



AUNZ REPORT

NOVEMBER 2025

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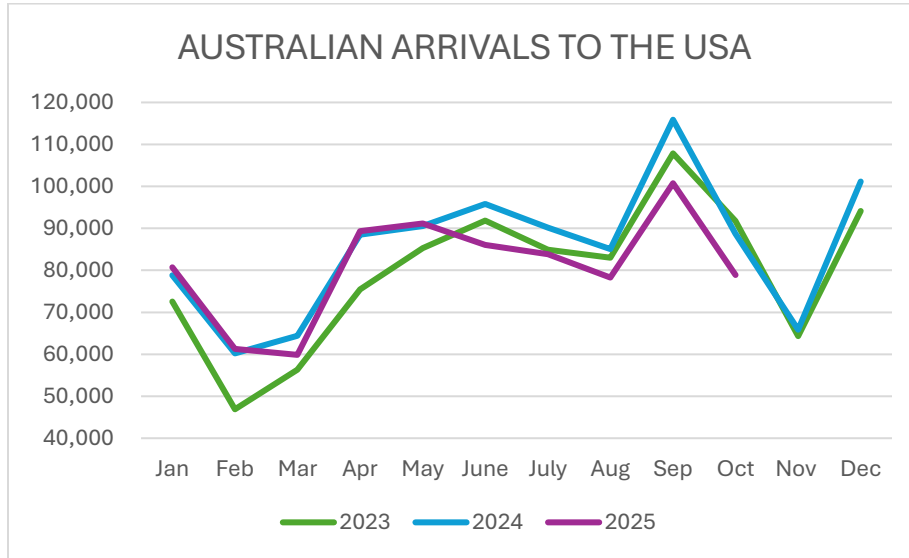


ABOUT TSUSA

Global Partner Programming

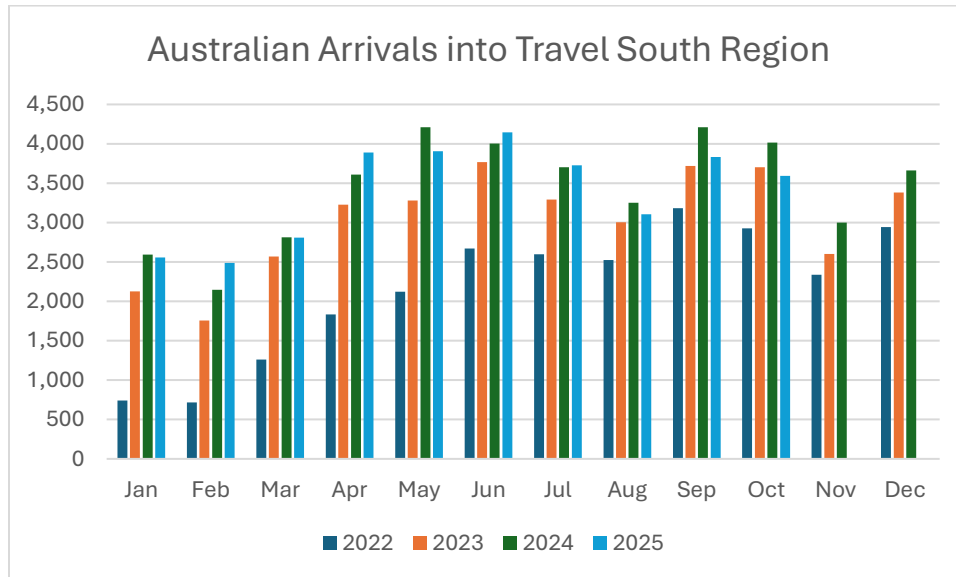
Visitation to the USA.

October arrivals reached 78,895, down -11% year-on-year, an improvement on September's -13.1% decline. Year-to-date visitation now sits at 810,257, down -5.6%. Australia ranked 11th among long-haul markets for the month.



Visitation to the Travel South States

Arrivals into the Travel South region are currently down -1.4% YTD (October 2025)





Texas remained the standout with +7% YOY growth, and Florida also performed strongly (+17%) off a low base. Other major gateways remained soft: California -13%, Hawaii -18%, New York -15%, and All other ports -10%.

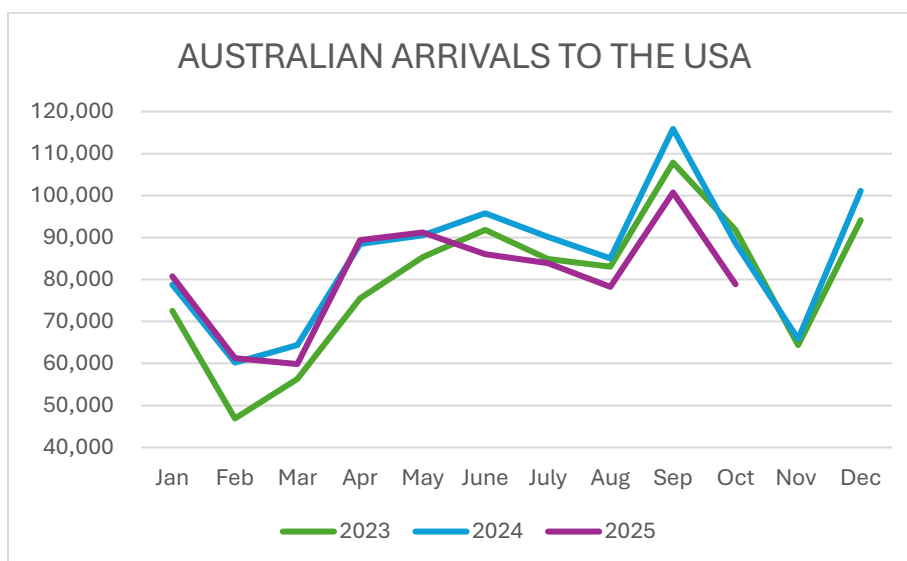
State	October port of entry arrivals	Difference YOY
California	34,712	-13%
Hawaii	11,252	-18%
New York	8,433	-15%
Texas	8,317	7%
Florida	2,566	17%
All other ports	13,615	-10%

New Zealand:

October US arrivals equalled 17,574, down -18% year-on-year. YTD reached 199,707 (-8.7%). September recorded 25,400 arrivals (-10.3%), with YTD at 182,133 (-7.6%).

