

# TravelSouth

All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**

## Monthly Report – January - Benelux

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## About TSUSA - Global Partner Programming

We appreciate the everlasting support of Travel South USA, and through this support we continue to be top-of-mind with the beautiful Travel South region, amongst trade, media and potential travelers. We have the pleasure to already be familiar with the region for several years, and look forward to yet another year where we can focus on promoting the GPP states. We are happy and grateful that for the coming budget year we can again count on 9 states, with a small change: Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Rhythms of the South!

We are used to multiple state marketing, and we will make sure every state will get its own fair share of attention, highlighting each unique selling points, highlights, and must-sees, together with an overall promotion of the Southern region. We will make sure you will get a good ROI on every marketing dollar spent. And the assurance you spend it in a healthy mature market, ready and eager to travel.

The overall goal is a growth in numbers of sales, exposure, and awareness of the travel possibilities to the Travel South states. Both the Dutch and the Belgian market are mature and healthy, with experienced and professional key trade and media players. We will continue to create and initiate smart marketing opportunities, resulting in a growth in visitation from the Benelux to the region and maximizing visitor spending and impact. Storytelling will play an important part in achieving our goals. Food, Music Culture, History and Outdoors are the main themes.

On a monthly basis we will be providing updates on the various marketing projects that have been approved for this fiscal year, we will provide an insight into the Benelux market and include any other information/ topics that are of relevance to the Travel South region.

### Why the Benelux market?

- 81% of the Dutch population (17.9 million) and 74% of the Belgium population (11,7 million) is vacationing at least once a year.
- A steady and stable market. Small, yet big in our number of travellers to the USA. 4 out of 100 people visit the USA yearly.
- High potential for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier destinations and potential for the shoulder season
- Both the Dutch and the Belgians receive an 8% annual extra salary called "vacation payout"
- The Dutch have at least 25 vacation days and about 10 public holidays, the Belgians have at least 20 vacation days and also 10 public holidays.
- The average time spent in the USA is: 18 days.





## I. Executive summary

- **Social media:**

The Travel South region was featured in 1 social media posts from *Ludwig from Joker Reizen*. He promoted their new Music Trip through the South in a post.

- **Publications:**

The Travel South Region received media attention through **1 Newsletter, 9 online articles** and **4 articles**. 3 articles came from *Tioga Tours Magazine*, featuring **Rhythms of the South, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana** and **North Carolina**. The other article came from Mezza based on the FAM from Hans Avontuur, featuring **South Carolina, Alabama** and **Rhythms of the South**. *WideOyster's* newsletter mentioned **North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky** and **Alabama**. *WideOyster* shared two longreads, as part of our coop: one featuring a coastal roadtrip through **North Carolina** and **South Carolina**, and the other highlighting unique cities in the American South, including **Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Missouri, North Carolina** and **South Carolina**. *Target Travel Marketing* mentioned **Missouri** in an article about the Vakantie Festival. **North and South Carolina** were mentioned by *Golf.nl*. *Benoit* shared our newsletter about Luxurious experiences in a blogpost, mentioning the **whole Travel South region**. *RTL Boulevard, Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad* celebrated Dolly Parton's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, mentioning **Tennessee**.

- **Travel South International Showcase**

In January, Rianne completed the final reporting for Travel South International Showcase.



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- Miscellaneous

After the Dutch national football team was assigned to Kansas City following the World Cup draw, Kansas City and Missouri decided to come to the Netherlands for a short sales mission, as an out of scope activity. They will meet with some media and trade partners and attend a consumer fair.



