

# INDIA REPORT

## JANUARY 2026

Travel  
South  
USA

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# Table of Contents

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Communication & PR
- III. Travel Trade
- IV. Monthly Newsletter
- V. Digital & Social consumer outreach
- VI. Market Updates
- VII. Action Items

# ABOUT TSUSA

## Global Partner Programming

The TSUSA GPP provides a foundational base from which state tourism offices have shared in-country representation with international export marketing and sales activities. Managed by Travel South USA, the official regional destination marketing organization for the 12 state tourism offices, these collaborative efforts create leveraged actions, increase reach of travel trade and journalists, and coordinated consumer campaigns which deliver visitors to the South. In 2019, the Travel South USA region welcomed 10.2 million visitors, who spent \$10.3 billion, with 90% of these visitors arriving from 15 markets from around the globe.

India, the world's fifth-largest economy, is projected to grow between 6% and 7% in FY25, reinforcing its status as one of the fastest-growing major economies. In 2024, the USA received 2.19 million visitors from India 24.3% increase over 2023, ranking India as the #2 overseas source market (excluding Canada and Mexico) and #4 overall for international arrivals. The country is now the world's third-largest aviation market, with significant airport expansions underway.

With Indian travelers typically holding a 10-year U.S. visa and a significant proportion comprising repeat visitors, the Southern states present considerable potential as destinations to explore. Through the GPP program, our focus will be on promoting the diversity and distinct character of the Southern states in the Indian market, thereby generating stronger interest and engagement among Indian travelers. The rich combination of culture, cuisine, music, and outdoor experiences offered by the region is particularly appealing to the Indian audience, making it a compelling proposition for both first-time and repeat visitors.

Indian travelers increasingly seek diverse experiences spanning sports, entertainment, cruises, wellness, and adventure tourism. Travel is now seen as a contributor to personal well-being and a way to collect unique experiences from shopping and cultural activities to culinary explorations. This shift is fueled by a young, affluent, and digitally savvy population, with millennials and Gen Z leading the way. Rising incomes and a "You Only Live Once" mindset are encouraging higher spending on premium services and exclusive travel opportunities. India's digital adoption is robust, with 806 million internet users (55.3% penetration, up 6.5% year-on-year) and stable mobile connectivity at 1.12 billion connections, covering 76.6% of the population.

# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- TSUSA India Workshop was a success with an attendance of 55 Indian travel agents who appreciated the destination presentations, live southern music as well as the networking opportunity.
- We are in continuous contact with travel trade and media partners with 74 trade meetings and 41 media meetings to date.
- SOTC has added a new product with a focus on Atlanta, Nashville, Memphis, Jackson & New Orleans [LINK](#)
- We gained 41 new Facebook followers and 44 new Instagram followers