Demand signals:

Australian leading OTA Luxury Escapes, who targets affluent travelers, reported that the USA is the #1 destination on customer wish-lists for 2026 (first time to make the top since the pandemic), with 30% indicating interest in travelling for the World Cup. This supports the emerging view that some travelers may have deferred USA trips in 2025 in favour of major 2026 sporting events.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Luxury Escapes concept store launch
- Thanksgiving
- Mission Planning
- International Showcase
- International Showcase St Louis Fam
- Melbourne media meetings
- Media pitching
- AU Facebook and Instagram Content
- GMM 26 Outreach
- Innovation Challenge





	Q1 TOTAL	Oct	Nov	Q2 TOTAL
Australia				
Trade				
Trade Meetings/Trainings	69	47	42	158
Number of Agents Trained	114	70	18	202
Travel Trade Newsletter Recipient	4068	3992	3992	12,052
Trade Newsletter Open Rate	28.37%	24.17%	24.12%	25.73%
Managed Media				
Media Meetings	15	10	12	22
Total number of articles published	38	21	5	26
Impressions	41,719,406	324,593	2,835,069	3,159,662
PR Newsletter Recipient	364	356	353	709
PR Newsletter Open Rate	47.80%	42.13%	43.63%	85.76%
Social Posts				
Facebook Page				
Followers	9,200	9,200	9,200	9,200
Likes	9,200	9,200	9,200	9,200
Facebook Posts				
Reach	515	454	329	783
Views	1,073	780	516	1,296
Likes	8	0	7	7
Comments	0	0	0	0
Shares	0	0	0	0
Instagram				
Reach	21	7	6	13
Views	527	320	122	442
Followers	18	9	10	10
Likes	25	11	6	17
Comments	0	0	0	0
Shares	0	0	0	0

9 partners
AL/KY/LA
/MS/MO/
NC/SC/TN
/ROTS





II. COMMUNICATIONS & PR

- Melbourne media meetings
- Media pitching
- AU Facebook and Instagram Content
- GMM 26 Outreach
- Innovation Challenge
- Earned media Coverage Book
- Global Market Media Place 25 media Coverage Book





COVERAGE:



COVER STORY

Streets wiser

We've all done it. Arrived in a new city, dropped our luggage and made a beeline for the brightest, most overhyped street.

It could be Bourbon Street, New Orleans, renowned for its music and nightlife, or Los Angeles' Hollywood Boulevard to view its famous footpath-embedded stars.

The anticipation is real – you've read about it, seen the social media posts, felt a connection through movies or songs.

Now you want a piece of that action for yourself. But in the words of Julia Roberts' Vivian in *Pretty Woman* – Big mistake. Big. Huge.

Instead of a fairytale ending you're more likely to find yourself on a boulevard of broken dreams – unable to get into key attractions, slammed by crowds, stung by tourist prices and targeted by pickpockets and petty thieves.

It's a massive letdown, and it can tarnish your outlook on the city.

We're not saying you shouldn't visit these celebrated strips. Of course, when you're in Paris you'll probably still want to stroll along the Avenue des Champs-Élysées (but go early or late, travel in the off-season, pre-book tickets for attractions and explore other viewpoints or adjoining streets).

IMAGE: EDD

Sick of following in the footsteps of three-abreast, selfie-conscious tourists? Then choose these more rewarding thoroughfares. By Kerry van der Jagt and Katrina Loble

Some cities are taking stock about their highest-profile streets. The French capital's most famous avenue is getting its groove back with a bold, greener, more pedestrian-friendly makeover, while in London, there are plans to remove cars and buses from a 1.6-kilometre section of a decaying Oxford Street.

Regardless, if you're after a deep sense of place – or just a fair-priced coffee – it's time to sidestep the world's touristy streets and choose low-key thoroughfares instead.

Here are some of Traveller's favourite alternatives.

INSTEAD OF Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris
TRY Rue de la Butte aux Cailles, Paris
Tell me more A character-filled street running through the quiet neighbourhood of Butte-aux-Cailles in the 13th arrondissement. One of the "lost villages"

of Paris, it has managed to maintain its village feel.

See + do A gentle warning: La Butte means hill, so let's just say it's not flat. Stroll the main thoroughfare, where art nouveau buildings brim with family-run cafes and eateries, follow the street art trail down cobbled lanes, and fill your basket with vintage treasures. Leave room in your basket for croissants and eclairs. Who are we kidding? Of course, they are meant to be gobbled on the run.

Don't miss Piscine de la Butte aux Cailles, a historic swimming pool complex on the nearby Place Paul Verlain. Bring your swimmers or simply enjoy the architecture (or even both).

Essentials Quiet by day, the street comes alive at night with buzzing bars and restaurants. Urban Evouac (ubparis.com) is a family-run hotel in the heart of the 13th arrondissement. See porigetaime.com

INSTEAD OF Bourbon Street,

New Orleans

TRY Frenchmen Street, New Orleans

Tell me more If you've outgrown raucous party streets, wander from the French Quarter (feel free to carry your cocktail with you in this most hedonistic of cities)

towards the Marigny – an old Creole neighbourhood – to find the more civilised groove of jazz-centric Frenchmen Street.

See + do Follow the saxophone toots and drum rolls spilling from music clubs such as The Spotted Cat, Snug Harbor, DBA, Blue Nile and Cafe Negril. Most joints are jumping nightly although, as The Spotted Cat warns, its hours are subject to

"parades, hurricanes (natural and man-made), second lines, festivals and music that is sometimes just too good to stop".

Don't miss Shop for a handmade souvenir or two at Frenchmen Art Bazaar; a nightly, family-friendly artisan market that opens at 7pm. During the day, flick through the vinyl selection at Louisiana Music Factory.

Essentials Just two blocks from Frenchmen is Hotel Peter & Paul (ash.world), a hip reworking of a former church, schoolhouse, rectory and convent; early next year, it will debut an outdoor pool. See nevourleans.com





ATLANTA'S CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER REOPENS WITH FRESH VISION

Posted by Chutima Kerdmo | Nov 21, 2025 | Attraction | 0 | *****



Following a \$57.9 million expansion, the Center now offers an even more engaging experience through innovative storytelling and interactive exhibits. The renovation includes two new wings, six new galleries, and enhanced event and educational spaces, further establishing the Center as a dynamic national destination for education, reflection, and civic engagement.

"Our reopening arrives at a time when understanding our shared history feels more urgent than ever," said Jill Savitt, president and CEO of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. "This Center was built to show how history speaks to the present. These new galleries allow people to experience both the courage of those who came before us and the call to continue their work today."