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## International metrics FY25 - 26

	July	Aug	Sep	Q1 TOTAL	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q2 TOTAL	Jan
<b>Benelux</b>									
<b>Trade</b>									
Trade Meetings/Trainings	4	11	8	23	8	4	3	15	7
Number of Agents Trained	-	-	150	150	-	-	-	0	0
Travel Trade Newsletter Receptient	0	0	531	531	658	659	659	1,976	656
Trade Newsletter Open Rate	0	0	41	41	47	46	46	139	30
<b>Managed Media</b>									
Media Meetings	1	1	1	3	3	2	1	6	2
Total number of articles published	4	11	10	25	13	8	7	28	13
Impressions	11,100	15,739	57,225	84,064	24,724	28,226	23,384	76,334	1,470,101
PR Newsletter Receptient	0	0	354	354	350	345	344	1,039	342
PR Newsletter Open Rate	0	0	44	44	43	42	40	125	18
<b>Social Posts</b>									
<b>Facebook Page</b>									
Followers	1,760	1,780	1,780	1,780	1,780	1,781	1,780	5,341	1,775
Likes	1,760	1,780	1,780	5,320	1,780	1,781	1,780	5,341	1,775
<b>Facebook Posts</b>								0	
Reach	0	291	906	1,197	466	4,555	7,107	12,128	4,269
Views	0	1,390	1,122	2,512	662	6,007	8,105	14,774	7,034
Likes	0	23	22	45	14	554	43	611	622
Comments	0	5	1	6	0	0	1	1	19
Shares	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	8	7
<b>Instagram</b>									
Reach	0	61	236	297	245	3,865	7,228	11,338	8,215
Views	0	2,058	1,581	3,639	1,956	5,806	3,277	11,039	1,869
Followers	0	83	122	122	192	248	271	711	298
Likes	0	65	73	138	77	72	58	207	50
Comments	0	5	4	9	3	3	4	10	12
Shares	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0





## II. Communication & PR

Coverage book has been updated:

<https://app.coveragebook.com/29490/books/f8d792af8750ac9a>

In de VS begint 1 februari de honderdste editie van de Black History Month, waarin de geschiedenis van zwart Amerika wordt gevierd. Reislejournalist **Hans Avontuur** bezoekt Charleston, South Carolina, een prachtige stad met een pijnlijk verleden.

### Het pijnlijke verleden van het Parijs van Amerika

FOTO'S HANS AVONTUUR



Chaufeur Franklin Williams vertelt het verhaal van de zwarte bevolking.

**F**ranklin Williams was het zat. Als chauffeur van toeristenbussen hoorde hij voortdurend het romantische verhaal van Charleston. Over de succesvolle families, de architecten, het vriendelijke zuiden. 'Een mooi plaatje,' zegt hij. 'Maar waar waren de verhalen over de mensen aan wie die rijkdom te danken is, de slaven? Waar waren de verhalen over de zwarte ambachtlieden die deze stad hebben gebouwd?'

Dus begon Franklin de mensen zelf rond te leiden. Langs de mooie en minder mooie plekken van Charleston. 'Ik ben een kind van de jaren vijftig,' vertelt hij, terwijl we door het noordelijke deel van het oude centrum lopen. 'Ik herinner me goed dat mijn moeder hield aan de keukentafel zat omdat ze er niet meer tegen kon om als tweederangsburger te worden behandeld.' Franklin wijst naar een elegante

poort van smeedijzer. 'Het werk van Philip Simmons, een zwarte meester-smid die een groot deel van de negentiende-eeuwse hekken, poorten en balkons in Charleston heeft gemaakt. Deze stad is gebouwd door slaven en zwarte arbeiders, timmerlui, schilders, bouwers en kunstenaars als Simmons.' Ik volg Franklin door de stad waar ik twintig jaar geleden voor het eerst was. De schoonheid is onveranderd. De mooie houten huizen, smalle straten, fontein, palmbomen wiesgind in de



zeewind, goudkleurige verlichting. Alleen werd destijds een ander verhaal verteld, niet dat het zwarte vrijheidslied *We shall overcome* hier is geboren. Het slavernijverleden werd wel genoemd, maar de nadruk lag op Charleston als het Parijs van Amerika, de stad van liefde en romantiek.