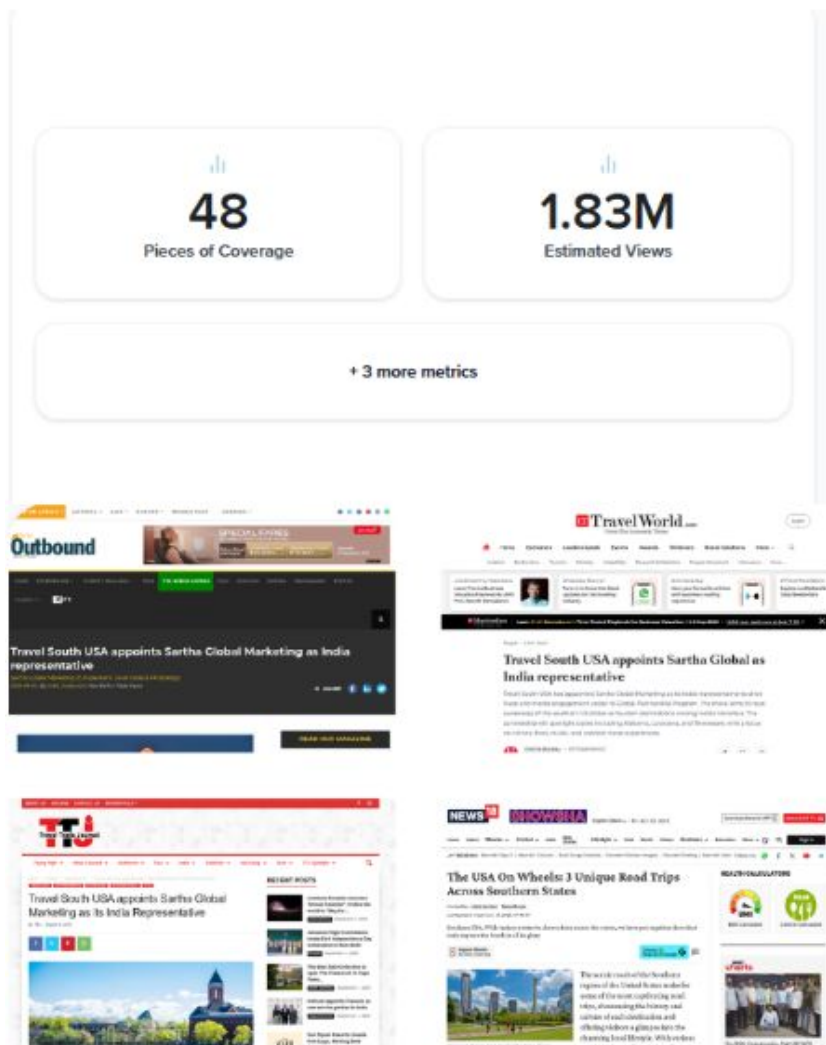
|   |                                    | Sep         | Q1 TOTAL    | Oct          | Nov         | Dec       | Q2 TOTAL     | Jan         | FY25/26 Total |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| 10<br>partners<br>AL/AR/KY<br>/LA/MS/<br>MO/NC/S<br>C/TN/RO<br>TS | India                              |             |             |              |             |           |              |             |               |
|   | Trade                              |             |             |              |             |           |              |             |               |
|   | Trade Meetings/Trainings           | 9           | 9           | 15           | 19          | 16        | 50           | 15          | 74            |
|   | Number of Agents Trained           | 4           | 4           | 13           | 24          | 14        | 51           | 13          | 68            |
|   | Managed Media                      |             |             |              |             |           |              |             |               |
|   | Media Meetings                     | 10          | 10          | 10           | 10          | 5         | 25           | 6           | 41            |
|   | Total number of articles published | 3           | 14          | 7            | 6           | 5         | 18           | 5           | 37            |
|   | Impressions                        | 4,15,00,000 | 4,63,50,000 | 20,86,77,600 | 4,81,90,000 | 20,00,000 | 25,88,67,600 | 1,09,97,443 | 31,62,15,043  |

## II. Comms & PR

Meetings with media, coverage opportunities, contacts, press trips, earned media valuation, clippings, and others.

### News Releases

- 5 media clippings were generated in the month of January.
- 1 piece of content was disseminated to the consumer media platforms, “Get Your Kicks on Route 66: A Family-Friendly Road Trip Through Missouri’s History and Culture”. It got 4 media coverage, We also got one coverage from the “Travel South International Showcase 2025” held in Kansas City, Missouri.
- CoverageBook Link - <https://app.coveragebook.com/29490/books/5c685b5c980151ee>



