

INDIA REPORT

APRIL 2026

Travel
South
USA

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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.

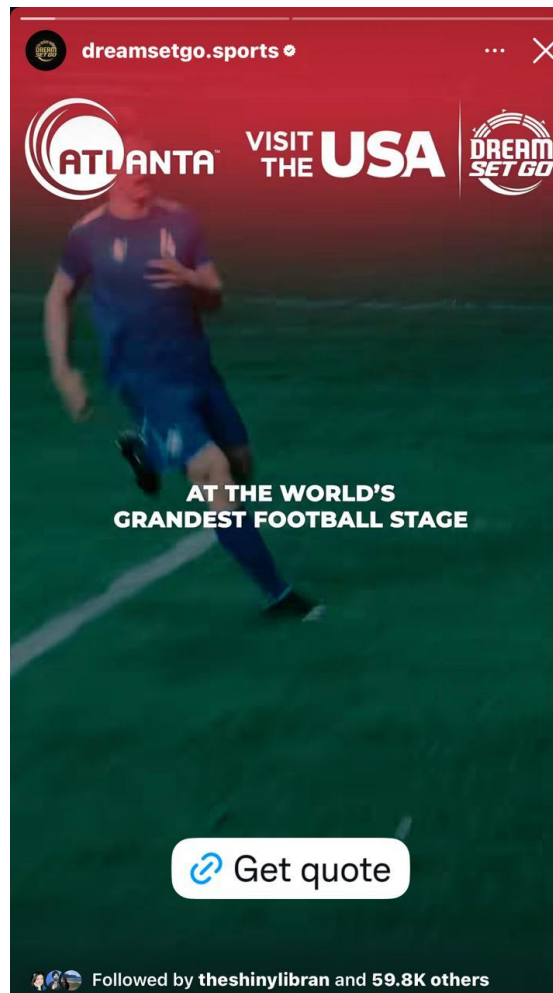
India, the world's fifth-largest economy, is projected to grow between 6% and 7% in FY25, reinforcing its status as one of the fastest-growing major economies. In 2024, the USA received 2.19 million visitors from India 24.3% increase over 2023, ranking India as the #2 overseas source market (excluding 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

- Trade and media discussions for TSUSA continued despite the ongoing U.S-Iran Conflict situation with **121 trade meetings** and **61 media meetings** to date.
- GMM 2026 was successfully attended by four Indian Media Journalists who explored Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia & West Virginia.
- We have achieved an increase of 82 TSUSA Products listed across 28 Indian travel agency websites bringing to a total of 127 featured products.
 - Top featured destinations: New Orleans, Atlanta, Louisiana & Tennessee
 - Gaining momentum: Missouri, Mississippi, and South Carolina
 - Opportunity areas: Arkansas & Nashville
- Atlanta was featured on the Instagram page of [DreamSetGo.com](https://www.dreamsetgo.com) as a part of the FIFA 2026 promotions