The Center's updated and expanded galleries bring history to life in powerful new ways:

- **Rolls Down Like Water: The American Civil Rights Movement** – The Center's signature gallery returns with new storytelling and updates that enhance one of the most powerful visitor experiences: the Lunch Counter simulation, where guests take a seat at the counter and experience the courage of protestors who faced hatred with calm resolve.
- **A Committed Life: The Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection** – This reimagined gallery features a rotating selection of Dr. King's personal papers and writings. Visitors encounter Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as never before—as a man, a father, a pastor, and a leader whose humanity deepened his moral vision. In a new tradition, the Center will feature a guest curator for each rotation. The inaugural guest curator is Rev. Dr. Bernice A. King, the youngest child of Dr. King and Coretta Scott King.
- **Everyone. Everywhere: The Global Human Rights Movement** – Highlights defenders and activists around the world and includes *A Mile in My Shoes*. During this immersive installation, guests walk in others' stories, encouraging empathy and connection.
- **Action Lab: A hands-on space where visitors can design personal civic engagement plans and discover practical ways to make a difference in their communities.**
- **Special Exhibitions Gallery:** For the first time, the Center features a gallery for temporary exhibitions, beginning with *"Reclaiming History: Selections from the Tinwood Foundation,"* which showcases Southern Black artists whose work confronts injustice and celebrates resilience.
- **Broken Promises: The Legacy of the Reconstruction Era:** Opening December 6, this gallery examines the Reconstruction period as a crucial foundation for understanding the Civil Rights Movement. It features historical artifacts and includes the marker commemorating Mary Turner's lynching, interpreted through the work of artist Lonnie Holley.

Visit the National Center for Civil and Human Rights for more information.

"This expansion is a powerful reminder of how institutions like the Center can inspire action through education and storytelling," said Megan Allen, CEO of City Pass, Inc. "We're proud to partner in a space that honors the past while empowering future generations to lead with courage and compassion."





HOW CULTURE BUILDS STRONGER, MORE CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Posted by Nichapa Ratchanathamchai | Nov 25, 2025 | Louisiana | 0 | ★★★★★



Community events produced by French Quarter Festivals, Inc. are more than entertainment—they're lifelines for local musicians and vital cornerstones of Louisiana's rich cultural heritage. Each event we create strengthens the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the greater New Orleans region.

FQFI is proud to share some of what we've achieved this year to support our people, celebrate our culture, and fuel our local economy.

Ps. We aren't done yet! More accessible opportunities to enjoy local music and are coming up soon with the 2025 Holidays New Orleans Style concerts.





Communications & PR

Media Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up/Next step
Constantina Demos, Travel Editor, Delicious,	<p>For travel content, they really focus on social and digital. Travel is the second best performing vertical after recipes.</p> <p>They have really focused on building out their domestic content online over the last year, as it has been performing really well (cost of living). Into 2026 they will be looking to get back into more international content.</p> <p>Really looking for under the radar and undiscovered destinations so the south has strong appeal.</p> <p>They do a print lift out quarterly (or thereabouts) - the next ones will be in March and June.</p> <p>For print, they can only cover international because they can't be seen to be playing favourites with a certain state (as their print lift out appears across QLD, NSW, VIC, SA etc).</p> <p>The team are very busy with events and have been inundated with famil invitations - they need to be selective about what they can attend. Video is crucial.</p>	Good contact to keep in mind if GF&W.
Mamamia, Casey Guth, Sales Manager	<p>We met with Casey to discuss Mamamia's plans for 2026 and the evolution of their content offering. Mamamia has expanded its podcast network and is now producing video-led podcast content to support stronger engagement and cross-platform reach.</p> <p>A key development is the launch of Retreat Mamamia, a new travel-focused vertical. Rather than being destination-led, the platform is structured around the practical questions and needs of their audience.</p> <p>Retreat Mamamia is positioned around core travel motivations such as resetting, escaping, seeking adventure, and finding connection. Content will deliver inspiration, ideas, and itineraries aligned to these need states.</p> <p>From a commercial perspective, Mamamia is offering quarterly partnership opportunities centred on these</p>	Podcasts are a key space to play in for 2026, they are very commercial focused but keeping close.





	<p>themes, with an overarching focus on creating content that mirrors how their audience is actively thinking about and planning travel.</p> <p>Mamamia is also developing a new platform targeted at the 45+ audience, which will span both the website and associated podcasts, representing an additional opportunity for future engagement.</p>	
Escape, Print Editor, Susan Bugg	<p>Print content must translate to digital – strong focus on practical, need-to-know info (how to book, packing, transport, what to wear, tips).</p> <p>Strong agreement that value is the key driver for US travel right now.</p> <p>No major change to how US content is incorporated – coverage mix is advertiser/market-led so Asia continues to dominate.</p> <p>They love trends, especially coolcations – open to pitches year-round.</p> <p>Appreciate post-famil feedback, especially positive notes on journalists and partner impact.</p> <p>Data doesn't have to directly tie to a story – it helps shape their strategy and market understanding.</p> <p>Constant appetite for “what’s new/changed”.</p> <p>Listicles remain strong</p> <p>Strong interest in niche details and deep-dives (e.g., American BBQ).</p> <p>Sport is trending – especially Aussies in-market or college sports as a value alternative in the US.</p> <p>Hikes/walking, niche foods, and road trips perform well.</p> <p>Declined Global Week Participation.</p>	<p>Have shared through what’s new, will circle back on hiking and storytelling for BBQ.</p>
Traveller, Deputy Editor, Jane Reddy	<p>Preference for individual famils; group trips need exclusivity built in.</p> <p>Free time on famils is important for note-taking and shaping the story.</p> <p>Lead with the headline/angle – always check existing coverage and what’s fresh.</p>	<p>Have pitched Global Week 2026.</p>





	<p>Multiple ways “in”: spokespersons, local voices, supporting data.</p> <p>Practical info remains important.</p> <p>Interested in local rituals.</p> <p>Sports coverage less relevant except major global events (FIFA, Super Bowl).</p> <p>Time-specific famils can be tricky.</p> <p>Outdoors/hiking continues to be huge.</p> <p>Insights, data and contextual intel should be shared ad hoc.</p> <p>Appreciate the notice we give – also open to soft pitches without firm dates if the angle is strong and the uncertainty is flagged.</p> <p>Value is still key for them.</p> <p>Keen to hear what’s coming up for all Gate 7 clients in the new year.</p>	
<p>Laura Rosioli (Freelance)</p>	<p>Australian journalist/host/producer working across lifestyle, human-interest, women’s health and sexual wellness.</p> <p>Strong visual storyteller, especially short-form video and social formats.</p> <p>Prefers personal, people-first, place-centred narratives over transactional tourism.</p> <p>Recent Bali guide for Luxury Escapes centring on wellness and self-perception.</p> <p>sted in subcultures, alternative lifestyles, sex/wellness hes in different regions.</p>	<p>None currently.</p>
<p>Julian Morgans (Freelance Podcaster)</p>	<p>Highly regarded journalist, editor, documentary maker. Former Editor at VICE Australia; now editorial director for The Daily Aus culture vertical.</p> <p>Smart, sharp, irreverent tone; strong in longform profiles and documentary-style storytelling.</p> <p>Runs a small but high-impact podcast network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What It Was Like: long-form stories with strong video/social amplification – potential fit for New Orleans. – Success/Failure podcast: global talent, entrepreneurial stories (Diary of a CEO-style but grounded). – Property/architecture podcast – possible New Orleans angle through local homes/heritage/architecture scenes. 	<p>None currently.</p>