## II. Comms & PR

### Media Contacts(phone calls, emails, personal meetings) cont.

| Contacts                  | Discussion points   | Website   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Business World            | The journalist covered an article based on the January theme “A Family-Friendly Road Trip Through Missouri’s History and Culture”.                | <a href="https://www.bwtravel.com/">https://www.bwtravel.com/</a>                 |
| Midday                    | The journalist covered an article based on the January theme “A Family-Friendly Road Trip Through Missouri’s History and Culture”.                | <a href="https://www.mid-day.com/">https://www.mid-day.com/</a>                   |
| MSN                       | The journalist covered an article based on the January theme “A Family-Friendly Road Trip Through Missouri’s History and Culture”.                | <a href="https://www.msn.com/">https://www.msn.com/</a>                           |
| Provoke Lifestyle         | The journalist covered an article based on the January theme “A Family-Friendly Road Trip Through Missouri’s History and Culture”.                | <a href="https://provokelifestyle.in/">https://provokelifestyle.in/</a>           |
| Travel & Food+            | Content shared to the journalist on the January theme “A Family-Friendly Road Trip Through Missouri’s History and Culture”. Coverage in pipeline. | <a href="https://www.tfninternational.com/">https://www.tfninternational.com/</a> |
| India Outbound (Magazine) | The journalist covered the article on “Travel South International Showcase 2025” held in Kansas City, Missouri                                    | <a href="https://indiaoutbound.info/">https://indiaoutbound.info/</a>             |

## III. Trade

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

| Contacts             | Activity/Activation   | Follow-up / Next step  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Ottila International | B2B travel agency. Discussion over product development & training request.  | Product development push   |
| Carnation Travel     | Discussion over adding TSUSA product to their existing list of US products. TSUSA India Workshop attendee                 | Follow-up email with important links was sent to all participating members. Product development to follow      |
| DreamTrip4U          | Discussion about TSUSA States and our focus. They specialise in niche USA itineraries & cater to experiential travellers. | Follow-up email with important links was sent  |
| Yatra.com            | Post TSUSA Workshop discussion focused towards product development  | Follow-up email with important links was sent. Additional itinerary links from our website was sent separately |
| SOTC                 | They have now added a new TSUSA product - <a href="#">LINK</a>  | Additional options discussed for further products list   |
| GRN Connect          | They currently have listed a TSUSA product. Call was focused on a Feb training session.                                   | Product development push   |
| MakeMyTrip.com       | Currently on TSUSA experiences listed. Push for an FIT product underway plus training request                             | Product development push   |
| Flag Travels         | Follow up call for product development. Their new website to be ready by mid-feb and TSUSA product to be uploaded         | Product development push   |
| Red Carpet Travels   | Training with 11 members from their products & sales team along with possibility for product development                  | Follow-up email with important links was sent to all participating members. Product development to follow      |
| Easemytrip.com       | Discussion on TSUSA product development and training request for Feb  | Product development push   |

## III. Trade

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

| Contacts                                | Activity/Activation  | Follow-up / Next step  |
|---|--|--|
| Thomas Cook                             | Follow up call for product development. A TSUSA product to be listed soon.   | Follow-up email with important links was sent. Product development to follow       |
| Voyagers Hub                            | A detailed call about TSUSA States to encourage product development on their website. They are in the process of revamping their existing website and will connect with us once it is ready.   | Follow-up email with important links was sent. Product development to follow       |
| N Chirag<br><br>Kulin Kumar<br>Holidays | Training session for additional product development (ROTS already listed) to take place in Wk1 Feb<br><br>Discussion to understand TSUSA's potential for their existing clientele. They have an FIT arm which would like to include 1-2 TSUSA states with 1-2 well established states like Orlando or NY | Follow-up email with important links was sent<br><br>Product development to follow |
| Nivalink                                | Follow up call for product development. New product to be listed ASAP.   | Follow-up email with important links was sent.                                     |

# IV. Newsletters

Trade Newsletter to 6000+ tour operators/ travel agent professionals and 300+ media professionals

| Status                                | Topic   | Trade Open Rate | Media Open Rate |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Travel South USA Newsletter Series# 5 | <b>Hit the Road:What's New in the South for 2026</b><br>January 09, 2026    | 19.70%          | 21.80%          |
|                                       | Featured Louisiana, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina and Mississippi |                 |                 |



## Travel South USA

All Y'all Are Welcome

JANUARY 2026



### HIT THE ROAD: WHAT'S NEW IN THE SOUTH FOR 2026

Welcome to the American South in 2026, where milestone celebrations, award-winning cuisine, and exciting new experiences take center stage. From America 250 commemorations and world-class dining across the region to new attractions, cultural openings, and headline events, the South is buzzing with fresh energy. Hit the road, follow the flavors, and discover a region where history, creativity, and discovery come together like never before.

