



# AUNZ REPORT

## APRIL 2026

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# ABOUT TSUSA

## Global Partner Programming

### Visitation to the USA. March 2026 i-94 arrival data (released April)

#### Australia:

- 57,637 arrivals in February, down -4% for the month of March and 6.5% YTD.
- Australia ranked 13th among long-haul markets for the month, slipping out of our usual top 10 position, but March is historical a low season month for travel to the USA from Australia.

#### Ports of Entry - Australia to the USA:

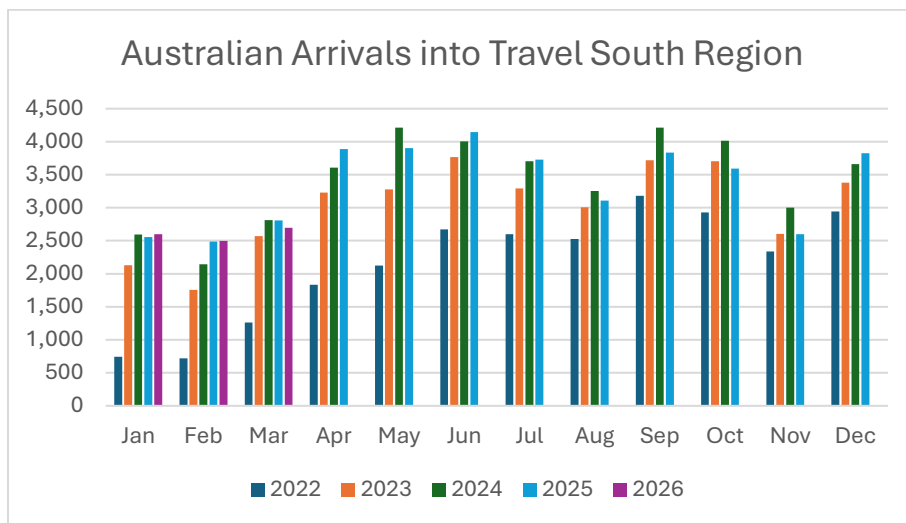
- Texas continues to outperform other regions on a year-on-year basis, supported by increased airlift, comparatively stronger value, and ongoing interest in cowboy and Western culture.
- The good news story this month is the positive growth year-on-year for California arrivals in March. Arrivals up 1% for the month of March, and year to date just down -6% YOY, a significant improvement from being down -15% in January.

Port of entry	March arrivals	March 2026 vs 2025 difference
California	29,520	1%
Hawaii	6,026	-20%
New York	3,949	-21%
Texas	8,328	11%
Florida	2,149	-10%
All other ports	7,665	-8%

#### First intended address - Travel South

- 2,695 Australians listed a Travel South state as their first intended address in March which was down 4% YoY.





**New Zealand:**

- 11,463 arrivals in March, down 14% for the month and 26% YoY.

**Global Travel Demand from Australia.**

February 2026 data has been released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showing where returning residents spent most time abroad.

891,460 Australians returned from an overseas trip in April, down -3.5% on one year earlier. This is the first recorded year-on-year decline since the borders opened and may indicate a slight softening of international demand due to geo-political tensions and consumer confidence. Despite this year on year decline, Australians continue to travel in record numbers.

The top 10 countries as follows:

- Value, close to home, and VFR ties driving demand for NZ, Japan, India, Vietnam and China.
- Thailand has lost market share to Vietnam, as low-cost carrier VietJet has increased airlift to Vietnam driving demand and effectively positioning Vietnam as the alternate to Thailand.
- 

Rank	Country	February Visits	Percentage growth YOY
1	New Zealand	113,460	2%
2	Japan	103,360	6%
3	Indonesia	101,630	-5%
4	India	88,680	6%
5	China	48,710	-31%
6	Thailand	43,770	-5%
7	Vietnam	40,100	-12%
8	USA	36,740	-10%
9	Philippines	30,710	0%
10	Malaysia	26,600	-23%





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Travel South Mission Planning
- April Newsletter
- Newcastle Events - Hunter Travel Group, MTA Expo & Lunch and Learn
- International Showcase Invites
- Product Audit update
- Global Media Marketplace 2026
- Alabama Pre-fam & Extension
- Innovation Challenge
- April Social Content





		Q1 TOTAL	Q2 TOTAL	Q3 TOTAL	April
<b>9 partners</b> <b>AL/KY/LA</b> <b>/MS/MO/</b> <b>NC/SC/TN</b> <b>/ROTS</b>	<b>Australia</b>				
	<b>Trade</b>				
	Trade Meetings/Trainings	69	178	31	17
	Number of Agents Trained	114	226	28	10
	Travel Trade Newsletter Recipient	4068	15,920	11,369	3,722
	Trade Newsletter Open Rate	28.37%	27.27%	30.55%	26.33%
	<b>Managed Media</b>				
	Media Meetings	15	39	6	7
	Total number of articles published	38	36	27	12
	Impressions	41,719,406	6,136,659	18,266,587	2,603,548
	PR Newsletter Recipient	364	1,057	1,071	360
	PR Newsletter Open Rate	47.80%	43.82%	46.70%	45.28%
	<b>Social Posts</b>				
	<b>Facebook Page</b>				
	Followers	9,200	9,200	9,161	9,100
	Likes	9,200	27,600	27,553	9,100
	<b>Facebook Posts</b>				
	Reach	515	1,113	171,807	398
	Views	1,073	2,069	68,195	222
	Likes	8	14	0	4
	Comments	0	0	0	0
	Shares	0	0	0	0
	<b>Instagram</b>				
	Reach	21	18	11,608	9





Views	527	762	29,144	76
Followers	18	32	26	26
Likes	25	20	18	8
Comments	0	0	0	0
Shares	0	0	0	0





## II. COMMUNICATIONS & PR

- Global Media Marketplace 2026
- Alabama Pre-fam & Extension
- Innovation Challenge
- April Social Content
- Earned media Coverage Book
- Global Market Media Place 25 media Coverage Book





## COVERAGE:



### Spotlight on New Orleans

There's nowhere in the world quite like New Orleans. A city where jazz spills from doorways, balconies drip in history and every street feels like a celebration. From the electric energy of the French Quarter to the **souful sounds**, New Orleans is a feast for the senses. Come for the music, stay for the food and fall in love with a destination that blends culture and adds in a little spook!

In our spotlight on New Orleans, we've curated a selection of fascinating day tours, lively Mississippi River cruises, along with guides and recipes to inspire both your travels and your taste buds. Plus, when you book one of our featured itineraries below with your personal travel manager, you'll enjoy exclusive savings.

Keep scrolling to discover what awaits on a New Orleans adventure.

## Experience The Rhythm of New Orleans



### Mississippi Delta Explorer River Cruise - Viking Cruises

7 nights from \$6,795\*pp twin share.  
Exclusive \$100\* per person saving.  
Plus, all meals, beverages, shore  
excursions, Wi-Fi, and more.



### New Orleans Tours - Bedsonline

Discover the culture of New Orleans on  
a locally guided day tour.



### Mississippi River Cruises - Bedsonline

Exclusive 10%\* saving on locally  
guided Mississippi river cruises.





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News

## Memphis: Where Music, Memory and the Mississippi Still Shape the Soul



Brian Crisp  
Apr 05, 2026

Share:



BB King's Company Store and music venues in legendary Beale Street entertainment district of Memphis, Tennessee, USA. Getty Images

There are cities you visit, and then there are cities you feel.

Memphis sits firmly in the latter category – a place where music seeps from the pavement, history lingers in the air, and the mighty Mississippi rolls past as if it has seen it all before.

It's a city that doesn't try too hard to impress you. And that's exactly why it does.

Yes, Memphis has had its struggles. Its past is layered with hardship and heartbreak. But spend even a short time here and something else emerges – a city rich in character, creativity and a quiet, unpolished pride.

This is the birthplace of rock 'n' roll, a cornerstone of the blues, and a crucible of soul. And somehow, that spirit still pulses through everything – the food, the streets, the people.





### Where music lives on

You can't talk about Memphis without starting with Graceland – the home of Elvis Presley.

It's kitsch, yes – shag carpets, mirrored ceilings, and the famous Jungle Room – but it's also strangely moving. Behind the rhinestones and excess is a story of staggering fame and its cost. Even for casual visitors, it offers a rare glimpse into a life lived at full volume.

Across town, the [Stax Museum of American Soul Music](#) tells a different story – one grounded in collaboration, culture and raw talent. Here, legends like Otis Redding and Isaac Hayes recorded songs that didn't aim for perfection, but for truth.

That philosophy still defines Memphis. It's not polished – it's real.

For a modern take, the [Memphis Listening Lab](#) offers something special: the chance to sit, headphones on, and lose yourself in the sounds that built the city – from soul to hip-hop, past to present.

### Beale Street and beyond

As evening falls, the pull of Beale Street is hard to resist.

Once the heart of Black commerce and culture, it's now a lively strip of neon lights, live music and late-night energy. Step into [B.B. King's Blues Club](#) and you'll hear the blues the way it was meant to be – loud, soulful and unapologetically alive.

But Memphis isn't stuck in the past. Neighbourhoods like Cooper-Young are buzzing with new music, independent bookstores and intimate venues where the next generation is finding its voice.





### **A city that eats well (and proudly)**

Memphis doesn't just feed you – it welcomes you to the table.

Here, barbecue isn't a trend; it's a tradition. At places like [Charles Vergos Rendezvous](#), ribs arrive smoky, tender and unforgettable.

But there's also a quiet evolution underway. Restaurants are reimagining Southern cuisine with a lighter, more modern touch – celebrating vegetables, local produce and bold flavours without losing their roots.

And then there are the small surprises – like a warm butter cookie from a local bakery or a perfectly made biscuit sandwich that somehow tastes like home, even if you've never been here before.

### **The river and the story it carries**

The Mississippi River is more than a backdrop – it's the reason Memphis exists.

Walk its edge at sunset, and you begin to understand the city differently. The water moves slowly, deliberately, as if carrying stories from another time.

Nearby, the skyline throws up one of Memphis's quirkiest sights – a glass pyramid turned outdoor megastore – proof that this is a city comfortable with reinvention.

### **A history that cannot be ignored**

Memphis also asks you to pause.

At the [National Civil Rights Museum](#), built around the Lorraine Motel where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, the past feels close – and confronting.

It's a powerful reminder that the story of Memphis is not just about music and food, but about courage, struggle and change.

And yet, even here, there is a sense of resilience. A belief that from hardship comes strength – and from history, understanding.

### **A slower side of the city**

For a different pace, head to Overton Park, where quiet forest trails wind through one of the few remaining urban old-growth forests in the United States.

It's a place to breathe, to step away, and to remember that Memphis isn't always loud. Sometimes, it's still.

### **Why Memphis stays with you**

Memphis doesn't try to be perfect.

It's a little rough around the edges, a little unpredictable – but deeply, unmistakably authentic. Like the music it gave the world, it stirs something inside you.

And long after you leave, you'll find yourself remembering the sound of a guitar drifting down Beale Street, the taste of smoky ribs, and the slow, steady rhythm of the river. Because Memphis isn't just a place you visit. It's a place you carry with you.