<p>Riley Wilson (Freelancer) Writes for Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, Local Project</p>	<p>We met with Riley Wilson, a freelance writer and copywriter based in Hobart, Tasmania. Riley has strong connections across Australian media, having previously worked as a desk editor at The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age. A US citizen who travels back annually and has a genuine affinity for the country, she is looking to develop more US focused content and is open to famil opportunities.</p> <p>Riley noted that she would report candidly on any political themes that arise, while still being interested in stories that highlight the positive and resilient aspects of US culture. She referenced a recent piece she produced for a small hotel business in St Louis that showcased its community impact.</p> <p>Her is also interested in agricultural tourism and architecture, and she regularly contributes to The Local Project on major new architecture builds. She also highlighted the cost of living pressures influencing Australian audiences, making accessible luxury a strong angle.</p> <p>Overall, her work is grounded in meaningful storytelling, and she represents a strong opportunity to help shape constructive narratives around US travel, particularly if placed in destinations aligned with her interests.</p>	<p>Keep close.</p>
<p>Anna Houlihan, Explore, ACM</p>	<p>Anna is an on staff writer for Explore and although mainly writes for crime has begun also writing travel.</p> <p>Very interested in spooky/haunted tourism and recently participated in a New Orleans famil.</p>	<p>Develop spooky angles in 2026.</p>
<p>Kate Cox, Explore, Travel Editor,</p>	<p>Pitched Global Week 2026.</p>	<p>Confirmed.</p>
<p>Alan Granville, Travel Reporter, Stuff.co.nz</p>	<p>The digital and print sides of the business have recently split in a restructure which includes a new digital editor. All pitches have to now go through this editor first – and sadly she declined due to current editorial focus’.</p>	<p>Reach out to print separately.</p>
<p>Stephanie Holmes, NZ Herald</p>	<p>Pitched global week 2026</p>	<p>Declined</p>





Justin Jamieson, Get Lost Magazine	Pitched global week 2026, is interested but wants to expand out into a partnership	Have requested proposal and will assess from there.
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III. TRAVEL TRADE

Trade Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings).

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up /Next step
Alexis Cunningham Partnerships and Contracting Manager Luxury Escapes	Met with Alexis and discussed Travel South and the US Market.	N/A
Gabriel Fonseca Business Development Manager Air New Zealand	Met with Gabriel and discussed Air New Zealand updates and routes to the US.	N/A
Tom Bonnafoux Regional Manager, Australia & New Zealand Travmedia	Met with Tom and spoke about his new role at Travmedia, giving him information into the US market.	N/A
CATO Event	Team attended and networked at CATO, engaging with key touring industry partners.	N/A
Gate 7's Thanksgiving Event	Hosted the annual Gate 7 Thanksgiving event. With a total of 75 guests, the afternoon was spent networking with key industry partners and building relationships.	N/A
Visit USA Thanksgiving Breakfast	Attended and networked at Visit USA's annual Thanksgiving Breakfast. Engaged with several key industry partners.	N/A
Luxury Escapes Event	Attended the Bondi Junction Luxury Escapes Grand Opening. Networked and engaged with several key industry partners.	N/A
MTA Webinar	Travel South Webinar with 42 Travel Managers. Webinar also loaded on their intranet for access when required.	N/A
Cassis Tannenberg Writer Karryon	Update and briefing on International Showcase	N/A





Kristy Prince North American Product Manager Adventure World	Update and briefing on International Showcase	N/A
Shona Bray North American Product Manager House of Travel	Update and briefing on International Showcase	N/A
Alysha Hughes North American Product Manager Helloworld & Viva Holidays	Update and briefing on International Showcase	N/A
Andrew Gay Founder Travel USA.co.nz	Update and briefing on International Showcase	N/A
Melissah Missio Chris Watson Chris Watson Travel	Update and briefing on International Showcase	N/A
Tim Holden Global Partnerships Manager Fight Centre	Discussion on Mels departure and attempted to find a replacement	N/A
Clint Jones National Account Manager Delta Air Lines	Discussions on loading, new Melbourne inaugural flights and potential fams for 2026	N/A
Nicole Bennett National Manager Delta Air Lines	Brief on 2026 Mission plan and potential to come on board as our airline sponsor for all event.	Ongoing
Matt Nicholas Manager Australia and New Zealand Sales American Airlines	Discussions on loading, Brisbane flights in DFW and LAX for the Australian summer season plus potential fams for 2026	N/A





CAMPAIGNS & ACTIVITY

Gate 7's Annual Thanksgiving





Gate 7's Annual Thanksgiving - Invite List

First name	Last name	Company
Adam	Townson	Travel Associates
Adam	Dickson	Infinity Holidays
Aida	Osta	Visit USA
Alexandra	Tulikova	Jackson Family Wines
Alison	Hubble	Entire Travel
Allison	Neech	Globus Family
Andres	Aragon MS	Jackson Family Wines
Andrew	Best	Hawaii Air
Anna	Burgdorf	Adventure World
Ashleigh	O'Reilly	Infinity Holidays
Belinda	Harvy	Discover the World
Carrie	Nightingale	Karryon
Caroline	Davidson	Visit USA
CELESTE	ARTHUR	Hawaii Air
Chris	Ingram	Memphis Travel
Christina	Atherton	Visit USA
Cinzia	Giacchi	Vinyl Media
Claire	Bradley	Luxury Escapes
Clint	Jones	Delta
Dani	Tuffield	Karryon
David	Bassett	Qantas Holidays
David	Clark	Tauck
Dominika	Dryjski	Travmedia

Eugene	Loane	Luxury Escapes
GABRIEL	FONSECA	Air New Zealand
Gretel	Puisens	TBO
jack	blades	Tonic
James	Lenehan	Stuba
Jamie	Crick	Allied Global Marketing
Janis	McDonald	Air Canada
Jitka	Vondrousova	Ignite Travel
Jo	Karbo	iTravel
Jodie	Collins	Luxury Escapes
Josh	Gordon	itravel
Jordan	Thompson	American Express
Joshua	Hewett	Helloworld
Kathleen	Fowler	iTravel
Kathleen	Brown	LA Tourism
Kendal	Thomas	American Express
Kevin	Looney	Air BnB
Kristy	Meudell	Virgin Australia
Kristy	Prince	Adventure World
Lauren	Moelk	TravMedia
Matt	Nicholas	American Airlines
Matt	Bailey	Luxury Escapes
Ned	Curtis	Qantas Loyalty
Nicholas	Hawksley	Infinity holidays

Nicole	Laurie	Delta
Nicole	Bennett	Delta
REBECCA	MCHENRY	iTravel
Richard	Carrick	United
Richard	Taylor	Off Loaded
Rob	Dempsey	Travelex
rodney	muller	Skimax
Sally	Suleyman	Qantas Loyalty
Sam	Hanania	American Express
Samantha	Harrison	United
Sarah	Pollard	Stuba
Sophie	Angus	Travelex
Sylvia	Schmiedl	Travel Plan
Teena	Hollwey	Rate Hawk
Tom	Bonnafox	TravMedia





MTA Webinar – 42 Agents Trained

From the Sunshine Coast to the Deep South – Discover America’s Best!

