

CANADA REPORT

June 2025

TRAVEL SOUTH USA



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I. Canada Overview

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- Not shy about travelling to the U.S.? Flight prices have dropped to some destinations.
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II. Executive Summary

- Trade newsletter
- Trade sales calls
- Media newsletter deployment
- New Baxter Campaign - microsite
- Media meetings
- Monitoring market stats and evaluating ongoing sentiment

9 Partners AL/AR/KY/N C/SC/TN/MS /MO/WV	Canada												
	2024						2025						
	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	YTD TOTAL
Travel Trade													
Trade Meetings	2	3	5	6	6	6	4	5	5	5	5	5	57
# of Agents Trained	N/A	N/A	18	13	14	0	46	15	0	0	0	0	106
Newsletters	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	9
PR													
Media Meetings	6	6	5	6	8	6	8	9	4	5	6	4	73
# of Articles Published	7	23	26	2	1	9	25	0	3	3	1	1	101
Impressions	16,154,640	23,988,050	16,300,000	99,500	304,000	22,508,450	22,342,228	0	914,000	290,200	860,000	20,000	103,781,068

1. COMMUNICATION & PR

Communication & PR	Annual KPIs Target	KPI Achieved This Month	KPI Achieved to Date
Media Meetings	50	4	73
No. of Articles Generated	55	1	101
Impressions	55,000,000	20,000	103,781,068
Global Media Marketplace & FAMs	5	0	6
Travel South USA PR Newsletters	10	1	10
Open rate for Newsletters/leads generated	20%	15.3%	30.1%

**Exceeding KPIs in four categories*

Media Coverage

- FY24-25 CoverageBook: <https://travelsouthusa.coveragebook.com/b/b6e02c4778cf8a3d>
- Earned Media Tracker: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ycbq4VFyhO4sXcCWXaFY2vCoZI2NV72H/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=100437309667561831242&rtpof=true&sd=true

Media Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Publication	Meeting Notes & Interest	Follow-up/Next step
Mike Baginski	Travel Industry Today	Met at IPW and discussed emerging travel trends relevant to Canadian travelers.	Shared destination materials and sample itineraries; awaiting feedback on potential editorial opportunities from her editor.
Loukia Zigoumis	Freelance	Explored potential stories highlighting family-friendly travel and destination wedding options throughout Travel South USA states.	Provide family-focused itineraries along with wedding/honeymoon story ideas and supporting images.
Shinan Govani	Freelance	Explored luxury lifestyle and cultural coverage opportunities, especially connected to music, design, and high-profile Southern events.	Pitch cultural event story angles and offer a potential hosted press trip.

Joel Levi	Toronto Guardian	Discussed city-style travel storytelling with a focus on sustainable, authentic, and lesser-known experiences throughout the South.	Share details on Travel South USA's responsible tourism initiatives and highlight off-the-beaten-path experiences.
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Global Media Marketplace & Summit 2025

Canada office secured six media for the 2025 conference and FAMs. Coverage is confirmed but will be delayed until consumer outlets resume US travel content due to the current sentiment in Canada. – We are working to influence a change in this pause knowing that domestic travel is at risk due to wild fires and poor air quality, reported to be the worst in history.

NAME	PUBLICATION	STATUS	EXPECTED COVERAGE	FAM CHOICE
Randy Sharman	Informed Traveler Podcast	Completed	Kentucky Louisiana Tennessee	Louisiana
Pat Lee	Post Media National	Completed	Two articles	West Virginia
Malik Cocherel	Le Devoir & Le Journal de Montreal	Completed	Two articles	Alabama
Jennifer Bain	Freelance	Completed	National Parks Traveler 1 Journey Woman National Parks Traveler 2	Arkansas
Kim Pemberton	Times Colonist	Completed	Two articles in weekly column	Georgia
Rosalind Stefanac	Freelance	Completed	Two articles	Mississippi
Robin Esrock	Canadian Geographic	<i>Can no longer participate.</i>	N/A	N/A
Leah Rumack	Freelance (CAA, Zoomer)	<i>Can no longer participate.</i>	N/A	N/A
Michelle Hopkins	Vacay.ca	<i>Can no longer participate.</i>	N/A	N/A