If you would like to visit contact the team at [Travel at 60](#) to discuss your best travel options.





# LUXURY travel

NEW ORLEANS • ART & CULTURE, CITIES, FOOD & WINE

## New Orleans now: Music, food and a city remade after Katrina

Words by Susan Skelly • Published 8 April 2026



FRENCH QUARTER MARDI GRAS COLOR IN NEW ORLEANS

Two decades after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans balances its deep musical heritage with a surge of new hotels, dining and cultural energy – a city reshaped but unmistakably itself

It's a summer mid-morning in [New Orleans](#) and the steam rising from the sidewalks smells like a hot promise. On the breeze: jasmine, roasting coffee beans, Creole spices – and muddy water.

Mardi Gras parades, jazz, gumbo and a voodoo vibe have long lured travellers to the US city built on a bend in the Mississippi River. But 20 years after Hurricane Katrina came close to destroying it, the Louisiana diva is delivering what Crescent City dwellers would call *lagniappe* – "something extra".

A US\$201.3 billion mop-up has delivered a new airport terminal, upmarket restaurants, luxury hotels, New Orleans Fashion Week, and big-ticket events such as the Super Bowl and [Taylor Swift](#) concerts. New bioscience, digital media and art-based enterprises have enticed a demographic seeking lifestyle.

They've found it in New Orleans, a town with a big, hybrid personality shaped by Spanish, French and African heritage. Founded in 1718, it was a French and then a Spanish colony before becoming part of [the United States](#) thanks to the Louisiana Purchase of 1803.





## Rhythm 'n' roots in the Big Easy

Most visitors start with the music. After all, the airport is named after the trumpeter Louis Armstrong. New Orleans is the birthplace of jazz, its origins in the drumming and voodoo rituals that took place in Congo Square before the Civil War. The brass band culture is part of the city's DNA, as is the music of the late greats of rhythm 'n' blues – Dr John, Allen Toussaint, Professor "Fess" Longhair and Walter "Wolfman" Washington.

Music is on tap: in Frenchman Street, Bourbon Street, the Marigny/Bywater neighbourhood, Tremé, Uptown, Downtown. On my first evening, I stop by Mahogany Jazz Hall on Chartres Street. There's no entry fee, but I'm expected to buy at least one drink. It's cosy, happy and there's a revolving door of artists.

Late next morning I head to the Dew Drop Inn, which accommodated movers and shakers in the civil rights movement, for the sold-out Saturday brunch debut performance of *Legends of the Dew Drop: Road to Rock & Roll*, a showcase of songs by Little Richard, Dave Bartholomew and Ray Charles.

New Orleans is chasing a UNESCO City of Music designation. Vue Orleans, which takes up several floors of the new US\$500-million Four Seasons skyscraper, explains why. This interactive cultural space profiles the city's key music genres: traditional and contemporary jazz, R&B, brass bands, funk, rap, zydeco and bounce, which gave us twerking in the 1990s. It's easy to spend an hour or two here, soaking up the sounds.

### While you're here

Murals are a street-stroller's reward. Visit these three: In the Bywater, *Light Mural* by Brandon "Bmike" Odums; Uptown, at 3223 Dryades Street, *Dr John* by MTO Graff; and in Central City, at the Ashé Cultural Arts Centre, *A Legacy of Music* by Donald L. Blackwell, depicting Louis Armstrong, Mahalia Jackson and Mardi Gras stalwarts.

## Parties on a plate

Café du Monde in Jackson Square was always the go-to for beignets – the pillowy Creole doughnuts drenched in a snowstorm of icing powder. I remember the sugar hit here on Saturday, 27 August 2005, when everyone was boarding up windows ahead of Hurricane Katrina. In the eerily deserted square, the gospel choir I was on tour with – our gigs cancelled – sang 'The Storm is Passing Over'. The beignet was comfort food then – and now.

It is one of many signature dishes, along with gumbo, the po'boy sandwich, jambalaya, red beans and rice, crawfish étouffée, Louisiana oysters and the king cake of Mardi Gras. Right now, food is a thing. The Michelin Guide will expand this year to cover the American South, including New Orleans. In 2026 the city will host the Bocuse d'Or Americas competition and the Pastry World Cup.

Foodies are booking for black cod miso at Nobu in the new US\$435-million luxury urban resort that is Caesars New Orleans. They're reserving tables at Café Sbisà, Restaurant R'évolution, Brennan's, and Jewel of the South (which offers 'caviar happy hour' on Wednesdays). Chef Ana Castro's modern Mexican eatery, Acamaya, in the Bywater, turned up on *Condé Nast Traveller's* 'Best New Restaurants' list this year.

Bourbon House is the pit-stop for Louisiana oysters every which way. In partnership with the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, the eatery has recycled more than 300 tonnes of shell to form 600-plus metres of new oyster reefs in the Gulf. The hope is that it protects the shoreline from erosion and provides habitat for new oysters and other marsh species.



NEW ORLEANS





## History and the 'hood

The tragedies of Hurricane Katrina are now a part of the city's history. Robert Florence, a documentarian and NOLA Historic Tours guide, provides an in-depth account of wetlands, flood walls, levees, pumping stations and Dutch engineering on a driving tour of the wards most affected by Katrina. New Orleans Green Tours' *A Walk Below Sea Level: a Water History Tour of New Orleans* canvasses the story of water and its management, a survey of environment and ecosystems, post-disaster recovery and lessons learned.

At the Historic New Orleans Collection research centre, historian Jason Weiss explains the new exhibit, *A Vanishing Bounty: Louisiana's Coastal Environment and Culture*, its focus the state's nature underpinnings and threats to its longevity.

I walk off a jazz brunch at Commander's Palace - turtle soup and lump crab over pecan-crusted redfish - with a Garden District tour where residences are the legacy of architects such as Henry Howard, James Freret and James Gallier Jr. Many celebrities have lived in the 'hood and my guide Robert Bell has all the details at his fingertips.

”

*Art in New Orleans is as idiosyncratic as the fashion.*

## Art and artisans

In the Four Seasons' glamorous Chandelier Bar, I chat to Tracee Dundas, founder of New Orleans Fashion Week. NOLA style, she tells me, is "undefinable but never cookie-cutter. It celebrates the many street styles, from Uptown to The Marigny to Frenchman Street."

Dundas' shopping tips include the custom millinery of Yvonne LaFleur, Mignon Faget jewellery, foot candy at ShoeBeDo, and, in the nine kilometre stretch of seduction that is Magazine Street: West London Boutique, Trashy Diva, and OdAomo, the custom couture of Sophia A. Omoro.

Art in New Orleans is as idiosyncratic as the fashion. JAM NOLA (JAM stands for joy, art, music) is a cultural funhouse with unique storytelling. The colourful exhibits are inspired by the theatrics of the city, everything from potholes to Mardi Gras krewes, red-light history, hair braiding and music. Browsing in the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, StudioBE, the New Orleans Museum of Art and its adjoining sculpture garden is also rewarded.

## Good to know

New Orleans hosts more than 130 festivals. In February/March [Mardi Gras](#) krewes work up their vivid floats; in April, musicians gather for the [New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival](#); June is dedicated to [New Orleans Pride](#); and every July the Essence Festival of Culture brings the streets alive with music. August is [Museum Month](#); October will have you choosing between the [New Orleans Film Festival](#) and the [Fried Chicken Festival](#); gumbo and po'boy have dedicated festivals in November.

## Homing instincts

Accommodation in the Big Easy is both quirky and quintessential. I especially love Maison Métier. With its art, vintage treasures and edgy detail, this place has the charm of a Parisian guesthouse, the glamour of a club, and the helpfulness of a grand hotel. Best of all, it has a speakeasy accessed via a secret door. With interiors by LA's Studio Shamshiri, the 67-key property at 546 Carondelet Street is the former City Hall Annex. Some suites have 5.5-metre ceilings.

The Roosevelt has a sublime block-long lobby that's a nod to the Gilded Age. During renovations in 2009, a terrazzo floor was discovered under carpet and glue. Tiles were replicated and the flooring reinstated, linking the two entrances. The gift shop is mandatory.

The 1925 Pere Marquette Building was one of New Orleans' first skyscrapers. Each floor celebrates a legendary jazz musician. I'm on Charlie 'Yardbird' Parker's floor. Piped jazz is the hotel's backing track 24/7. In the foyer is a powerful installation called *Jazz Ensemble*, by Benjamin Bullins, of trumpets, cornets, trombones and saxophones salvaged from the debris of Hurricane Katrina.





# ESCAPE

Travel Advice

## What your travel back-up plan should be during the Middle East conflict

In times of upheaval, seasoned travellers pivot to new horizons... here's what's trending.



**Mercedes Maguire**  
April 7, 2026 - 12:28PM Escape

[Add to favourites](#)

With the ongoing crisis in the Middle East disrupting flight paths, shrinking fuel supplies and generally casting a pall over travel to Europe, you might expect holiday plans to hit the deck. But Aussie travellers are nothing if not intrepid. Instead, they're pivoting to the likes of Peru's Inca Trail, diverting to safaris in South Africa and booking jaunts to soak up the culture in Japan. After all, the world keeps spinning.

"What we're seeing is not a retreat from travel but a reassessment of priorities and comfort zones," says Sarah Higgins of World Expeditions, an adventure travel operator with expertise everywhere from Mongolia to Patagonia. "Travellers are favouring destinations that feel geographically and logistically removed from those complexities."

But good intentions will only get you so far.

From urban thrills to verdant chills, the golden state of California ticks a lot of boxes, says Kellie Easterbrook of Pursers Travel Group. "In one trip, you get incredible variety, from beaches and national parks to wine regions and theme parks." But with direct flights to Dallas, America's southern destinations, particularly New Orleans and Nashville, are also proving popular.

[Clinch the deal:](#) Enjoy four nights at the Sheraton Waikiki Beach Resort from \$1799 a person twin share and save up to \$455 when you book by April 30, 2026.





# ESCAPE

## 7 best food spots to try in Nashville

Yes, there's Southern food here in Nashville, but there is so much more to sink your teeth into... I took a tour of some of the best this city has to offer.



Claire Isaac

April 8, 2026 - 12:58PM Escape

[Add to favourites](#)

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### 1. Best Breakfast

#### [The Buttermilk Ranch](#)

This hotspot in the trendy 12 South neighbourhood often has hours-long queues to get inside - little wonder when you taste their cheesy grits or their biscuits with gravy. Their "thing" is mixing Southern staples with other brunch items, home baked pastries, lattes, big breakfasts, salads and something called "the cube" which is a mind-blowing sandwich affair made from square croissants, all in an Instagrammable setting just perfect for snapping. Have I mentioned the grits?





## 2. Best Brunch

### [Roze Pony](#)

Situated in the Belle Meade/ West Nashville part of town, Roze Pony is a super popular brunch spot, serving up cocktails, fresh salads, yummy things on toast and sandwiches – including a burger that locals say is worth the drive across town (they're not wrong). They make a great Bloody Mary, have a delicious selection of home baked cakes and cookies, and serve dinner too... if you don't ever want to leave.