Join us for a virtual journey through several unforgettable regions of the USA.

Explore the real Los Angeles — 30+ diverse neighbourhoods, endless sunshine, iconic beaches, and the ultimate day of thrills at Universal Studios Hollywood.

Discover the charm of Virginia, where history meets wine country and coastal escapes, and Louisiana, where the soulful sounds of jazz in New Orleans to Cajun and Creole flavours can’t be found anywhere else, the state offers an authentic experience steeped in tradition.

This webinar will showcase the best of the South and West, giving you fresh ideas to inspire your clients with authentic, unforgettable US experiences.

Plus, the following prizes will be on offer on the day:

- Universal Express Pass Tickets
- LA Tourism Gift Pack
- \$100 Gift card from LA Tourism
- Louisiana Gift Pack
- \$100 Gift cards from the other states

Visit USA Annual Thanksgiving Breakfast 2025:





Luxury Escapes Bondi Junction Store Opening:





Infinity Holidays Memphis City Break:



Memphis

Music, History and Southern Soul Around Every Corner

Memphis pulses with music, history, and Southern soul. Explore Beale Street, tour Graceland, visit the National Civil Rights Museum, and savor legendary barbecue; experience the birthplace of blues, soul, and rock 'n' roll in one unforgettable city.

Package includes:

3 Nights Memphis with Graceland Tour.

Package Code: IH52662

from

\$909

based on per person twin share

BOOK NOW





Melbourne Media Meetings:



Travel Daily 'Bon Voyage' EOY event:





RESOURCE CENTRE UPDATES

What's On:



November 28, 2025

Louisiana Lights

Experience the magic of the season at Louisiana Lights, a dazzling holiday walk through LSU Burden Museum & Gardens in Baton Rouge. Wander glowing pathways, capture festive photos, and enjoy a joyful atmosphere perfect for families, couples and friends. Secure your tickets and celebrate Louisiana's holiday charm.

[\(more...\)](#)



December 13, 2025

Christmas Lighted Boat Parade 2025

Watch the Christmas Lighted Boat Parade illuminate the coast as decorated vessels depart LuLu's Gulf Shores at dusk and glide toward The Wharf in Orange Beach. Enjoy spectacular views along the canal as the festive flotilla lights up the night for a beloved annual holiday tradition.

[\(more...\)](#)

What's New:

⊕ November 2025

The Mecklen

Charlotte welcomes The Mecklen, a new boutique-style hotel in University City and the first in the region under Marriott's Tribute Portfolio brand. Transforming a former Holiday Inn, the property features 175 thoughtfully designed rooms and an on-site restaurant and bar, "Side Eye," serving elevated Southern-style cuisine and creative cocktails. Stylish, modern and comfortable, The Mecklen offers travellers a fresh new stay option in one of Charlotte's fastest-growing districts.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Trailborn Surf & Sound

Trailborn Surf & Sound has reopened in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, bringing a fresh coastal stay to the region. The renovated resort features 151 modern rooms with ocean or sound views, plus balconies designed for relaxed seaside living. Guests can enjoy surf lessons, kayaking, yoga sessions and seasonal oyster roasts. With a seafood-focused restaurant and vibrant surf bar, Trailborn Surf & Sound offers a stylish, laid-back beachfront escape on the Carolina coast.

[LEARN MORE](#)





Newsletters – Festivals in 2026: The Food with a Side of Music

TRADE Newsletter – Recipients: 3992 Open Rate: 963 (24.12%)

PR Newsletter – Recipients: 356 Open Rate: 150 (42.13%)



Festivals in 2026: The Food with a Side of Music

From coastlines to mountain towns, the South is serving up a festival season where food and music share the spotlight. Across the region, 2026 brings together chef-driven flavours, local traditions, live performances, and community celebrations that turn every weekend into a reason to travel. Whether it's seafood by the water, bluegrass in the hills, or street-party flavours in historic towns, these festivals deliver the South at its vibrant, delicious best.

[Learn More](#)





KENTUCKY

Kentucky Celebrates

Kentucky's festival scene serves up music, flavour, and Southern character in unforgettable ways. In Danville, the Great American Brass Band Festival turns the town into a lively open-air celebration filled with picnic traditions and local pride. Henderson turns up the heat with the W.C. Handy Blues and Barbecue Festival, where smoky flavours meet soulful blues. And in Somerset, the Master Musicians Festival brings big-name talent to the mountains for a true Kentucky summer experience.

[Read More](#)



ALABAMA

Alabama Highlights

Alabama's 2026 festival calendar is packed with music and flavour. Hangout Music Festival brings beachside performances to Gulf Shores in May, while the Opelika Songwriters Festival in March offers intimate shows in cosy downtown venues. Food lovers can enjoy the West Alabama Food and Wine Festival in April or the Seafood Fest in Orange Beach in February. From coastal seafood to storytelling and song, Alabama has something for every taste.

[Read More](#)



MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Moments

Mississippi blends bold flavours and soulful soundtracks all year long. Spring brings Jackson Food and Wine, the Double Decker Arts Festival in Oxford, and Clarksdale's legendary Juke Joint Festival. Summer heats up with the Tupelo Elvis Festival and the Natchez Food and Wine Festival. Come fall, the Delta Hot Tamale Festival and the Natchez Balloon Festival keep the celebrations rolling with unmistakable Southern charm.

[Read More](#)





RHYTHMS OF THE SOUTH

Atlanta, Nashville, New Orleans

If you want to party in the true spirit of the South, these cities deliver year-round. Atlanta sets the pace with favourites like the Atlanta Dogwood Festival, SweetWater 420 Fest and the Atlanta Jazz Festival. Nashville turns up the sound with the Music City Irish Festival, CMA Fest, the Nashville Hot Chicken Festival, and the Americana Music Festival & Conference. New Orleans brings the energy with French Quarter Fest and Jazz Fest, offering iconic food, music and culture at every turn.

[Read More](#)



SOUTH CAROLINA

Flavour Forward

South Carolina's 2026 festival season is packed with culinary and musical highlights. The Charleston Wine + Food Festival marks its 20th year from March 4-8, uniting top chefs, winemakers, and live music. In September, euphoria Greenville showcases chef dinners, tastings, and performances. Adding coastal charm, the Bluffton Seafood Festival celebrates Lowcountry flavors with fresh local catch and community spirit. Together, they offer unforgettable food-driven experiences.

