

A photograph of a young man and woman sitting at a table, looking at each other and smiling. They are in a room with large windows looking out onto trees with autumn foliage. Colorful string lights are hanging from the ceiling. Two white mugs are on the table.

# Bloomington

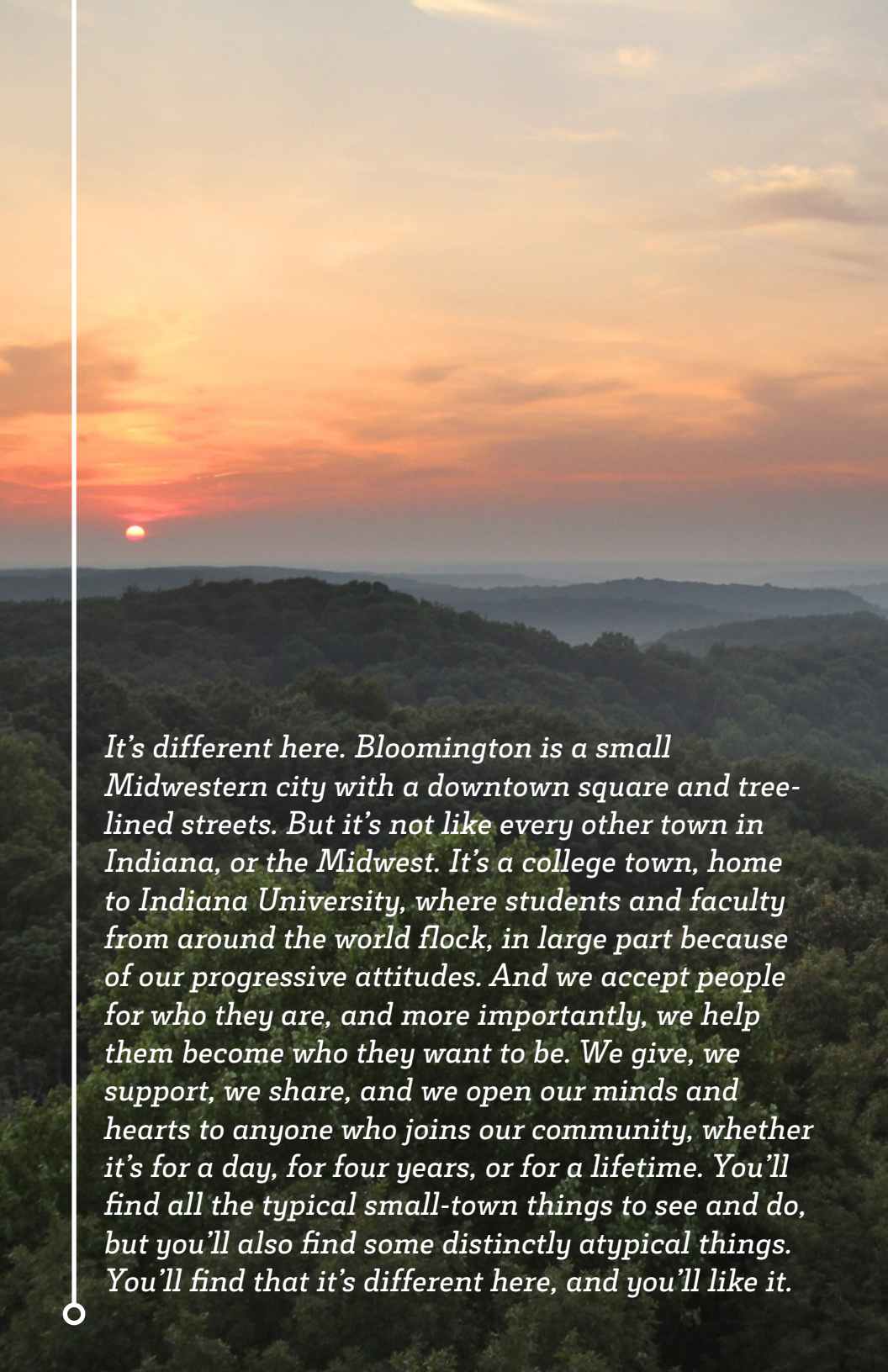
INDIANA

**LGBTQ VISITORS GUIDE**

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The suggestions  
in this guide represent  
just some of the hundreds  
of LGBTQ-friendly businesses in  
Bloomington. You'll find yourself welcome  
wherever you go in our fair city. For more  
restaurant, hotel, and entertainment ideas, see  
[visitbloomington.com](http://visitbloomington.com) or tweet us @visitbtown.



*It's different here. Bloomington is a small Midwestern city with a downtown square and tree-lined streets. But it's not like every other town in Indiana, or the Midwest. It's a college town, home to Indiana University, where students and faculty from around the world flock, in large part because of our progressive attitudes. And we accept people for who they are, and more importantly, we help them become who they want to be. We give, we support, we share, and we open our minds and hearts to anyone who joins our community, whether it's for a day, for four years, or for a lifetime. You'll find all the typical small-town things to see and do, but you'll also find some distinctly atypical things. You'll find that it's different here, and you'll like it.*





## THE PERFECT BLOOMINGTON GAYCATION

UPLAND BREWERY

*Every good vacation starts with checking in to your swanky hotel and dropping off your bags before a night out.*

The Hyatt Place in downtown Bloomington is a favorite among travelers – from their Bloomington-themed décor and local artwork along the adjacent B-Line Trail, to their sponsorship of Bloomington PRIDE and host of summer pride festival workshops, you'll find comfort and classiness at the Hyatt Place. For an even more local flair, stay at the Grant Street Inn, which is also in the heart of downtown and features newly updated rooms with one of the best breakfasts in town.

After you check in, head to dinner at one of Bloomington's 100+ locally owned restaurants. You can't go wrong with Upland Brewery, one of Indiana's most popular breweries and a local favorite. Sidle up to the bar to catch the game with locals, enjoy a table in their newly expanded restaurant, or head outside to the patio for a meal under the stars. Or try the plethora of international restaurants on 4th Street, a.k.a. Restaurant Row. From Korea to Afghanistan to Italy, you'll find something new to surprise your palette with.

*And now it's time for a show.* The Buskirk-Chumley Theater hosts theater, live music, dance, film, and more, including the annual PRIDE Film Festival in January. Or pop into The Comedy Attic, ranked among the **top ten comedy clubs** in the nation. For a perfectly Bloomington experience, visit the Indiana University Cinema for top-notch independent film or catch a bout with the Bleeding Heartland Roller Derby.

*Before you head back to the hotel,* swing by the Back Door, Bloomington's beloved queer bar, for **dancing, drag queens, and delicious drinks** like The Beard and Maliboobie. Don't leave without checking out their handmade countertop filled with all sorts of vintage pictures we can't describe here.

*No trip to Bloomington would be complete without locally roasted coffee.*

Some local favorites include:

	
<i>an eclectic coffee shop with an impressive array of teas and smoothies.</i>	<i>located along the B-Line Trail in a sunlit room with an exquisitely fancy espresso machine.</i>

Pick up a souvenir mug and a bag of beans to take home and share with friends (or don't share; we won't tell).

*If boozy drinks are more your thing,* walk out the doors of Hopscotch and down the trail to Cardinal Spirits, **the best (and only) distillery in town.** They're coming up with new liquors faster than you can say "Tiki Tuesday" (which is as festive and frequent as it sounds). Take home a bottle of Gay Vodka, whose profits support our local LGBTQ nonprofit.