**DE VERANDERING KWAM NIET** vanzelf. Na een jarenlange maatschappelijke en politieke strijd ging in 2015 het International African American Museum open, dat nu tot de topattracties van de stad behoort. Hoewel Donald Trump de geschiedenis lever onder het tapijt schuift, wordt in het stijlvolle museum met veel zorg het verhaal van de Afrikaanse Amerikanen verteld. Er is aandacht voor hun afkomst, slavenbestaan, vrijheidsstrijd en bijdrage aan het Amerika van nu. 'De komst van het museum heeft meer dan twintig jaar geduurd,' vertelt Isabelle Britto, de Nederlandse

**DEZE STAD IS GEBOUWD DOOR SLAVEN EN ZWARTE ARBEIDERS, TIMMERLUI, SCHILDERS EN KUNSTENAARS'**



In het International African American Museum.

curator met Amerikaanse roots. 'Er was een moordpartij voor nodig om het in een stroomvervalsing te brengen. Bij de *church shooting* in de Mother Emanuel-kerk in 2015 schoot een witte racist negen zwarte mensen dood. Een drama dat onderwerp was dat het niet alleen onderwerp uit een ver verleden is.' Britto en haar collega Matt Stevenson zijn trots op het museum. 'Bij tot slaaf >

**LANDMARKS**  
Het International African American Museum en de Mother Emanuel-kerk zijn landmarks op de Civil Rights Trail, een route door vijftien vooral zuidelijke staten van de VS. De locaties waren van grote betekenis in de strijd van zwarte Amerikanen voor gelijke rechten. Ook bijonder: de Edmund Pettus Bridge (waar de actie voor kiesrecht bloedig beëindigd werd) en de McCrory-diner in Rock Hill (zwarte studenten die geen eten kregen bleven uit protest zitten).  
- [civilrightstrail.com](http://civilrightstrail.com).





## III. Sales Calls

### Media contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
<b>BAM Media -</b> Simone den Boer	<p>BAM Media is an independent media agency that connects brands with leading Dutch magazines and online platforms, securing advertising placements that increase visibility with targeted audiences. The agency can work with both large (€20.000+) and smaller budgets (€600). She reports that BAM Media, emphasizes tailored media placements rather than PR services, offering clients curated advertising opportunities in lifestyle, travel, food, and other sectors.</p> <p>A magazine in their portfolio that we could work with is Residence Traveller (90.000 print reach). Its focus is travel in combination with unique accommodations. These include “the most beautiful”, “most unique”, and “finest” addresses that can be found abroad.</p> <p>They also work with culinary magazines Delicious (291.000 print reach, 615.000 online reach) and Foodies (60.450 print reach, 550.000 online reach).</p>	
<b>Ster reclames -</b> Ingo Janssen	<p>Ster Reclames is in charge of all advertisement spots on the three main Dutch television channels (NPO 1, NPO 2 and NPO 3). These are also the channels that will broadcast the FIFA World Cup, and they reached out to us after receiving the invitation for our Visit KC activation event.</p> <p>Further they provide opportunities for advertisement on radio stations (Radio 1, Radio 2, Radio 3, Radio 4, Radio 5). And also online bannering on NOS.nl one of the largest news platforms in the Netherlands.</p> <p>For an impactful campaign on the radio you will need an estimate budget of 10k, for television you should estimate about 40k.</p>	<p>Following up with them, about a partnership with Visit KC for broadcasting during the FIFA World Cup.</p> <p>Also ofcourse something we could consider for a Travel South campaign</p>

### Trade contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
<b>Style in Travel -</b> Birgitte Bosma	<p>They have launched a new campaign that focusses on the World Cup locations where the Netherlands will play. These are Dallas, Houston and Kansas City. As these locations are relatively close to each other, with a couple of days in between the games, there is a good chance that Dutch people will travel to the USA for it.</p>	
<b>Travelhome -</b> Perry van der Wiel	<p>We spoke with Petty from Travelhome. He reported a significant decline in U.S. bookings. While the decrease was approximately 40% through December, the drop improved to around 25% in January. He anticipates that it may take at least five years for the U.S. market to fully recover. In</p>	