[Read More](#)



MISSOURI

Midwest Magic

Missouri's 2026 festival season is packed with flavour and small-town charm. Kimmswick's iconic Apple Butter Festival draws huge crowds each October, with wood-fired apple butter, live music and hundreds of artisan stalls. In March, Hermann's Wurstfest celebrates German heritage with sausages, wine and folk traditions, while summer brings the Missouri Bourbon Festival with tastings and local food. Perfect for those seeking authentic Midwest culture in every season.

[Read More](#)





LOUISIANA

Festive Louisiana

Louisiana knows how to party with over 400 festivals each year, and some of the most iconic blend music, culture, and unforgettable food. In April, French Quarter Fest brings Louisiana music to every corner of the French Quarter alongside some of the state's best culinary bites. Each May, the Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival serves up Cajun flavours and zydeco energy. In fall, Shreveport's Red River Revel showcases art, food, and live performances for nine vibrant days.

[Read More](#)



NORTH CAROLINA

Festival Finds

North Carolina's 2026 festival calendar blends music, food and Southern charm. Spring kicks off with MerleFest, one of America's top bluegrass gatherings, and the creative LEAF Festival near Asheville. Summer brings the new Lovin' Life Music Festival to Charlotte. In fall, highlights include the John Coltrane Jazz & Blues Festival, the iconic Lexington Barbecue Festival, and the coastal-style Salt, Smoke & Sound. The Highlands Food & Wine Festival offers a luxurious mountain finale.

[Read More](#)



TENNESSEE

Smoky Flavours

Tennessee's Grains & Grits Festival in Townsend celebrates Southern spirits, gourmet food, and mountain culture on the Peaceful Side of the Smokies. Guests enjoy bites from local chefs, regional craft spirits, and live music. A standout highlight is the Ring of Fire, where five chefs roast whole animals over an open pit, pairing each dish with a featured distillery's signature spirit. An unforgettable taste of Tennessee tradition.

[Read More](#)





FIND OUT MORE:



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GATE 7

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SOCIAL CONTENT UPDATE

Gate 7 Private AU/NZ Travel Trade Community – 662 Members

Imogen Janisch
Admin · 10 November at 14:46 · 🌐

Discover Louisiana's Festival Calendar 🎉

With more than 400 festivals each year, Louisiana offers endless opportunities to create unforgettable itineraries for your clients. From live music and food to culture and art, there's something happening year-round.

French Quarter Fest – New Orleans, April: Showcasing local music and cuisine in the heart of the French Quarter.

Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival – May: Celebrate Cajun culture, food, and lively Zydeco music.

Red River Revel - Shreveport, Fall: Nine days of art, music, and culinary delights.

Plan your travels around Louisiana's signature events and experience the state's vibrant spirit firsthand!




Imogen Janisch
Admin · 14 November at 11:53 · 🌐

Hotel of the week | Blackberry Mountain, Tennessee

Looking for a standout luxury property in the South to recommend to your clients? Blackberry Mountain in Tennessee is one of those rare resorts that becomes the reason for the trip itself.

Set on 5,200 acres in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, this award-winning property blends wilderness and elevated hospitality. Guests can expect exceptional wellness programs, fine dining, curated outdoor adventures and uninterrupted mountain scenery.

Blackberry Mountain is ideal for travellers seeking a nature-focused escape without compromising on comfort or quality. It appeals to wellness enthusiasts, couples, high-end clients and anyone wanting a retreat that feels both restorative and indulgent.





Instagram:





Instagram

travelsouthusa.au



travelsouthusa.au From smoky BBQ to soulful jazz and sweet summer treats, Atlanta, Georgia's festival scene serves something for everyone. 🍷🍷

Don't miss the Atlanta Jazz Festival over Memorial Day weekend - one of the largest free jazz festivals in the country.

Other highlights include the Dogwood Festival in spring and the Atlanta Ice Cream Festival in July for a cool, family-friendly vibe.

📍 @discoveratlanta

#RhythmsOfTheSouth #TravelSouth

Instagram

travelsouthusa.au



travelsouthusa.au From beachside beats to hometown BBQs, Alabama's 2026 festival season is packed with music, food, and Southern spirit. Highlights include Hangout Fest on the Gulf, Opelika Songwriters Festival, and country favorite Rock the South in Cullman this June. 🍷

📍 @alabamatravel

#SweetHomeAlabama #TravelSouth





Instagram

travelsouthusa.au



travelsouthusa.au South Carolina's vibrant culinary and music scenes take center stage in 2026 with two unforgettable festivals.

Celebrate 20 years of the Charleston Wine + Food Festival (Mar 4-8) with world-class chefs, wine, and live music in the heart of the "Culinary Village." Then, head to euphoria Greenville (Sept 17-20) for chef-driven dinners, tastings, and soulful performances.

[@discover_sc](#)

#DiscoverSouthCarolina #TravelSouth

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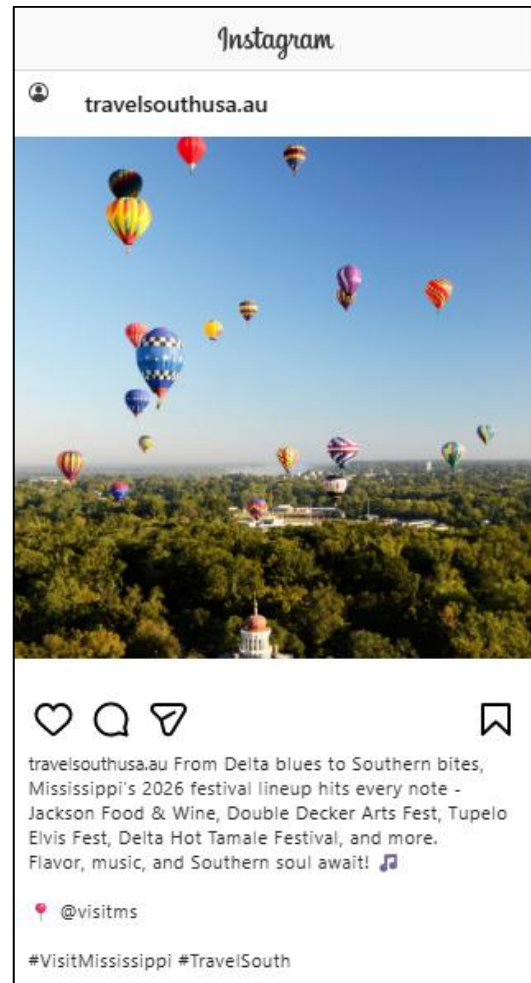
travelsouthusa.au North Carolina comes alive in 2026 with festivals that blend sound, flavor, and Southern charm.