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

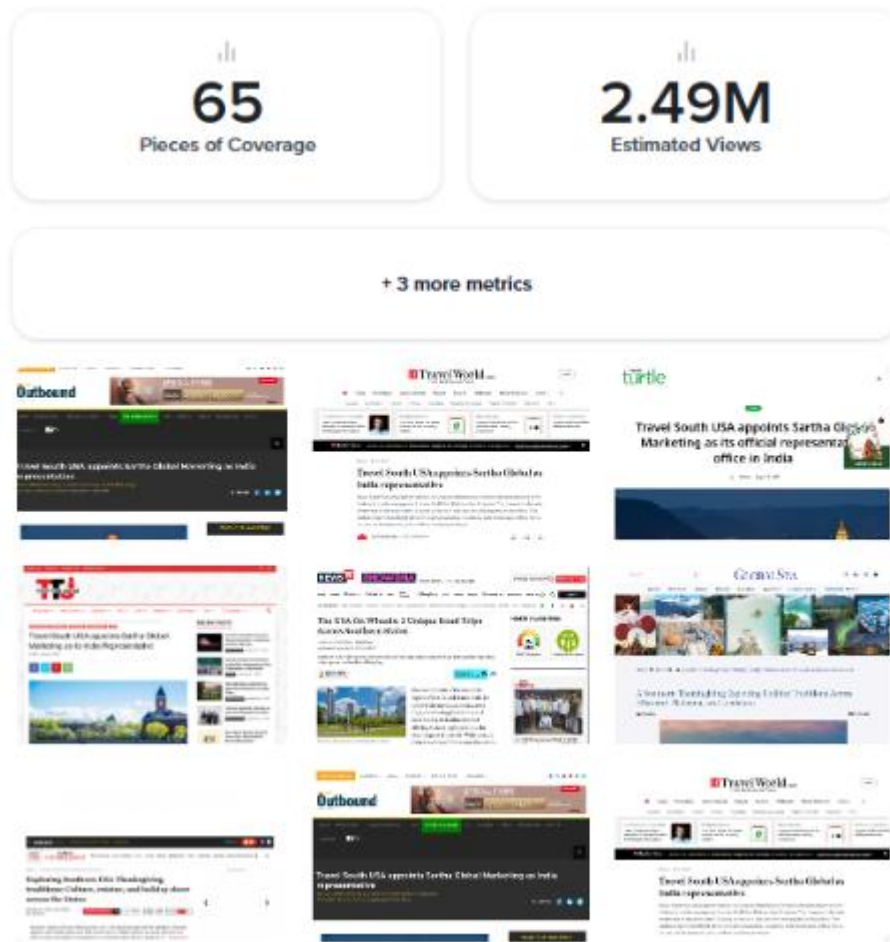
		Q1 TOTAL	Q2 TOTAL	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q3 Total	Apr	FY25/26 Total
10 partners	India								
	Trade								
	Trade Meetings/Trainings	9	50	15	17	15	47	15	121
AL/AR/KY	Number of Agents Trained	4	51	13	42	13	68	12	135
/LA/MS/									
MO/NC/S	Managed Media								
C/TN/RO	Media Meetings	10	25	6	5	8	19	7	61
TS	Total number of articles publ	14	18	5	6	9	21	6	59
	Impressions	4,63,50,000	25,88,67,600	1,09,97,443	28,80,000	1,07,69,000	2,46,46,443	7,37,38,000	40,36,02,043

II. Comms & PR

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

News Releases

- 6 media clippings were generated in the month of April.
- 2 content pieces were disseminated to the consumer media platforms -
 - Atlanta Gets Ready for 2026 FIFA World Cup: A 3-Day Itinerary for Fans and Visitors
 - Summer itinerary in Mississippi
- Additionally, a content piece on “MICHELIN Guide Restaurants in Nashville” was disseminated.
- CoverageBook Link - <https://app.coveragebook.com/29490/books/5c685b5c980151ee>



II. Comms & PR

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

Contacts	Discussion points	Website
Indulge Express	6 places to visit if you're making the trip to Atlanta for the FIFA World Cup 2026	https://www.indulgexpress.com/
News18	Sun, Seafood And Sunsets: The Ultimate Mississippi Gulf Coast Summer Itinerary	https://www.news18.com/
Daily Hunt	6 places to visit if you're making the trip to Atlanta for the FIFA World Cup 2026	https://m.dailyhunt.in/
Daily Hunt	The musical spirit of New Orleans: Jazz fest, local music scene, and beyond	https://m.dailyhunt.in/
Metro Focus	A Full Day of Fun at the Mississippi Gulf Coast	https://metrofocus.in/
Bold Outline	A Full Day of Fun at the Mississippi Gulf Coast	https://boldoutline.in/
Times of India (Food)	MICHELIN Guide Restaurants in Nashville (In Pipeline)	https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/