*Picture: Claire Isaac*



## 3. Best Dinner

### [Yolan @ The Joseph](#)

Named as one of America's top 100 restaurants in 2025, this Italian eatery inside The Joseph Hotel downtown, is fabulous. It's Italian food the way Italians like it, made by Chef Jeremy Dobson and his team – from truffle gnocchi to beetroot tartare, a perfect Cotoletta alla Milanese to heavenly dessert Gelato Al Latte – a milk gelato with a white chocolate crunch. This is special occasion food done perfectly, in a sophisticated setting. They call it a love letter to Italy, and it truly is something to write home about.

*Picture: Claire Isaac*





## 4. Best Date Night

### [Bad Idea](#)

Once a church, Bad Idea is actually a really good idea – with a horseshoe-shaped bar in the middle of the dining room and the original windows and high ceilings lending light to the fun space. And the food's great too – there are takes on McNuggets, a mushroom dish playfully called "chicken and dumplings", and a mac and cheese with truffles. Drinks wise, it's wine-focussed – with owner and sommelier Alex Burch offering over 30 by the glass.

## 5. Best Pasta

### [Iggys](#)

Nestled in the industrial-chic Wedgewood-Houston neighbourhood this restaurant makes its own pastas daily (including gluten free options) and offers a selection on the menu each day. Brothers Ryan and Matthew Poli (fun fact: Ryan worked at Brae in Victoria a few years ago) are keen to make customers feel at home here and it shows, it's fun and fashionable – Bobby Cannavale was dining there while we ate! Also try the Garlic bread – you won't regret it.



## 6. Best BBQ

### [Martin's](#)

You do have to have BBQ while you're in Nashville, and Martin's is the place. There are three outposts in the city, all with a big menu for big appetites. Our tip: get a BBQ tray for two sides and a pile of meat, and choose from their signature pulled pork, brisket, turkey, catfish and more. Or man up for the Redneck Taco – a cornbread hoecake filled with meat, salads and hot sauce. Wash it all down with a cold beer or a sweet tea, play some darts and enjoy.

*Picture: Claire Isaac*





## 7. Best Bar

### [The Fox](#)

A dive bar is always fun and The Fox, one of Food and Wine's top 10 US bars, is great. This East Nashville establishment has a great array of cocktails on the menu, including their famous Down To Be Wrong, served in its own Fox tikki cup. And come hungry – at least for late night snack – they make their own take on "milk" and cookies – chocolate chip cookies with whipped mascarpone. And yes, they're as good as they sound.





### PISMO BEACH TOPS USA TODAY BEST COASTAL TOWN AGAIN

Posted by Chutima Kerdmo | Apr 11, 2026 | California | 0 ● | ★★★★★



For the second consecutive year, the votes are in and Pismo Beach, California has claimed the top spot in USA TODAY 10Best's Readers' Choice Award for Best Small Coastal Town. The 2026 win makes Pismo Beach the program's first-ever back-to-back champion.

The official results were publicly announced on April 8, 2026 and are published at [10best.usatoday.com](https://10best.usatoday.com). Nominations were carefully curated by a panel of subject matter experts and USA TODAY 10Best editors before being opened to a national public vote. The 2026 top ten winners are:

1. Pismo Beach, California
2. Stuart, Florida
3. Morro Bay, California
4. Avalon, California
5. Cassine, Maine
6. Cape May, New Jersey
7. Gulf Shores, Alabama
8. Beaufort, North Carolina
9. Carmel-by-the-Sea, California
10. Cedar Key, Florida



Pismo Beach has been a consistent contender in this national recognition, finishing fifth in 2023, second in 2018, and claiming the top title in 2025 and again in 2026. Notably, this year's list features **four California coastal towns in the top ten**, with Pismo Beach leading the state's impressive showing alongside Morro Bay (#3), Avalon (#4), and Carmel-by-the-Sea (#9), underscoring the Central Coast's appeal to travelers nationwide.

"This recognition means the world to our community and winning it twice in a row tells us that what makes Pismo Beach special isn't a trend, it's who we are," said Gordon Jackson, Executive Director of the Pismo Beach Conference and Visitors Bureau. "There's only one place where you can claim on the beach, wine taste in the afternoon, and catch a world-class sunset over the pier, and the whole country just voted for it. Again."





DESTINATIONS / EVENTS

## MEMPHIS TOURISM'S ANNUAL BLUES-INSPIRED TRADE EVENTS RETURN IN MAY



Edited by [Staff Writers](#)

Published on: 15th April 2026 at 10:17 AM

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Memphis Tourism's annual blues-inspired trade events return in May.

SHARE



**Memphis Tourism, in partnership with United Airlines and Globus Family of Brands, has announced that its annual blues-inspired trade events are back this May, giving Aussie travel partners the chance to experience the Memphis soul.**

The Memphis talent for this year's trade showcase, the Grammy Award-winning bassist MonoNeon, will be flown in from the home of Blues, Soul & Rock'n'Roll and perform not only as the headliner at these key trade events but also the 25th edition of Blues on Broadbeach on 16 May.





The Memphis Tourism trade events will take place at Mary's Underground in Sydney on the 12 May, The Toff in Melbourne on 14 May, and a smaller VIP event at the NEW "Memphis Blues & Soul Bar" located in the Blues on Broadbeach Festival Precinct on the 16th of May. The three-city trade roadshow has been designed to immerse travel partners in the culture, energy and musical legacy of the city, to inspire deeper engagement with Memphis as a must-visit US destination.

One of Memphis' greatest bass players, MonoNeon brings exceptional artistic credibility and global recognition and is no stranger to playing in Australia, performing at the Melbourne Jazz Fest in 2022, and in June 2025 as part of his "I Want Snacks & Gifts" tour.

He's known as being one of the last people to work with Prince and has worked with an extraordinary roster of artists including Eric Gales, Mavis Staples, George Clinton, Nas, Ne-Yo, Mac Miller and Christone "Kingfish" Ingram to name a few. He was also endorsed by Flea, from Red Hot Chili Peppers, as "the greatest electric bass player". MonoNeon has also collaborated with Fender Guitars on a signature instrument line, and for this year's festival, MonoNeon is giving away a specially designed guitar worth \$3,000 to a lucky festival attendee.





MonoNeon's involvement in the 2026 Memphis showcase underscores Memphis Tourism's commitment to delivering a culturally rich, authentic experience that resonates with Australian audiences, while strengthening awareness of Memphis as a vibrant, music-led destination. The tourism board's long-standing partnership with Blues on Broadbeach has seen some of the city's most talented musicians make their way to Australia to entertain and inspire, and the 2026 campaign featuring MonoNeon will be a memorable one.



"Along with our exceptional partners United Airlines and Globus, we are thrilled to bring the energy, culture and soul of Memphis to Australia once again," Memphis Tourism Australia & New Zealand director Chris Ingram said.

"These shows are all about giving our travel partners an authentic taste of our music and heritage, while highlighting Memphis as a vibrant destination beyond the usual US getaways. With MonoNeon as our music ambassador, we are confident that these events will inspire and excite our Australian travel partners."





## 20 THINGS TO DO IN FAIRHOPE ALABAMA THAT FEEL LIKE A DREAM

by Stephen Smith · 14 April 2020 | Updated on Apr 14th, 2020 · This post may contain affiliate links. Read our disclosure.

This small city on the shores of Mobile Bay within Baldwin County, Alabama has a population of just 22,500 people. It was founded in the last decade of the 19th century by people who wished to create a place where there was a fair society with equal rights and opportunities. They followed the teachings of an economist Henry George who had created such a community in Iowa.

As time went by, Fairhope attracted intellectuals and artists seeking somewhere to spend their winters in a kinder climate than in many other parts of the USA. The principles on which Fairport was based, leasehold land and a single tax rate, whatever the use to which the land was put, still applies. However, the proximity of the large city of Mobile has resulted in Fairhope being a suburb of the latter, an affluent suburb at that. Recently, the New York Times described it as "A Southern Town That's Been Holding on to Its Charm, for More Than a Century".

Its appeal includes activities relating to the Gulf as well as visitors being able to immerse themselves in history and tradition. Alabama as a whole is conservative by nature, despite the principles on which Fairport was initially base; elements of communism? Read on and you will learn more about this small city, hopefully enough to encourage you to visit.

### FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA

#### 20 THINGS TO DO IN FAIRHOPE

##### 1- STROLL ALONG THE FAIRHOPE PIER



Looking for things to do in Fairhope Alabama?

The Fairhope Municipal Pier offer great views of Mobile Bay, and much more.

There are anglers trying their luck every day, especially at weekends; they can access the pier for nothing but they need licences in order to fish unless they are 65 years old or more.

There is parking nearby on a first come, first served basis.





# ESCAPE

## Is this the most photographed bathroom in the world?

The bathroom in this US hotel is one special place to have a pee... even Elvis thought so.



Claire Isaac

2 min read April 17, 2026 - 9:29AM

ESCAPE

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It's not every day I barge into the men's toilets with my camera at the ready... I promise. But here I am, brandishing my iPhone, about to peruse some loos.

We're in the opulent Hermitage Hotel in downtown Nashville and we've been promised something very special downstairs, just outside the hotel's fancy restaurant, Drusie & Darr.

You see, this men's room is super famous. It became one of "the world's most Instagrammable bathrooms" in 2019, has been named Best Restroom in America and all sorts of famous folk have been photographed frolicking in its facilities (don't worry though - women are asked to leave the bathroom if a male customer needs to use it).



In 2019, this was named the best restroom in America.

Photo shoots, album covers, tv crosses - they've all been done in these, erm, dunnies. Stars like Jack White, Reese Witherspoon and the Dixie Chicks have all spent time (and in Jack's case, perhaps a penny) inside these walls.





So what makes it so special?



It used to be frequented by the likes of Elvis and JFK.

Well, first of all, it's the colour. Walking inside you're hit in the face by lime green and black glass tiles, pistachio green sinks, urinals and toilets, a beautiful terrazzo floor. Then there's an unusual feature. Harking back to a different time, there's a shoeshine station, said to have been used by both JFK and Elvis (though not at the same time).

There's even an original old rotary phone that connects to the front desk – used, I'm told, when guests wanted to organise a shine to take place.

Apparently when the hotel last did renovations, they removed the old shoeshine stand to give it a zhuzh and found a bottle of Kentucky Bourbon behind it. I'm thinking that was definitely Elvis.



The room didn't originally look this spectacular – in fact it had small white tiles on the floor and walls to begin with. The OTT art deco green and black glass tiles came about in the art deco heyday of the 1930s, when some parts of the walls were moved to accommodate ventilation and plumbing fixtures.

And that isn't all that was behind those walls – doorways from the restroom, now closed up, once led to a men's exercise room and shower. The hotel staff joke that it was Nashville's first fitness centre.



The women's bathroom is pretty cool too.





Originally there was also a barber shop in the room next door – it operated from 1913 until 1977 – but today the hotel has turned the space into a wonderful women’s bathroom, renovated more recently to match the men’s.

The ladies’ loos are equally as OTT – we’re talking walls made of variegated pink marble, inlaid marble flooring, arched doorways, rose pink loos to perch on, Barbie-pink taps, rose gold-framed mirrors and seriously glamorous lighting throughout.