From MerleFest's bluegrass beats and LEAF's global arts to Lexington's smoky barbecue and Highlands Food & Wine's mountain luxury - every season offers a new reason to celebrate.

[@visitnc](#)

#VisitNorthCarolina #TravelSouth






Facebook:






 **Travel South USA (AU, NZ)** 3 November · 🌐

In Townsend, Tennessee, the Grains & Grits Festival is a celebration of Southern spirits and gourmet grub. 🍷🌟

Savour bites and sweet treats from local chefs, alongside craft spirits from regional legends. Discover the thriving food and spirits scene, meet legendary distillers, and enjoy live music – all set against the backdrop of the Peaceful Side of the Smokies.

📍 [Tennessee Vacation](#)

[#MadeInTennessee](#) [#TravelSouth](#)



 **Travel South USA (AU, NZ)** 5 November · 🌐

Visit New Orleans for good times that roll all year long - and festivals that never stop. 🎉🌟

Kick off with the magic of Mardi Gras, then dive into a season of music, food, and celebration with the French Quarter Festival and legendary Jazz & Heritage Festival.


From Satchmo SummerFest to Beignet Fest, and the festive charm of Réveillon dinners and decked-out hotel lobbies, every season in the Crescent City brings a reason to celebrate.

📍 [Visit New Orleans](#)

[#RhythmsOfTheSouth](#) [#TravelSouth](#)





 **Travel South USA (AU, NZ)** 10 November at 09:30 · 🌐


From smoky BBQ to soulful jazz and sweet summer treats, Atlanta, Georgia's festival scene serves something for everyone. 🎷 🍷

Don't miss the Atlanta Jazz Festival over Memorial Day weekend - one of the largest free jazz festivals in the country.

Other highlights include the Dogwood Festival in spring and the Atlanta Ice Cream Festival in July for a cool, family-friendly vibe.

📍 [Discover Atlanta](#)

[#RhythmsOfTheSouth](#) [#TravelSouth](#)



 **Travel South USA (AU, NZ)** 13 November at 09:30 · 🌐

From beachside beats to hometown BBQs, Alabama's 2026 festival season is packed with music, food, and Southern spirit. Highlights include Hangout Fest on the Gulf, Opelika Songwriters Festival, and country favorite Rock the South in Cullman this June. 🎷

📍 [@alabamatravel](#)

[#SweetHomeAlabama](#) [#TravelSouth](#)





 Travel South USA (AU, NZ)
17 November at 09:30 · 🌐

South Carolina's vibrant culinary and music scenes take center stage in 2026 with two unforgettable festivals. Celebrate 20 years of the Charleston Wine + Food Festival (Mar 4–8) with world-class chefs, wine, and live music in the heart of the "Culinary Village." Then, head to euphoria Greenville (Sept 17–20) for chef-driven dinners, tastings, and soulful performances. 🎵 🍷

📍 @discover_sc

#DiscoverSouthCarolina #TravelSouth



 Travel South USA (AU, NZ)
20 November at 09:30 · 🌐

North Carolina comes alive in 2026 with festivals that blend sound, flavor, and Southern charm. From MerleFest's bluegrass beats and LEAF's global arts to Lexington's smoky barbecue and Highlands Food & Wine's mountain luxury - every season offers a new reason to celebrate.

📍 @visitnc

#VisitNorthCarolina #TravelSouth





Travel South USA (AU, NZ)
24 November at 09:30 · 🌐

🔥 Louisiana's festival season is sizzling!

Celebrate Cajun culture at the Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival this May - where crawfish, live music, and Southern spirit take center stage. Then, enjoy local flavors at French Quarter Fest in April and arts galore at Red River Revel in the fall.

📍 [Explore Louisiana](#)

[#ExploreLouisiana](#) [#TravelSouth](#)



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)
27 November at 09:30 · 🌐

From Delta blues to Southern bites, Mississippi's 2026 festival lineup hits every note - Jackson Food & Wine, Double Decker Arts Fest, Tupelo Elvis Fest, Delta Hot Tamale Festival, and more. Flavor, music, and Southern soul await! 🎵

📍 [Visit Mississippi](#)

[#VisitMississippi](#) [#TravelSouth](#)





Market Update

Economic & Market Update

The following economic announcements were made in November:

- **RBA holds interest rates at 3.60% (announced 4 Nov):** The RBA kept the cash rate on hold for another month, noting that inflation had picked up more than expected. They signaled caution and indicated that the path back to target may be slower than previously forecast. [Source](#)
- **Inflation rose 3.8% in the year to October 2025 (announced 26 Nov):** Inflation lifted again, with annual CPI rising due to higher electricity, housing and rental costs following the end of state government support. Underlying inflation also moved back above the RBA's 2-3% band, reinforcing concerns about persistent price pressure. [Source](#)
- **Unemployment fell to 4.3% (from 4.5%) (announced 14 Nov):** driven by solid jobs growth. The improvement suggests the labour market remains resilient, reducing the likelihood of any near-term interest rate cuts. [Source](#)
- **AUD vs USD (November):** The Australian dollar moved within a narrow band, ending the month around USD 0.64-0.65. A slightly firmer AUD early in the month softened again as global markets strengthened the US dollar. Price remains a barrier for long-haul destinations like the USA. [Source](#)

Visitation to the USA.

- In November the i-94 arrival data was released for September and October:

Australia:

- October arrivals reached **78,895**, down **-11% year-on-year**, an improvement on September's -13.1% decline. Year-to-date visitation now sits at **810,257**, down **-5.6%**. Australia ranked **11th** among long-haul markets for the month.

Ports of Entry - October:

- Texas remained the standout with +7% YOY growth, and Florida also performed strongly (+17%) off a low base. Other major gateways remained soft: California -13%, Hawaii -18%, New York -15%, and All other ports -10%.

	October port of entry arrivals	Difference YOY
California	34,712	-13%
Hawaii	11,252	-18%
New York	8,433	-15%
Texas	8,317	7%
Florida	2,566	17%
All other ports	13,615	-10%





September recap:

- Australia recorded 100,750 arrivals (-13.1%) and ranked 9th for the month. YTD at September was 731,362 (-4.9%). Port trends were similar, although notable that New York fell -21%, reversing its usual strength, while Texas again grew (+15%).

	September port of entry arrivals	Difference YOY
California	46,746	-15%
Hawaii	12,511	-19%
New York	8,582	-21%
Texas	9,173	15%
Florida	1,943	-15%
All other ports	21,795	-11%

Demand signals:

Australian leading OTA Luxury Escapes, who targets affluent travelers, reported that the USA is the #1 destination on customer wish-lists for 2026 (first time to make the top since the pandemic), with 30% indicating interest in travelling for the World Cup. This supports the emerging view that some travelers may have deferred USA trips in 2025 in favour of major 2026 sporting events.