Editorial Newsletter

Discover the Best Free Things to Do Across the South

- Open Rate: 12.9%
- Click-Through-Rate: 0.72%
- Distribution: 1,230

Marketing

CAA Niagara

Program timeline & launch dates:

Each campaign will launch on the 15th of the month. It is recommended that agent training sessions take place prior to the campaign live dates (first or second Wednesday of each month at 11a.m. EST)

SEPT - Missouri & Partners (STL & KC)

NOV - New Orleans & Savannah

DEC - Tennessee & Partners (Nashville & Sevierville)

JAN - Alabama & Partners (AL Mt Lakes, Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile)

FEB - North Carolina & Partners (Fayetteville)

MAR - Kentucky & Partners (Lexington) – *on hold*

APR – Arkansas – *on hold*

MAY - Myrtle Beach – *on hold*

Program Overview:

- Instagram and Facebook Social for 3 weeks
- Virtual Agent Training – first or second Wednesday of each month
- CAA Niagara Homepage Banner for 30 days
- 1x Dedicated Email E-Blast reaching 13,500+ registrants
- CAA APP Ad Carousel for 30 days - running under state Ad
- Liz Fleming Show - check out past episodes of the show at <https://www.610cktb.com/shows/liz-fleming-travels.html>

Toronto Star

Kentucky's campaign surpassed our PV goal and had terrific average read times for each article, all surpassing the average read benchmark of 2min12sec.

Strong Reach & Impressions

- Delivered 1,320,776 impressions through native article amplification
- Achieved a reach of 49,874 via paid social promotion
- Generated 77,973 total impressions across social units

High Engagement with Content

- Overall click-through rate (CTR) on social: 0.03%
- Native article amplification CTR: 0.42% with 5,614 clicks
- Sponsored articles collectively drove 5,003 page views, with solid average time on page ranging from 2:20 to 3:14 minutes

Top Performing Articles

- *Best of Kentucky*: 1,941 page views with an average time on page of 3:14
- *Gateway to the South*: 901 page views with 3:11 average time on page
- *Why Fall is the Best Time to Indulge*: 1,345 page views, 2:55 average time
- *Western Kentucky BBQ*: 816 page views, 2:20 average time



Baxter Media

Participating partners:

- Alabama
- Missouri
- Savannah
- Baton Rouge

IPW

Attended IPW and supported with engagement with the Canadian delegation. The event had great turnout and positive feedback from Canadians in attendance.

Some feedback includes:

Randy Sharman, Informed Traveler – *“I love the South and feel it’s important to continue supporting our friends south of the border. I will continue to showcase the awesome music and culinary offerings the south has to offer.”*

Debbie Olsen, Freelance – *“I don’t believe in holding back on promoting travel to the US. Canadians will eventually be back to travel in droves, and I think it’s important to remain present with the US destinations. Thank you so much for the invitation to this event – it was an awesome taste of what the South has to offer!”*

I. LEISURE SALES

Leisure Sales Measures	Annual KPIs Target	KPI Achieved This month	KPI Achieved to Date
Tour operator meetings <i>*focus on top 20 and grow CAA club partnerships</i>	20	5	57
Agent Trainings	200	0	106
International Showcase & FAMs participants	6	0	6
Travel South Travel Trade Newsletter	10	1	9
Open rate for Newsletters/leads generated	25%	28.91%	28.91%

Leisure Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Name	Company	Purpose of Meeting	Follow-up/Next step
Jennifer Martin	WestJet	The new route from Calgary to Raleigh launched and is doing well with minimal marketing. WJ is going to test social in early July (North Carolina is investing in sponsored content in efforts to support the route).	Monitoring bookings through the CTA promo code.
Tim Macdonell	Elite Sports	Professional sports continue to be a draw as Canadians follow their teams. The Toronto Blue Jays are on a winning streak which may influence fans to grow interest to their USA games.	Follow up on cities for baseball tours and building basketball for Fall.
Shirley Bu	Voyages Vasco	Provided updates on assets and destination support. The agency has U.S. trips scheduled for the next quarter. Clients remain hesitant; however, they remain open to restarting promotions if sentiment improves.	Follow up on any additional information required.
Ludy	Voyages	Connected to discuss Nashville and	Follow up on any

