

# 12 Essential Conferences for Meeting Everyone You Need to Know to Succeed in Cannabis

Mark your calendars. These are the top 12 cannabis conferences to go to over the next year.

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Sure, it's exciting that billions of dollars are sloshing around the cannabis industry. And we all know one way to get a piece of that action is being at the right conferences – the kind where you can meet insiders, get inspired, and make business happen. But as the cannabis industry explodes with events, how do you choose among the hundreds of national and international conferences each year, not to mention the festivals, forums, trade shows, and meet-ups?

Here's a list of a dozen of the best and most highly regarded cannabis events in the industry – and which are the best for you, depending on whether you're looking to invest or meet investors, buy or sell products, find business solutions, network, trend-spot, or simply get your entrepreneurial toes wet.

## 1. The High Times Cannabis Cup

June 1-2, Santa Rosa, Calif.

June 8-9, Clio, Mich.

June 22-23, Bay Area

*Great for:* Selling and sampling

The High Times Cannabis Cup is one of the community's premier sales and consumption events, featuring hundreds of vendors and live performances.

June 7-9, Toronto

September 5-6, Berlin, Germany

*Great for:* An industry-wide view

Held three times a year (its Vancouver event was in January), the expo features hundreds of exhibitors from across North America and Europe, main-stage talks by cannabis leaders, a startup pitch competition, interactive demos, and more. Consumers, professionals, and the canna-curious have the chance to engage with established and emerging brands and learn more about the fast-paced world of cannabis. The Toronto conference will have more than 250 exhibitors, as well as keynotes, live cannabis growing and cooking demos, and a career fair.

June 26, London

*Great for:* Investing in the green market

The IC3 describes itself as catering to "sophisticated investors seeking alternative asset classes and portfolio diversification." It's also probably the best conference for cannabis entrepreneurs to get in front of institutional and accredited investors. Europe is set to become one of the world's largest cannabis markets, so if you have some extra cash, it might be worth learning more and meeting the businesses and investors already establishing a foothold there.

July 17, Chicago (and others)

*Great for:* Finding funding

Arcview Group is one of the most established investment organizations in the cannabis space, setting up connections between entrepreneurs and funders. Since 2018, their event arm has organized a number of conferences in the U.S., Canada, and Hong Kong. Upcoming International Investment Forums include the Chicago event plus dates in New York City (September 30) and Las Vegas (December 8).

July 22-24, San Jose, Calif. (and others)

*Great for:* All things science and technology

NCIA is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that seeks to advance the interests of a responsible cannabis industry. Thousands of professionals flock to its annual Seed to Sale Show in February for two days of networking, learning, and shopping to improve their canna-business. Seed to Sale is uniquely focused on the science and technology of the cannabis plant, but NCIA's San Jose Summit & Expo centers around the business end, and their conference in Long Beach, Calif. (October 8-9), is all about navigating the adult-use market.

September 15-16, Vancouver

February 6-7, 2020, San Francisco

*Great for:* Spotting what's next

The ICBC features an edgy lineup of lectures and exhibitors focused on industry trends. The February 2019 event in San Francisco drew approximately 1,500 people from more than 20 countries and presenters from at least a half-dozen nations, while ICBC's Europe-based conferences regularly draw attendees from 60 or more countries.

Dates to be determined, Santa Rosa, CA

*Great for:* Insights into top cannabis brands, networking.

This trade show in beautiful wine country just happened in early May. Unlike the Emerald Cup, which happens at the same location, and is focused towards consumers, Hall of Flowers is an industry-only, highly-curated B2B trade show specifically designed to facilitate the trade of premium licensed cannabis products across flower, concentrate, edible, topical and accessories

October 14-15, Chicago

*Great for:* Meeting investors

The Benzinga Cannabis Capital Conference is a business and finance event featuring both private and publicly traded companies, and a series of panels on building and scaling a green business. It's a good opportunity to network, seek funding, and close deals.

## **9. MJBizCon**

December 11-13, Las Vegas

*Great for:* Networking

If you want to attend just one cannabis-related event this year, it probably should be the world's largest, the Marijuana Business Conference & Expo, or MJBizCon for short. The 2018 expo drew more than 27,000 attendees, 1,000 exhibitors, and 150 speakers for an entire week of weed networking. The colossal scale of MJBizCon makes it *the* place to see others and be seen. Even if you don't attend the conference itself, there are dozens of parties and events happening around it, and plenty of opportunities to make connections.

December 14-15, Santa Rosa, Calif.

*Great for:* Experiencing the cannabis community – complete with music

The Emerald Cup, a.k.a. “the Academy Awards of the medical

marijuana industry,” takes place at the Sonoma County, Calif., fairgrounds and is *the* tribal gathering where the West Coast cannabis community celebrates the fall harvest. It hosts the original and longest-running and largest organic, sun-grown cannabis competition on the planet. With numerous discussion panels and a diverse set of industry-leading vendors, attendees can learn about every aspect of the industry. There is ample opportunity to mingle with the best cultivators, seed breeders, and product makers from around the world—and listen to bands on three musical stages. All in all, the Cup provides an organic, highly entertaining experience that immerses attendees in the origins of the contemporary cannabis industry and culture.

## 11. CannaTech Events

December, South Africa

*Great for:* Making global connections

CannaTech events are all about the international angle, with presentations that focus on government policy, science, research, finance, medicine, tech, agriculture, and innovation. Past conferences were held in Tel Aviv, London, Sydney, Hong Kong, Davos, and Panama and have included pitch events and deal rooms for investors to meet entrepreneurs.

## 12. SXSW Conference

March 8-17, 2020, Austin, Texas

*Great for:* The big picture

While certainly much more than a green event, SXSW 2019 for the first time ever featured a series of cannabis panels along with its famed offerings of music, film, politics, tech, and media. A conference designed to spark the unexpected by bringing together cultural celebrities and provocateurs, you

might just walk away with your next great cannabis idea.

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