At one point women weren’t meant to come down here at all – the restaurant, original bar and bathroom were a men’s only zone until the 1920s. Now this place is a bona fide Nashville attraction, and it’s said that nearly as many women as men visit the gents every day. After having visited myself, it’s easy to see why.

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More Coverage



[10 best things to do in Nashville, Tennessee](#)



[The one thing you need to do in Nashville](#)

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## Nashville expands July 4 celebrations for America250 milestone

| DAILY NEWS / USA |

AUTHOR: Staff Writer | 23/04/2026 | 1 min. read



Nashville is set to host its largest-ever Independence Day celebration in 2026, expanding its "Let Freedom Sing! Music City July 4th" event to a two-day festival as part of America's 250th anniversary.

The enhanced program, running from 3 to 4 July, will feature more stages, expanded live music programming and the largest fireworks and drone show in the city's history.





### Two-day format boosts visitor appeal



For the first time, the event will begin with a "Prelude to the Fourth" on 3 July, featuring three stages of live music alongside family-friendly activities at Walk of Fame Park.

The main Independence Day celebrations on 4 July will expand to five stages across downtown Nashville, showcasing a multi-genre lineup spanning country, rock, pop, jazz and more.

The program is designed to position Nashville as a key destination for the America250 celebrations, attracting both domestic and international visitors.

### Record-scale fireworks and drone show planned

A major highlight will be a synchronised fireworks and drone display featuring 1,000 drones, accompanied by a live performance from the GRAMMY Award-winning Nashville Symphony.

The show is expected to be the largest aerial display ever staged in the city, reinforcing Nashville's reputation for large-scale live entertainment.

The free event will also include the Amazon Family Fun Zone, offering interactive experiences, live performances and activities for families.

### Trade opportunity in event-led travel

The event has historically drawn significant crowds, with more than 365,000 attendees recorded in 2025 and generating an estimated US\$23.8 million in direct visitor spending.

For the travel trade, the expanded 2026 program presents a strong opportunity to package event-led itineraries around a milestone celebration.

As destinations leverage major anniversaries to drive visitation, large-scale events such as this are expected to play a key role in attracting long-haul travellers.





## 20 THINGS TO DO IN TUPELO MS BEYOND ELVIS

By [Jevance Shaw](#) · 25 April 2020 | Updated on Apr 25th, 2020 · This post may contain affiliate links. [Read our disclosure.](#)

Tupelo is a vibrant Mississippi city in the Magnolia State's northeast corner famous for being the birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll icon Elvis Presley. The city sits just 116 miles (187 km) from downtown Memphis where Elvis made his breakthrough and is steeped in Choctaw and Civil War history.

Incredibly historic and the cultural epicentre of northeast Mississippi, it's no surprise that Tupelo is one of the fastest-growing cities in the Magnolia State. From the interesting Elvis Presley Birthplace and Museum to the scenic Natchez Trace Parkway, Tupelo has fantastic things to see and places to visit. Here are the top things to do in Tupelo.

[Contents](#) [\[show\]](#)

### TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI

#### 20 THINGS TO DO IN TUPELO

##### 1- ELVIS PRESLEY BIRTHPLACE AND MUSEUM



One of the top things to do in Tupelo is to visit Elvis Presley's birthplace.





# Take5



Your travel

## PITCH PERFECT getaways

These music-filled destinations hit all the right notes

If you're a fan of music (and honestly, who isn't?), you need to add one of these destinations to your travel bucket list. From the jazz clubs of New Orleans to Elvis Presley's home of Graceland in Memphis - each of these will leave you rocking and rolling long after you've left...

66 **Take5**

### Memphis, USA

A city synonymous with Elvis Presley, Memphis is filled with music history. From the infamous Beale Street to Sun Studio, Memphis is the home of blues and soul music. Enjoy blues in one of the many bars that line Beale Street, while the Beale Street Music Festival takes place each year in May. But the real crown jewel of music is Graceland, Elvis's 13.8-acre estate, which now acts as a museum dedicated to the King of Rock.

**ALLOW:** 3-4 days



Memphis will leave you All Shook Up



### Liverpool, England

A city that needs no introduction, Liverpool is synonymous with The Beatles. A mecca for Beatles fans, embark on one of the city's Beatles tours and visit The Cavern Club - where the fab four got their start. The Beatles Story Museum is worth a visit, and you're likely to find Beatles Easter eggs around the streets.

**ALLOW:** 2-3 days





It's always party time in Rio!

### Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Music is entwined in Rio's culture, from samba and bossa nova to carnival rhythms. Live music flows onto the streets and even onto the golden beaches. Take a samba class, laze around on the sand and enjoy a beachside performance, and embrace the city's vibrant nightlife. There's no shortage of samba bars, while Circo Voador is a popular venue for rock music. If you visit in July, you'll be treated to the annual Festival de Música Brasileira.

**ALLOW:** 4-6 days

### Nashville, USA

Widely considered to be the country music capital of the world, Nashville has seen the likes of Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton and Hank Williams all call it home. Often dubbed 'Music City', you'll find an eclectic mix of honky-tonks, historic recording studios and modern country-pop. You don't have to go far either, with live music heard throughout the streets, but Bluebird Cafe and Tootsie's Orchard Lounge are institutions worth checking out.

**ALLOW:** 3-5 days



Get ready for a good old fashioned bootscoot!

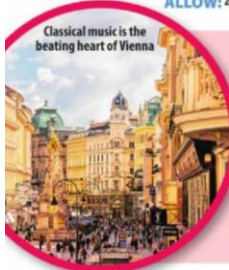
### New Orleans, USA

The birthplace of jazz, New Orleans is a city filled with big brass bands, blues, funk and soul music. Musicians from Louis Armstrong to Trombone Shorty all add to the city's music history, while Frenchmen Street is the place to be if you want to visit a jazz club. No visit to New Orleans is complete without stopping in at the Spotted Cat Music Club or Fritzel's European Jazz Pub, and you're likely to encounter impromptu street performances in the French Quarter.

**ALLOW:** 4-6 days



The streets of New Orleans are particularly lively



Classical music is the beating heart of Vienna

### Vienna, Austria

If it's classical music you want, make your way to Vienna. Home to the greats, including Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, classical music resides in the bones of this city. Explore the grand concert halls, attend a palace concert you won't soon forget, or just chill out at a cafe while musicians provide the ambience. While you're in town, make sure you visit Musikverein (home of the Vienna Philharmonic) and Vienna State Opera.

**ALLOW:** 3-4 days



Havana's scene is colourful and vibrant

### Havana, Cuba

Sultry, rich and soulful – Havana's music scene will leave you wanting more. Home to a variety of styles, you'll find Afro-Cuban, salsa, son cubano and jazz here. It's vibrant, colourful, and will be coursing through your veins by the time you leave.

**ALLOW:** 3-4 days

### Austin, USA

The live music capital of the world, Austin is home to a variety of styles, including rock, blues, country and indie. From dive bars to historic theatres, there's always a band to see. Make sure you stop by The Continental Club if you're a fan of rock and blues, or Mohawk Austin if indie music is more your scene.

**ALLOW:** 4-5 days



You'll be spoilt for choice in Austin

Take5 67

WORDS BY DEBETTER STAMMILL





# COMMUNICATIONS & PR

Media Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up/Next step
Justin Jamieson, Get Lost Magazine	Pre-briefed GMM and attended the Kentucky pre-fam	Follow-up for ETA on publish timelines
Katrina Lobley (Freelance), Traveller, Sydney Morning Herald	Pre-briefed GMM and attended the Mississippi pre-fam	Follow-up for ETA on publish timelines
Vanessa Richards, Creator & Byrdli	Pre-briefed GMM and attended the Louisiana pre-fam and River Parishes extension	Follow-up for ETA on recap report
Cole Dickson, Creator	Pre-briefed GMM and attended the Louisiana pre-fam and River Parishes extension	Follow-up for ETA on recap report
Kate Cox, Explore	Pre-briefed GMM and attended the Tennessee pre-fam	Follow-up for ETA on publish timelines
Christopher Singh, The AU Review	Pre-briefed GMM and attended the Virginia pre-fam	Follow-up for ETA on publish timelines
Will Salkeld, Creator	Pre-briefed GMM and attended the Alabama pre-fam and extension	Stories published, feed posts incoming throughout May & June





## III. TRAVEL TRADE

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

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up /Next step
Jenny Nilsson Owner Operator <b>House of Travel</b>	Training and update on Travel South Region off the back of Gardens & Grilling: Southern Flavours in Full Bloom newsletter.	N/A
Sharon Race Travel Advisor and Director <b>Race Travel</b>	Training and update on Travel South Region of the back of Gardens & Grilling: Southern Flavours in Full Bloom newsletter.	N/A
Richard Styles General Manager – Commercial Partnerships <b>TripaDeal</b>	Referrals for DMC's and Southern USA road trips itineraries and providers. Info and ideas on DMC's. Invite to International Showcase to Richard or Alanna Betz – Product Manager.	Ongoing
Jessica O'Grady Senior Travel Advisor <b>Travel Associates, Geelong</b>	Update and training on Travel South region for client itinerary including Tennessee, Virginia, North & South Carolina.	N/A
Hayley Lyson Mobile Travel Agent <b>italktravel &amp; cruise</b>	Update, TS training and itinerary support for client music focused itinerary.	N/A
Alexis Cunningham & Jodie Collins Partnerships Manager <b>Luxury Escapes</b>	Update on Visit California program and results. Invite to International Showcase and Travel South Mission. Alexis is very interested in contracting more hotel direct and has just released a New Orleans limited time lux special.	Ongoing
Marliee Hawkins Travel Specialist <b>Before you Book</b>	Update, TS training and itinerary support for client on a history focused itinerary.	N/A
Melissa Warren Group General Manager Marketing <b>Helloworld</b>	Discussion on International Showcase invite and planning for mission meeting in Melbourne.	N/A
Janice Lee Tavel Manager <b>Travel Managers</b>	Info and training on the blue highway, music trails, New Orleans, Memphis and Atlanta. Festivals and special events in the South	N/A





Tina Millington Travel Designer <b>Travel Associates Langhorne &amp; James</b>	Update and training on Travel South region for client itinerary including Tennessee, Louisiana and Mississippi.	N/A
Monique Roos Senior Commercial Specialist <b>US Commercial Services</b>	Site inspection and planning for Consul General VIP Event in June	Ongoing
Mel Sherry Mobile Travel Specialist <b>MTA Travel</b>	Planning and support for MTA Newcastle expo, plus breakfast training with all MTA's in the area in May.	Ongoing
Lisa Tjand Head of Retail <b>Hunter Travel Group</b>	Planning for Hunter Travel Group training in Newcastle. Hunter Travel Group (HTG) is a multi-award-winning travel agency group and the largest branded member of the Helloworld Travel Network. It is one of Australia's largest privately owned, family-managed travel groups, with over 175 travel professionals across 35 locations nationwide. There are 12 offices in the Newcastle area.	Ongoing
<b>Newcastle Lunch and Learn</b>	Lunch & Learn event for agents across multiple brands in the region including Flight Centre, Far & Away, Travel Managers and Envoyage.	Ongoing
Cath Alston Mobile Travel Advisor <b>Home &amp; Afar Travel</b>	Training and support with Southern USA itinerary.	N/A
Anika Kuruc Travel Manager <b>Travel Managers</b>	Training and support with Southern USA itinerary, including Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia.	N/A
Tim Holden Sara Winfield Maria Menendy <b>Flight Centre</b>	Discussion and invite to Flight Centre group for both International Showcase and Travel South Mission.	Ongoing
Lea Toledano Operations & Sales Consultant <b>Cartier World Travel</b>	Training and support with Southern USA itinerary, around food, BBQ and some civil rights sights	N/A





# CAMPAIGNS & ACTIVITY

## Travel South Mission VIP Consul General Invitation





## Travel South Mission VIP Auckland Invitation



**Travel South**  
USA

One Region, Infinite Adventures

**You're invited to step into the South**

Travel South USA is bringing a taste of the region to Auckland, where the flavours run deep, the music tells a story, and every moment feels just a little more alive.