CARDINAL SPIRITS GAY VODKA  
PHOTO BY BLOOMINGTON PRIDE

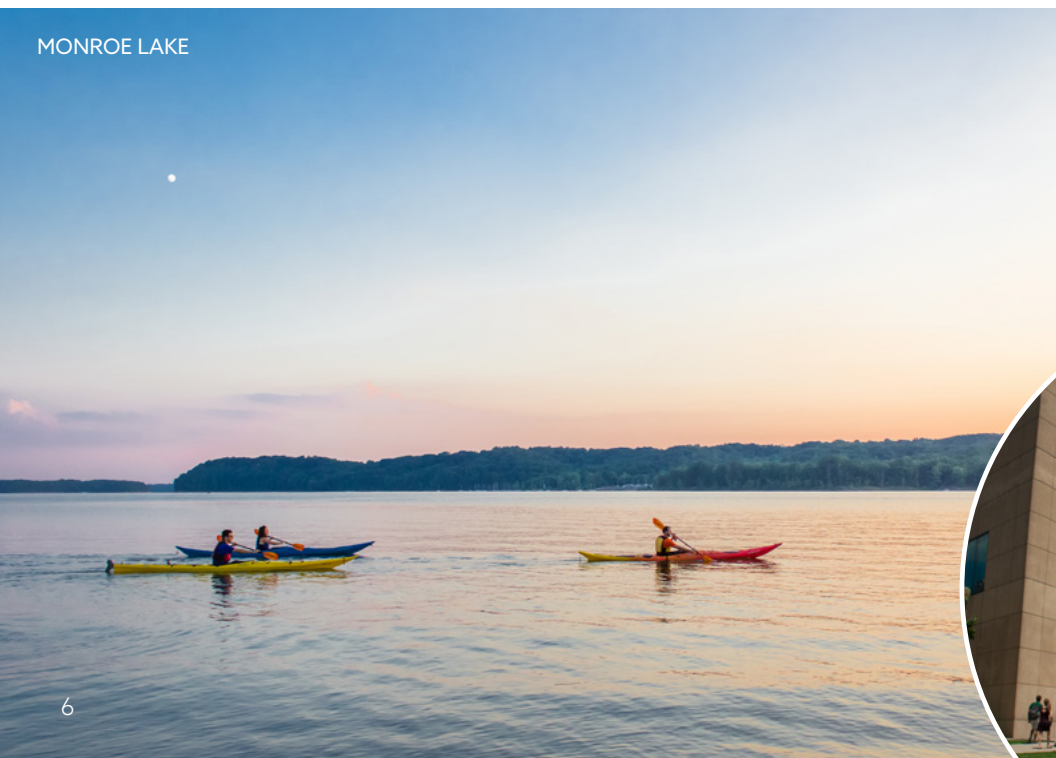
*For an adventure,* you've got the **largest lake in the state** (Monroe Lake) on the south side of town, which is also adjacent to the enormous Hoosier National Forest, full of hills and trees and gorgeous vistas. Relax on the water with a boat rental at the Fourwinds Lakeside Inn & Marina. But even if the ground is blanketed in snow, don't worry – Hoosier Heights climbing gym can get you set up with all-day excitement, whether you're a novice on the rocks or an experienced boulderer.

FOURWINDS LAKESIDE  
INN & MARINA



*Now it's time to stimulate your mind,* and we suggest none other than the **Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, & Reproduction**. Founded by Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey in 1947 with the intent of creating open

MONROE LAKE



dialogue about sexuality, the Kinsey Institute is a pioneer in research and maintains a unique art gallery right in the center of the Indiana University campus. While you're at IU, you might check out such landmarks as:



**SIMON SKJODT  
ASSEMBLY HALL**

*where the Hoosiers play basketball*



**ESKENAZI MUSEUM OF ART**

*designed by I.M. Pei*



**THE ROSE WELL HOUSE**

*which has seen many a kiss  
from couples young and old*



ESKENAZI MUSEUM OF ART



CLOTHES & STYLING BY ANDREW DAVIS  
PHOTO BY BLUELINE

***Before you go, treat  
yourself to a souvenir.***

There's no better place to shop local than downtown, where you'll find high-quality handmade items at Gather Handmade Shoppe, well-tailored suits for men and women at Andrew Davis, one-of-a-kind international finds at Global Gifts, and vintage furniture and decor items at Lola & Company. There's so much to explore, so give yourself at least an afternoon.