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	response, Travelhome is currently shifting its primary focus toward Australia and New Zealand.	
<b>UStavel</b> – José Kraan	José mentioned the company has launched a radio advertising campaign and is seeing satisfactory results so far. They continue to receive a solid volume of inquiries and report healthy conversion rates into bookings. While they recognize the current market situation, they remain confident in both their product offering and the long-term strength of the market.	
<b>Tioga Tours</b> – Paul Backer	Tioga Tours hosted their “XXL USA Experience” event in late December. Attendance was approximately 25% lower than expected compared to previous years. They also noted increased consumer hesitation, with conversion rates trending below normal levels.	
<b>Joker</b> – Ludwig Verbruggen and Jeroen Vincken	<p>We spoke with Ludwig and Jeroen during Vakantiebeurs. They noted that inquiry volumes are clearly declining, although conversion rates remain strong. Despite the softer demand, Joker Reizen continues to feel confident. They have also seen an increase in requests for Canada compared to last year. However, due to the World Cup, demand for the usual peak travel months of June and July is lower than expected. If it weren't for the cup, they would have sold more Canada.</p> <p>In addition, consumer concerns regarding travel to the U.S. have shifted. While last year questions were mainly focused on National Park entry fees, this year travelers are more frequently asking whether Europeans can still travel to the U.S. and if they may face any complications during their trip. Joker Reizen continues to address these concerns by providing factual information, actively promoting travel to the U.S., and investing in ongoing staff training.</p> <p>We talked to Ludwig about him proposing activities directly to partners and asked him to send the same proposal to us. We explained Travel South is aiming to offer the partners a strategic and cohesive marketing plan for each market. We know some of the partners sometimes have additional budget, but in those cases, TS still likes to be involved.</p>	
<b>AmerikaNu.nl</b> – Bart Verhoeff	Bart and his team are working on expanding their services, firstly by offering more destinations (they already expanded to Canada last year) and are now looking at offering more southern countries as well, such as Mexico and Costa Rica. They have changed their software for developing itineraries and products and can now also offer this service to travel agents. The software in their website was slowing down, so they will also completely renew this and change the design in the coming months. He also mentioned that the news is impacting the USA bookings, but he is still selling trips and customers are still having great experiences at the destination.	
<b>Indelible Travel</b> – Frans Schoon	We spoke with Frans Schoon from Indelible Travel. The company has been operating for nearly three years. While booking numbers are still increasing, growth has been slower than initially expected. They continue to see interest and bookings for the U.S., though demand is lower than anticipated. As a result, Indelible Travel has expanded its offering to include Canada as well as several Asian destinations.	





## IV. Newsletter

### Newsletter to the trade & media

We sent out the latest newsletter in January. The focus for the newsletter was what's new and noteworthy in the Travel South Region.

Status	Topic	Subscribers	Open rate	Click-thru rate
Newsletter sent out on: January 13th	New and noteworthy	Trade		
		656	29.6%	1.2 %
		Media		
		342	18.4%	0.0%

View the newsletter here: <https://mailchi.mp/3e27561885a0/nieuwsbrief-travel-south-usa-nieuw-in-2026>



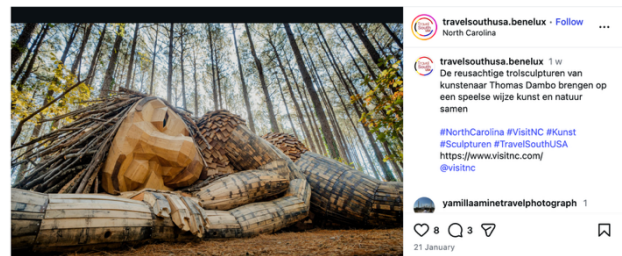
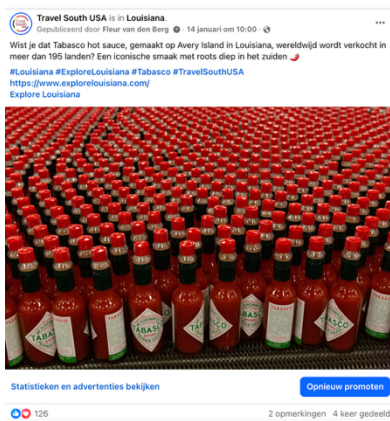
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## V. Social media