This isn't a standard trade lunch. It's a chance to connect, be inspired, and walk away with stories your clients will want to book.

**Travel South USA VIP Lunch**  
Monday 15 June  
12:00–2:00pm  
Origine Mezzanine  
Level 2, 172 Quay Street, Commercial Bay

RSVP to [penny@gate7.com.au](mailto:penny@gate7.com.au) by Monday 11 May with any dietries

**One Region. Infinite Possibilities. All Y'all Are Welcome**





## Viva Holidays Louisville Campaign

Home > Travel Inspiration > Travel Inspo

### Viva Holidays spotlights Louisville, Kentucky with new Aussie-ready packages

Do you know which US city blends Southern charm, modern creativity, bourbon heritage, and a 2-minute sporting legacy? If you said, Louisville, Kentucky, top marks! Known globally as Bourbon City, it's an ideal destination for travellers seeking a lively vacation and Viva Holidays' have [new packages](#) to make booking Louisville a breeze.



Say cheers to Viva Holidays' making travel to Bourbon City a breeze

Australian travellers love destinations where they can connect to heritage, culture, and enjoy a warm welcome. Louisville, Kentucky, has all three in abundance (especially Southern charm).

Bourbon is just the beginning! Conveniently located in the heart of the US, Louisville extends an invitation for your clients to sip its rich heritage and serves as the gateway to the American South.



Guided tastings and cocktail classes bring the Urban Bourbon Trail™ to life.

Alongside its fascinating bourbon heritage – with Whiskey Row at its heart – Louisville is home to the greatest two minutes in sports at the Kentucky Derby.

Whether your clients want to visit this vibrant city as a standalone vacation or as part of a wider road trip, [Viva Holidays](#), in partnership with [Brand USA](#) and [Louisville Tourism](#), have the ideal packages to suit.





| Top ten things to see & do



Whiskey Row in Louisville brings bourbon heritage to life through distilleries, bars and live music.

Recognised as one of the friendliest cities in America, Louisville offers a wealth of attractions, a sophisticated culinary scene, and authentically welcoming neighbourhoods.

Here is a snapshot of Bourbon City's top 10 highlights:

- Churchill Downs & Kentucky Derby Museum: The iconic home of the Kentucky Derby, these two attractions offer an immersive look into 150+ years of racing history and its accompanying memorabilia.
- Muhammad Ali Center & the US Civil Rights Trail: Exhibits at this cultural institution honour Muhammad Ali and Louisville's important place on the US Civil Rights Trail.
- Whiskey Row: This revitalised, vibrant district invites visitors to celebrate the city's bourbon heritage via its distilleries, tasting rooms, upscale bars, and live music venues.
- Waterfront Park & Big Four Pedestrian Bridge: Wander the waterfront trail along this picturesque riverfront park. At night, the Big Four Bridge glows bright with colourful lights.
- NuLu: Louisville's energetic arts and design district, NuLu, offers independent boutiques, contemporary galleries, craft breweries, and farm-to-table eateries.





Louisville's Waterfront Park and Big Four Bridge glow at night along the Ohio River.

- **Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory:** Home of the world-famous Louisville Slugger baseball bat, visits include show-and-tell regarding how the bats are made.
- **Butchertown:** An edgy neighbourhood blending historic industrial spaces with modern eateries, it's fun to explore Butchertown's distilleries, specialty shops, and artisanal markets.
- **Frazier History Museum & Kentucky Bourbon Trail® Welcome Center:** What better place to begin a bourbon journey than with expert guidance about distilleries, tastings, and regional experiences? It's the official start point of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail®.
- **Bourbon & Beyond:** For September travels, check out Bourbon & Beyond, an acclaimed multi-day festival where top musicians, celebrity chefs, and the best bourbon experiences are headliners.
- **Urban Bourbon Experiences:** In Louisville, bourbon isn't just a drink—it's an experience. Explore a walkable mix of historic bars, stylish cocktail lounges, and distillery stops, where guided tastings, cocktail classes, and bourbon-inspired dishes offer an immersive taste of Kentucky's signature spirit.

### Unlocked with Viva Holidays

Take the guesswork out of booking Louisville with Viva Holidays' new ready-to-book packages.

Here's a sample of what's on offer:

#### Discover Louisville



Butchertown blends historic charm with modern eateries, distilleries and artisan spaces.

This 5-day package is the ideal introduction to Louisville. Downtown, the Muhammad Ali Center, Waterfront Park, and Whiskey Row dining are must-do attractions.

Discover Louisville includes:

- A 4-night stay at the 4-star Louisville Marriott Downtown in a Guest Room
- A 6-day Alamo hire car in a Nissan Versa (or similar)

From \$1,359\* per person twin share.





#### Explore Kentucky Self-Drive



Everything you need to know about bourbon is found at Frasier Museum

For 10 fun-filled days, your clients can enjoy a whirlwind adventure around Kentucky's top attractions. There's bourbon culture, of course, in Lexington's Distillery District, at Louisville's Angel's Evry and Old Forester distilleries, and at the Kentucky Bourbon Distillery, where they can sip straight from the barre!

For other wow-worthy inclusions, suggest the National Corvette Museum, laps in a Corvette at NCM Motorsports Park, and a chance to stand where 'The Greatest' once stood, at the Muhammad Ali Center.

Explore Kentucky Self-Drive includes:

- A 1-night stay at Aloft Newport on the Levee; Days Inn by Wyndham Lexington Southeast; Holiday Inn Express Berea; Baymont by Wyndham Bowling Green; Best Western Paducah Inn; and Best Western Plus Owensboro
- A 3-night stay at Hampton Inn Louisville Downtown
- An 11-day Alamo hire car in a Nissan Versa (or similar)

From \$1,979\* per person twin share. All accommodation is 3-star in standard rooms.

#### Bourbon, Bluegrass & Horse Country Self-Drive

This 16-day round-trip itinerary departs Nashville for Tullahoma, Pigeon Forge, Lexington, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Louisville, and Owensboro.

Regional highlights include Nashville's live music, honky-tonks, and Southern eats on Broadway Street, the Jack Daniel's distillery in Lynchburg, a scenic drive into the Great Smoky Mountains or fabulous Dollywood visit.

Lexington's historic downtown is fun to explore, while the Kentucky Horse Park or visiting a thoroughbred farm connects to the state's derby heritage.

In Louisville, Whiskey Row offers a wealth of urban distilleries, while Owensboro reveals how it became the nation's bluegrass capital at the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame.

Bourbon, Bluegrass & Horse Country Self-Drive includes:

- A 5-night stay at Days Inn by Wyndham Lexington Southeast
- A 2-night stay at Comfort Inn & Suites Nashville Downtown-Stadium; Econo Lodge Downtown in Louisville; and Best Western Plus Owensboro
- A 1-night stay at Hampton Inn Tullahoma; Best Western Plaza in Pigeon Forge; Quality Inn & Suites, Cincinnati; and Super 8 by Wyndham Indianapolis
- A 17-day Alamo hire car in a Nissan Versa (or similar)

From \$2,365\* per person twin share. All accommodation is 3-star in standard rooms.





Discover more



Bourbon & Beyond is a popular annual event

For more inspiration and curated packages, discover how bourbon is just the beginning on Viva Holidays' dedicated [Louisville campaign page](#).

To get more destination information and marketing assets, visit Viva Holidays' dedicated [agent platform](#), then book on [Mango](#), their online reservations system.

This article is brought to you by Viva Holidays, Brand USA, and Louisville Tourism.



The screenshot shows the Viva Holidays website interface. At the top, the 'VIVA HOLIDAYS' logo is prominently displayed in red. Below it is a navigation menu with links for 'KEYS', 'GIFT CARDS', 'VIVA GOLD', 'BROCHURES', 'ABOUT', and 'CONTACT'. The main content area features a large background image of people walking through an archway. A white text box is overlaid on the image with the following content:

## LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - BOURBON IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Welcome to Louisville, a vibrant city where rich heritage, modern creativity and genuine Southern hospitality come together. Known around the world as "Bourbon City," Louisville invites you to explore its spirited culture—whether you're sampling handcrafted bourbon along the Urban Bourbon Trail or discovering the stories that shaped America's favourite whiskey.

The city's energy is felt through its iconic pillars. Experience the thrill of the Kentucky Derby, one of the most celebrated sporting events in the world. Explore the powerful legacy of Muhammad Ali, whose life and values continue to inspire visitors at every turn.

Then delve into Louisville's unmatched craftsmanship, highlighted by the iconic Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory, and explore the city's rich mix of sporting and cultural experiences. Beyond its landmarks, Louisville's neighbourhoods offer a warm and welcoming atmosphere, nationally recognised for their friendliness and inclusivity.

Centrally located in the heart of the U.S., Louisville is an ideal gateway to the American South—easy to reach, yet impossible to forget. Whether you're here for a signature event or a broader journey, you'll find a city that honours its past while embracing a bold, fresh future.

