

## Cannabis Tourism in Canada

Caleb McMillan :: 2023-05-15

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[Cannabis](#) tourism in Canada has been a lost opportunity. The Cannabis Act was effectively a public health document, focusing on making the herb unpopular for young people.

Or, as Justin Trudeau once said, his government would not be legalizing a “[boutique market](#).”

But for Nathan Mison, President of [Diplomat Consulting](#), this makes sense. “We were in violation of three international treaties when we legalized cannabis.” There was concern about how other countries may react and whether it would affect trade.

It was a “Hecularian effort” to legalize cannabis. But it’s been half a decade. More jurisdictions have legalized or are talking about [legalization](#).

“The world has moved on,” says Nathan. “The fear that government once had should not be held anymore.”



Nathan Mison focuses on cannabis tourism in Canada. Interestingly enough, even within the framework of Canada's public health Cannabis Act, there's room for tourism.

"The federal government definitely has a significant role," says Nathan. "But a lot of this stuff actually lives at the provincial and municipal level. And that's why we've been focusing on the municipal level first. The feds and the provinces have created a pathway for it. But if there's no business licence and zoning at a municipal level, those businesses can't open."

I asked Nathan about opening a bed and breakfast. Could I not advertise a B&B that's cannabis-friendly?

"There's zoning that allows you to be a B&B that serves alcohol," says Nathan. "Because that's in the zoning. It doesn't say alcohol *and* cannabis. So technically, the cannabis, as soon as they add that to the menu, it'd make it a non-compliant business under the municipal zoning."

His catering company, [CBD CBN](#), is handicapped by these rules.

"We do it out of the homes," he says. "Because now you're socially sharing the cannabis. The caterer is not remunerated for a cannabis service, which would be in violation of the federal act. And the homeowner sharing the cannabis to his guests is complaint under federal and provincial and municipal rules. And that's stupid."

Nathan asks why can't we have a green wedding? Infused-restaurants? Cannabis-friendly coffee shops? Why can't we have cannabis tourism in Canada?

"And it's not just about food and drink," Nathan says. "Why the hell can't you have a spa experience? Why can't you have a massage experience? There's no bloody reason for it. It's a legal product."

## Edmonton Leads the Way



The only thing stopping cannabis-centric B&Bs, restaurants, caterers, and others is municipal zoning.

In other words, it's your local politicians preventing cannabis tourism in Canada.

"Right now," Nathan says, "The primary barrier is zoning."

Therefore, he and others have been busy in the city of Edmonton, arguing for changes in zoning laws. "Serendipitously," he says, these efforts have resulted in the city performing a "comprehensive zoning renewal for the first time since 1959."

"We've been finding pretty good success in the city of Edmonton. In June, we could see a pretty significant step forward, with Edmonton being the first municipality to create zoning for cannabis consumption sites. Once you get one city, another city can say, "Hey, we like this, we like that, we'll do that too."

"We believe there is pathway to make this happen where we'll be opening cannabis consumption restaurants or coffee shops or a spa in Edmonton within the year."

That certainly sounds promising for cannabis tourism in Canada. But one major setback Nathan finds is the mentality of those in charge.

"When we talk to the political class and the bureaucratic class, they seem to disproportionately represent the 27% of Canadians who aren't okay with cannabis and disregard the 73% of Canadians who are."

Nathan figures it's probably cannabis stigma. "I think a lot of that is because they still think it's beads, bongos, and Bob Marley," he says.

Yet, to no surprise to our readers, cannabis consumers aren't a 1970s-era stereotype.

"These are functional members of society. Who spend money, have disposable income," says Nathan. He mentions that 25% of worldwide travellers have identified that they'd like a cannabis experience when they travel. Why would we not be capitalizing on that?

"It just seems like a slam dunk," he says.

# Nobody Cares About Cannabis Tourism in Canada



Part of the problem is the government didn't legalize cannabis for economic reasons.

"Because the Cannabis Act was created through [Health Canada](#), they've never given an economic mandate at a federal ministry or a provincial ministry or minister," says Nathan. "Which means, nobody cares about the jobs. Nobody cares about the money. Nobody cares about the taxation created."

But Nathan is optimistic about the economic roundtable and the Cannabis Act legislative review. As well as [CBD](#) – and potentially other minor [cannabinoids](#) – getting approved as natural health products.

"I think the economic roundtable allows us to have conversations about where cannabis is at now, where it can go and how it can be a true economic driver of the Canadian economy."

He says the government can feel confident moving forward now that the sky hasn't fallen and other countries are looking to legalization.

"73% of Canadians support cannabis legalization," Nathan says. Many believe it was Justin Trudeau's greatest (perhaps only) real accomplishment as prime minister.

"The thing to remember," says Nathan, is that "most people don't know a single thing about the cannabis sector." And that includes cannabis tourism in Canada.

Therefore, it's up to Canada's cannabis connoisseurs to keep pushing for rights and opportunities.

## Cannabis Tourism in Alberta



“[Alberta](#) became the first province to allow public consumption of cannabis at live events and festivals,” says Nathan. “We believe that’s an example of what can be done in other jurisdictions.”

However, Nathan notes, they still haven’t gotten the province to approve the sale of cannabis at events and festivals. However, the government does allow curbside delivery.

“When they created the rules out of covid, they never defined how far the curb had to be away from the store,” says Nathan. “So why can’t it be at a curb at a live event or festival?”

Is there anything more patriotic than exploiting nanny-state bureaucratic loopholes? Nevertheless, Nathan says the barriers preventing cannabis tourism in Canada are crashing down.

“There’s no reason we can’t have cannabis products, mocktailers, infused-chips being sold at festivals *this summer*,” he says.

“We just need to continue to push our representatives and regulators to allow that to happen. Cannabis tourism is probably months away, not years away.”

Nathan Mison will speak at the upcoming [Grow Up Conference and Expo](#) in Edmonton, [Alberta](#). The conference takes place between May 28-30.

### **Footnote(s)**

<https://www.cbdcbn.ca/>

<https://www.diplomatconsulting.com/>

<https://growupconference.com/>