# IV. Newsletters



**LOUISIANA**

Louisiana has a lot to offer in 2026, and leading the way is the Louisiana Hot Sauce Trail, launched in October 2025. Featuring 17 stops across the state, the trail spotlights small-batch local hot sauces, iconic factory tours like Tabasco, and uniquely Louisiana experiences such as the Hot Sauce Shrine at the Abita Mystery House.


[WELCOME 2026!](#)



**ALABAMA**

In 2026, Alabama shines with America 250 celebrations spotlighting its role in U.S. history through new heritage experiences statewide. Paired with rising culinary acclaim, 15 Alabama restaurants recognized in the Michelin Guide - and a growing focus on outdoor and cultural tourism, the state offers a fresh mix of history, flavor, and discovery.


[EXPLORE MORE](#)



**NORTH CAROLINA**

North Carolina stands out with 47 Michelin-recognized restaurants in 2026, new attractions like the North Carolina Zoo's Asia exhibit and the reopening of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, plus major moments including America 250 celebrations, the PGA Tour's Biltmore Championship, and the MLS All-Star Game in Charlotte.

[CELEBRATE 250<sup>th</sup>](#)



**SOUTH CAROLINA**

Take a road trip through South Carolina and see why the Palmetto State is emerging as the South's top culinary destination in 2026. From Greenville, home to the city's first Michelin star at Scoundrel, to Charleston's Michelin-starred Vern's, Malagón, and Wild Common, this journey pairs scenic drives with world-class flavor and local gems.

[KNOW MORE ABOUT IT](#)



**MISSISSIPPI**

Mississippi emerges as a standout destination with 10 restaurants recognized in the Michelin Guide, spotlighting culinary excellence. The year also brings new cultural trails in Greenwood, major festivals and America 250 celebrations, fresh museum openings, boutique hotels, and landmark events, making 2026 a vibrant year to explore Mississippi's food, history, and culture.

[EXPLORE MORE](#)

## YOUR NEXT SOUTHERN ADVENTURE STARTS HERE!

**FUN FACT:** *The North-American branch of Michelin is headquartered in Greenville, South Carolina.*

[FOR MORE UPDATES, LOCAL SECRETS, AND TRAVEL INSPIRATION, FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!](#)



## V. Social Media

- Boosted assets delivered 60.8K Facebook views (+14,656.6% MoM) and 45.8K Instagram views, confirming strong efficiency in driving top-funnel visibility.
- Content generated 3,194 engagements (+2,301.5% MoM), including 2,952 reactions, 82 comments, and 11 shares, indicating improved creative resonance versus December.
- Instagram continued to lead on reach and interaction:
  - o Reach: 83.5K
  - o Interactions: 32,979
  - o Profile visits: 82
- Audience growth validates awareness-to-follow conversion:
  - o Facebook: 41 new followers
  - o Instagram: 44 new followers
- Paid promotion complemented organic distribution, ensuring sustained visibility beyond initial posting windows and improving overall content lifespan.
- The combination of destination storytelling + light paid amplification continues to deliver cost-efficient reach, engagement depth, and steady follower growth supporting the proposed video-first boosting approach for February and March.

# VI. Market Update

## Market & Economy Updates

- The United States has withdrawn the additional 25% penalty tariff imposed on Indian goods, providing significant relief estimated at around USD 5 billion for Indian exporters. The rollback follows trade discussions between both countries and is expected to ease bilateral trade tensions while supporting key Indian export sectors.
- The Union Budget 2026–27, has been positively received by India's travel and tourism industry, signalling the government's intent to position tourism as a key economic growth driver through enhanced investment, connectivity, and sectoral support.
- DBS Bank forecasts inflation rising gradually to 3.5% in 2026, while India's GDP growth is projected to be between 6.5% and 7.2%, keeping it among the fastest-growing major economies.
- India and the EU have finalized a landmark free trade agreement, opening up greater two-way market access across manufacturing and services, reducing barriers for EU goods and boosting Indian exports.