III. Trade

Trade Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Activity/Activation	Follow-up/ Next step
Touristers	FIT focused Mumbai-based agency who were given a TSUSA presentation (2 members). They have interests to promote Louisiana and the Carolina's. They are currently using Emirates for their U.S travelling clients and have not faced any delays.	FIT Product development push
Riya Travels (DMC) & Riya Holidays (FIT & Corporate)	Mumbai based agency with over 13,000 active platform users. We have conducted a TSUSA Training with 5 participants from their Products team as a part of our push for new product development.	Follow-up email with important links was sent to all participating members.
NikandAmi Travels	Mumbai based FIT agency. The U.S. is among their top-selling destinations and they are interested to promote of-beat destinations. Discussions included potential collaborations through social media and training initiatives to strengthen internal destination knowledge.	Follow-up email with important links was sent
Vibrant Destinations	Mumbai-based FIT focused agency. They have steady VFR clients to the U.S. A detailed TSUSA presentation was provided to two members of their Sales team.	Follow-up email with important links was sent.
Makson Travels	Mumbai-based VFR focused agency with steady focus towards the U.S. Discussion was around introducing them to TSUSA states and product development.	Follow-up email with important links was sent.
The Grand Vacationist	Part of the Kinihara Group, the company focuses on USA corporate and FIT travel, handling ~120–130 pax last year (60% corporate). While current business is on hold, they are launching a New Jersey office to support future corporate travel growth.	Product development push
Jay Tours & Travels	They have steady FIT & VFR business to the U.S. We have introduced TSUSA as well as pushed for product development.	Product development push
The Travel Planners	Ahmedabad-based FIT & VFR focused agency with a discussion to update them on product development for TSUSA. They intend to start with Florida as a starting point and requested for itineraries around the same.	Follow-up email with important links was sent.
All4Season	A luxury-focused travel company specializing in curated FIT itineraries for HNI and discerning clients. Team training & Social media promotions for TSUSA discussed	Follow-up email with important links was sent Product development to follow
Flamingo Travels	Primarily focused on group travel- ad hoc and fixed departures, with well-established US itineraries. They are now gradually expanding their FIT segment focusing on customized offers. Discussion focus was to increase their existing number of TSUSA products.	Product development push

III. Trade

Trade Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Activity/Activation	Follow-up/ Next step
Holiday Craft	FIT & VFR focused Ahmedabad agent currently facing weak U.S enquiries due to the ongoing situation. Introduction to key states like South Carolina & Louisiana provided	Follow-up email with important links was sent. Product development to follow
Thomas Cook	Follow up over product development and discussion over the performance of the TSUSA product available on their website	Maintain regular follow-up
Golden Tours	Introduction to TSUSA and member states. Product development push for the FIT segment discussed.	Follow-up email with important links was sent
Sahajanand World Travels	Follow up over product development and details on North Carolina, South Carolina and Louisiana shared	Follow-up email with important links was sent.
Veena World	Follow up over product development for the FIT segment and additional details provided around key routes (ROTS & Culinary)	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# 8	Gardens & Grilling: Southern Flavors in Full Bloom: April 15, 2026	18.50%	20.70%
	Featured Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri and ROTS		



Travel South USA

All Y'all Are Welcome

APRIL 2026



GARDENS & GRILLING: SOUTHERN FLAVORS IN FULL BLOOM

Welcome to the American South - where spring brings gardens into bloom and grills to life. From vibrant floral displays and outdoor festivals to legendary barbecue, Gulf seafood, and comforting "meat and three" plates, the season is a celebration of flavour and community. Beyond the table, rich history, music heritage, and lively neighbourhoods add depth to every experience - making the South a place where culture, cuisine, and connection come together.

IV. Newsletters



KENTUCKY

Beyond the Bourbon Trail, a new kind of "spirit" is blooming in Kentucky. The Kentucky Garden Trail spans 12 gardens across nine counties, offering a passport-style journey from Louisville to historic Liberty Hall. Best in spring, it bursts into colour with cherry blossoms and native blooms - perfect for a refreshing, nature-filled road trip.

