

Brighton

Posted on Thu, 1 August 2024 by Christian and Nick

Join us as we vada the online reviews for the bars and clubs of Brighton's gay village! In the Brighton podcast episode, we pop into Legends, The Queen's Arms, The Bulldog, Revenge, The Marine Tavern and The Bedford Tavern. Along the way we share fun facts about the city's queer history, as well as encountering bangers, Barry Gibb lookalikes and Elaine Paige's chihuahua.

Fun Facts about Brighton

Brighton, a place often referred to as the LGBT+ capital of the UK, has a rich queer

history which can, apparently, be traced back to the Napoleonic Wars, when the enormous number of soldiers garrisoned in the town drew many gay men to the area. Now, over two hundred years later, it is estimated that 11-15% of the city's population identifies as LGBTQ+, with Brighton claiming the highest percentage of same sex households in the UK. Of course, the city first became fashionable amongst day-trippers from London in the late 1700s, when the then Prince of Wales, who became King George IV, became a regular visitor. The palace he built, known as the Royal Pavilion, remains one of England's most unique landmarks. Every summer, Brighton hosts one of the UK's largest Pride events, attracting over 400,000 visitors as well as stars such as Kylie Minogue, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, all of whom have headlined the event. And, on the subject of pop, it's worth remembering that Brighton was the backdrop for Abba's Eurovision success when the city hosted the event in 1974.

The Brighton Gay Scene

Most of Brighton's gay venues are located in and around St James's Street in the Kemptown area, close to the seafront. Start your night with a cozy pint at The Marine Tavern or the friendly Bedford Tavern before heading to The Queen's Arms for camp cabaret and dazzling drag. Dance divas can hit the floor at Revenge, Brighton's legendary LGBTQ+ nightclub, while The Bulldog offers a classic, no-nonsense gay bar vibe. And for seafront glamour, Legends serves up cocktails, cabaret, and stunning views. Whether you're after a relaxed seaside vibe or a wild night out, Kemptown offers a fabulous mix of culture, community, and camp – making it the ultimate destination for queer fun by the sea!

Legends

Legends describes itself on its website as a "feisty, friendly and fun venue, open till 4am daily." Legends is actually comprised of an upstairs hotel, a ground floor bar and a downstairs nightclub. It's a spacious venue, with a large terrace overlooking the sea front and has been going for over thirty years. They serve breakfast and lunch daily, and their Sunday afternoon cabaret is something of a Brighton institution, with drag legends such as Davina Sparkle, Miss Jason and Dave Lynn taking to the mic.

Website: https://legendsresortbrighton.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/LegendsBrighton

Address: 31-34 Marine Parade, Kempton, Brighton BN2 1TR

The Bulldog

The Bulldog, Brighton's oldest gay pub, opened in 1979 in St James's Street. It's a two-floor venue, although quite small, with capacity for just over one hundred people, and famed for its karaoke nights and bear nights. It relaunched under new ownership in 2023, with the manager promising a return to the 'old Bulldog'.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088391904293

Address: 31 St James's St, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1RF

The Queen's Arms

In its Instagram profile, The Queen's Arms describes itself as the "legendary Kemptown venue, providing you with the best drag and cabaret in Brighton. Open seven days a week, 365 days a year." It's a tiny venue, but it always has the most tremendous atmosphere.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554423585590

Address: 7-8 George St, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1RH

Revenge

Revenge describes itself as the ultimate party destination where you can "slut drop on the dance floor" and feel safe from start to finish. (The TripAdvisor description has changed this to "where you can go nuts on the dance floor". Are slut dropping and going nuts, the same thing or different? Discuss.) Revenge is spread over three floors, including an amazing roof terrace with spectacular views over the city below, including the iconic Palace Pier.

Website: https://www.revenge.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/RevengeBrighton/

Address: 32-34 Old Steine, Kemptown, Brighton BN1 1EL

The Marine Tavern

Marine Tavern is a beloved establishment that has stood proudly on Broad Street in Brighton for over a century. According to their Facebook Page, the Marine Tavern is one of the smallest pubs in Brighton where people get to know one another and become friends. You can have a quiet pint here or enjoy a party atmosphere.

Website: https://themarinetavern.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TheMarineTavern/

Address: 3 Broad St, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1TJ

The Bedford Tavern

Brighton's infamous back street boozer has been doing its own special thing for over 200 years and is still going strong! Notorious for its Bonkers Musical Bingo on Sundays!

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BedfordTavernBrighton/

Address: 30 Western St, Hove BN1 2PG

Other bars to visit

Affinity Bar

Affinity Bar offers "fabulous craft drinks, stunning cocktails and weekend cabaret".

Website: https://www.affinitygaybar.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/AffinityGayBar

Address: 129 St James's St, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1TH

Bar Broadway

Bar Broadway is a popular musical theatre bar featuring "cocktails & chanteuses singing pop songs & show tunes, plus karaoke".

Website: https://barbroadway.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/barbroadwaybtn/

Address: 10 Steine St, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1TY

Charles Street Tap

Charles Street Tap has a full food menu which includes, burgers, pizzas, fish and chips and Sunday roasts and according to their website, there is something different going on every night “from retro video gaming or drag quizzes to award winning DJs and our most famous cabaret.”

Website: https://www.charlesstreettap.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/CharlesStreetTap

Address: 8 Marine Parade, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1TA

Centre Stage

Centre Stage Brighton is a cabaret and show venue with a120 capacity bar. During the summer months you can choose to relax on the sun trap terrace looking out onto Brighton Pier and the beach.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/centrestagebrighton/

Address: 11-12 Marine Parade, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1TL

The Grosvenor Bar

The Grosvenor is a lively, late-opening bar with modern, fairy-lit interior, original features and an open fire. Tables can be booked for cabaret performances and drag bingo.

Website: https://thegrosvenorbar.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TheGrosvenorBarBrighton/

Address: 16 Western St, Brighton BN1 2PG

The Zone Bar

The Zone Bar is in the heart of Kemp Town and has regular music acts, drag entertainment and karaoke.

Website: http://www.zonebrighton.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/www.zonebrighton.co.uk/

Address: 33 St James’s St, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1RF

And finally, please remember that even if we are a little tongue in cheek in our podcast, we do love each and every venue on the scene, and we urge you all to get out there and support your local gay bars!