

Tea dances were events organized on Sunday afternoons in the US gay community, originating in New York in the 1950s and 1960s. The original dances included tea service. They were a place for singles to meet. The name alludes to traditional tea dances of the English countryside.

History

It was illegal until the mid-1960s for bars in New York to sell alcohol to people known to be gay, and New York City police would conduct raids on establishments catering to them. Hence, gay men in the area began to hold tea dances outside the city as an alternative venue for meeting. In New York, these generally took place on Fire Island, in Cherry Grove and the Pines, on Sunday afternoons. Serving tea rather than alcohol made them more acceptable and less law-defying. Because they were held in the afternoon, attendees could catch a ferry and return home and be ready to work on Monday morning.

Tea dances spread beyond New York and lasted into the 1990s and beyond, regularly taking place in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Provincetown, and Los Angeles and San Francisco, among other cities.

As gay people became more accepted and legally protected, the tea dances were subsumed into nighttime club events such as circuit parties, although have recently seen a resurgence, particularly at gay vacation destinations such as Provincetown and Fire Island.

(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

National Coming Out Day – October 11, 2025

National Coming Out Day (NCOD) is an annual LGBT awareness day observed on October 11 to support anyone "coming out of the closet". First celebrated in the United States in 1988, the initial idea was grounded in the feminist and gay liberation spirit of the personal being political, and the emphasis on the most basic form of activism being coming out to family, friends, and colleagues, and living life as an openly lesbian or gay person. The founders believed that homophobia thrives in an atmosphere of silence and ignorance and that once people know that they have loved ones who are lesbian or gay, they are far less likely to maintain homophobic or oppressive views.

The date of October 11 was chosen because it is the anniversary of the Second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1987.

“William J. O’Brien: From Here to There”

Exhibition Dates: October 1 - November 14, 2025

Artist's Reception: Sunday, October 12, 2025 from 1 to 4 p.m.

"Tea Dance" theme for National Coming Out Day