



AUNZ REPORT

MAY 2026

Prepared By:

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ABOUT TSUSA

Global Partner Programming

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

Australia:

- 76,773 arrivals in April, down -14% for the month YoY, and YTD down -8.8% YTD
- Australia ranked 11th among long-haul markets for the month.

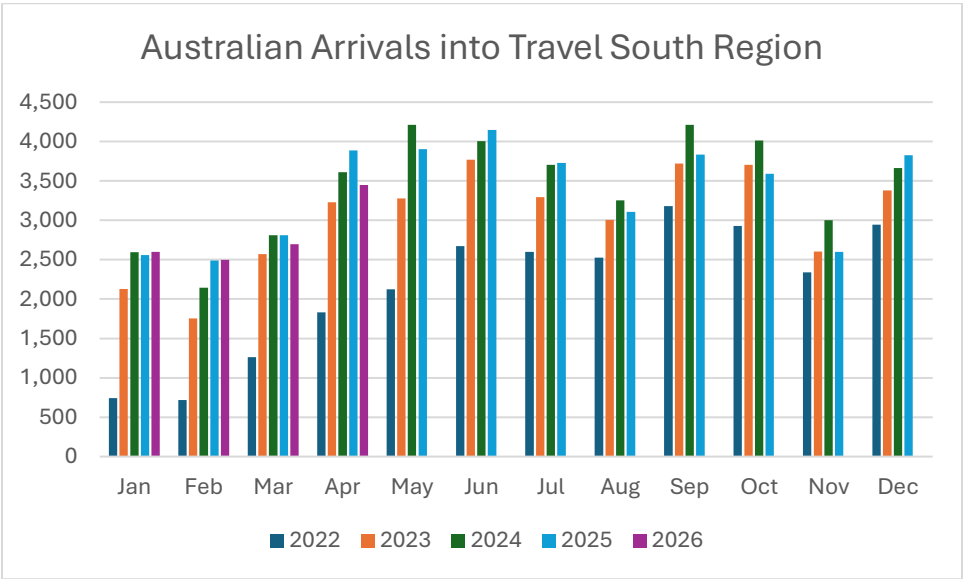
Ports of Entry – Australia to the USA:

- 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.

Port of entry	April arrivals	April 2026 vs 2025 difference	YTD Arrivals (Jan – Apr)	YTD, YOY difference
California	34,995	-21%	127,934	-10%
Hawaii	16,511	11%	36,825	-9%
New York	4,981	-32%	16,724	-23%
Texas	8,963	10%	36,519	13%
Florida	2,635	-8%	12,101	-7%
All other ports	8,688	-26%	35,463	-13%

First intended address – Travel South

- 3,449 Australians listed a Travel South state as their first intended address in April.





New Zealand:

16,291 arrivals to the USA from New Zealand in April, down 23% for the month YOY, and YTD down - 25.6% YOY.

Global Travel Demand from Australia.

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

818,990 Australians returned from an overseas trip in March, an increase of 7.6% on one year earlier.

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.
- Singapore likely to have seen significant growth year on year as the preferred transit hub to Europe as Australians avoid the middle east.

Rank	Country	March Visits	Percentage growth YOY
1	New Zealand	138,040	13%
2	Indonesia	121,980	5%
3	Japan	89,230	12%
4	Vietnam	58,110	26%
5	China	56,790	31%
6	India	56,090	5%
7	USA	54,600	-2%
8	Thailand	53,340	-1%
9	Singapore	32,890	21%
10	Philippines	26,920	15%





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Travel South Annual Plan
- Travel South Mission Planning
- June Newsletter
- Newcastle Events with Hunter Travel Group, MTA Expo & Lunch and Learn
- International Showcase invites
- Global Media Marketplace 2026 coverage and content





		Q1 TOTAL	Q2 TOTAL	Q3 TOTAL	April	May
9 partners AL/KY/LA /MS/MO/ NC/SC/TN /ROTS	Australia					
	Trade					
	Trade Meetings/Trainings	69	178	31	17	21
	Number of Agents Trained	114	226	28	10	82
	Travel Trade Newsletter Recipient	4068	15,920	11,369	3,722	3,699
	Trade Newsletter Open Rate	28.37%	27.27%	30.55%	26.33%	28.49%
	Managed Media					
	Media Meetings	15	39	6	7	3
	Total number of articles published	38	36	27	12	125
	Impressions	41,719,406	6,136,659	18,266,587	2,603,548	20,696,677
	PR Newsletter Recipient	364	1,057	1,071	360	356
	PR Newsletter Open Rate	47.80%	43.82%	46.70%	45.28%	48.60%
	Social Posts					
	Facebook Page					
	Followers	9,200	9,200	9,161	9,100	9,134
	Likes	9,200	27,600	27,553	9,100	9,134
	Facebook Posts					
	Reach	515	1,113	171,807	398	225
	Views	1,073	2,069	68,195	222	116
	Likes	8	14	0	4	0
	Comments	0	0	0	0	0
	Shares	0	0	0	0	0
	Instagram					
	Reach	21	18	11,608	9	9





	Views	527	762	29,144	76	48
	Followers	18	32	26	26	26
	Likes	25	20	18	8	9
	Comments	0	0	0	0	1
	Shares	0	0	0	0	0





II. COMMUNICATIONS & PR

- Global Media Marketplace 2026
- Travel South Annual Plan
- Travel South Mission Planning
- Earned media Coverage Book
- Global Media Marketplace 2026 coverage and content
- Global Market Media Place 25 media Coverage Book





COVERAGE:

ESCAPE

The dying art of the spontaneous restaurant walk-in is ruining food for me

Bring back the risky thrill of walking into restaurants on a whim.

[Alexandra Carlton](#)

4 min read May 1, 2026 - 12:00PM

ESCAPE

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Yet if I think back, some of my best restaurant finds have happened when I've simply stumbled into a good meal. There was the time I was wandering around the Garden District of New Orleans with the sole purpose of admiring the ancient magnolias draped with green and purple Mardi Gras beads that swayed over every front gate. The magnolias were instantly forgotten when I spotted a café called Le Petit Bleu next to the famous Commander's Palace restaurant. I marched inside on a hunch and ate the best bowl of gumbo I tried all trip (though I got a hot tip from a regular that the turtle soup is even better – I'll know for my next visit).





le LUXURY ESCAPES

TWIN TOWNS

EAT

Mosquito Supper Club

Part dinner party, part cultural preservation project. Seasonal tasting menus spotlight Gulf seafood and regional traditions, served communally in an intimate setting. An adjacent bar takes walk-ins and serves a la carte plates and bar snacks. Come curious, trust the kitchen and let the conversation flow as easily as the wine.

DRINK

Manolito

A Havana-leaning bar with serious credentials, Manolito specialises in daiquiris done properly. Expect fresh, balanced cocktails and a no-nonsense approach to Cuban rum. The menu is tight, the execution sharp and the mood unfussy. Perfect for a quick drink that will likely turn into two.

DO

Music Box Village

Musical structures built to be touched, played and heard. Live performances often activate this space, but wandering solo is just as rewarding. It's inventive, hands-on and a refreshing change of pace from traditional venues.

EXPLORE

St. Charles Line

Climb aboard and let New Orleans unfold. These historic green streetcars run from Canal Street deep into Uptown, gliding past stately Garden District mansions, Loyola and Tulane campuses, and a parade of oak-lined avenues. Hop off near Lafayette Cemetery No. 1 or Audubon Park for a wander.