[EXPLORE ORIGINALS](#)



ARKANSAS

Arkansas' flavours are rooted in community. From Whole Hog Cafe's award-winning barbecue to legacy spots, its smoky traditions run deep, with Wright's Barbecue adding a modern edge. Beyond barbecue, farmers markets and food festivals - celebrate fresh produce, seasonal harvests, and the state's evolving culinary scene.

[DISCOVER MORE](#)



TENNESSEE

Celebrate spring in Tennessee with blooms and bold flavours. Nashville's Cheekwood in Bloom features over 250,000 flowers, live music, and art, marking America's 250th anniversary. Meanwhile, the National Cornbread Festival in South Pittsburg (April 25-26, 2026) offers a lively mix of cook-offs, BBQ, music, and community charm.

[READ FURTHER](#)



MISSOURI

Missouri pairs scenic gardens with legendary grilling traditions. Stroll through blooming landscapes and seasonal festivals across the state, then dive into its rich barbecue culture - home to iconic Kansas City and St. Louis styles known for bold, smoky flavors and tangy sauces. Missouri offers a perfect blend of nature and flavor-filled experiences.

[KNOW MORE ABOUT IT](#)



RHYTHMS OF THE SOUTH

Spring in Atlanta, Nashville, and New Orleans blends blooming gardens with bold flavours. From Atlanta's floral festivals and diverse barbecue scene to Nashville's vibrant blooms and patio dining, and New Orleans' garden tours and crawfish feasts, the season offers a perfect mix of nature and grilling culture.

[EXPLORE MORE](#)

YOUR NEXT SOUTHERN ADVENTURE STARTS HERE!

FUN FACT: Cheekwood's hands-on workshops, inspired by its gardens and seasonal exhibits, invite visitors to explore new skills under expert guidance - perfect for creatives, beginners, or a fun outing with friends and family.

FOR MORE UPDATES, LOCAL SECRETS, AND TRAVEL INSPIRATION, FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



V. Social Media

- Posting has resumed since mid April with a more aggressive and consistent content approach to regain momentum post the March pause
- The TSUSA India Facebook page recorded 280 views and 36 engagements, reflecting early traction as content distribution restarted
- TSUSA India Instagram delivered 175 views, with a balanced audience mix (44% followers, 55% non-followers)
- Instagram generated 60 interactions and 30 profile visits, highlighting strong engagement and increased intent to explore the brand

VI. Market Update

Market & Economy Updates

- India Outlook: United Nations projects steady ~6.4% GDP growth, strengthening through 2027 positioning India as a key regional growth engine.
- Insights from the Skyscanner survey include –
 - Outdoor and cultural experiences are key travel motivators.
 - 87% of the respondents said International travel is a focus for them in 2026.
 - Hotel selection is largely driven by experiences and offerings available.
- Booking.com study titled ‘How India Travels’ highlights the following –
 - Travel sentiment continues to remain strong.
 - Family reunions and trips with friends are the most important travel drivers.
 - Indian travelers are increasingly seeking connections and shared experiences from their journeys.

Airline Updates

- Etihad Airways: Strong U.S. network (6 routes) with high demand; leveraging Abu Dhabi preclearance and robust India connectivity (11 cities, ~30–40% U.S. traffic from India).
- British Airways: Expanding India operations for summer 2026 with more flights, bigger aircraft, and new twice-daily London–Bengaluru service.
- Air India: Cutting some international flights (June–July) due to high fuel costs and airspace restrictions, reducing frequencies from Delhi & Mumbai to major global cities.

Travel Trade Updates

- As per discussions with leading travel companies, including B2B platforms:
 - Demand for travel continues to remain strong
 - There is no negative sentiment towards the U.S.; the challenge is limited flight availability, with demand exceeding supply.
 - Confidence in transiting via the Middle Eastern hubs has improved, with Emirates, Etihad, and Qatar resuming all their flights from India and about 75-80% onwards from their respective hubs.