We have been posting all throughout December on our social media platforms. A total of **9 posts** were published on Facebook and **9** on Instagram. Each state being highlighted once, and the Rhythms of the South cities rotating every month. This month, New Orleans was featured. The content for the posts is based on this month's newsletter and is shared across both channels.

The Facebook post with the highest reach, generating **1606 impressions** and **135 interactions**, highlighted Tabasco hot sauce in Louisiana. On Instagram, the strongest performance came from the post featuring Thomas Dambo's sculptures in North Carolina, reaching **1079 people** and securing **11 interactions**. See posts below:





## VI. Market Update

### Dutch Travel Trends 2026: Columbus Travel trend survey

Recent findings from the annual Columbus Travel trend survey suggest that Dutch travelers will approach long haul travel more selectively in 2026, with a continued preference for destinations that offer a clear return in terms of nature, culture, and meaningful experiences. While Europe remains the dominant choice, the United States continues to rank among the top long-haul destinations, particularly for travelers seeking iconic landscapes and once in a lifetime journeys. A key shift is the growing demand for what researchers describe as “curated freedom.” Travelers are increasingly looking for flexibility during their trip, while relying on professional support for complex logistics and planning. The survey further highlights a strong emphasis on value and comfort. Dutch travelers remain highly cost conscious, prioritizing destinations that balance outdoor adventure with reliable accommodation, safety, and ease of transport. Rather than traveling cheaper, they are traveling smarter, often choosing fewer trips with greater impact.

### TUI’s key summer travel trends

TUI’s latest research and booking data highlights the 2026 summer travel trends for Dutch travelers. The market is moving beyond traditional beach holidays, with a stronger focus on active, personal, and experience driven trips. One growing trend is the “runcation,” where travelers combine vacations with running events or scenic trails abroad. Solo travel continues to grow, driven by travel concepts that offer freedom and independence while still creating opportunities for social connection. While relaxation remains the main reason to travel, more Dutch holidaymakers are also prioritizing cultural discovery and new experiences.



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### VII. Activities overview

This chapter provides updates when activities have been executed, when there is an update on the progress, or any action points.

#### Wideoyster

This year is a continuation of last year, as part of a two-year cooperation. Half of the publications have already gone live in the previous fiscal year. The final publication went live January 2026.

#### The Outdoors

We will be featured as a 'destination of the month', where the Travel South region will be prominently featured across all their platforms for a whole month. The 5 advertorials are written based on desk research and input provided by us. The combined activities are expected to generate a reach of approximately 1,5 million. Exact timing of this feature tbd.

#### Visit USA Associations

Trough the continued membership that Travel South has with Visit USA The Netherlands and Visit USA Belgium, they continue to generate frequent exposure through the newsletters and on social media.

#### Benelux Trade & Media newsletter

Every month, a newsletter will be sent out to the Benelux Trade and Media database. Each month focusing on a different theme, highlighting all GPP states. Please view chapter IV for the monthly analyses.

#### Benelux social media

Content on Facebook & Instagram will be published throughout the month, using the newsletter as a source of inspiration. Please view chapter V for the monthly analyses.

#### Product Survey

This project will again be executed in spring 2026, reporting all tour operator data from 2025



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## Out of Scope

Travel South International Showcase: completed.

Global Week: The media marketplace will take place in Mobile, Alabama in spring 2025. Contract has been signed, three media have been confirmed, and two other media are pending availability.