THE LUX FILES

STAY

Bourbon Orleans Hotel

Tucked between Bourbon Street buzz and quieter residential corners, this hotel offers the best of both worlds. Expect comfortable rooms, a leafy courtyard and a sense of history without the dust sheets. Perfect for travellers who want easy access to the action but a calm retreat at night.



Street music isn't background noise in these two cities – it's the main event. New Orleans leans into brass bands and second lines; Rio answers with samba circles and beachfront beats. Different hemispheres, same instinct: when the music starts, you move.



New Orleans

This city runs on contradictions and doesn't apologise for any of them. Grand mansions sit blocks from corner dive bars, funeral marches turn festive. James Beard-recognised chefs plate alongside third-generation po'boy shops. New Orleans has reinvented itself repeatedly, each time emerging louder and more determined to enjoy itself.

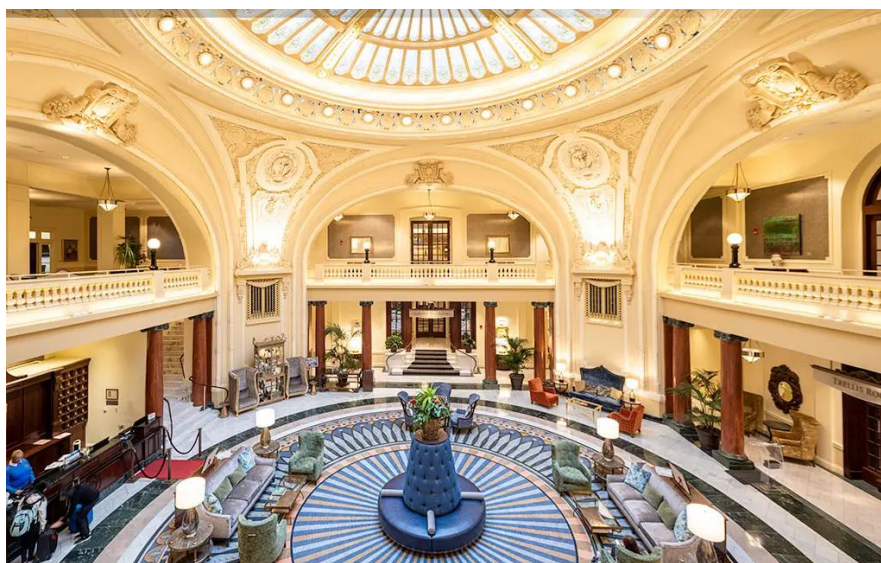




explore

No one has ever heard of this town – but they should stay at the hotel

The former gossip house of senators, soldiers and socialites.



There are hotels that impress you, and there are hotels that make you stop mid-step and stare upwards. The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa is the latter.

THE BACKSTORY

In the heart of downtown Mobile, Alabama, this grande dame of the Deep South is all sweeping staircases, glittering chandeliers and old-world swagger – a place where senators, soldiers, socialites and presidents once gathered beneath stained glass domes to gossip, plot and celebrate.





For travellers wanting to experience a different side of America as the country barrels towards its 250th birthday celebrations in July, 2026, there may be few more fascinating stays than this. Because while cities such as New York, Boston and Washington tend to dominate the American history conversation, Mobile quietly lays claim to some of the nation's richest – and most complicated – stories.

This is a hotel that predates the Civil War; that has burned down and been rebuilt multiple times; that served as the headquarters of future US president Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812. Today, it's one of the South's most unexpectedly glamorous stays.

The original Battle House Hotel opened in 1852, built by brothers James and John Battle on a prime corner of Mobile's bustling port district. In its heyday, this was *the* place to see and be seen in the South – a social hub for wealthy cotton traders, politicians and military figures arriving by steamboat.

Although the current structure dates largely to 1908, as with a lot of grand American hotels, it fell into decline, and was shuttered completely by the 1970s, sitting vacant for decades – a ghostly relic in the middle of downtown Mobile.

The hotel was ultimately revived by the Retirement Systems of Alabama – essentially Alabama's version of a giant public-sector superannuation fund – which invested heavily in restoring historic landmarks across the state.

Officially, the Battle House is a four-star property. In reality, it feels considerably more luxurious than many five-star hotels, thanks largely to its glamorous sense of occasion.





VISIT USA AUSTRALIA WELCOMES AU/NZ DELEGATES TO IPW IN FORT LAUDERDALE



Edited by Staff Writers

Published on: 20th May 2026 at 12:58 PM

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Guests got into the spirit of celebration.



Latest News



APT Luxury Travel launches 100-Day World Tour to mark its centenary
June 3, 2026



Beyond Borders on the Road in Adelaide and Perth tickets now on sale
June 3, 2026



Trafalgar river cruise incentive can earn advisors uncapped earnings
June 3, 2026



Hoshino Resorts opens new Legacy Hotel in former Yokohama City Hall
June 3, 2026

Visit USA Australia has launched IPW with its annual AU/NZ IPW Welcome Reception, held at House on the River in Fort Lauderdale ahead of what promises to be a busy week of trade activity.

Sponsored by New Orleans & Company and Explore Louisiana, with support from TravMedia and Visit USA NZ, the riverside event brought together Australian and New Zealand delegates, media and Visit USA members for cocktails and industry networking.

Special guests included Nick Adams, Special Presidential Envoy for American Tourism, Exceptionalism and Value, alongside representatives from the U.S. Commercial Service and the National Travel and Tourism Office.




Thursday 21st May 2026

Visit USA catches vibes at IPW event

THE vibes were high at Visit USA Australia's annual AU/NZ IPW Welcome Reception at the charmingly eclectic House on the River in Fort Lauderdale.

Proudly sponsored by New Orleans & Company and Explore Louisiana, with support from TravMedia and Visit USA NZ, the relaxed event was a chance for members, delegates and media to catch up and reconnect over cocktails and canapés ahead of a busy week.

Special guests at the reception included Special Presidential Envoy, American Tourism, Exceptionalism and Value, Nick Adams and representatives from US Commercial Services and the National Travel & Tourism Office.

Newly appointed Visit USA Australia President Belinda Harvy said the much-loved event is always a fantastic opportunity to bring everyone together, reconnect with industry friends and partners and celebrate the importance of the Australian and New Zealand market to US tourism partners.



GUESTS brought the energy to Visit USA's event.



BELINDA Harvy and Aida Osta, Visit USA Australia with Corey Marshall, Visit USA ANZ.



OLIVA Markase, New Orleans & Company; Lexie Miliatis, Gate 7; and Hayley Lyson, italktravel.



EVA Huezo, Visit California; Lexie Miliatis, Gate 7; Tristan Freedman, Brand USA; and Penny Brand, Gate 7.



SALLY Miles and Mel Newton from Linkd Tourism.



CONNECTIONS and conversations at Visit USA Australia's welcome reception.



EVENT sponsors New Orleans & Company and Explore Louisiana.



ATTENDEES get into the spirit of the event.





Visit USA Australia hosts IPW welcome event in Fort Lauderdale

| USA / DAILY NEWS |



Visit USA Australia has kicked off IPW 2026 with its annual Australian and New Zealand welcome reception, bringing together delegates, travel industry partners and U.S. tourism representatives ahead of the week-long trade event.

Held at House on the River in Fort Lauderdale, the event was sponsored by New Orleans & Company and Explore Louisiana, with support from TravMedia and Visit USA NZ.