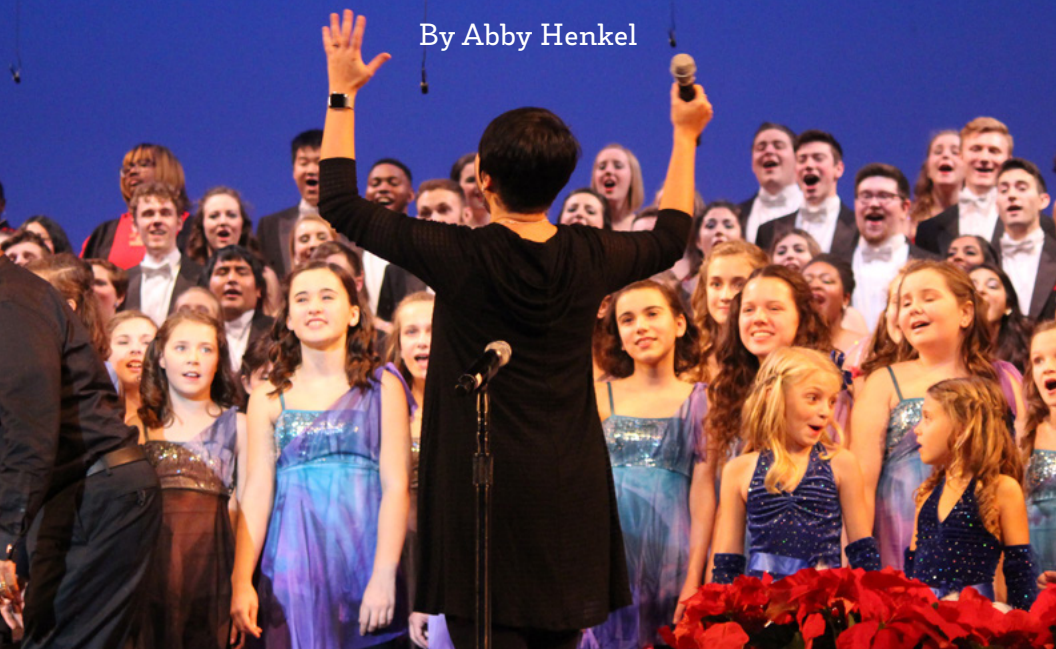
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*For more travel ideas and  
itineraries, check out  
**visitbloomington.com**  
or get in touch on social media.*



# THE SPECTRUM OF MUSIC IN BLOOMINGTON

By Abby Henkel



## *In Bloomington, no day is ever too quiet.*

Whether you're walking down Kirkwood enjoying the live music pouring out of local bars, or strolling the halls of the Jacobs School of Music as future virtuosos practice Puccini and Paganini, music is a part of our culture. Many of this city's active musicians identify among the LGBTQ spectrum, and contribute mightily to Bloomington's booming music scene. We

interviewed a few of them to see what inspires them, what moves them, and how their music has been influenced by the creative culture of Bloomington.

Among them is Jess Waggoner, a PhD student at Indiana University and multi-talented musician. Since moving here in 2009, she's been in several bands, all with a focus on acoustic instruments and resonant



vocal harmonies. Currently she has been songwriting and performing with a country/Americana band called Corn Palace.

in the band write songs—it feels more communal and is much more satisfying to me than merely highlighting a lead singer/songwriter.”

“I’ve always been drawn to big dramatic harmonies and the portability of acoustic instruments such as guitars, banjos and violins,”

Waggoner explains.