Pasilaban	Fournier	culinary tours. Agents shared that safety concerns continue to be a barrier, along with fluctuating exchange rates. Although group bookings are paused, some FIT clients are starting to explore US travel this fall/winter.	additional information required.
Sabrina Locke	Paradis Tours	Provided updates in South Carolina and Myrtle Beach. The agency mentioned minimal inquiries for U.S. trips, with most clients still prioritizing Canada and Europe.	Follow up on any additional information required.
Debbie Howard	Voyages Lexus	Discussed potential fall travel opportunities in Alabama and Mississippi. Clients are showing interest in music and cultural tours. Value remains a key factor.	Follow up on any additional information required.
Christiane Crump	Voyages Aquaterra	Reviewed updates in Kentucky and Arkansas for FIT and small-group tours. Suggested scenic drives and cultural stops. Some are browsing for late-2025 travel.	Follow up on any additional information required.

Webinars/Agent trainings

Due to the current political and economic sentiment, a decision to postpone the scheduled webinars for now. Our goal is to ensure strong engagement and deliver value when the timing is more appropriate for our partners.

The alternative program includes a dedicated microsite for four Travel South states on TravelCourier.ca, providing comprehensive and engaging content to promote travel agent engagement and awareness of each state.

Platform: *TravelCourier.ca*

Timing: 2-month campaign (July & August)

Purpose: *This campaign replaces the previously planned agent trainings for the above states.*

Components:

- 1 Baxter produced article, optional 3 additional State produced articles
- Banner Ads (rotated throughout microsite during each 2-week feature)
- Email Blasts to Canadian travel agents
- Social Media Posts via Baxter Media channels

Campaign Overview:

Microsite Duration:

- **Total campaign duration:** 2 months
- **Each state receives:**
 - **2 weeks** of exclusive feature on the microsite

Content & Articles:

- Promoted Article
- State-Provided Article

Banner Advertising:

- **For each state's 2-week feature:**
 - 3 banner ad placements:
 - 250 x 250 Rotated throughout the microsite during the 2-week feature.

Promotion:

- **Email Blasts:**
 - Targeted email blasts to travel agents across Canada, highlighting the microsite and driving traffic.
- **Social Media Posts:**
 - Posts across Baxter Media's social channels to amplify the reach and encourage travel agent interaction.

Reporting & Performance Metrics:

At the conclusion of each state's 2-week feature, Baxter Media will provide a detailed performance report outlining key metrics including page views, unique visitors, banner impressions, click-through rates.

Newsletters

Free things to do while in the South

- Open Rate: 28.91%
- Click Rate: 1.69%
- Distribution: 19,463

All newsletters can be found at the link [HERE](#).

International Showcase 2024

NAME	COMPANY	STATUS
Laurence Despiegel	Toundra Voyages	completed
Beth Fleeton	CAA Niagara	completed
Kelsey Baron	AMA Travel	completed
James Ma	Concord Tours	completed
Maryssa Lessard	GVQ	completed
Julien Yessien	Expression Voyages	completed
Christine Roberti	Baxter Media	completed

International Showcase Report [HERE](#)

Looking Ahead at July 2025

Communication & PR

- **Ongoing media meetings** and **pitching** to obtain coverage.
- **Executing** an approved plan with intimate events.
- **Compile** new guidelines for coverage monitoring through CoverageBook.

Leisure Sales

- **Present** Baxter campaign to replace agent trainings.
- **Prospecting** trade for Fall Global Summit – focus on buyers interested in Sports & Entertainment.