WENTWORTH MANSION CHARLESTON: GRAND SOUTHERN LUXURY STAY

Posted by Robert La Bua | May 26, 2026 | [Headline News](#), [Global Travel Connoisseur](#), [GTM Reviews](#) | 0 📌 | ★★★★★



One of the most charming travel destinations in the United States, Charleston is the largest city in South Carolina. At one time, Charleston was the richest city in America; nowadays, its rich history is recalled with a bittersweet past with which it has come to terms with admirable candour. Many of the impressive residences along the famous Battery were homes to families whose wealth was based on the labour of enslaved people who worked the plantations where valuable crops were grown. Today, these homes are a testament to the resilience of the enslaved as much as to the elite lifestyle in the American South of the 18th and 19th centuries. Charleston's entire city centre is replete with well-preserved examples of Greek Revival, Georgian, and Victorian architecture that imbue the city with its historical atmosphere.





VISIT USA SETS THE TONE AS IPW OPENS IN FLORIDA

Posted by Stephen Morton | May 21, 2026 | [Headline News](#), [Florida](#), [Trade Events](#) | 0 🗨️ | ★★★★★



Not the speeches, not the name badges, not even the carefully choreographed schedules that follow, but that opening gathering where people decide, quietly and often subconsciously, whether the week ahead will deliver something meaningful or simply more of the same.

In Fort Lauderdale, Visit USA Australia got that balance right.

Their annual AU/NZ Welcome Reception, held this year at the slightly offbeat but undeniably charming House on the River, didn't try too hard, and that, frankly, was its strength. A bit of breeze off the water, a glass that never seemed empty, and just enough Louisiana flavour to remind everyone that America still knows how to put on a show without looking like it's trying.

This wasn't theatre. It was familiarity. And in a business built on relationships, that still counts for plenty.

The room filled quickly with Australian and New Zealand delegates, media, and industry regulars, many of whom have been circling IPW for years. There were handshakes that didn't need introductions, conversations picked up mid-sentence from last year, and the usual quiet scanning of the room to see who's here, who's new, and who matters this time around.

Among the official contingent was Nick Adams, serving as Special Presidential Envoy for American Tourism, Exceptionalism and Value, one of those roles that sound grand but, in practice, signal how seriously the United States is taking its tourism recovery and growth story.

Also present were representatives from the U.S. Commercial Service and the National Travel and Tourism Office, reinforcing what has become increasingly clear: the US isn't leaving its international visitation to chance.

At the centre of the evening, however, was Visit USA Australia's new President, Belinda Harvy, stepping into the role with a steady hand and, refreshingly, without unnecessary fanfare.

"The Visit USA Welcome Reception is always a valuable opportunity to bring our delegation and members together ahead of a busy week, celebrate the strong connections across our industry and showcase the significance of the Australian and New Zealand market to our US partners," she said.





3AW Afternoons with Tony Moclair

Travel with Justin Jamieson - Thu 21 May, 2026

3AW

MELBOURNE

AFTERNOONS

TONY MOCLAIR

00:00

23:44

Travel with Justin Jamieson - Thu 21 May, 2026

View description

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Published May 21, 2026, 2:48 PM





explore

Nashville hot chicken showdown: Hattie B's v Prince's and the best of the rest

I tried Nashville's hottest chicken. One nearly broke me.

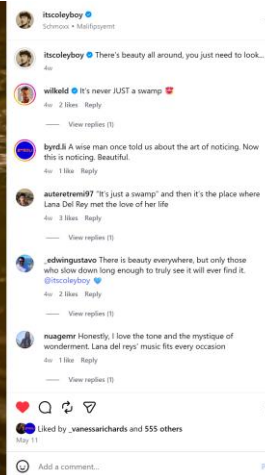
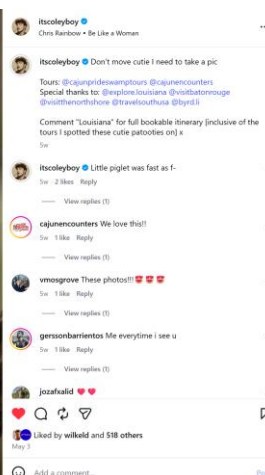
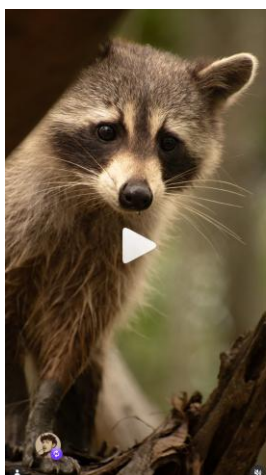
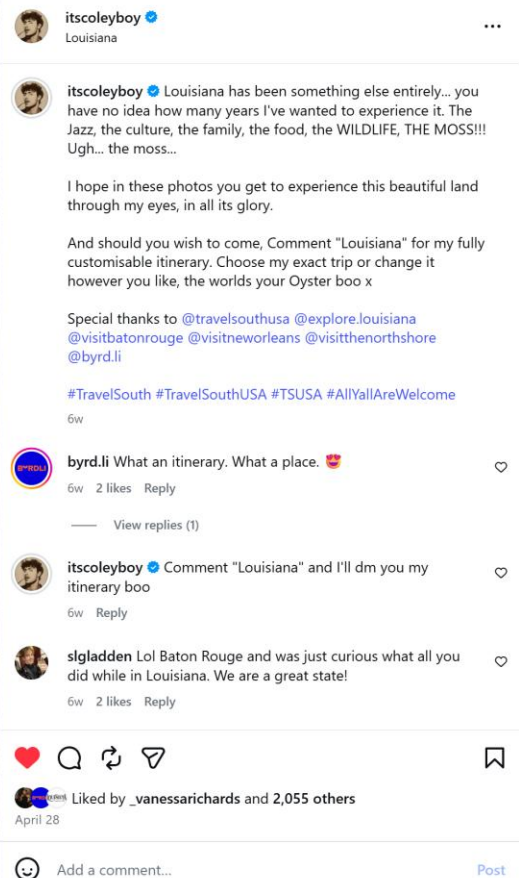


Like all good food legends, Nashville hot chicken begins with sex, revenge ... and a woman who deserves more credit than history gives her. The story goes that Thorton Prince, a handsome man-about-town, came home after one late night too many. The next day, his furious girlfriend decided to punish him by loading his fried chicken breakfast with a brutal quantity of spice.

It backfired spectacularly. Prince loved it - and by the 1930s, his family had turned that act of culinary vengeance into a business. Today, Prince's Hot Chicken is still regarded as the original, the place from which Nashville's fiery obsession spread across the city and then the world.