“I especially love collaborative projects where multiple folks

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culture.*

Gender and sexuality have played an important role in Waggoner’s musical development, as she explains:

“Songwriting is a space where one can play with gender fluidity, trying on different characters and perspectives



JESS WAGGONER (CENTER), PERFORMING AT 2015 PRIDE SUMMERFEST

within an established form. I like to hear other voices singing songs I've written, and have been lucky to have bandmates who have no qualms singing different gendered and sexual perspectives from their own."

Waggoner's music fits well into the eclectic Bloomington

"Something my friends and I always say about Bloomington is that whatever weirdo project you want to start, there's always a few folks who will collaborate with you and always a few folks who will come to see you. When I began the drag gospel project, I knew I wanted to sing these old gospel songs from my



THE BISHOP BAR  
PHOTO BY TALL + SMALL PHOTOGRAPHY

musical scene, which boasts recording studios (like Russian Recording), record labels (such as Secretly Canadian), and dozens of venues. Her favorite venues include The Back Door for their stage and campy atmosphere and The Bishop for their sound system. These venues have performers nearly every night of the week.

childhood in rural Alabama, and I was stunned and grateful that others wanted to join me.

"I've never been made to feel that I have to only perform with other queer acts or only in queer venues. There's a lot of openness and excitement in Bloomington audiences and I'm grateful for that."



QUARRYLAND MEN'S CHORUS, PERFORMING  
AT THE 2016 PRIDE FILM FESTIVAL

Barry Magee, director of Quarryland Men's Chorus for gay and allied male-identified singers, echoes that sentiment. "The support we get in terms of invitations to perform, concert audiences, and financial support continues to grow and that allows us to grow our mission of outreach."

Quarryland has been around for 14 years and continues to grow in size and

musicality with each season. They have also grown to embrace the gender spectrum and its potential to impact their music – "As we've grown in size in the past 14 seasons we have also become more diverse in terms of people of color, allies, and from time to time have had trans men and genderqueer

singers," explains Magee. "This diversity has grown in part because we have authentic conversations about the limitations

*"There's a lot of openness and excitement in Bloomington audiences and I'm grateful for that."*



of the chorus when there is limited diversity of both on-stage and off-stage members."

The choir also feels a special calling to reflect on the importance of its gay identity, specifically choosing music written by LGBTQ composers and recognizing that the composer's sexual orientation could have an effect on the music they wrote. And it's just a great opportunity to explore the vast canon of men's choral music, which isn't as commonly performed as music for mixed and treble choirs.

Quarryland's music is eclectic and impressive, singing everything from popular music to choral standards and music from the past centuries. For those who don't consider themselves choral music fans, a Quarryland concert is a great place for an introduction. And for those with a classical

music sensibility, the choir's high standards for musicality and interpretation will make you rethink everything you thought you knew about amateur choirs.

And then there's Ly Wilder, the young and unreasonably accomplished visiting

professor of jazz at

Indiana University.

She grew up near New York City and spent her childhood running around bluegrass festivals and rubbing elbows with the likes of Fred Waring and other great jazz artists.

Currently she directs the Singing Hoosiers, an 85-voice ensemble that brings popular American music and dance to life. Catch one of their shows if you can – you won't be disappointed.

"I'm inspired every day by my students and colleagues at IU," Wilder explains. "I can't believe so much art and culture exist here for our community."

*I can't believe so much art and culture exist here for our community.*



*Whether you seek classical guitar on a restaurant patio or a grunge concert at a queer bar, jazz in a concert hall or local bluegrass in a park, Bloomington's music scene is diverse, supportive, and ever growing.*

Wilder and her wife, Brennan Wilder, founded BEAT (Bloomington Expressive Arts Training), when they moved to Bloomington. Ly smiles as she explains how Brennan's talent as a choreographer and musician translate to her ability to understand how the children in the choir need to connect their bodies to the singing as well as to the movements. Wilder says that above all, the kids should aspire to be great people and gain skills from their art that transcend the performance.