VI. Market Update

Media Updates

- JioStar, a joint venture between Disney and Reliance, has overtaken Google India in gross revenue, reporting \$4.03 billion in FY26, compared with Google India's \$3.86 billion. Meta India had an estimated revenue of \$3.11 billion—positioning JioStar as a serious third force in India's advertising and media ecosystem, with sports telecasts and streaming driving most of the growth. [Read more](#)
- India's OTT (over-the-top) streaming market has reached 1.45 billion monthly active users (MAUs), according to a recent CLSA report, reflecting 20% growth over the past three years. [Read more](#)
 - YouTube remains the dominant OTT platform in India, with 772 million users, followed by JioHotstar at 390 million. Netflix (at 92 million) has overtaken Amazon Prime Video (with 67 million) in user numbers.
 - Streaming growth is being fueled by smartphone adoption and affordable data, with India's smartphone user base projected to grow by nearly 20% to 885 million by FY28, expanding the addressable market for OTT platforms and streaming services.
- India's Connected TV (CTV) market is expanding rapidly, with the active CTV user base growing 87% year-over-year since 2024 to around 130 million users across 60–70 million homes. Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are emerging as key growth drivers for CTV adoption, supported by rising smart TV penetration, affordable devices, and better broadband access. [Read more](#)
- Creators are expected to influence nearly 30% of India's total retail spend by 2030, according to a joint Google-Deloitte report, signalling the growing role of influencers in shaping purchase decisions and consumer trust online. The broader e-commerce market is also projected to grow from \$90 billion to \$250 billion by 2030. [Read more](#)
- According to a FICCI-EY Media and Entertainment Report 2026, micro drama apps are entering India's mainstream streaming charts, with local platforms ranking among the country's top five most-downloaded video streaming apps—overtaking established OTT players such as Netflix and SonyLIV. This signals the rise of ultra-short, mobile-first storytelling as a major content category. [Read more](#)
- AI content consumption is surging in India, with AI-related stories generating over 15 million pageviews in the last 90 days, marking a sharp 92% increase compared with the previous 45-day period. [Read more](#)
- According to an EY media report, India ranks among the strongest global markets for print magazines, with nearly 27% of consumers reporting they paid for print magazines in the past year, placing the country ahead of markets like the US, UK, and Japan in print engagement. Moreover, magazines are seeing a revival in ad interest, a growing subscription base, and a targeted premium readership, as more advertisers consider them important platforms for brand exposure, with English-language titles now contributing 50% of total magazine advertising revenue. [Read more](#)
- India's printed news industry recorded a modest recovery in H2 2025, with total circulation reaching 29.1 million copies for the July–December 2025 period, translating into 2% growth, according to data from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC). [Read more](#)

VII. Actions

1. Travel South USA Webinar

- Plan to host two TSUSA webinars targeting 35 attendees each, leveraging the Sartha Global database and Zoom.
 - Webinar 1: 27 May with focus on North & East India
 - Webinar 2: 03 June with focus on West & South India

1. Newsletter

- May Edition - The Roots of Southern Food & The Bounty of the Sea
- Focus states – Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina & South Carolina

1. Social Media

Content Mix Optimization:

- 50% Inspiration (destinations, experiences)
- 40% Value-led (itineraries, tips, seasonal hooks)
- 10% Social proof (UGC, testimonials, creator content)
- Allocate budget to boost top 4–5 performing posts/week based on early engagement signals.
- Leverage cumulative budget (~\$400 from last few months) for targeted post promotions, focusing on high-performing creatives to maximise reach and engagement efficiency
- Adopt an always-on amplification approach, boosting posts consistently through the month instead of one-time bursts to sustain visibility
- Prioritise video-first content, given strong engagement and profile visit signals to drive deeper user interaction