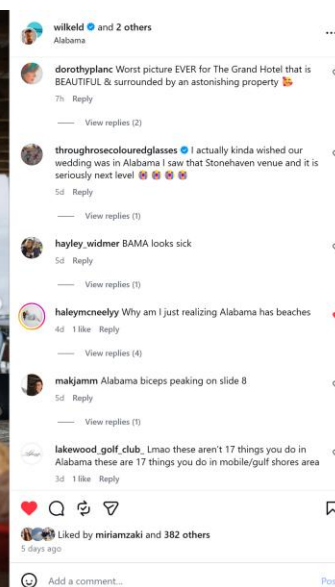
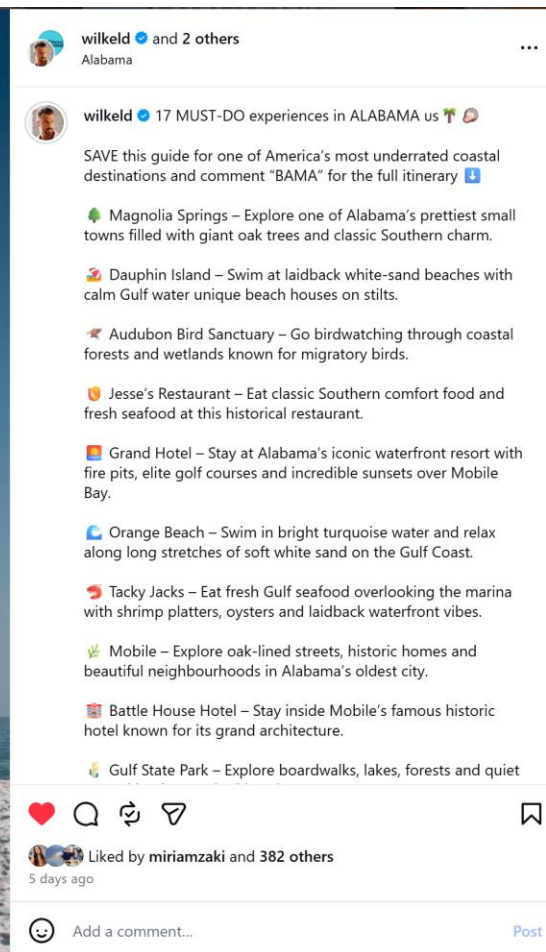
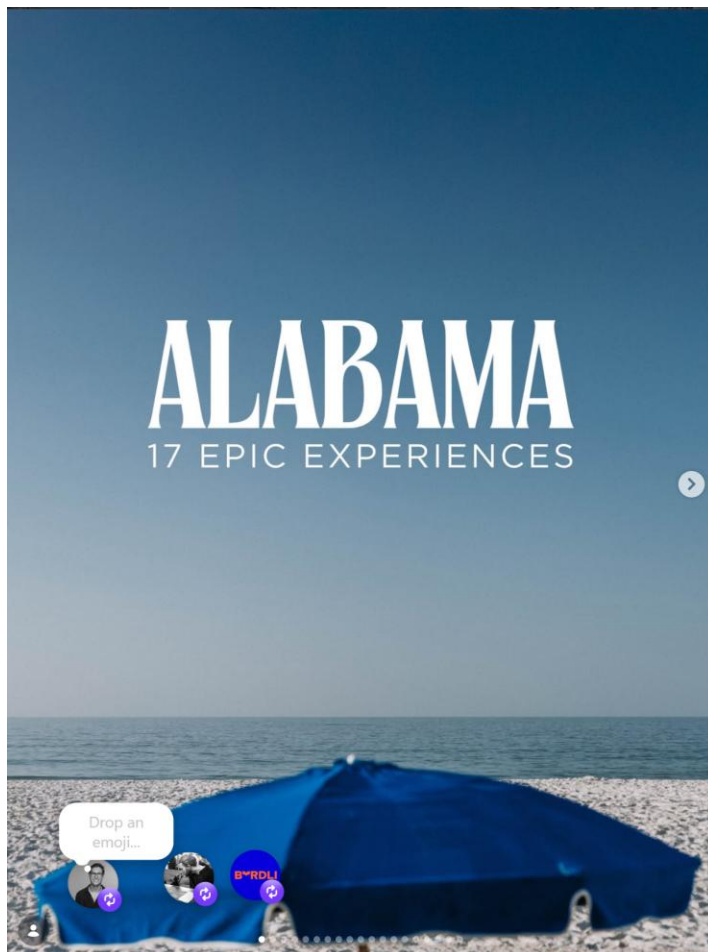
Cole Dickson, Louisiana Pre-Fam

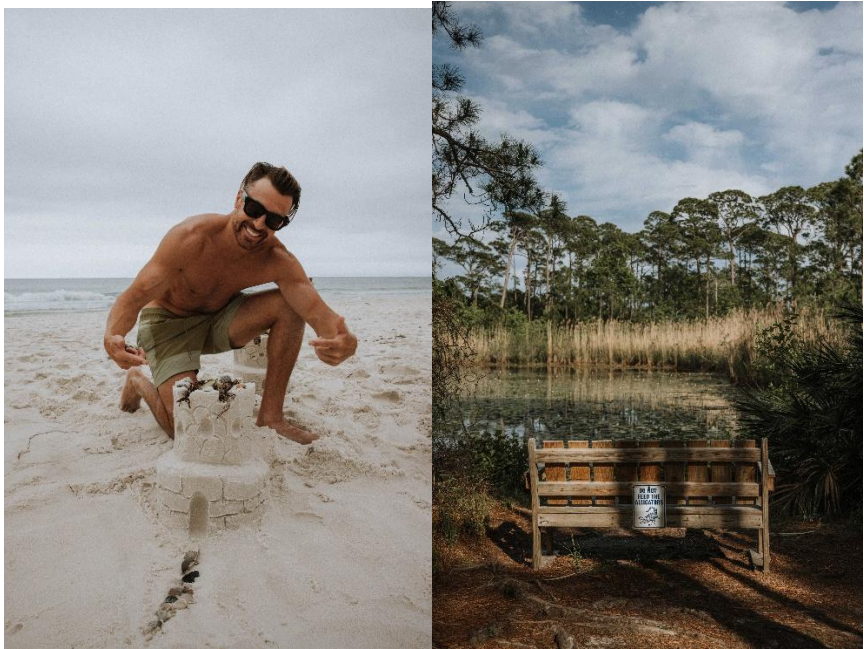






Will Salkeld, Alabama Pre-Fam





Creator's itineraries

Find **Will Salkeld**'s curated travel itineraries.

 8 DAYS



Alabama Unfiltered

 Alabama, USA

 Hotels  Experiences included

8 days / 7 Nights
Curated by Will Salkeld
From AUD \$3,493 per person
Ground package only. Flights Available as an add-on....

8 Days from

\$3,493_{AUD}

Per person





COMMUNICATIONS & PR

Media Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up/Next step
Anna Shahab, Freelance Writer based in NZ, writing for Stuff, NZ Herald, Kira Ora, Escape, Qantas	We recently connected with Anna Shahab to explore potential editorial opportunities. Anna has a strong interest in food-led travel and culinary storytelling, but is also open to receiving pitches and considering famil opportunities across a broad range of travel topics, particularly those with a strong destination angle or experience-led hook. As a freelance journalist, she aims to secure multiple commissions around each destination or story idea, making her a valuable contact for destinations with several angles to explore.	Follow up in new fiscal.
Qantas Mag, Faith Campbell and Katrina O’Brien	We recently connected with the editorial team at Qantas Magazine to discuss upcoming opportunities and editorial planning. The title is currently refining its editorial structure across food and wine, style, wellness and business, with the team generally working around six months in advance and currently planning late 2026 and early 2027 content. There is strong interest in fresh destination angles, particularly new openings, milestone moments and stories that feel distinctive for their well-travelled audience. Solo famil opportunities are preferred where possible, allowing contributors to develop more exclusive destination-led stories tailored specifically to Qantas readers.	None currently.
9Travel, Kristine Tarbert	Met with Kristine to discuss Nine.com.au’s site relaunch which is planned for 1 June. While details were mostly under wraps, this will see a renewed and refreshed focus on Nine’s travel content. Other notes: Very interested in sport-led stories and how we can kill two birds with one stone for travel and sport coverage.	None currently





	Receives many famil invitations (more than 10 each week), so they need to be more discerning with how and who attends these. They only send on staff writers to cover, and do not work with freelancers in a paid capacity. Are happy to write desk research-led stories when a writer has previously travelled to a destination – this allows them to insert their own insights into the story	
Melbourne Media Breakfast	Invites, RSVPs and follow up for Melbourne Media Breakfast	
B2B Media Appointments	Invites, RSVPs and follow up for B2B Media Appointments	