As a member of the LGBTQ community, Wilder finds that she has become a more compassionate person, musician, and educator. "It's definitely made me grateful for how loving and accepting the artistic community of friends and family that Brennan and I are a part of have loved and supported us, and that comes through in my music for sure."

## MUSIC VENUES

### THE BLUEBIRD

A historic music venue booking high-caliber talent in Bloomington.

[thebluebird.ws](http://thebluebird.ws)

### BUSKIRK-CHUMLEY THEATER

Hosts music, theatre, dance, film, and community events presented by more than 50 organizations.

[buskirkchumley.org](http://buskirkchumley.org)

### THE BISHOP

Craft beers, spirits, great music, and no cover all week.

[thebishopbar.com](http://thebishopbar.com)

### IU JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

(Musical Arts Center, Simon Hall, & Auer Hall)

Produces world-class opera, ballet, and musical performances throughout the year.

[music.indiana.edu](http://music.indiana.edu)

### IU AUDITORIUM

Presents an exciting season of Broadway shows, concerts, and student events.

[iuauditorium.com](http://iuauditorium.com)

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*Find more live music options at*  
**[visitbloomington.com](http://visitbloomington.com)**

# BLOOMINGTON WEDDINGS

Planning a wedding can be challenging: once you've decided on "the one," you've got to decide on about one million other things for the wedding. So we have two recommendations: get married in Bloomington and call us for help. There are many fantastic venues in Bloomington that can act as a ceremony or reception site (even our City Hall is gorgeous), and numerous vendors to provide everything from food to flowers. Wading through the options can be tough, but that's where Visit Bloomington steps in. We can help guide you through the local resources and ease a little of the stress. This section will give you a glimpse of what's available and what we do, but talking with our expert team is even better.

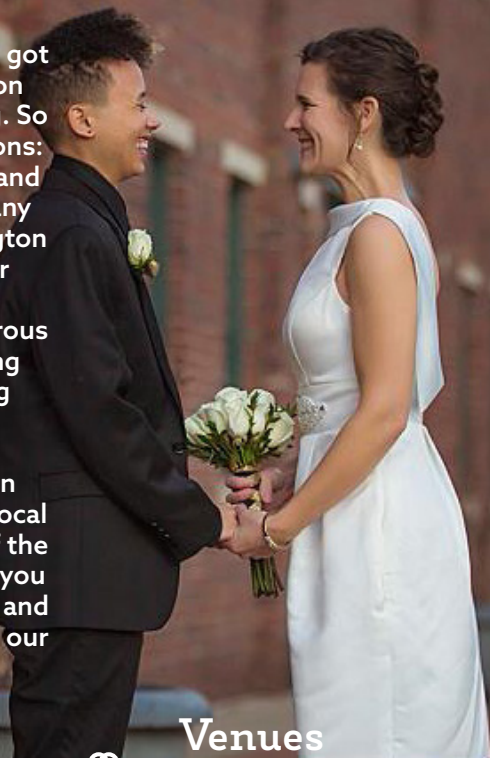


PHOTO BY ICARUS PHOTOGRAPHY

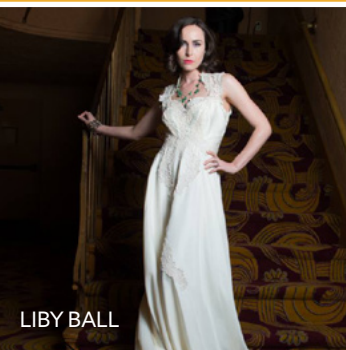
## Vendors

RAINBOW BAKERY  
LIBY BALL CUSTOM ATTIRE  
ROYALE HAIR PARLOR  
JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

## Venues

WONDERLAB MUSEUM  
SYCAMORE FARM  
INDIANA MEMORIAL UNION  
BUSKIRK-CHUMLEY THEATER

*Find more venues, vendors, and resources at*  
**[visitbloomington.com/weddings](http://visitbloomington.com/weddings)**



LIBY BALL



RAINBOW BAKERY



WONDERLAB



# Wedding Tips

Make sure to call us to see what else is going on in town before you set a date! We offer these services free of charge.