Market Update

ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

- **Canada is actively working to diversify its trade partnerships beyond the U.S.. In early July, Foreign Minister Anita Anand confirmed that Canada is pursuing a free trade agreement with ASEAN—a strategic move to reduce dependency on U.S. markets amid ongoing tariff tensions.**
Canada is seeking to finalise a free trade deal with Southeast Asian nations as part of a push to expand into new markets, its top diplomat said, responding to the hefty tariffs imposed on it by the United States, its neighbour and largest trade partner. ([source](#))
- **Cuts at Ontario colleges leading to nearly 10,000 job losses, union says**
Close to 10,000 college faculty and staff have either been let go or are projected to lose their jobs amid hundreds of program cancellations and suspensions since last year, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union said Wednesday as it warned of serious trouble in the sector. ([source](#))
- **Interprovincial Energy Deal: Alberta–Ontario Oil & Pipeline Study**
On July 7, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith and Ontario Premier Doug Ford signed MOUs to collaborate on energy and infrastructure projects. These include a new oil pipeline to James Bay, expanded rail routes to move Alberta's energy and Ontario's critical minerals, and potential access to a deep-water port—designed to enhance interprovincial trade and reduce reliance on U.S. markets. ([source](#))
- **Canadian dollar notches biggest gain in one month as greenback slides.**
The Canadian dollar jumped 0.7% to 1.3625 per U.S. dollar, its biggest daily gain in a month, amid a broad drop in the U.S. dollar after reports President Trump considered replacing Fed Chair Powell and a downward revision to U.S. GDP (–0.5%). Markets now await Canada's April GDP data, with nearly 40% odds of the Bank of Canada easing in July. ([source](#))

TRAVEL TRENDS

- **Canadians Not Letting Rising Costs Derail Summer Travel Plans: Survey ([Source](#))**
 - Despite ongoing concerns about inflation and the rising cost of living, the majority of Canadians are still prioritizing summer travel, according to a new report from BMO
 - The survey found that 77% of Canadians plan to travel this summer, with nearly two-thirds (62%) saying they'll spend the same or more on vacations compared to 2024.
 - The average travel budget for Canadians this summer sits at CAD\$3,825, which includes flights, accommodations, transportation, and food.
- **From Border Blues to Local Boom: Canada's 2025 Tourism Spending Outlook (TD Economics)**
 - Tourism spending in Canada is projected to grow modestly by 2–4%, with total expenditures expected to increase by \$2–4 billion, despite broader economic challenges.
 - U.S. visitor spending is forecasted to decline by 5–10% (~\$1B) due to trade tensions, economic uncertainty, and a weaker U.S. dollar. Border towns and duty-free shops are seeing sharp revenue drops as U.S. car trips continue to fall.

- Canadian domestic travel remains the key buffer, driven by shifting preferences, affordability, and incentives like the Canada Strong Pass. Domestic air travel rose significantly in April, and Airbnb searches for local trips surged 20%.
 - Non-U.S. international visits show promise: Visitors from the U.K., Mexico, and China have increased, with Google Trends data confirming a spike in global and local interest in travel to Canada in March–April.
 - Overall tourism resilience is supported by domestic travel strength and a modest rebound in non-U.S. markets, helping to offset the decline in U.S. travel and positioning Canada's tourism sector for a relatively stable year.
 - Looking to 2026, Canada's role as co-host of the FIFA World Cup is expected to deliver a major tourism boom, potentially boosting GDP, international visibility, and travel sector employment. ([source](#))
- **Carney's 'Canada Strong Pass' to come into effect on June 20**
The federal government will launch the Canada Strong Pass on June 20, running through August, as part of its initiative to promote domestic tourism and national unity. The pass will offer free Via Rail seats for youth under 18 traveling with parents, free access to national galleries, museums, and historic sites, and discounted admission for Canadians aged 18–24. It will also include reduced camping fees in national parks for all Canadians. Positioned as a response to rising U.S. tensions, the pass aims to encourage families to explore Canada this summer while fostering a stronger national identity. ([source](#))

AIRLINE UPDATES

- **WestJet Expands Its Horizons by Integrating Sunwing Airlines, Delivering an Innovative and Game-Changing Travel Experience for Canadian Passengers in Canada**
WestJet has officially completed its integration of Sunwing Airlines as of May 29, 2025, marking a major milestone in its strategy to become Canada's leading provider of sun and vacation travel. The move combines two major travel brands to expand travel options, offer better value, and streamline operations, including the unification of 43 additional aircraft under a single Air Operator Certificate. WestJet is investing in cabin reconfigurations to offer a full range of fare classes—Premium to UltraBasic—across its fleet, responding to evolving traveler demands. Sunwing Vacations will continue to operate under its own brand but with improved access and booking through WestJet's expanded network. Overall, this integration strengthens WestJet's position in the leisure travel market and sets a new standard for accessible, flexible vacation travel in Canada. ([source](#))
- **New Route of the Day – Americas (14 June 2025): WestJet between Vancouver and Tampa**
On June 14, 2025, WestJet launched a new seasonal weekly service between Vancouver and Tampa, marking the first direct connection between the two cities. The route, operated with WestJet's Boeing 737 fleet, targets demand during the peak Alaskan cruise season and will compete with Air Canada's twice-weekly offering. Tampa Airport CEO Joe Lopano welcomed the route as part of WestJet's continued growth and praised the added international connectivity. Tampa is experiencing its busiest summer yet, with a record number of international flights and an average of 512 daily departures, highlighting the strategic value of this new Canada–Florida link. ([source](#))