III. TRAVEL TRADE

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

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up /Next step
Newcastle Lunch & Learn	Lunch and learn training with 27 Advisors	N/A
Hunter Travel Group Training Event	Evening Training event with 45 Hunter Travel Group agent	N/A
MTA Training Breakfast	Training with 7 MTA Advisors @Anita, please add all the attendees Amanda Dowell – adowell@mtatravel.com.au Sarah Fenton – sfenton@mtatravel.com.au Andrea Borserio – aborserio@mtatravel.com.au	N/A
MTA Travel Expo	Attendance at MTA Newcastle consumer expo with MTA.	N/A
Caroline Macias Lea Toledano Travel Agent Cartier World Travel	Training and itinerary support for a client trip to the south.	N/A
Erin Beckford Personal Travel Manager Travel Manager	Invite to Anna Bay Travel Managers expo. Training and a mail out of collateral and swag for prizes	N/A
Hayley Lyson Mobile Travel Agent Italk Travel	Update on TS product and training on the region. Hayley will be attending IPW for the first time.	N/A
Kelly Clive Country Manager AU/NZ Delta Airlines	Discussion on mission support with prizes and attendance at Auckland and Melbourne agent events. Delta are supplying 1 x Delta Flight to the South in Auckland and 2 x Delta Flights to the South in Melbourne	N/A





Oliver Thorpe Casper Tromp Jeremy Toy ROTS Musicians	Coordination with guitarist, and pianist for Travel South Mission and Robin Barnes performance in Auckland, Melbourne and Sydney	N/A
Alison Hopkirk National Account Manager NZ Delta Air Lines	Liaison and coordination with Alison on Auckland event and prize giveaway from Delta.	N/A
Yvette Montell Agency Sales Executive VIC/TAS/SA Global Sales Delta Air Lines	Liaison and coordination with Alison on Auckland event and prize giveaway from Delta.	N/A
Jodie Collins Senior Manager- Tourism Board Partnerships Luxury Escapes	Liaison with Jodie for Travel South Mission meeting in Melbourne, plus attendance at International Showcase.	N/A
Joran Carpenter Trade Partnerships Manager Helloworld	Liaison with Jordan for Travel South Mission meeting in Melbourne, plus attendance for Madison at International Showcase.	
Gordie Bayne Founder Showponi	Liaison with Gordie for Travel South Mission meeting in Auckland.	N/A
Paula Watson Head of Long Haul & Supplier Relations Shona Bray North American Product Manager House of Travel	Liaison with Paula and Shona for Travel South Mission meeting in Auckland, plus more information on attending International Showcase in Nashville.	N/A
Auckland VIP Event	Invites, RSVPs and follow up for Auckland VIP lunch event with 20 attendees.	N/A
Auckland Agent Event	Invites, RSVPs and follow up for Auckland Agent Event with 80 attendees.	N/A
Melbourne Agent Event	Invites, RSVPs and follow up for Melbourne Agent Event with 80 attendees.	N/A





B2B Trade Appointments	Invites, RSVPs and follow up with 12 buyers for B2B Trade Event.	N/A
Consul General VIP Event	Invites, RSVPs and follow up for Consul General VIP Event with 65 attendees and 25 Travel South Delegations	N/A
IPW Visit USA Welcome party	Attendance at Visit USA welcome party at IPW sponsored by Louisiana and New Orleans in preparation for 2027	N/A





CAMPAIGNS & ACTIVITY

Newcastle Lunch & Learn – 27 Agents





Agencies	Name	Email
Bfree Tours	Brooke Gibson	admin@bfreetours.com.au
Braga Travel Freight & IMT P/L	Beverley Tranter	bevtran2010@hotmail.com
Braga Travel Freight & IMT P/L	Anne Grant	bevtran2010@hotmail.com
Embark travel	Michelle Barker	michelle@embark-travel.com.au
Evolution Travel	Tony Kelly	tonya.kelly@envoyage.com.au
Flight Centre Cardiff	Toby Rumbel	toby.rumbel@flightcentre.com.au
Flight Centre Cardiff	Bronte Talbot	bronte.talbot@flightcentre.com.au
Flight Centre Charlestown	Liv Brown	liv.brown@flightcentre.com.au
Flight Centre Kotara	Marni Bell-Waights	marni.bellwaights@flightcentre.com.au
Flight Centre The Junction	Katie Holmes	katie.holmes1@flightcentre.com.au
Flight Centre Toronto	Courtney Hodges	courtney.hodges@flightcentre.com.au
Flight Centre Tuggerah	Phoenix Edwards	phoenix.edwards@flightcentre.com.au
Free 2 Travel	Natasha Gouw	natasha@f2t.com.au
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Home & Afar Travel (Mobile travel Advisor)	Cath Alston	cath@haatravel.com.au
Home & Afar Travel	Kylie Amos	kylie@haatravel.com.au
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Jade Henry Travel	Jade Henry	jade.henry@envoyage.com.au
Travel with Karen	Karen Grayson	itravelwithkaren@gmail.com
TravelManagers	Laura Smith	laura.smith@travelmanagers.com.au
TravelManagers	Peter Carmichael	peter.carmichael@travelmanagers.com.au
TravelManagers	Erin Beckford	erin.beckford@travelmanagers.com.au





Newcastle Hunter Travel Group Training – 45 Agents





MTA Breakfast Training – 7 MTA Agents



MTA Regional Expo





Visit USA IPW Welcome Events





Chris Watson EDM - Contiki Beats, Boots and Besties Tour
Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans

BOOTS, BEATS & BESTIES

Nashville to Dallas with
Ladies Love Country
Departing 7 November 2028

Grab your boots and round up your besties – this is the ultimate USA adventure. From the neon lights of Nashville to the honky-tonks of Texas, you'll be line dancing, singing along, and ticking off all the must-do sights along the way from the Country Music Hall of Fame, Graceland to the NASA Space Center and beyond. Think iconic cities, unforgettable nights, and a whole lot of laughs, all hosted by Holly & Grace from Ladies Love Country.

Scan Me

Boots, Beats & Besties - with Ladies Love Country & Contiki

Grab your boots and round up your besties – this is the ultimate USA adventure. From the neon lights of Nashville to the honky-tonks of Texas, you'll be line dancing, singing along, and ticking off all the must-do sights along the way from the Country Music Hall of Fame, Graceland to the NASA Space Center and beyond. Think iconic cities, unforgettable nights, and a whole lot of laughs, all hosted by Holly & Grace from Ladies Love Country.

More Details - [Check it out here](#)

Map

Pricing

Twin Share Price	Single Supp Price
\$6,999	\$8,798

Price Dates and Conditions

TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome USA



Newsletters – The Roots of Southern Food & The Bounty of the Sea

TRADE Newsletter – Recipients: **3699** Open Rate: 1054 (**28.49%**)

PR Newsletter – Recipients: **356** Open Rate: 173 (**48.60%**)

TravelSouth
USA



The Roots of Southern Food & The Bounty of the Sea

From coastlines to farmlands, the South's culinary story is shaped by rich traditions, local ingredients, and a deep connection to land and water. Fresh seafood, slow-smoked barbecue, and farm to table dining come together to create a region defined by bold flavour and heritage. From dock to table and pit to plate, every dish reflects craftsmanship, culture, and community, inviting travellers to explore a food journey rooted in history, innovation, and unforgettable taste.

[Learn More](#)



TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome USA



TENNESSEE

A Journey of Craft, Flavour and Pairing

In Tennessee, the Whiskey Trail's Cork to Fork Culinary Trail pairs local distilleries with nearby restaurants for spirit infused, chef driven dishes. Think maple bread pudding, smoked bone in pork loin, and creative seasonal plates inspired by regional spirits. Visitors can explore curated pairings through a digital passport designed to guide a tasting journey that blends craftsmanship, flavour, and the state's rich whiskey heritage.