Bloomington has so many local vendors that can help make your day flawless and totally you. It just might save you some money, and you're helping out local businesses!

Start planning as far in advance as possible (a year is usually good) to get your ideal venue and start booking hotel rooms for out-of-town guests.

Prepare for the weather & have a back-up plan! Indiana weather is unpredictable, but we do hear that rain on your wedding day is good luck.

Include some suggestions of fun things to do in town for guests while they're here. Some families might want to plan a mini-vacation around your wedding as well.

"One of my happiest times in Bloomington was the first few days when same-sex marriages became legal in Indiana. Watching the community rally around all of the couples who could finally express their love for one another helped me realize what an open and accepting city we live in. And I got to officiate a few of the ceremonies, too!"

**NICOLE BOLDEN**, *Bloomington City Clerk*

## Our Wedding Services

- Arrange hotel room blocks with special rates
- Suggest wedding venues and places of worship for your ceremony and/or reception
- Recommend vendors: caterers, bakeries, wedding planners, photographers, videographers, florists, DJs, & more
- Provide rehearsal dinner ideas
- Advise on travel times, weather, and concurrent events that might interfere with your wedding
- Give suggestions for bridal showers and bachelor/bachelorette parties
- Provide visitors guides, maps, & brochures to help out-of-town guests navigate Bloomington and all it has to offer







## DANCING QUEEN

Ready to put on your dancing shoes? Start with dinner at King Dough or FARMbloomington and get the party started at the Root Cellar (in the basement of FARMbloomington) for a cool underground vibe & great DJs, and end your evening at The Back Door where you'll find great cover bands, DJs, and drag shows!

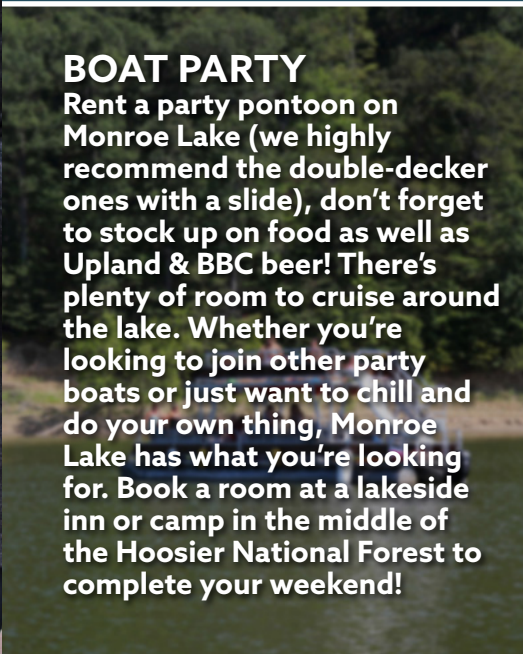


## IU FAN & GRADS

Plan a weekend around a Hoosiers basketball game; the men's & women's teams have plenty of weekend home games to choose from. Grab a bite to eat at Mother Bear's or Lennie's, head to the game, and then celebrate a win at Nick's with a round (or two) of Sink the Biz!



## Bachelor & Bachelorette Party Ideas



### BOAT PARTY

Rent a party pontoon on Monroe Lake (we highly recommend the double-decker ones with a slide), don't forget to stock up on food as well as Upland & BBC beer! There's plenty of room to cruise around the lake. Whether you're looking to join other party boats or just want to chill and do your own thing, Monroe Lake has what you're looking for. Book a room at a lakeside inn or camp in the middle of the Hoosier National Forest to complete your weekend!



### RELAXING WEEKEND

Book a room at one of the B&Bs in town, grab brunch at the Runcible Spoon, followed by an afternoon of indulgent massages & mani/pedis at a spa downtown, dinner at Uptown Cafe, and finishing up the evening with drinks at Cardinal Spirits.



