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Internationally Proud

Pride Month is a month-long celebration and commemoration of the past and ongoing struggles of the LGBTQ+ community to achieve equal civil rights. It is a period where the community and its supporters gather together in events such as Pride parades, protests, workshops, symposia, and concerts and continually fight to have their voices heard and be rightfully represented. Even though it originated in the United States and is officially celebrated in June, nowadays the Pride season is honored in many other countries at different times of the year. So, what are some of the biggest international Pride events?

São Paulo, Brazil

São Paulo's Pride Parade is famed for being the world's largest Pride Parade. This celebration is fraught with lively music and dancers in glamorous costumes and attracts more than three million participants every year. Compared to the first parade in 1997 — which had roughly 2,000 participants—, its crowd has grown exponentially in the past twenty-six years. The parade plays the role of being an event of celebration but also of political activism as each year a different slogan is adopted in defense of LGBTQ rights; the 2023 slogan was "*Queremos políticas sociais LGBTQ+ por inteiro e não pela metade*" ("We want LGBTQ+ social policies in full and not in half"). São Paulo Gay Pride

takes place in *Avenida Paulista* on the Sunday after the *Corpus Christi* annual holiday — this year's was held on June 11th.

New York City, United States

New York City Pride is the largest parade in North America. In this city, the first Gay Pride march was held on June 28, 1970 — on the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. Every year, the Stonewall Inn — declared a historic landmark by the city of New York in 2015 and named a national monument by President Barack Obama — is visited by millions of people to commemorate the valiant confrontations between gay rights activists and the police after the warranted raid of the gay bar in 1969. Nowadays, the NYC Pride Parade is filled with thousands of visitors who travel from all over the country just to be part of this empowering event that serves as a platform for advocacy and queer visibility. This year's Pride March happened on June 25th, taking off from 25th Street and 5th Avenue.

Madrid, Spain

Madrid Pride, also known as *Madrid Orgullo (MADO)*, is the biggest parade in Europe. Nine years after the incident at the Stonewall Inn, Madrid celebrated its first Pride demonstration on June 25th, in which the queer community and its allies called for tolerance and equality of their members in society. Thanks to their perseverance and courage, in 1979, the government of Adolfo Suárez took measures to decriminalize being gay, lesbian, trans woman, and bisexual in Spain. Ever since annual parades have been taking place between the last weeks of June and the month of July; this year began on June 23rd and will end on July 2nd, and the slogan is “*Abrazando la*

diversidad familiar: iguales en derechos", which translates to "Embracing family diversity: equality in rights".

Taipei, Taiwan

Taiwan has been considered to be one of the most LGBTQ+ friendly nations in Asia after Thailand. In fact, it was the first Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage due to a law passed on May 24, 2019, and has been home to many gay events, with Taipei Pride Parade as the most important one. Being the largest Gay march in Asia, it has over 10,000 LGBT travelers in attendance every year and it joyfully celebrates queer pride with numerous go-go dancers and drag queen shows. This year's parade will take place on the last Saturday of October.

Johannesburg, South Africa

With most of their countries being anti-LGBTQ, people in Africa continue to fight to amplify Pride from a South African event to one that is honored across the continent. The African queer community celebrates its pride in what is the biggest African gay parade that takes place every year in Johannesburg, South Africa. Twenty-two years after South Africa's first Lesbian and Gay Pride march of 1990, the LGBTQ Association of South Africa registered a pride flag that fused the distinguishable elements of all the African flags with the famous rainbow flag to better represent the diversity of Africa's LGBTQ+ME community; ever since its creation, Pride is celebrated under this symbol of unification and liberation. Johannesburg Pride is held every year around October, usually spanning a week or two and this year's culminating parade will take place on Saturday, October 28th.

Tel Aviv, Israel

Tel Aviv Pride, a week-long series of events celebrated the second week of June, is the largest LGBTQ Parade in the Middle East. The journey to honor this celebration, however, was not easy; as religion plays a central role in national and civil life in Israel, and given the biblical rejection of queer behavior, homosexuality was perceived negatively amongst Israelis for decades. It was not until March 22, 1988, that the legal code decriminalized being gay, and five years later, the first Tel Aviv Pride Parade took place. Now, Tel Aviv is considered one of the most gay-friendly cities in the world and will hopefully continue to host this inclusive celebration in the future despite the new Israeli government helmed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has openly expressed his extreme anti-LGBTQ sentiment. This year's parade took place between June 4th and June 10th.

Sydney, Australia

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is the largest Pride event in Oceania. The first gay Mardi Gras happened on June 24, 1978, when the Gay Solidarity Group staged a day of events in Sydney to address various battles of the queer community and strive against discrimination and stigma. After the police responded rather violently to the march, the queer community was encouraged to continue fighting to make the parade an annual festival. Because of the national attention brought to the affair and the Pride supporters' tenacity and bravery, about 3,000 people were able to march in an incident-free parade in 1979. The 2023 Mardi Gras was held between February 17th and March 5th.

All in all, even though June is coming to an end and we are saying goodbye to Pride Month in the US, remember it is still being celebrated all year round in many other countries across the globe. Let us not forget that although Pride is a time of celebration of the LGBTQ+ community and its members' identities, it is also a powerful medium to raise awareness of the constant challenges the queer community has to face and of other broader social concerns regarding civil rights and equality.

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