[Read More](#)



MISSISSIPPI

Where Southern Comfort Meets Coastal Flavour

Mississippi's food story is rooted in soul and shaped by the sea. From slow cooked greens, cornbread, and Delta tamales to Gulf fresh shrimp and oysters, every dish reflects deep cultural heritage and bold flavour. In Jackson, signature Comeback Sauce adds a tangy twist, while coastal kitchens serve dock to table seafood, blending comforting Southern traditions with the fresh bounty of the Gulf.

[Read More](#)





LOUISIANA

Fresh Seafood, Straight from Source to Plate

In Louisiana, fresh seafood is at the heart of Creole and Cajun cuisine. From fishing off Grand Isle to bayou shrimping and freshwater catches at Lake Martin, the waters deliver bold, unforgettable flavour. A must-try is charbroiled oysters, made famous at Drago's Seafood Restaurant, grilled with butter, garlic, herbs, and cheese. From dock to table, Louisiana offers a true taste of the Gulf's rich culinary heritage.

[Read More](#)



KENTUCKY

Where Tradition Meets Modern Taste

Kentucky's culinary scene continues to earn national recognition, with celebrated chefs and farm to table dining leading the way. Seasonal menus highlight local ingredients and creative techniques, reflecting the state's rich food culture. Beyond fine dining, Kentucky's barbecue heritage stands strong, especially in Western Kentucky, where slow cooked mutton remains a regional specialty. Together, innovation and tradition define a culinary legacy that continues to evolve.

[Read More](#)





NORTH CAROLINA

A Taste Shaped by Land and Sea

North Carolina's culinary story begins in its fields, where generations of farmers have shaped a food culture rooted in simplicity and flavour. From sweet potatoes to iconic local brands, tradition meets innovation across the state. Along the coast, oyster farming and fresh seafood like shrimp, crab, and flounder define the table, reflecting a deep connection between land and water and offering a true taste of North Carolina's rich heritage.

[Read More](#)



MISSOURI

Smoke, Spice and Time-Honoured Craft

Missouri is best known for its legendary barbecue, with Kansas City at the heart of the tradition. Visitors can explore the craft behind smoked meats and sauces through interactive experiences that highlight both local favourites and regional styles from across the country. Rooted in community and storytelling, this rich barbecue culture showcases how smoke, spice, and tradition come together to define one of America's most iconic cuisines.

[Read More](#)





SOUTH CAROLINA

A Culinary Story of Coast and Countryside
South Carolina's food identity is shaped by the connection between its rich farming traditions and the bounty of the Atlantic. This balance creates a cuisine that is both rooted in heritage and constantly evolving. From field to coast, every dish reflects a blend of land, water, and history. More than a meal, food here tells a story of culture, community, and the natural resources that define the state.

[Read More](#)



ALABAMA

Rich Traditions, Bold Southern Flavours
Alabama's food roots blend African, Indigenous, and European influences into a rich, soulful cuisine. Barbecue anchors the tradition, slow smoked over hickory and served with regional sauces, including North Alabama's signature white sauce. Along the Gulf Coast, fresh shrimp, oysters, crab, and fish showcase the state's seafood bounty, while classics like pecan pie and banana pudding reflect a legacy of warm Southern hospitality and tradition.

[Read More](#)



FIND OUT MORE:



CONTACT INFO:

Phone: 02 9158 9314 | Email: Jacob@gate7.com.au





TRAVEL SOUTH MISION

Auckland and Melbourne Travel Agent Event Invites & RSVPS



**If you only attend one trade event this year,
make it this one.**

We're bringing the energy of Travel South USA to Auckland led
by the Songbird of New Orleans, Robin Barnes.

Great Prizes, Great Partners, Great Destinations – A night you'll
actually remember.

Event Details

Where: HI-SO Rooftop Bar, 67 Customs Street East, Auckland
When: Monday, 15th of June 2026 | 6:00-9:00PM
RSVP: Via the link below before 25th of May

Spots are limited, non transferable and this one will fill fast.
RSVP 25th May.

[RSVP](#)

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

GATE 7

Enjoying updates from Travel South?
Explore more of Gate 7's destinations.
[Manage your subscriptions here.](#)



**If you only attend one trade event this year,
make it this one.**

We're bringing the energy of Travel South USA to Melbourne led
by the Songbird of New Orleans, Robin Barnes.

Great Prizes, Great Partners, Great Destinations – A night you'll
actually remember.

Event Details

Where: The Toff, Level 2, Entry via Curtain House 252 Swanston St,
Melbourne VIC 3000
When: Tuesday, 16th of June 2026 | 6:00-9:00PM
RSVP: Via the link below before 26th of May

Spots are limited, non transferable and this one will fill fast.
RSVP 26th May.

[RSVP](#)

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

GATE 7

Enjoying updates from Travel South?
Explore more of Gate 7's destinations.





Auckland & Sydney VIP Event Invites & RSVPs



YOU'RE INVITED

Pull up a chair... we've saved you a spot.

Travel South USA invites you to experience a region where the flavours run deep, the music tells a story, and every moment feels just a little more alive.

This is the South, where One Region, Infinite Adventures comes to life through the people, the places, and the stories you'll be selling long after the night is over.

Join us for a VIP lunch designed to inspire and connect.

Monday 15 June
12-2pm
Origine Mezzanine
Level 2, 172 Quay Street, Commercial Bay, Auckland

Please RSVP to Penny@Gate7.com with any dietary requirements by Monday 11 May
Spots are limited.

All Y'all Are Welcome.





Sydney Consul General Invites & RSVPS



Consul General of the United States of America

Jeremy Cornforth
requests the pleasure of your company
to a networking reception to meet with
Travel South USA
representatives

★ ★ ★

Consul General's Residence
20 Wallaroy Road
Woollabra NSW 2025

Thursday June 18, 2026
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Business Attire

RSVP by May 27
via [RSVP link](#)

SOCIAL CONTENT UPDATE

Gate 7 Private AU/NZ Travel Trade Community – 724 Members



Gate 7 Private AU/NZ Travel Trade Community

If your perfect day starts with muddy boots, fresh mountain air and the sound of rushing water, it's time to put Tennessee on your hiking bucket list. From the jaw-dropping beauty of Fall Creek Falls to hidden waterfall gems tucked deep within lush forests, every trail leads to something unforgettable.

🔥 Chase waterfalls through rugged gorg... See more



[View insights](#)

78 post reach >



Gate 7 Private AU/NZ Travel Trade Community

 Sandrine LG
[Admin](#) · · May 27 at 1:37 AM · 🎵 Lovely Day · Bill Withers · 🌐

While in the Blue Ridge Mountains, VA - check out Staunton!

If you need a break from the big cities.. from Roanoke.. we went up north and overnight in charming Staunton. Hotel 24 South hosted us, one of the historic hotels of America.

