FEEDBACK

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America's Four Best Cities for Beards and Beer

Have a beard? Like beer? You'll fit in perfectly in these hairy, hoppy hotspots.

Some things just go together. Red, white and blue. Batman and Robin. Burgers and fries. Shoes and socks. Soap and water. Peanut butter and jelly. Dogs and walks. And, of course, the signature pairing for good-looking, fun-loving gentlemen everywhere: beards and beer.

Alone, a beard is a look and a beer is a beverage. Together, however, they're a lot more than that. They're a way of life.

Think about it. A guy who has a glass full of suds and a face full of scruff is a guy who lives in the moment. He's not fancy or fussy, finicky or fretful. He's unflappable, unencumbered and uninhibited. He knows who he is, and he does what he wants. And what he wants is an afternoon full of simple pleasures: a cold pint on a hot day with good food, a cool breeze and the best of friends.

If that sounds good — and you know it does — it might be time to plan a trip to reconnect with the bearded brew master inside you.

But if you're that guy, you don't want to waste your time or your vacation days on places that don't feel right. Rather, you want to spend them in places that catch your drift and get your vibe. Places that look as good on you as your beard does. Fortunately, America is full of them. Here are four of the most promising. Pack your favorite stein and your favorite beard oil, then hit the road, Jack.

1. Portland, Ore.

(Photo credit: Breakside Brewing)

Whether you love them or loathe them, there's no denying it: You have hipsters to thank for modern beard culture. Way back in 2005, when a clean-shaven face was your ticket to the top — of both the corporate ladder and the dating pool — hipsters were blazing their own trails with freewheeling facial hair in places like Brooklyn, N.Y., and Portland, Ore. The latter remains the hipster capital of North America, and also happens to be a happening town for hopheads. In fact, Portland is home to some 58 breweries. Favorites include Breakside Brewery, which has a few locations around town at which to sample its celebrated IPAs; Upright Brewing, which is the go-to for home brewers thanks to its classic European ales that are simple but superbly done; and Wayfinder, Beer, a lager-centric brewpub with killer eats. While you're in town, don't forget to buy a Maple Cream donut from the original Voodoo Doughnut, which comes filled with Bavarian cream and topped with maple frosting and its very own mustache.

2. Fort Collins, Colo.

(Photo credit: BrandCulture)

As a mountain town with a free spirit, Denver has always had a deep appreciation for beards and beer. If you really want to marinate in yeast and whiskers, however, you should head an hour north to Fort Collins, which is home to Colorado State University and several badass breweries, including New Belgium Brewing Co. and Odell Brewing Co. , among many others.

Another 'b' that's popular here is bicycles, which happen to be one of the best ways to experience the local beer culture. Try renting one, then cycle your way from one beautiful beer haven to the next, feeling the fresh Colorado air against your beard as you go. If that sounds fun, consider visiting Labor Day weekend, which is when New Belgium traditionally hosts Tour de Fat, its annual celebration of bikes and beer, the centerpiece of which is a costumed bike parade that ends at its brewery. It's a giant party with a Mardi Gras atmosphere, so bring plenty of sequins, glitter and confetti with which to bedazzle your beard.

3. Asheville, N.C.

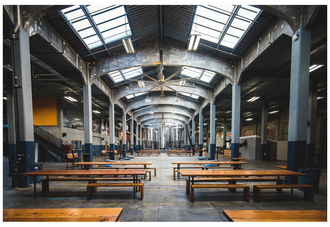
(Photo credit: Hi-Wire Brewing)

The city of Asheville in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains is a haven for artists and outdoorsmen. And while they don't always have a lot in common, there's at least two things that guys in both contingencies appreciate: a shapely beard and a frosty beer.

You'll find both in spades in Asheville, which has so many bearded fellas that back in 2016, a photography student who was visiting from France was inspired to create a whole book on the subject of Asheville's beards, titled "Bearded Strangers."

As far beer, Asheville has more breweries per capita than any other U.S. city. A few worth checking out include Burial Beer Co., which offers funky beers and awesome outdoor seating where you can enjoy them; Highland Brewing Co., which is Asheville's oldest craft brewery; and Hi-Wire Brewing, whose circus theme makes beer fun again. Perhaps the best way to enjoy beer in Asheville, however, is for dessert: Try The Hop Ice Cream Café, which is known for ice creams that are infused with local ales, porters and stouts. (Be sure to grab extra napkins if you're bearded, because ice cream and facial hair can make for a messy combination.)

4. Cincinnati, Ohio



(Photo credit: Rhinegeist Brewery)

Chicago. Milwaukee. St. Louis. The Midwest is chock-full of cities with terrific beards and beers. King among them, however, might be Cincinnati, whose bearded men are so numerous and so handsome that online magazine Cincinnati Refined once published a whole photo essay dedicated to them — "The Bearded Men of Cincy."

Although locals' appreciation of beards is recent, their affinity for beer is longstanding. In fact, Cincinnati was one of the top beer-producing cities in the country prior to Prohibition. A century later, that history is evident in a spate of modern brewhouses. Popular spots include Rhinegeist Brewery, which is known for its IPAs; Braxton Brewing Co., which stands out for its creative and inventive recipes; and Listermann Brewing Co., which is beloved for its stouts. To check out several spots in one go, board the Cincy Brew Bus or take a walking tour along the Brewing Heritage Trail.

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