TRAVEL TRADE UPDATES

- **Not shy about travelling to the U.S.? Flight prices have dropped to some destinations.**

At this time of year, flight prices to popular U.S. destinations from Canada typically increase ahead of peak vacation months. But after [tensions](#) between the two countries have spurred many Canadians to travel elsewhere, flight prices for a number of U.S. cities have dropped.

- In 2024, Canadian residents' trips to the United States totalled 39 million, or about 75 per cent of all Canadian-resident travel abroad, according to Statistics Canada.
- In recent months, that has [declined](#), with Canadian residents' return trips by air to the U.S. in April declining 14 per cent, and 24.2 per cent in May.

- **NYC lights up in red and white for Canada Day.**

New York City proudly illuminated its skyline in red and white, the colours of the Canadian flag, to mark Canada Day and celebrate the enduring friendship between Canada and New York City. The tribute, visible across the city, was intended as a gesture of friendship and connection. It honoured the deep-rooted cultural, economic, and personal ties between Canadians and New Yorkers, bonds built on mutual respect, shared values, and decades of cooperation. ([source](#))

- **Canada Faces Tourism Decline from U.S. and Asia, But Europe, U.K., and Mexico Spark a Robust Tourism Revival**

Canada's tourism sector is facing a steady decline in both U.S. and overseas visitors, with April showing an 8.9% drop in U.S. arrivals and a 0.6% dip in international visitors, marking the third and seventh consecutive monthly declines, respectively. A major contributor is a 12.6% decrease in visitors from Asia, though European and Latin American markets—particularly the U.K., France, and Mexico—remain relatively strong. Canadian travel to the U.S. also fell sharply by 29.1%, while overseas travel by Canadians rose 9.1%. Rising travel costs, shifting post-pandemic habits, and global competition are influencing this trend, prompting calls for Canada to strengthen tourism strategies, diversify offerings, and enhance visitor experiences to support recovery. ([source](#))

Air Canada

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Toronto to Atlanta (ATL)	None	1x daily	2x daily
Montreal to Atlanta (ATL)	Increase	1x daily	2x daily
Toronto to Charlotte (CLT)	Increase	1x daily	2x daily
Toronto to Nashville (BNA)	None	2x daily	2x daily
Montreal to Nashville (BNA)	None	No direct flights	1-2x daily
Toronto to Raleigh (RDU)	Increase	No direct flights	1-2x daily

Montreal to Raleigh (RDU)	Increase	No direct flights	1-2x daily
Toronto to St. Louis (STL)	Increase	1x daily	1-2x daily
Montreal to St. Louis (STL)	Increase	No direct flights	1x daily
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	Increase	1x daily	1-2x weekly
Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

Air Transat

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

Flair

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Edmonton to Nashville (BNA)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Toronto to Nashville (BNA)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

Porter Airlines

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
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WestJet

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Calgary to Atlanta (ATL)	Increase	1x daily	2x daily
Vancouver to Atlanta (ATL)	Increase	No direct flights	2x daily
Toronto to Nashville (BNA)	None	1x daily	1x daily
Vancouver to Nashville (BNA)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Calgary to Nashville (BNA)	None	1x daily	1x daily
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

Updated WestJet route schedule:

<https://www.westjet.com/en-ca/book-trip/direct-flights/index>

American Airlines

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Toronto to Charlotte (CLT)	Increase	3x daily	4x daily
Montreal to Charlotte (CLT)	None	2x daily	2x daily
Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	Increase	No direct flights	1x daily
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

JetBlue

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

Delta Air Lines

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Toronto to Atlanta (ATL)	None	5x daily	5x daily
Montreal to Atlanta (ATL)	Increase	2x daily	3x daily
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

United Airlines

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from July 1
Toronto to Charleston (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to Charlotte (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights