

The Top 20 Film Festivals In North America

Category: Bucket List Worthy

By John S | July 17, 2018



In just about every aspect, film festivals are the events of the season. They are your ticket into the heart and soul of “what’s in” when it comes to film, the creative arts and the communities that support them. Now, not every film festival is created equal, and there’s no point in spending your time chasing subpar events. Though that won’t be a problem here.

North America is home to a large and booming film industry, and with that comes a variety of festivals and celebrations dedicated to honouring the passion of the medium and the people involved. So, how do you choose the right one? If you’re a sci-fi nerd, general cinephile, or simply looking for a spectacular time, narrowing down your options can be a challenge. The choices from larger than life events, to small and intimate venues can be overwhelming. That’s why, after months of research and interviews, Flight Network has compiled the ultimate list of the Top 20 Film Festivals worth your time and adoration.

Each and every festival on this list is sure to be a hit in 2018, and we have a feeling you’ll want to give in to your passion, get excited, and join in on the fun and magic that surrounds the community of filmmakers, producers and audiences alike. This is your opportunity to celebrate, get involved, network, and show your pride towards the magic that is film.

Check out the list below of our Top 20 Film Festivals in North America for 2018:

- 1. [Banff Mountain Festival](#) | 2. [Gimli Film Festival](#) | 3. [Ottawa International Animation Festival](#)
- 4. [Canadian Film Fest](#) | 5. [Centretown Movies Outdoor Film Festival](#) | 6. [SHOUT LGBTQ Film Festival](#)
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1. Banff Centre Mountain Film and Book Festival

Banff, Alberta, Canada



Radical Reels, Banff Centre, Mountain Festival, 2017

Dates: October 27 – November 4, 2018

Festival Type: Film and Book

Single Ticket Price: \$15-\$60 CAD

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: Everest Pass \$2,000 CAD (Full festival pass includes VIP socials).

The Banff Centre Mountain Film and Book Festival is North America’s largest mountain Festival in the Canadian Rockies, which brings together adventurers, legends, and pioneers to share their stories.

Join the 9 day excursion in Banff, Alberta which is an area filled with tales of remote journeys, ground-breaking expeditions, and cutting-edge adventures told through the eyes of authors, photographers, and filmmakers from around the world.

The festival features film screenings, presentations, a mountain marketplace, and much, much more. Past speakers have included Sir Chris Bonington, Leo Houlding, and Lynn Hill.

Visit www.banffmountainfestival.ca to learn more.

2. Gimli Film Festival

Gimli, Manitoba, Canada



Dates: July 25 – 29

Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price:: \$10 CAD

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$110

The Gimli Film Festival is recognized as one of the most successful film festivals in Manitoba. Its warm and welcoming environment attracts filmmakers and audiences from around the world. The Gimli Film Festival is not only a terrific opportunity to see some of the world’s best films but also offers many opportunities for emerging filmmakers.

The Gimli Film Festival showcases over 100 features, documentaries and shorts from Manitoba, Canada and the world, that promise informative, fascinating and riveting entertainment.

A few of the features include:

- Five indoor venues and the popular RBC Sunset Screenings: Free on-the-beach movies!
- Local and Canadian premieres of award-winning films from around the world!
- Over \$11,000 awarded in pitch competitions & film competitions
- Q & As with Icelandic and Canadian filmmakers
- Workshop and panels for aspiring filmmakers
- Special Events
- Networking events

The 2018 Gimli Film Festival will be celebrating their 18th annual festival with critical, engaging and entertaining cinema from the most promising Manitoban and Canadian filmmakers and an exceptional selection of feature films and documentaries from around the world!

Stay tuned for the release of the 2018 program on their website.

Visit gimlifilm.com to learn more.

3. Ottawa International Animation Festival

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada



Dates: September 26-30, 2018

Festival Type: Animated Film

Single Ticket Price:: \$13 for adults; \$9 for seniors, children and members

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$95 – \$235 CAD

Join over 30,000 attendees in one of the world's largest animation festivals. This Oscar®-recognized festival is the can't-miss event of the animation world!

Ottawa will once again be the stage where you can enjoy the world's most cutting-edge, thoughtful, funny and provocative animated films while mingling with many of animation's most celebrated stars, studios and characters. Whether you love classic cartoons, mind-bending experiments, fantastic digital creations, dazzling effects, technical fireworks, thought provoking observations, or pure gut-busting fun, there is something for everyone.

Visit www.animationfestival.ca to learn more.

4. Canadian Film Fest

Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Dates: March
Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: 10\$ CAD
Weekly & Full Ticket Price: 175\$ CAD

The Canadian Film Fest (CFF) showcases the very best in emerging filmmaking talent from Canada.

Dedicated to supporting Canadian independent films and cultivating emerging and established filmmaking talent.

In addition to film screenings over the course of five days at Cineplex's Flagship Scotiabank Theatre, the CFF presented the CFF Industry Series with industry panelists, a sold out master class on directing, a screenplay competition worth \$10,000 and of course, awesome parties!

The feature and short film lineup for the Canadian Film Fest is a mixture of all genres of films ensuring something for all tastes.

Visit www.canfilmfest.ca to learn more.

5. Centretown Movies Outdoor Film Festival

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada



Dates: July 20 – August 25

Festival Type: Outdoor Film Festival

Single Ticket Price: Free!

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: Free!

This FREE festival under the stars, is run purely by the passion of volunteers.

The festival runs for 5 weeks every summer, on both Friday's and Saturday's, in July and August. Every Friday night, they partner with a community organization. They present a film and gather donations for their organization. On Saturday nights, Centretown Movies presents a film of their own and collects donations to help support the festival and future festivals.

Visit <https://centretownmovies.wordpress.com/> to learn more.

6. SHOUT LGBTQ Film Festival

Birmingham, Southeast US, United States



Dates: August 22 – 26, 2018
Festival Type: Film Festival

Single Ticket Price: 10\$
Weekly & Full Ticket Price: 55\$

SHOUT showcases features, documentaries and short films by new and established artists and offers attendees the opportunity to view topics of interest to the LGBTQ communities, as well as an opportunity to interact with filmmakers and documentary subjects in attendance.

Birmingham SHOUT is Alabama's first and only LGBTQ film festival and is proud to support the growing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and otherwise queer community in Central Alabama, along with providing compelling content for anyone interested in independent films.

Visit shoutfilmfest.com to learn more.

7. RIDM Documentary Festival

Montréal, Québec, Canada



Dates: November 8 – 18, 2018

Festival Type: Documentary

Single Ticket Price: 12\$

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: 100\$

The Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM) is one of North America's leading documentary film festivals.

Each year, the RIDM (Rencontres Internationales Du Documentaire De Montréal) presents more than 140 Canadian and International documentaries with several World and North American premiere's.

Its industry event, Doc Circuit Montréal (DCM), is Quebec's only documentary forum.

Visit <http://ridm.ca/en> to learn more.

8. Edmonton International Film Festival (EIFF)

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada



Dates: September 27 to October 6, 2018
Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: \$15 CAD
Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$151 CAD

EIFF is a festival created by filmmakers and their vision to create a festival that showcases contemporary, independent cinema that inspires and offers a unique perspective of the world in a friendly, joyous, intimate, celebration of the art of cinematic storytelling.

In its 32nd year, EIFF is an OSCAR Qualifying film festival, unspooling more than 150 international, independent films from around the globe in a 10-day cinematic feast with visiting filmmakers, parties, workshops, short films (with lunch!), Galas and an international awards jury.

“As a juror, you laugh, you cry, you’re amazed (and sometimes disappointed), but at some level, the films, the energy, the wonder and the beauty of the art form touch your soul. The Edmonton International Film Festival: it’s a celebration.”

-Mike Davison (USA)

Visit www.edmontonfilmfest.com to learn more.

9. FIN Atlantic International Film Festival

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



Dates: September 13-20
Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: \$38.00
Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$175 (Students and seniors pay \$135)

Atlantic Canada’s curator of epic and unforgettable stories – bringing you the best of the best before anyone knows it’s the best!

The fact that the most celebrated Canadian and international films coexist so naturally alongside the Atlantic region’s brightest talents is truly the crowning achievement of the Atlantic International Film Festival.

In recent years, Festival attendees have been some of the first in the world to see award winners such as ROOM, BROOKLYN, MOONLIGHT, THE SQUARE and CALL ME BY YOUR NAME while also discovering such exceptional regional films as CAST NO SHADOW, CLOSET MONSTER, MAUDIE, WEREWOLF and BLACK COP, which have gone on to garner international recognition.

This melding of global and local makes the Atlantic International Film Festival a truly unique experience.

Blog: www.finfestival.ca/news

Visit www.finfestival.ca to learn more.

10. Festival Du Nouveau Cinéma (FNC)

Montréal, Québec, Canada



Dates: October 3-14, 2018

Festival Type: Film/New Media Interactive Art

Single Ticket Price: 10\$

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: 150\$

The oldest film festival in North America that still offers the most innovative and astonishing art from all over the world. For over 47 years, Montreal Festival Du Nouveau Cinéma (FNC) has been a major event of the international cinema scene, where it has proved its capacity to adhere to the most avant-garde audiovisual practices. Your favorite filmmakers, the Young Turks and key artists from all over the world working in cinema and new media will all be gathering for 11 days of festivities, events and meetings. The she-wolf will be expecting you for her 47th edition!

Visit <http://nouveaucinema.ca/en> to learn more.

11. Calgary Underground Film Festival

Calgary, Alberta, Canada



Dates: April 2019

Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: 7\$
Weekly & Full Ticket Price: 89\$

The Calgary Underground Film Festival features films that defy convention in a unique festival experience.

The Calgary Underground Film Festival is now Western Canada’s biggest genre film festival and is dedicated to programming films that defy convention. The festival offers a unique roster of films rarely seen in North American theatres, and actively looks to showcase titles in all genres, from horror, sci-fi and fantasy to comedies, thrillers and music-related films. CUFF currently has two festivals year-round. A 7-day festival mid-April, and the all-new CUFF.Docs International Documentary Festival in November.

In addition to its unique and genre-pushing programming, the film festival strives to create a fun festival atmosphere. DJs play before all films, they run a full bar with custom cocktails, and bring several filmmakers to the festival each year. Past guests to the festival include Aubrey Plaza, Crispin Glover and John Waters.

Visit www.calgaryundergroundfilm.org to learn more.

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12. Asinabka Film & Media Arts Festival

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada



Dates: August 8-12, 2018

Festival Type: Film, Media Arts, Music, Culture

Single Ticket Price: \$5.00

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$25.00

The Asinabka Festival brings together the best of traditional and contemporary Indigenous arts to Ottawa, Canada, in Algonquin territory.

The Festival presents the best in Indigenous film, music and media arts over 5 days. There is also an outdoor film screening on historic Asinabka/Victoria Island amongst the tipis and wigwams of a traditional Algonquin village with traditional Indigenous performances, food, and music.

The outdoor film screening is followed by screenings throughout the week at the Canadian Museum of Nature.

There is also a contemporary art exhibition at Artist Run Centre Gallery 101, with workshops, discussions and music that showcases underground, emerging and new wave Indigenous music.

Visit www.asinabkafestival.org to learn more.

13. Vox Popular Media Arts Festival

Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada



Dates: September 13-16, 2018

Festival Type: Media Arts

Single Ticket Price: \$10 CAD

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$30 CAD

The Vox Popular Media Arts Festival allows the voice of the people from around the world to be heard in a local environment.

The Festival (formerly the Bay Street Film Festival) will celebrate its 14th anniversary from September 13-16, 2018. Vox Popular programs include all genres of media arts – documentary, features, shorts, experimental, 360VR, and installations made in Northwestern Ontario, Canada and internationally.

The annual festival and year-round programming connects professional independent filmmakers with other artists and to audiences of all ages and interests by showing films, facilitating creative and professional development and multidisciplinary arts performances in an accessible, inclusive, friendly environment.

Visit www.voxpopular.ca to learn more.

14. New Orleans Film Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana, USA



Dates: October 17 – 25, 2018

Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: \$13 USD

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$320 USD

A 9 day celebration of cutting edge, diverse cinema combined with the best parties New Orleans has to offer!

Now in its 29th year, the New Orleans Film Festival, October 17-25, 2018, has grown into an internationally respected annual event that attracts 25K people, 400+ filmmakers, and 240 films. It is one of the few film festivals that is Oscar-qualifying in all three Academy-accredited categories: Narrative Short, Documentary Short, and Animated Short — and it's been recognized by MovieMaker Magazine as one of the "Top 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee" every year since 2012 (one of only two festivals to receive that recognition for seven straight years). Attending filmmakers and cinema fans enjoy a unique camaraderie in a city that has an international reputation for knowing how to have a good time!

visit <http://neworleansfilmfestival.org> to learn more.

15. Seattle International Film Festival

Seattle, Pacific Northwest, USA



Dates: May 17 – June 10

Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: \$14 USD

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$1,800 USD (Platinum Pass – Apr. 14 – Jun. 10, 2018)

The Seattle International Film Festival is the largest film festival in the United States, and is renowned for presenting over 400 features, short films, and documentaries gathered from more than 80 countries.

SIFF has gathered together a snapshot of the world through a diversity of filmmakers whose strong storytelling and artistic acumen highlights what film does best: creates awareness, empathy, and understanding around another person's experiences. Within this year's program there is a particular focus on Indigenous filmmaking, women directors, Pacific Northwest film, African pictures, and Chinese films.

Visit <http://siff.net> to learn more.

16. ReelAbilities Film Festival: Toronto

Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Dates: May 29 – June 4, 2018

Festival Type: Cultural – Film

Single Ticket Price: \$12 CAD

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: N/A

A Festival that shines a light on the fact that Deaf people and those with disabilities are often underrepresented in media and film.

ReelAbilities Film Festival: Toronto is Canada's largest festival dedicated to showcasing Deaf and disability cultures. Since its inaugural year in 2016, the Festival has grown steadily adding new programming and more films each year and has welcomed thousands of filmgoers who have come to enjoy film but also learn about the way different people navigate the world. The 2018 Festival presented its first ever comedy night and explored the topics of sexuality and disability, disability rights, the Deaf film scene and inclusive design through panels and workshops. The Festival also educated youth about life with disabilities through its ReelEducation school and field trip program.

Visit <http://reelabilities.org/toronto/> to learn more.

17. Open Roof Festival

Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Dates: Every Wednesday from June 20 – August 22

Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: \$15 CAD

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: N/A

Open Roof Festival has become a summer institution in the city and the go-to summer date night and meeting spot helping to bring together the community with Hollywood hits, indie flicks and emerging musical acts under the stars.

Open Roof Festival is a 10-week outdoor film festival offers filmgoers an eclectic mix of Hollywood and indie flicks paired with emerging musicians or bands in a variety of genres plus an ever changing food menu and drinks – a combination that has established the Festival's reputation as Toronto's ultimate summer date night and meeting spot.

The Festival is also an almost entirely volunteer-driven event and all profits raised are put forth in support of Canada's independent film production and music communities.

Visit <http://www.openrooffestival.com/> to learn more.

18. NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA)

Los Angeles, California, USA



Dates: Once a month (throughout the year)

Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: \$5.00 USD (includes admission to one film program)

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$15.00 USD (includes open bar and three film programs)

A very unique format. This festival aims to carefully curate only the most exciting new storytellers.

NewFilmMakers Los Angeles Monthly Film Festival offers filmmakers and cinema aficionados an opportunity to gather together in LA throughout the year. The festival features a red carpet reception with an open bar, filmmaker Q&A's, workshops, panels and more!

Visit <http://www.NFMLA.org> to learn more.

19. San Diego Latino Film Festival

San Diego, California, USA



Dates: Mid March (2019 dates TBA)

Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: \$12 USD

Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$120 USD (11 films)

The San Diego Latino Film Festival is an 11-day celebration of Latino culture, including cinema, arts, music and food.

The Festival was established 25 years ago initially as a student film festival focusing on works by Latinos and/or about the Latino Experience. It has since developed into one of the larger and well-respected Latino film festivals in the world.

The festival includes over 170 national & international film premieres, guest filmmakers and actors, the Annual Sabor Latino Food, Beer & Wine Festival, daily live performances and concerts, an art show, Opening & Closing Night Parties and more!

Visit <http://sdlatinofilm.com> to learn more.

20. Open World Toronto Film Festival (OWTFF)

Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Dates: October 18 – 21, 2018
Festival Type: Film

Single Ticket Price: \$10 CAD
Weekly & Full Ticket Price: \$20 CAD

The Open World Toronto Film Festival (OWTFF) is a celebration of aspiring and established film talent with musical performances, multimedia coverage, and a Q&A session where international filmmakers share their lessons from the industry, for the industry.

The 4 Day glamorous event includes a red carpet filled with fashion and photographers, an winners gala (which includes: dinner & live music & aware acceptance speeches), a virtual reality exhibit, and screenings.

This is the one event where the filmmakers are treated like stars.

Visit <https://owtff.com> to learn more.

So, which festival are you most excited for?

Planning on attending one or more of these fantastic film festivals? We’d love to hear which one and why. Please comment your answers below!

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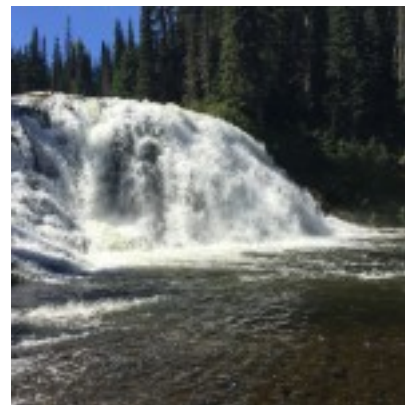
Canada's Top 50 Small Towns



Vacation like a Rock Star!



4 Must-See Music Festivals
(That Aren't Coachella)



3 Incredible Rivers in
Northern British Columbia