### NIGHT OUT ON THE TOWN

Begin your day with a tasting at Oliver Winery, dinner at Scholars KEEP or Grazie Italiano, a show at The Comedy Attic or Bloomington Playwrights Project, and drinks at The Atlas Ballroom (complete with skee-ball) to cap off the evening.





PRIDE SUMMERFEST  
PHOTO BY MIKE WADDELL



PRIDE FILM FESTIVAL  
PHOTO BY BLUELINE

## Attractions & Events

### PRIDE FILM FESTIVAL

*Late January*

The PRIDE Film Festival is devoted to issues and situations concerning the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities.

[bloomingtonpride.org](http://bloomingtonpride.org)

### IU GLBTAA CELEBRATION

*Late January*

The GLBTAA Celebration Weekend offers faculty, staff, alumni, students and friends a wonderful schedule of diverse and fun-filled events.

[alumni.indiana.edu/glbtaa](http://alumni.indiana.edu/glbtaa)

### PRIDEFEST

*Late August*

Summerfest is a free weekend-long celebration of queer people and allies.

[bloomingtonpride.org](http://bloomingtonpride.org)

### THE KINSEY GALLERY

*Open year-round, Wed. - Fri.*

The Kinsey Institute Gallery features changing exhibitions that highlight art focused on sexuality, gender, and reproduction.

[kinseyinstitute.org](http://kinseyinstitute.org)

### ROLLER DERBY

*February - June*

The Bleeding Heartland Roller Derby has home games and tournaments throughout the spring.

[bleedingheartlandrollerderby.com](http://bleedingheartlandrollerderby.com)

### THE BACK DOOR

*Open daily until 3am*

Bloomington's only queer bar, known for great dancing and clever cocktail names.

[backdoorbloomington.com](http://backdoorbloomington.com)

*For tons more events that are open to all, check out  
[visitbloomington.com/events](http://visitbloomington.com/events)*



THE KINSEY GALLERY



BLEEDING HEARTLAND ROLLER DERBY

Indiana University is ranked in the Campus Pride list of the **top 50** LGBT-friendly colleges and universities.

The Advocate ranked Bloomington the **fourth-gayest city** in the country.

**The Kinsey Institute** on sexual behavior and health was founded at IU Bloomington in 1947 by Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey.

Bloomington has received a **perfect 100-point score** on the Human Rights Commission's Municipal Equality Index every year from 2015-2018.

Bloomington was named the **number one** "surprisingly gay small-town destination" by OutTraveler.com.

Bloomington Pridefest attracts **up to 15,000 attendees** every year.

## Resources

### **BLOOMINGTON PRIDE**

Bloomington PRIDE serves the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and allied community of Bloomington and south-central Indiana.

**[bloomingtonpride.org](http://bloomingtonpride.org)**

### **PRISM YOUTH COMMUNITY**

Prism is an inclusive social group for youth celebrating all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

**[bloomingtonpride.org](http://bloomingtonpride.org)**

### **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

The City of Bloomington Human Rights Commission is designed to educate and raise awareness about civil rights laws and human rights issues.

**[bloomington.in.gov](http://bloomington.in.gov)**

### **RAINBOW RIGHTS TASK FORCE AT THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

This group seeks to work with and for the congregation in the area of LGBTQ rights and concerns.

**[uubloomington.org](http://uubloomington.org)**

### **LGBTQ+ CULTURE CENTER**

The Culture Center serves as a resource and information center for campus and community individuals, groups, events, and activities.

**[glbt.indiana.edu](http://glbt.indiana.edu)**

### **IU GLBT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

The IU Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Alumni Association (GLBTAA) seeks to improve the quality of life for LGBT students, faculty, staff, alumni, and fans of Indiana University.

**[alumni.indiana.edu/glbtaa](http://alumni.indiana.edu/glbtaa)**

**800-800-0037**



**VISITBLOOMINGTON.COM**