Tour Operators & Travel Agencies

- Intrepid Travel has launched 10 new family trips and 28 new active adventures in 2026, seeing an increasing interest in both tourism sectors. [Source](#)
- The Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) has heralded 2025 as a year of “acceleration and achievement”, securing a 100% membership retention rate while growing its ranks to 25. [Source Page 2](#)
- Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) is preparing to roll out a new intelligent digital platform from early next year that will give its members more intuitive access to luxury product details. [Source Page 4](#)
- TBA Group, a global brand experience agency, is opening in Sydney, bringing its specialist expertise across sports, brands and entertainment to the region. [Source](#)
- Flight Centre and Travel Associates have been named Australia’s most trusted and recommended travel agencies according to a Finder survey. [Source](#)
- Asian travel platform Klook, filed an IPO on Monday as it makes its bid for global expansion. [Source](#)





- Luxury Escapes has opened its newest store at Bondi Junction, its consultants being senior travel advisors with strong track records. [Source](#)
- Flight Centre's profits fall short, but predicts strong growth ahead. [Source Page 2](#)
- Expedia Group's B2B business enjoyed an exceptional third quarter, with bookings increasing 26% year-on-year. [Source Page 2](#)
- Railbookers President and CEO has told Travel Weekly that the Australian market continues to grow at lightning speed, and revealed that their new itineraries discovering the heart of America will resonate with the Australian traveler. [Source](#)
- Flight Centre Travel Group has launched its first-ever leisure loyalty program with World360 Rewards. [Source](#)

Traveler Insights

- Explore Worldwide has shared the destinations and shifts shaping how travellers want to experience the world in 2026. [Source](#)
- Christmas Travel is up more than 100% this year, with Australians booking almost 40 days earlier than usual to beat price hikes. [Source Page 2](#)
- More travellers are managing every stage of their journey using their phones according to the IATA 2025 Global Passenger Survey (GPS). [Source Page 1](#)
- Global travel surges ahead with longer stays, Gigtripping, and Coolcations leading the way according to The Global Travel Report, released at World Travel Market London 2025. [Source](#)
- Continued Government shutdown will have devastating consequences, U.S. Travel says. [Source](#)
- More and more people are opting for a physical getaway over a traditional holiday. [Source](#)
- The US has continued to struggle in its quest to gain more traction with Australian travellers, the latest monthly figures have laid bare. [Source Page 4](#)
- According to the latest ATIA Travel Trends Report, travel to the US has remained flat and declined slightly overall, for the year ending September 2025. [Source](#)
- Recently released Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), reveal that US-bound travel fell by a significant 13% year-on-year in September. [Source](#)
- In a bid to stem some of the bleeding in visitation, the Visit USA Act was recently introduced in Congress with the aim of restoring full funding for the vastly depleted Brand USA. [Source Page 4](#)





- Majority of APAC travellers now book trips around sports and entertainment events. A Hilton survey across China, India, Australia, Singapore and Japan reveals 40% of respondents plan international trips for events, with F1 leading the charge, and loyalty program perks shaping hotel choices. [Source](#)

Air Lift

- Qantas has dropped a big international sale with 300K seats to 27 destinations from \$299 one-way. The sale also includes Sydney-LA Economy return from \$999.00 [Source](#)
- Hawaiian Airlines is offering Aussies AUD \$10 return flights between the Hawaiian Islands. [Source](#)
- Qantas has shared a first look at its first exclusively configured ultra-long-haul A350-1000ULR aircraft being assembled. [Source](#)
- Qantas has discounted more than 1.5 million seats across 130-plus routes for travel over next year, including Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas and Singapore. [Source](#)

Media

- Sydney Morning Herald editor Bevan Shields has announced he will step down after four years in the role. The Herald, one of Australia's oldest newspapers, will see its chief reporter, Jordan Baker, step into the editor position in 2026. [Source](#).
- Nick Hall will leave Man of Many after four years as Editor in Chief, marking a notable change for one of Australia's leading men's lifestyle publishers. News of his replacement is yet to be announced. [Source](#).
- Lucy Mae Beers has been appointed Managing Editor of 7NEWS.com.au, which has a unique audience of more than eight million readers each month and remains one of Australia's most-visited news sites for breaking news, sport, entertainment and lifestyle content. She has been with the brand for more than six years, most recently serving as News Editor and Victoria Editor. [Source](#).
- ABC is reviving Race Around the World, targeting the next wave of Australian filmmakers. The reimaged format builds on the legacy of the original 1990s hit, which became a cultural phenomenon for its raw, on-the-ground storytelling. The new series acts as both a tribute to its original spirit and a bold update for a generation of filmmakers, storytellers, and content creators shaped by digital and global connection. The show is currently casting emerging Australian filmmakers willing to produce a film every 10 days for 100 days across 10 countries, and will premiere on ABC TV and ABC iview in 2026. [Source](#).
- LiSTNR has launched a new sport-focused podcast exploring the pressures, expectations and public scrutiny faced by elite sporting figures. The series aligns with the platform's strategy to expand deeper into narrative sport storytelling. [Source](#).





- Escape has published its forecast of leading travel trends for 2026, highlighting rising interest in slow travel, micro escapes, meaningful cultural exchange, and high design accommodation. The list signals continued appetite for trips that balance immersion, comfort and novelty. [Source](#).
- The latest Meltwater Australia report outlines key digital behaviour shifts heading into 2026, with social video continuing to dominate. AI enhanced search is also accelerating, with 30 percent of Australians using AI tools each month. Niche communities are also rising in influence, with platforms such as Reddit now used by 31.9 percent of Australians, placing the country fifth globally and underscoring the power of community driven discovery. Influencer marketing has also grown by 13.5 percent year on year, reflecting its expanding impact across the media landscape. [Source](#).
- Australian travellers are setting their sights on sports-fuelled adventures, luxury indulgences and bucket list getaways for 2026, according to new insights from Luxury Escapes' annual Travel Trends Survey. The survey, conducted in September 2025, polled over 1,000 Australians, revealing that 98 per cent of those who travelled in the past year plan to travel again in 2026, with many allocating more budget and planning more overseas trips than ever before. [Source](#).
- Australians are heading to a mix of value, bucket-list and indulgent destinations in 2026, with Bali, Thailand and Vietnam popular for value-for-money luxury, Italy and Japan chosen for repeat-worthy bucket-list experiences, and the UK and New Zealand favoured for family reunions and nostalgic returns. The Maldives remains the top choice for ultimate all-inclusive indulgence, while the USA draws interest for major sporting events and cultural experiences. [Source](#).

Actions

- International Showcase
- Mission Planning
- Travel Managers Webinar
- Trade & PR Newsletter
- GMM 26 Pitching & Follow-Ups
- Social Campaign