Staunton is more than you might expect. It's a friendly combination of small town USA and a vibrant cultural scene. It's the place you go to stroll red brick sidewalks, admire stunning architecture and shop locally-owned downtown boutiques. It's ... See more



+14





Gate 7 Private AU/NZ Travel Trade Community

Admin

Group expert

- May 20 at 3:09 PM

🌟HOUMAS HOUSE ESTATE & GARDENS🌟

- Explore Louisiana

Step back in time and experience the elegance of the South at one of Louisiana's most iconic estates 🏡🌿

Known as the "Crown Jewel of Louisiana's River Road," HOUMAS

HOUSE ESTATE & GARDENS features:

- 🏡 38 acres of stunning gardens
- 🏡 A beautifully restored historic mansion
- 🗺️ Guided tours with costumed storytellers
- 🍽️ Authentic Louisiana dining experiences
- 🌿 Southern charm around every corner

Whether you're a history lover, garden enthusiast, or simply looking for a unique Louisiana experience, **HOUMAS HOUSE ESTATE & GARDENS** is a must-visit destination between New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

📍 Plan your visit today: <https://houmashouse.com/tour/houmas-house-mansion-and-gardens-tour>

Penny Brand

Admin

Group expert

🔖 Top contributor

- May 12 at 12:49 PM

MELBOURNE TRAVEL AGENTS... TRAVEL SOUTH USA IS HEADING YOUR WAY!

Get ready to experience the sounds, flavours and stories of the American South at our upcoming Travel South USA Agent Event in Melbourne!

Whether you're selling first-time USA travellers, music lovers, foodies or repeat USA clients looking for something different... this is one you won't want to miss.

📍 Melbourne - The Toff

📅 Tuesday 16th June

🕒 6-9pm

Spots are limited, so get in quick! See less

EVENTS.HUMANITIX.COM

Travel South Melbourne

Penny Brand

Admin

Group expert

🔖 Top contributor

- May 12 at 12:54 PM

AUCKLAND TRAVEL AGENTS... THE SOUTH IS COMING TO NEW ZEALAND!

Get ready for an unforgettable night celebrating the music, culture and iconic road trips of the American South.

Travel South USA is bringing together partners from across the region for a vibrant trade event designed to inspire your next USA bookings and give you fresh ideas for your clients looking beyond the usual hotspots.

From legendary music cities and soul-filled food experiences to scenic drives, and authentic Southern charm... discover why the South delivers one of the most memorable USA holidays on the map.

Meet key Southern USA partners with plenty of Southern hospitality along the way

Perfect for agents selling repeat USA travellers, foodies, music lovers, multi-generational holidays and clients looking for deeper, more authentic travel experiences.

📍 Auckland Hi So

📅 Monday 15th June

🕒 6-9pm

Spaces are limited, so get in quick! See less

EVENTS.HUMANITIX.COM

Travel South Auckland







Penny Brand
Admin · Group expert · Top contributor · May 4 · 🌐

North Carolina is building a foodie reputation that's hard to ignore.

From the creative kitchens of Asheville to the rising culinary scene in Raleigh and Durham, this is where Southern tradition meets serious innovation. Chefs are pushing boundaries with hyper-local ingredients, reworking classic dishes, and delivering experiences that feel both grounded and completely fresh. It's all about flavour!

For clients chasing the next big U.S. food destination... this is one to watch!

[\[https://guide.michelin.com/.../the-cities-making-north-...\]](https://guide.michelin.com/.../the-cities-making-north-...)[\[https://guide.michelin.com/.../the-cities-making-north-...\]](https://guide.michelin.com/.../the-cities-making-north-...) See less



GUIDE.MICHELIN.COM
The Cities Making North Carolina a World-Class Food Destination

Instagram:





travelsouthusa.au · Follow



travelsouthusa.au · 6d



South Carolina's Culinary Story of Coast & Countryside

South Carolina's food identity is shaped by the connection between its farming traditions and Atlantic bounty. From field to coast, dishes reflect a blend of land, water, and history. Rooted in heritage yet constantly evolving, the state's cuisine tells a story of culture, community, and the natural resources that define every bite.



@discoverer.sc



1







6 days ago

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🔥🌊 Alabama's Barbecue & Coastal Flavor

Alabama's food roots blend African, Indigenous, and European influences into a soulful cuisine. Barbecue anchors the tradition—slow-smoked over hickory and served with regional sauces, including North Alabama's famous white sauce.

Along the Gulf Coast, shrimp, oysters, crab, and fish highlight the state's seafood bounty. 🌊 while classics like

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May 20

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🌾🌊 From Fields to Coast: North Carolina's Food Heritage

North Carolina's culinary story begins in its fields, where generations of farmers have shaped a food culture rooted in simplicity and flavor. As the nation's leading producer of sweet potatoes, the state turns humble crops into both comforting classics and modern dishes, reflecting a long tradition of resourceful Southern cooking. That heritage extends to iconic brands like Pepsi in New Bern and Krispy Kreme in Winston-Salem, alongside a vibrant food scene that blends nostalgia with innovation. Along the coast, oyster farming and fresh seafood like shrimp, crab, and flounder define the table 🌊, showcasing a deep connection between land, water, and flavor.

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May 18

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🔥 Louisiana Seafood: From Water to Table

In Louisiana, fresh seafood is at the heart of Creole and Cajun cuisine. From fishing off Grand Isle to bayou shrimping and freshwater catches at Lake Martin, the waters are rich with flavor. Don't miss charbroiled oysters—made famous at Drago's Seafood Restaurant—grilled with butter, garlic, herbs, and cheese for a true taste of Louisiana. 🍤🔥

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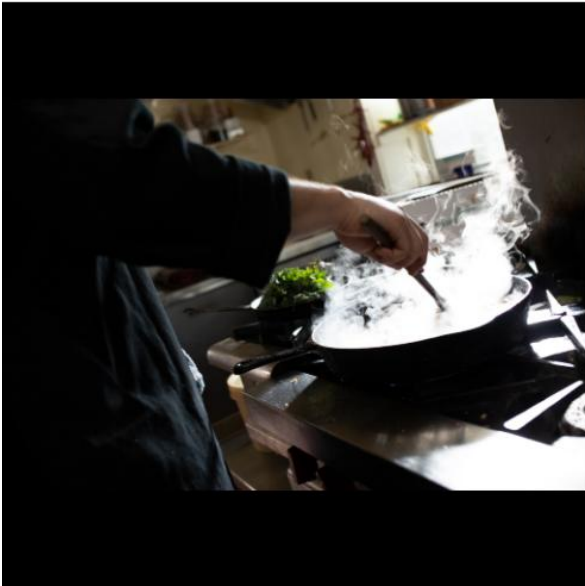
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May 4

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🔥 Kentucky's Culinary Legacy: Chefs & BBQ Excellence

Kentucky's culinary scene continues to earn national recognition, with James Beard nominations highlighting chefs like Noam Bilitzer and David Willocks in 2026. The Baker's Table showcases seasonal, farm-to-table dining 🌿, alongside acclaimed chefs including Ouita Michel and Edward Lee.

Beyond fine dining, Kentucky is known for its barbecue heritage, especially

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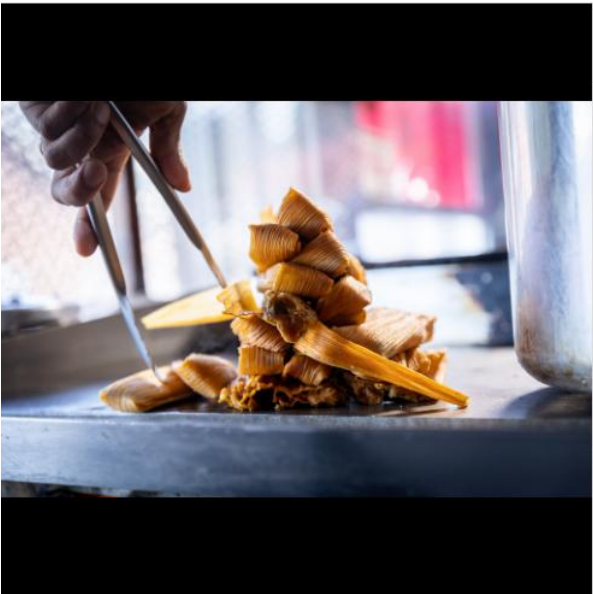
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May 13

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🌮 From Soul to Sea: Mississippi's Flavorful Roots

Mississippi's food story is rooted in soul and shaped by the sea. From slow-cooked greens, cornbread, and Delta tamales to Gulf-fresh shrimp 🦐 and oysters, every dish reflects deep cultural heritage and bold flavor. In Jackson, signature Comeback Sauce adds a tangy twist, while coastal kitchens serve dock-to-table seafood, blending comforting traditions with fresh, coastal bounty.