## Airline Updates

- India's aviation sector is set for rapid expansion, with the commercial aircraft fleet projected to triple to 2,250 by 2035, driving strong passenger growth and positioning India among the world's top three aviation markets.

Emirates airline is optimistic about getting an expansion of flight seats to and from India, in the upcoming bilateral negotiations, as current capacity cannot keep up with the demand being created.

Air India expects to receive 19 widebody aircraft, undergoing complete refurbishment, by the end of 2026. These include Boeing 777 aircraft capable of operating on the India-US route. The airline has also ordered 30 additional Boeing 737 Max aircraft, bringing its orderbook with Boeing to 250 aircraft.

Air India plans to add additional flights as operations resume after disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine, improving connectivity across affected routes.

## National Tourism Organisation & DMO Updates

- Brand USA concluded its first Travel Week India in Bengaluru, hosting 95 travel agents from across India, 74 US delegates, 10 speakers, and 30 media representatives, while debuting the America the Beautiful campaign ahead of 2026.
- South African Tourism has announced the 2026 edition of its Annual India Multi-City Roadshow, which will be held across five cities.

# VI. Market Update

## Trade Updates

- MakeMyTrip Limited, India's leading online travel service provider, reported sustained profitable growth with strong double-digit expansion across core segments in its unaudited Q3 FY 2025 results.
- SOTC Travel, one of India's leading travel and tourism companies, has partnered with fintech platform SaveIN to launch a "Save and Pay Later" option that lets customers book holidays and pay via zero-interest EMI through a fully digital process.

## Media Updates

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India noted that the country's media and entertainment sector is projected to expand to \$36 billion by 2027, up from \$29.4 billion in 2024, citing television and radio broadcasting as key pillars of India's media and entertainment growth. [Read more](#)
- India reached a major digital milestone in November 2025, when the country's broadband internet subscriber base crossed the 1 billion mark, according to data released by the Press Information Bureau. The base has grown more than sixfold over the past decade, driven by the rapid expansion of high-speed internet infrastructure and affordable data plans. [Read more](#)
- According to Media Partners Asia (MPA)'s, India is expected to overtake China to become the largest Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) market by 2030, with an estimated 358 million individual subscriptions. [Read more](#)
- India's television audience is projected to reach nearly 1 billion viewers by 2029, driven by rising disposable incomes, improving literacy, and increasing internet penetration, according to a new study by the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA). [Read more](#)
- India's digital video market is expected to reach about \$9.17 billion by 2030, driven primarily by advertising-supported models that are set to capture around 70% of incremental growth over the decade, according to a Media Partners Asia report. [Read more](#)
- A joint report from the Multiplex Association of India and E&Y suggests that increasing India's cinema screen count to 20,000 over the next five years could generate 0.125 million jobs and \$0.11 billion in additional tax revenue. [Read more](#)
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has set up a Live Events Development Cell (LEDC) to support the structured growth of India's growing live entertainment industry and strengthen the country's emerging concert economy. [Read more](#)
- According to Adobe's inaugural Creators' Toolkit Report, India, one of the world's fastest-growing creator markets, is seeing particularly strong adoption of AI, with 97% of Indian creators saying that generative AI is positively influencing the creator ecosystem, underscoring its transition from an experimental tool to a core component of creative workflows. [Read more](#)

# VII. Actions

## 1. Travel South USA Product Development

Ongoing efforts to expand the portfolio of Travel South USA products among Indian trade agencies.

## 2. Travel South USA GMM26 Date Apr 22-30

For Travel South USA GMM 2026, we have received four media confirmations, with further coordination currently underway.

## 3. Newsletter

February Edition - Soul Food: BBQ to "Meat & Threes", Honoring Civil Rights Legacies! With a focus on Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky & ROTS

## 4. Social Media

Boost 2–3 high-quality destination overview videos to sustain reach, video consumption, and cost-efficient visibility across Facebook and Instagram.

Retain high-performing formats and messaging, and refine targeting and creative selection monthly to maximise efficiency and follower growth.