UNITED STATES





DEALS



22 Day Southern USA Road Trip  
USA



15 Day Bourbon, Bluegrass & Horse Country Self Drive  
USA



10 Day Explore Kentucky Self Drive  
USA



5 Day Discover Louisville  
USA

**5 DAY DISCOVER LOUISVILLE**  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - BOURBON IS JUST THE BEGINNING

**USA**  
Per Travel Dates: 1 Apr 2028 - 30 Jun 2028, 1 Sep 2028 - 30 Oct 2028, 1 Jul 2029 - 31 Aug 2029

Experience the best of Louisville and its surrounds, from vibrant downtown attractions to the tranquil beauty of Bardonia and Lexington. With self-drive day trips and a stylish city stay, this getaway blends culture, flavour and classic Kentucky heritage

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Explore downtown with a visit to the Muhammad Ali Center, Waterfront Park, and enjoy dinner on Whiskey Row
- Visit the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory
- Take a tour of the Old Forester Distillery or Angel's Envy tour
- Self drive day trips to explore further afield

**INCLUDES FINE PRINT**

- 4 nights at Louisville Marriott Downtown \*\*\*\*\* in a Guest Room
- 6 days Alamo car hire in a Nissan Versa or similar\*

With Share 4 Nights per person from **\$1,349**

Add an additional \$522\* per person for travel on: 1 Jul 2028 - 31 Aug 2028

**ENQUIRE NOW**

**RELATED DEALS**

- 21 Nights from: **\$5,829**  
22 Day Southern USA Road Trip  
USA
- 14 Nights from: **\$2,349**  
15 Day Bourbon, Bluegrass & Horse Country Self Drive  
USA
- 9 Nights from: **\$1,979**  
10 Day Explore Kentucky Self Drive  
USA





## 15 DAY BOURBON, BLUEGRASS & HORSE COUNTRY SELF DRIVE

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - BOURBON IS JUST THE BEGINNING



USA

On Sale Until: 30 Apr 2026

For Travel Between: 6 Apr 2026 - 30 Jun 2026, 1 Sep 2026 - 14 Dec 2026, 1 Mar 2027 - 16 Mar 2027

Discover the soul of the American South on a self-drive adventure through Tennessee and Kentucky. From Nashville's legendary honky-tonks to the rolling hills of horse country, this journey blends live music, bourbon tastings, and iconic attractions like Jack Daniel's Distillery and Dollywood. Explore charming towns, historic distilleries, and the birthplace of bluegrass—all at your own pace.

**ROUTE:** Nashville - Tullahoma - Pigeon Forge - Lexington - Cincinnati - Indianapolis - Louisville - Owensboro - Nashville

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Explore Broadway Street for live music, honky-tonks, and Southern eats
- Visit the Jack Daniel's distillery in Lynchburg
- Take a scenic drive into the Great Smoky Mountains or take a visit to Dollywood
- Visit a thoroughbred farm or the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington
- Lexington's Historic Downtown is perfect for great food, bookstores and local art
- Savour the drinks on Bourbon Row, Louisville at the numerous urban distilleries
- Owensboro is the bluegrass capital and can learn more at the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame

### INCLUDES FINE PRINT

- 2 night at Comfort Inn & Suites Nashville Downtown - Stadium ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Hampton Inn Tullahoma ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Best Western Plaza Inn, Pigeon Forge ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 5 nights Days Inn by Wyndham Lexington Southeast ★★★ in a Standard Room

ENQUIRE NOW

### RELATED DEALS



22 Day Southern USA Road Trip  
USA



10 Day Explore Kentucky Self Drive  
USA



5 Day Discover Louisville  
USA





## 10 DAY EXPLORE KENTUCKY SELF DRIVE

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - BOURBON IS JUST THE BEGINNING



USA

On Sale Until: 30 Apr 2026

For Travel Between: 6 Apr 2026 - 30 Jun 2026, 1 Sep 2026 - 31 Oct 2026, 1 Jul 2026 - 31 Aug 2026

ENQUIRE NOW

From barrel tastings and horse farms to motorsports and must-see museums, this self-drive itinerary showcases Kentucky's most iconic experiences. Enjoy a mix of culture, history, flavour and fun on a road trip designed for curious and adventurous travellers.

### RELATED DEALS

**ROUTE:** Cincinnati - Lexington - Berea - Cumberland Falls - Bowling Green - Paducah - Owensboro - Louisville

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Treat yourself to a bite of bourbon culture in Lexington's Distillery District
- Visit the National Corvette Museum before hitting top speeds at the NCM Motorsports Park
- Explore Louisville's vibrant bourbon scene with stops at distilleries like Angel's Envy and Old Forester
- Stand in the ring with "The Greatest" at the Muhammad Ali Center
- Sip straight from the barrel at a Kentucky Bourbon Distillery

#### INCLUDES FINE PRINT

- 1 night at Aloft Newport on the Levee, Newport ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 1 night Days Inn by Wyndham Lexington Southeast ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Holiday Inn Express Berea ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Baymont by Wyndham Bowling Green ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Best Western Paducah Inn ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Best Western Plus Owensboro ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 3 nights at Hampton Inn Louisville Downtown ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 11 days Alamo car hire in a Nissan Versa or similar+



22 Day Southern USA Road Trip

USA



15 Day Bourbon, Bluegrass & Horse Country Self Drive

USA



5 Day Discover Louisville

USA





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## 22 DAY SOUTHERN USA ROAD TRIP

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - BOURBON IS JUST THE BEGINNING

**USA**  
On Sale Until: 30 Apr 2020  
For Travel Dates: 1 Apr 2020 - 23 Apr 2020, 26 Apr 2020 - 3 Jun 2020, 8 Jun 2020 - 10 Sep 2020

Embark on a 21 night self drive adventure through the heart of the American South, where music, history, and culture come alive. From the vibrant streets of Atlanta and Charleston's coastal charm to the scenic beauty of Asheville and the soulful sounds of Nashville and New Orleans, this journey blends iconic attractions with authentic Southern hospitality. Explore bourbon trails, historic plantations, legendary music halls, and picturesque mountain drives—all at your own pace.

**ROUTE:** Atlanta - Charleston - Asheville - Nashville - Tupelo - New Orleans - Memphis - Louisville - Atlanta

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Experience the heart of country music in Nashville at the Vibrant Broadway Strip
- Tour the opulent Biltmore Estate in Asheville, America's largest private home
- Stroll through the French Quarter, Sazerac cuisine, and soak in the soulful sounds of the jazz
- Step back in time with a visit to historic mansions and riverfront views in Natchez
- Visit the humble beginnings of the King of Rock 'n' Roll at the Elvis Presley Birthplace

**INCLUDES:** **FINE PRINT**

- 2 nights at Courtyard by Marriott Atlanta Downtown \*\*\*\*\* in a Queen Room
- Atlanta CityPASS including access to 5 attractions
- 3 nights at Friends Market Hotel, Charleston \*\*\*\*\* in a Traditional Room
- 1 night at Courtyard Asheville \*\*\*\* in a King Room
- 3 nights at Captain by Hyatt Downtown Nashville \*\*\*\*\* in a One King Bed
- 2 nights at Courtyard Marriott Tupelo \*\*\*\* in a Guest Room
- 3 nights at Auld New Orleans Downtown \*\*\*\*\* in a King Room
- 5 hour New Orleans City & Cemetery tour with Garden District Stroll
- 8 hour Plantation & Swamp tour
- 3 nights at The Innbody Memphis \*\*\*\*\* in a Traditional Room
- Admission to Memphis Rock n Soul Museum & Memphis Music Hall of Fame
- 3 nights at Courtyard by Marriott Louisville Downtown \*\*\*\*\* in a Double Room

- 1 night at Courtyard by Marriott Atlanta Downtown \*\*\*\*\* in a Guest Room
- 23 days Aamo car hire in a Nissan Versa or similar\*

**TRAVEL DATES:** 1 - 23 Apr, 26 Apr - 3 Jun, 8 Jun - 10 Sep 20

**REQUIRE NOW**

**RELATED DEALS**

15 Nights from **\$2,348**

15 Day Bourbon, Blues and Home County Self Drive  
USA

10 Nights from **\$1,979**

10 Day Explore Kentucky Self Drive  
USA

8 Nights from **\$1,349**

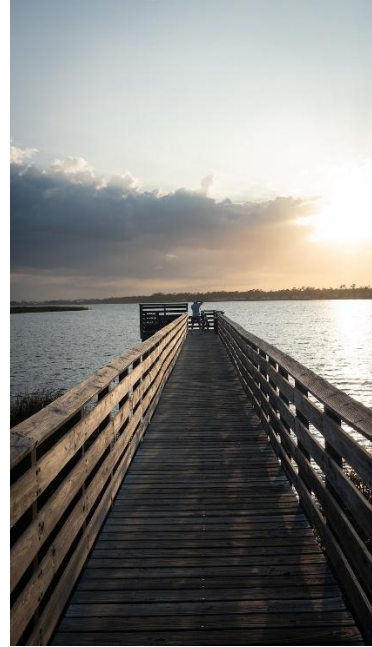
5 Day Discover Louisville  
USA

Trip from 21 Nights per person from **\$5,829**





Travel South Global Week Pre-Fam





Travel South Global Week





## RESOURCE CENTRE UPDATES

### What's On:



November 15, 2026

### **North Carolina Chinese Lantern Festival**

A must-see holiday highlight in the Raleigh area, the North Carolina Chinese Lantern Festival transforms Cary's Koka Booth Amphitheatre into a glowing wonderland, with hundreds of handcrafted lanterns and over 15,000 LED lights creating a magical walk-through experience.

(more...)





# Newsletters – Gardens & Grilling: Southern Flavors in Full Bloom

TRADE Newsletter – Recipients: 3732 Open Rate: 980 (26.33%)

PR Newsletter – Recipients: 360 Open Rate: 162 (45%)

## TravelSouth USA



### Gardens & Grilling: Southern Flavours In Full Bloom

From blooming gardens to outdoor festivals, spring is a celebration of colour, flavour, and fresh beginnings. Across the South, vibrant florals, seasonal events, and farm fresh experiences invite visitors to explore the region in full bloom. From botanical trails to local markets and open-air dining, every moment blends natural beauty with rich culinary traditions, showing that spring is best experienced through shared meals, lively gatherings, and the simple joy of the season.

[Learn More](#)

### TENNESSEE

**Gardens in Bloom and Cornbread on the Grill**  
Spring shines in Tennessee as vibrant gardens burst into colour and seasonal festivals take centre stage. Visitors can stroll through spectacular floral displays, then head to lively celebrations featuring classic Southern flavours. From creative cornbread tastings to smoky barbecues and live entertainment, the season blends natural beauty with culinary tradition. It is a time when gardens, gatherings, and great food come together to showcase Tennessee at its most welcoming.



[Read More](#)





### NORTH CAROLINA

#### Gardens in Bloom & Grills Fired Up

Spring in North Carolina is a feast for the senses. Wander through vibrant gardens as azaleas and tulips burst into colour, then follow the aroma of slow smoked barbecue to legendary local spots. From blooming landscapes to time honoured pitmaster traditions, the state pairs natural beauty with rich culinary heritage, inviting visitors to experience a season where fresh air, bold flavour, and Southern charm come together.

[Read More](#)



### LOUISIANA

#### Springtime in Louisiana

Spring in Louisiana brings vibrant azalea blooms and peak crawfish season. Follow scenic trails across the state, from forest paths to neighbourhood routes filled with colour. After a day among the blossoms, celebrate the season with a plate of freshly boiled crawfish, a true local tradition. Gardens and grills come together in Cajun country, offering a perfect blend of natural beauty, bold flavour, and festive springtime spirit.

[Read More](#)



### SOUTH CAROLINA

#### Festivals in Full Bloom

Spring in South Carolina brings food and flowers together in vibrant outdoor settings. Stroll through blooming gardens, enjoy live music and barbecues, and experience local festivals filled with flavour and community spirit. From chef tastings to classic Southern bites, each event celebrates the season in full colour. With azaleas in bloom and fresh dishes to savour, springtime offers a perfect blend of beauty, culture, and unforgettable Southern charm.

