewalls.com
15. **Tri-Curious** – The Gayborhood's must-do Halloween party happens at Tabu. This year's program: a very Halloween-y drag and burlesque variety show featuring a costume contest and followed by dancing, courtesy of DJ Drootrax and karaoke in the third-floor cabaret lounge. **October 26.** 254 S. 12th Street, (215) 964-9675, tabuphilly.com
16. **Henri David Presents: Halloween the Ball** – Philadelphia's most colorful, most photographed party exceeds the half-century mark this Halloween. Antique Row jeweler Henri David has hosted this glorious bash since 1968; although his costume is always the evening's big reveal, his guests' certainly give him a run for the money. **October 31.** Philadelphia 201 Hotel, 201 N. 17th Street, (215) 732-7711

Theater:

17. **Ragtime** – A modern adaptation of the 1990s Tony-winning Broadway musical written by gay playwright Terrence McNally follows a group of folks from various backgrounds and classes fighting for the American dream in The Big Apple. **September 19-October 20.** Arden Theatre, 40 N. 2nd Street, (215) 922-1122, ardentheatre.org
18. **Into the Woods** – After scoring a big hit with its production of *Into the Woods* in 2015, Norristown's Theatre Horizon brings back cast members for a three-night musical revue. The Stephen Sondheim-penned musical, inspired by beloved fairy tales like Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood and Rapunzel, is a time-tested LGBTQ fave. **September 27-29.** Theatre Horizon, 401 DeKalb Street, Norristown, (610) 283-2230, theatrehorizon.org

- 19. *Rent*** – The musical that boldly brought the story of AIDS to the embarks on its 20th anniversary tour, which includes a three-night stop in town. Pulitzer- and Tony-winning *Rent*, loosely based on Puccini's *La Bohème*, follows a group of artists in New York City as they struggle to accomplish their dreams while dealing with the devastating realities of AIDS. **October 18-20.** Merriam Theater, 250 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999, kimmelcenter.org
- 20. *Mean Girls*** – The 2004 film that spawned such quotes as “Stop trying to make fetch happen” and “That’s why her hair is so big. It’s full of secrets” gets the touring Broadway treatment. The Philadelphia run is particularly noteworthy, considering the film and musical were both written by Upper Darby’s own Tina Fey. **November 19-December 1.** Academy of Music, 240 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999, kimmelcenter.org

Concerts:

- 21. Lizzo** – The diva and outspoken ally comes to Philly in support of her crazy-catchy new album, *Cuz I Love You*. The LP is all about empowering those who are overlooked—especially women of color—and features infectious anthems *Juice*, *Tempo*, *Truth Hurts* and *Good as Hell*. **September 18.** The Met Philadelphia, 858 N. Broad Street, (800) 653-8000, themetphilly.com
- 22. Randy Rainbow Live!** – The viral internet sensation who made a name for himself spoofing political interviews on YouTube makes a local stop on his national tour. Rainbow’s musical event finds the perky comedian offering commentary alongside some of his greatest video hits, plus hilarious song parodies and witty political observations like only he can give them. **September 21.** Merriam Theater, 250 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999, kimmelcenter.org
- 23. Sleater-Kinney** – Openly bisexual guitarist, singer and actor Carrie Brownstein co-helms the ultimate Riot Grrrl band, hitting the road this fall in support of their ninth studio album, *The Center Won’t Hold*. Sleater-Kinney rocks on with new music like *Hurry on Home*, which the A.V. Club included in its list of the 30 “favorite queer rock of 2019 (so far).” **October 27.** The Fillmore Philadelphia, 29 E. Allen Street, (215) 309-0150, thefillmorephilly.com
- 24. Elton John** – Britain’s legendary musical queen pops by South Philly for two nights of his *Farewell Yellow Brick Road* tour. The rocket man treats audiences to time-honored numbers like *Tiny Dancer*, *Candle in the Wind* and *Daniel* before jetting home to retirement. **November 8-9.** Wells Fargo Center, 3601 S. Broad Street, (215) 336-3600, wellsfargocenterphilly.com

Visual Arts:

- 25. *arms ache avid aeon: Nancy Brooks Brody/Joy Episalla/Zoe Leonard/ Carrie Yamaoka: fierce pussy amplified*** – An in-depth, multimedia exhibition features boundary-pushing works by four artists who formed the groundbreaking queer art collective “fierce pussy amplified” in New York City in 1991. Founded in response to the AIDS epidemic, the group not only challenged the stigma surrounding the disease, but also raised public awareness of lesbian identity and visibility during a decade of increasing political mobilization around gay rights. The exhibit features archival material highlighting the collective’s trailblazing history and shows how the artists have continued to provoke and confront important issues in solo capacities. **September 13-December 22.** Institute of Contemporary Art, 118 S. 36th Street, (215) 898-7108, icaphila.org
- 26. *Jacolby Satterwhite: Room for Living*** – The Fabric Workshop and Museum presents the first exhibit in its 42-year history to incorporate virtual reality—and the first solo museum show for artist-in-residence Jacolby Satterwhite, renowned for digitally animated art. *Room for Living* manifests queer theory, modernism, video game history, art history and Satterwhite’s personal experience in undeniably modern realms. **September 13, 2019-January 19, 2020.** 1214 Arch Street, (215) 561-8888, fabricworkshopandmuseum.org

- 27. *American Voyager: Herman Melville at 200*** – To mark what would be Herman Melville’s 200th birthday, a Rosenbach exhibition presents first editions and rare manuscripts through the lenses of LGBTQ identity, social justice, environmentalism and globalization to piece together the life of a once-unsung writer whose posthumously beloved *Moby-Dick* transformed an under-read American novelist into a literary icon. **October 3, 2019-April 5, 2020.**
2008-2010 Delancey Place, (215) 732-1600, rosenbach.org
- 28. *Temple of Sirius*** – Bella Vista’s Da Vinci Art Alliance presents a Black sanctuary of art to honor the past, present and future of African and Black art and experience through a spiritual lens. Curator Malachi Lily, who identifies as “a shapeshifting, nonbinary Black poet, artist, curator and moth,” presents works with spiritual resonance by fellow nonbinary artists Obsidian Bellis, ocean, Alex Farr and Vitche-Boul Ra. **October 6-27, 2019.** 704 Catharine Street, (215) 550-1446, davinciartalliance.org
- 29. *30 Americans*** – Striking works by 30 of the country’s most influential contemporary African American artists, many out and all allies—Jean-Michel Basquiat, Mark Bradford, Nick Cave, Barkley L. Hendricks, Kerry James Marshall, Wangechi Mutu, Lorna Simpson, Mickalene Thomas, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Kehinde Wiley—go on display in the Barnes Foundation’s Roberts Gallery. The exhibit offers powerful expressions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class against a backdrop of prejudice. **October 27, 2019-January 12, 2020.**
2025 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, (215) 278-7000, barnesfoundation.org

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