[Read More](#)





### MISSISSIPPI

#### Gardens, Grills and Festivals

Spring in Mississippi pairs blooming gardens with smoky Southern flavour. Azaleas frame historic homes while festivals bring together barbecue, live music, and local culture. Visitors can stroll through gardens, explore literary landmarks, and savour coastal favourites like chargrilled oysters. From vibrant events to quiet moments in bloom, the season offers a rich mix of tradition, flavour, and community, making spring a memorable time to experience Mississippi.

[Read More](#)



### KENTUCKY

#### Spring in Bloom on Kentucky's Garden Trail

While the Bourbon Trail often takes centre stage, another kind of spirit blooms across Kentucky each spring. The Kentucky Garden Trail invites travellers to explore 12 botanical gardens and arboreta, from Louisville's Waterfront Botanical Gardens to historic Liberty Hall. Cherry blossoms, bluebells, and vibrant native flowers transform the landscape into a colourful journey, offering a fresh way to experience the state's natural beauty and rich horticultural heritage.

[Read More](#)



### MISSOURI

#### Gardens, Gin and Farm to Table Flavour

Spring in Missouri blends botanicals with bold local flavour. Visitors can explore curated gin experiences, sampling a wide range of styles while learning from passionate experts. Beyond the city, farm visits offer a taste of rural life, from artisanal cheeses to seasonal dinners featuring local produce and meats. Together, these experiences create a refreshing way to enjoy spring through craftsmanship, flavour, and the region's rich agricultural heritage.

[Read More](#)





### RHYTHMS OF THE SOUTH

Atlanta, Nashville, New Orleans

Spring is in full swing as gardens burst into colour and grills fire up across the region. Stroll through vibrant blooms, seasonal festivals, and scenic outdoor spaces before savouring smoky barbecue, fresh seafood, and local favourites. From lively patios to iconic culinary spots, the season blends natural beauty with bold flavours, inviting visitors to experience a perfect mix of blossoms, bites, and warm Southern hospitality.



[Read More](#)

#### FIND OUT MORE:



#### CONTACT INFO:

Phone: 02 9158 9314 | Email: [Jacobi@gate7.com.au](mailto:Jacobi@gate7.com.au)

## GATE 7

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# SOCIAL CONTENT UPDATE

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

**Penny Brand**  
Admin Group expert Top contributor · · March 2 · 🌐

If you're building Southern USA itineraries and not talking about South Carolina's food scene... you're leaving flavour on the table.

Here's what to tempt your clients with:

Shrimp & Grits – the Lowcountry classic that turned humble ingredients into a national icon.... See more



GUIDE.MICHELIN.COM  
Seven Classic South Carolina Foods and Where to Find Them

**Sandrine LG**  
Admin · · March 20 at 10:09 AM · 🌐

**Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion music festival voted among the very best in the USA.**

The Birthplace of Country Music is pleased to report that USA TODAY 10BEST voted Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion as #5 nationally in the 2026 Readers' Choice Award for Best Music Festival.

Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion is the only music festival to win in either Tennessee or Virginia, ranking it as the best for both states.

See more





Instagram:





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🌸🌺 South Carolina: Festivals in Full Bloom

Spring in South Carolina brings food and flowers together in beautiful outdoor settings. Stroll through Swan Lake Iris Gardens during the Iris Festival, savor BBQ and live music at Pickin' & Piggin' at the Park, or enjoy chef tastings at Taste of Black Charleston 🍷. At the beloved Flowertown Festival in Azalea Park, blooming azaleas and local bites create the perfect Southern celebration.

📍 @discover\_sc

#DiscoverSouthCarolina #TravelSouth

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April 13

Log in to like or comment.



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🌸🌺 Mississippi in Bloom: Gardens, Grills & Festivals

Spring in Mississippi pairs blooming gardens with smoky Southern flavor. In Natchez, azaleas frame historic homes during the Natchez Pilgrimage while music fills the air 🎷. Festivals like Crosstie Arts & Jazz and Que on the Yazoo bring BBQ, live music, and local flavor together. From garden strolls at the Eudora Welty House to chargrilled oysters along the Gulf Coast, Mississippi celebrates spring with unforgettable

1 1 1

April 15

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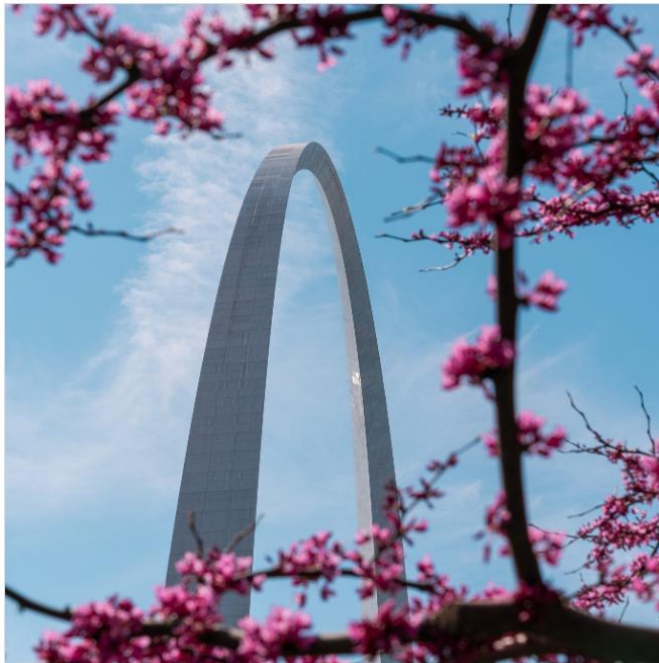
travelsouthusa.au 2w  
🌷🍞 Tennessee: Gardens in Bloom & Cornbread on the Grill

Spring shines in Tennessee at Nashville's Cheekwood in Bloom, where 250,000 red and white tulips, violas, and daffodils celebrate America 250 amid art, music, and garden strolls 🌸. Later in April, head to South Pittsburg for the National Cornbread Festival—home of the Lodge Cast Iron cook-off, creative cornbread tastings, and smoky BBQ at the new "Pitt Stop."

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April 20

Log in to like or comment.



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travelsouthusa.au 2w  
🌿🍷 Missouri: Gardens, Gin & Farm-to-Table Flavor

St. Louis offers a springtime mix of botanicals and bites. At The Gin Room, explore 300+ gin varieties through flights, seminars, and classes with owner Natasha Bahrami, the only U.S. inductee in the international Gin Hall of Fame 🏆. For farm-fresh experiences, visit Green Dirt Farm in Weston—tour the sheep dairy, taste artisanal cheeses, and enjoy Farm Table Dinners featuring local meats and produce for a true Missouri culinary adventure.

📍 @visitmo  
#MissouriAdventure #TravelSouth

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April 22

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📍 Atlanta, Nashville & New Orleans:Gardens & Grilling

Spring is in full swing across the South! In Atlanta, stroll Atlanta Botanical Garden's 140,000 blooming tulips and daffodils during Atlanta SUPER Blooms! and enjoy smoky bites at Heirloom Market BBQ or Sweet Auburn Barbecue. Nashville bursts with color at Cheekwood Estate & Gardens and the Cherry Blossom Festival, while grills fire up at Music City restaurants and outdoor patios. New Orleans pairs lush gardens like the Besthoff Sculpture Garden with crawfish season and char-grilled Gulf seafood—where flowers and fire-kissed flavors meet.

📍 @discoveratlanta @visitmusiccity @neworleans

1

April 27

Log in to like or comment.



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travelsouthusa.au 5w  
📍 Spring in Bloom on Kentucky's Garden Trail

While the Bourbon Trail often takes center stage, another kind of "spirit" is blooming across Kentucky. The Kentucky Garden Trail invites travelers to explore 12 botanical gardens and arboreta—from Louisville's Waterfront Botanical Gardens to historic Liberty Hall. Spring brings cherry blossoms, bluebells, and vibrant native blooms, turning the trail into a colorful road trip that celebrates the Commonwealth's

1

April 1

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Facebook:





Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

2 April · 🌐



🌸 Spring in Bloom on Kentucky's Garden Trail

While the Bourbon Trail often takes center stage, another kind of "spirit" is blooming across Kentucky. The Kentucky Garden Trail invites travelers to explore 12 botanical gardens and arboreta—from Louisville's Waterfront Botanical Gardens to historic Liberty Hall. Spring brings cherry blossoms, bluebells, and vibrant native blooms, turning the trail into a colorful road trip that celebrates the Commonwealth's rich horticultural roots.

📍 @kytourism

#KentuckyTourism #TravelSouth



Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

7 April · 🌐



🔥 North Carolina: Gardens in Bloom, Grills Fired Up

Spring in North Carolina is a feast for the senses. Wander through vibrant gardens like Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Reynolda Gardens, and Airlee Gardens as azaleas and tulips burst into color 🌸. Then follow the aroma of slow-smoked barbecue to legendary spots like Skylight Inn and Lexington Barbecue. From blooming landscapes to pitmaster traditions, the Tar Heel State pairs garden beauty with smok Southern flavor.

📍 @visitnc

#VisitNorthCarolina #TravelSouth





Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

9 April · 🌐



🌸🍤 Springtime in Louisiana: Azaleas & Crawfish

Spring in Louisiana means vibrant azalea blooms and peak crawfish season. Follow scenic Azalea Trails across the state—from the 30-mile Wild Azalea Trail in Central Louisiana to the Lafayette Azalea Trail winding through charming neighborhoods 🌺. After a day among the blossoms, celebrate Louisiana's "5th Season" with a plate of freshly boiled crawfish, where gardens and grills come together in true Cajun style.

📍 @explore.louisiana

#ExploreLouisiana #TravelSouth





Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

14 April at 10:00 · 🌐



📍 South Carolina: Festivals in Full Bloom

Spring in South Carolina brings food and flowers together in beautiful outdoor settings. Stroll through Swan Lake Iris Gardens during the Iris Festival, savor BBQ and live music at Pickin' & Piggini' at the Park, or enjoy chef tastings at Taste of Black Charleston 🌿. At the beloved Flowertown Festival in Azalea Park, blooming azaleas and local bites create the perfect Southern celebration.

📍 @discover\_sc

#DiscoverSouthCarolina #TravelSouth





Travel South USA's post

 Travel South USA (AU, NZ)  
16 April at 10:01 · 🌐

🔥🔥 Mississippi in Bloom: Gardens, Grills & Festivals

Spring in Mississippi pairs blooming gardens with smoky Southern flavor. In Natchez, azaleas frame historic homes during the Natchez Pilgrimage while music fills the air 🎷. Festivals like Crosstie Arts & Jazz and Que on the Yazoo bring BBQ, live music, and local flavor together. From garden strolls at the Eudora Welty House to chargrilled oysters along the Gulf Coast, Mississippi celebrates spring with unforgettable tastes.

📍 @visitms

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



Travel South USA's post

 Travel South USA (AU, NZ)  
21 April at 10:00 · 🌐

🌸🌸 Tennessee: Gardens in Bloom & Cornbread on the Grill

Spring shines in Tennessee at Nashville's Cheekwood in Bloom, where 250,000 red and white tulips, violas, and daffodils celebrate America 250 amid art, music, and garden strolls 🌸. Later in April, head to South Pittsburg for the National Cornbread Festival—home of the Lodge Cast Iron cook-off, creative cornbread tastings, and smoky BBQ at the new "Pitt Stop."

📍 @tnvacation

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





Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

23 April at 10:00 · 🌐

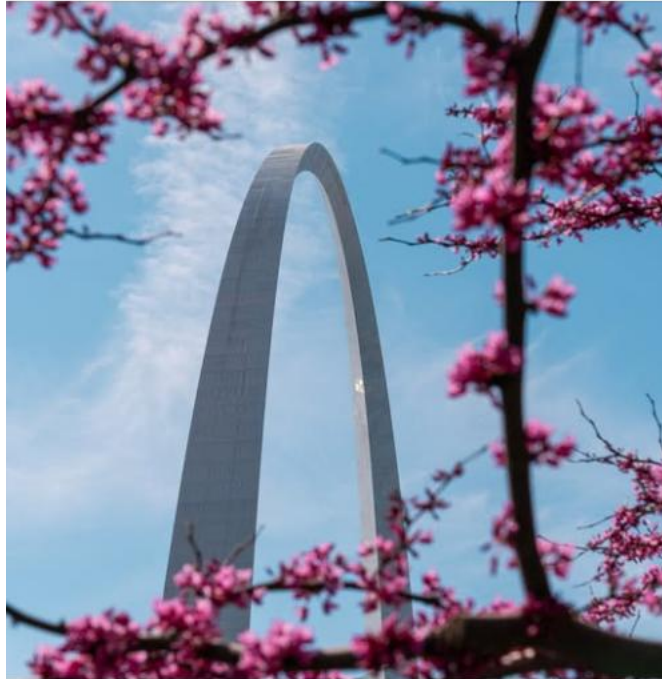


🌿 Missouri: Gardens, Gin & Farm-to-Table Flavor

St. Louis offers a springtime mix of botanicals and bites. At The Gin Room, explore 300+ gin varieties through flights, seminars, and classes with owner Natasha Bahrami, the only U.S. inductee in the International Gin Hall of Fame 🌿. For farm-fresh experiences, visit Green Dirt Farm in Weston—tour the sheep dairy, taste artisanal cheeses, and enjoy Farm Table Dinners featuring local meats and produce for a true Missouri culinary adventure.

📍 @visitmo

#MissouriAdventure #TravelSouth





Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

28 April at 10:00 · 🌐



🔥 Atlanta, Nashville & New Orleans: Gardens & Grilling

Spring is in full swing across the South! In Atlanta, stroll Atlanta Botanical Garden's 140,000 blooming tulips and daffodils during Atlanta SUPER Blooms! and enjoy smoky bites at Heirloom Market BBQ or Sweet Auburn Barbecue. Nashville bursts with color at Cheekwood Estate & Gardens and the Cherry Blossom Festival, while grills fire up at Music City restaurants and outdoor patios. New Orleans pairs lush gardens like the Besthoff Sculpture Garden with crawfish season and char-grilled Gulf seafood—where flowers and fire-kissed flavors meet.

📍 @discoveratlanta @visitmusiccity @neworleans





# Market Update

## Economic & Market Update

The following economic announcements were made in April:

- **Consumer Price Index (26 April 2026):** Inflation rose 4.6% YoY in the March quarter, well above the RBA target, driven by housing, food, transport and fuel costs, reinforcing that cost-of-living pressures remain elevated for households. [Source.](#)
- **Unemployment rate (18 April 2026):** The unemployment rate remained steady at 4.3% in March, signaling a still-resilient labor market despite broader economic headwinds. [Source.](#)
- **Household spending (5 April 2026):** Household spending **rose 0.3% in February**, with modest growth pointing to cautious consumer behaviour amid ongoing cost-of-living pressures. [Source.](#)
- **Australian dollar strengthened against the USD in April:** AUD/USD rose through the month, from around 0.69 USD in early April to 0.7201 USD by 30 April, improving Australian outbound purchasing power into the U.S. compared with last year. [Source.](#)

## Tour Operators & Travel Agencies

- **Travellers shifting away from Europe?**  
A Shift away from Europe is already beginning to be witnessed by Globus family of brands (GFOB), with managing director Chris Hall telling Travel Daily two of the company's top three destinations for last month were in other parts of the world. While the United Kingdom & Ireland were still the second most popular destinations in March, Canada filled the top slot, followed by **Japan** in third. [Source](#)
- **Viva Holidays spotlights Louisville, Kentucky with new Aussie-ready packages**  
Do you know which US city blends Southern charm, modern creativity, bourbon heritage, and a 2-minute sporting legacy? If you said, Louisville, Kentucky, top marks! Known globally as Bourbon City, it's an ideal destination for travellers seeking a lively vacation and Viva Holidays' have [new packages](#) to make booking Louisville a breeze. [Source](#)
- **Australian travellers still prioritising Europe despite Middle East crisis**  
TravelManagers Executive General Manager Michael Gazal says Australians are still booking "a lot of European holidays for the peak season" despite the travel chaos caused by the Middle East crisis. [Source](#)
- **Societe cracks 1.3m**  
Luxury Escapes' rewards program Societe has accrued 1.3 million members in less than a year after launching to the market. [Source \(page 3\).](#)
- **Luxury outpacing the market: Virtuoso posts 20% sales growth and 23% forward bookings surge**  
Luxury travel is running at roughly double the broader leisure market growth rate, with Virtuoso's global network recording 20 per cent year-on-year preferred partner sales growth in the first two months of 2026, even as Oxford Economics revised international leisure forecasts lower for the year. [Source.](#)





- **Signature Travel Network continues to expand across Australia**

Signature Travel Network has added new preferred partnerships and members in a bid to expand its presence across the Australian market. [Source](#)

## Traveler Insights

- **The Rise Of The Female Traveller And Why It Matters**

Women are travelling more often and increasingly choosing to travel alone, redefining how journeys are planned, experienced and shared. Recent insights from Trip.com Group show flight bookings by women have risen by 13 per cent year on year. At the same time, global search interest in “**solo female travel**” has surged, increasing by more than 800 per cent since 2020, according to digital marketing agency Adido. [Source](#)

- **Aussies switch up plans**

Australians are changing their travel plans due to flight disruptions and the challenging economic climate, according to new research from iSelect. Findings showed that 55% of Australians are now opting to travel during off-peak seasons, with 54% choosing to book flights at less popular times during the day, while 39% are flying on budget airlines for a change. [Source](#) (page 6)

- **ATIA says ceasefire offers hope, but travel rebound will depend on price, product and trade**

The ceasefire may have offered the travel industry its first real note of optimism in weeks, but the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) says it does little on its own to rebuild consumer confidence. For Middle Eastern carriers and destinations, the task now is to win travellers back, and that will take aggressive pricing and close work with the trade. [Source](#)

- **US at a crossroads:** WTTC while the global travel market enjoyed its biggest year in 2025, the United States finds itself at a crossroads after it lost market share during the period, figures from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) have showed. Despite the negative trend, the US remains the most valuable tourism and travel market in the world, but according to WTTC CEO Gloria Guevara, if that mantle is to be retained, big changes are needed from American tourism policy-makers. [Source](#)

- **Travellers still flying, just not that way: Aussies continue to reroute amid shifting demand**

The overwhelming majority of Aussie travellers are still jetting abroad despite the Middle East conflict - but they're choosing their flight paths more carefully, a new study suggests. [Source](#)

## Air Lift

- **Aussie carriers vulnerable**

Australia has been listed as one of the most vulnerable countries to jet fuel shortages if the war in the Middle East were to drag on for many more months, a new report by Morningstar DBRS has predicted. [Source](#)

- **BAD NEWS: Ticket Prices To Rise AS Airlines Hike Airfares.**

Travellers can expect higher ticket prices for flights in the months ahead with Australia's two largest airlines announcing airfare increases. Qantas and Virgin Australia say soaring global fuel prices have placed significant pressure on operating costs. The price hikes come amid a sharp escalation in jet fuel costs, driven largely by ongoing instability in the Middle East, which has disrupted global oil supply





chains. [Source](#)

■ **ATIA scrutinises Qantas-AA alliance: Are travel advisors being sidelined?**

The Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) warns the ongoing Qantas-American Airlines alliance could sideline travel advisors, urging the ACCC to safeguard fair competition and independent distribution in the trans-Pacific market. [Source](#)

■ **Sunrise milestone** In a landmark moment for Qantas, its Airbus aircraft designed to service ultra-long haul Project Sunrise flights has emerged from a factory in France and will begin test flights... Qantas indicated it remains on track to launch Project Sunrise in the first quarter of 2027, starting with London or New York from Australia's east coast. [Source](#)

■ **United shakes up premium fares: What the new tiered cabins mean for travellers**

United Airlines is reshaping how its passengers book premium long-haul flights, introducing a new tiered fare structure across its international network. For customers, the change aims to simplify choice while offering more flexibility in how they pay for added benefits... United is also updating its website and app to display these options more clearly, allowing customers to compare inclusions in one place. [Source](#)

■ **United wanted an airline mega-merger with American, but got shut down fast**

United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby has confirmed he approached American Airlines about a potential merger, revealing plans for what he described as a growth-focused airline powerhouse before the proposal was shut down. [Source](#)

■ **The Walshe Group revamps commercial and sales team for Delta Air Lines**

The Walshe Group has announced a series of strategic personnel changes across its business, including a new commercial leadership appointment and several new and expanded roles within its sales team supporting long-term partner Delta Air Lines in Australia. [Source](#)

## Media

■ **Nike has selected Australia for its first country-specific TikTok launch globally, underlining the market's importance as a testing ground for digital-first campaigns.** The new @nikeaustralia account quietly launched last month, debuting with content tied to Nike's sponsorship of the CommBank Socceroos. The move reinforces TikTok's growing role in youth marketing, localised storytelling and culturally relevant brand campaigns. [Source](#).

■ **Mamamia Out Loud reported 1.2 million monthly listeners, which was the largest monthly audience for an Australian show in the history of the Australian Podcast Ranker.** The result reinforces Mamamia's position as one of Australia's most influential audio publishers. [Source](#).

■ **Research from Webjet's 2026 report indicates Australians remain highly motivated to travel internationally despite cost pressures,** with Japan, Europe and Southeast Asia continuing to rank strongly for future trips. Consumers are increasingly booking earlier and seeking deals to secure value in a competitive market. [Source](#).

■ **A new Business of Fashion case study highlights how influencer marketing has evolved from a brand awareness tool into a core performance channel.** With consumers now spending nearly two-thirds of their media time online, often engaging with creator-led content, brands are





following audience attention and investing accordingly. The report notes influencer marketing is larger than ever, but success now depends on sophisticated strategies focused on conversion, measurable ROI and long-term creator partnerships, rather than follower counts or one-off campaigns. [Source](#).

- **The Age (a major Australian daily newspaper) released a new article this month with sentiment noting that Australian travel demand remains strong but is evolving in both destination choice and purpose.** New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom still remain reliable performers, but growth is shifting towards Asia and value-driven short-haul markets supported by direct flights. There is also rising interest in North Africa, the Middle East and high-end experiential travel such as Antarctica, reflecting a broader move towards more frequent, shorter international trips. [Source](#).