🤍 1 💬 🗑️ 📌

May 6

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 [travelsouthusa.au](#) 3w
🍷 Cork to Fork: Tennessee's Whiskey & Culinary Trail

Have your whiskey and eat it too 🍷🍴
The Tennessee Whiskey Trail's Cork to Fork Culinary Trail pairs local distilleries with nearby restaurants for spirit-infused, chef-driven dishes like maple bread pudding and smoked bone-in pork loin. Visitors can explore pairings through a digital passport designed to guide the perfect tasting journey.

📍 @tnvacation

🤍 1 💬 🗑️ 📌

May 11

[Log in](#) to like or comment.





Facebook:

Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)
28 May at 10:00 · 🌐

 South Carolina's Culinary Story of Coast & Countryside

South Carolina's food identity is shaped by the connection between its farming traditions and Atlantic bounty. From field to coast, dishes reflect a blend of land, water, and history. Rooted in heritage yet constantly evolving, the state's cuisine tells a story of culture, community, and the natural resources that define every bite.

 @discover_sc

#DiscoverSouthCarolina #TravelSouth



Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)
26 May at 10:00 · 🌐

 Missouri's Barbecue Heritage

Missouri is best known for its legendary barbecue. In Kansas City, the new Museum of Barbecue offers hands-on exhibits exploring the craft behind smoked meats and sauces, from local favorites to regional styles across the United States. It celebrates Kansas City's iconic barbecue tradition while showcasing how this flavorful American cuisine connects communities nationwide through smoke, spice, and storytelling.

 @visitmo

#MissouriAdventure #TravelSouth







Travel South USA's post

Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

21 May at 10:00 · 🌐

Alabama's Barbecue & Coastal Flavor

Alabama's food roots blend African, Indigenous, and European influences into a soulful cuisine. Barbecue anchors the tradition—slow-smoked over hickory and served with regional sauces, including North Alabama's famous white sauce.

Along the Gulf Coast, shrimp, oysters, crab, and fish highlight the state's seafood bounty 🌊, while classics like pecan pie and banana pudding reflect its sweet Southern hospitality.

@alabamatravel

#SweetHomeAlabama #TravelSouth



TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome USA



Travel South USA's post





Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

19 May at 10:00 · 🌐

🌿 From Fields to Coast: North Carolina's Food Heritage

North Carolina's culinary story begins in its fields, where generations of farmers have shaped a food culture rooted in simplicity and flavor. As the nation's leading producer of sweet potatoes, the state turns humble crops into both comforting classics and modern dishes, reflecting a long tradition of resourceful Southern cooking. That heritage extends to iconic brands like Pepsi in New Bern and Krispy Kreme in Winston-Salem, alongside a vibrant food scene that blends nostalgia with innovation. Along the coast, oyster farming and fresh seafood like shrimp, crab, and flounder define the table 🌊, showcasing a deep connection between land, water, and flavor.

📍 @visitnc

#VisitNorthCarolina #TravelSouth







Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

14 May at 10:00 · 🌐

🔥 Kentucky's Culinary Legacy: Chefs & BBQ Excellence

Kentucky's culinary scene continues to earn national recognition, with James Beard nominations highlighting chefs like Noam Bliitzer and David Willocks in 2026. The Baker's Table showcases seasonal, farm-to-table dining 🌿, alongside acclaimed chefs including Ouita Michel and Edward Lee. Beyond fine dining, Kentucky is known for its barbecue heritage, especially Western Kentucky's mutton BBQ, with Owensboro celebrated as the "Mutton Capital of the World."

📍 @kytourism

#KentuckyTourism #TravelSouth



Travel South USA's post



Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

12 May at 10:00 · 🌐

🍷 Cork to Fork: Tennessee's Whiskey & Culinary Trail

Have your whiskey and eat it too 🍷 The Tennessee Whiskey Trail's Cork to Fork Culinary Trail pairs local distilleries with nearby restaurants for spirit-infused, chef-driven dishes like maple bread pudding and smoked bone-in pork loin. Visitors can explore pairings through a digital passport designed to guide the perfect tasting journey.

📍 @tnvacation

#MadeInTennessee #TravelSouth





Travel South USA's post





Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

7 May at 10:00 · 🌐

👉 From Soul to Sea: Mississippi's Flavorful Roots

Mississippi's food story is rooted in soul and shaped by the sea. From slow-cooked greens, cornbread, and Delta tamales to Gulf-fresh shrimp 🍤 and oysters, every dish reflects deep cultural heritage and bold flavor. In Jackson, signature Comeback Sauce adds a tangy twist, while coastal kitchens serve dock-to-table seafood, blending comforting traditions with fresh, coastal bounty.

📍 @visitms

#VisitMississippi #TravelSouth



Travel South USA's post





Travel South USA (AU, NZ)

5 May at 10:00 · 🌐

👉 Louisiana Seafood: From Water to Table

In Louisiana, fresh seafood is at the heart of Creole and Cajun cuisine. From fishing off Grand Isle to bayou shrimping and freshwater catches at Lake Martin, the waters are rich with flavor. Don't miss charbroiled oysters—made famous at Drago's Seafood Restaurant—grilled with butter, garlic, herbs, and cheese for a true taste of Louisiana. 🍽️🔥

📍 @explore.louisiana

#ExploreLouisiana #TravelSouth







Market Update

Economic & Market Update

The following economic announcements were made in May:

- **RBA increases interest rates to 4.35% (5 May):** The Reserve Bank increased the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.35%, citing renewed inflation pressure, higher fuel and commodity prices, and concern that inflation could remain above target for longer. [Source.](#)
- **Unemployment rises to 4.5% (released 21 May):** The ABS reported that unemployment increased from 4.3% to 4.5% in April, with employment falling by 18,600 people, pointing to some softening in the labour market despite trend employment still growing. [Source.](#)
- **Inflation eases but remains elevated at 4.2% (released 27 May):** The ABS reported annual CPI inflation eased from 4.6% in March to 4.2% in April, with housing, transport and food still the largest contributors to annual price growth. [Source.](#)
- **Australian dollar remains broadly steady against the USD in May:** The AUD traded mostly around US\$0.71–0.72 through May, peaking at 0.7255 on 11 May before ending the month at 0.7177, suggesting the RBA rate rise provided some support but was offset by global uncertainty and inflation concerns. [Source.](#)

Visitation to the USA.

- April 2026 i-94 arrival data (released in May)

Australia:

- 76,773 arrivals in April, down -14% for the month YoY, and YTD down -8.8% YTD
- Australia ranked 11th among long-haul markets for the month.

Top 10 countries in 2025

Rank	Country	Visits	Percentage growth YOY
1	New Zealand	205,710	2%
2	Indonesia	164,730	-4%
3	Japan	159,090	17%
4	India	133,580	5%
5	China	120,490	36%
6	USA	79,390	-7%
7	UK	76,250	3%
8	Vietnam	72,620	23%
9	Thailand	72,180	-10%
10	Philippines	50,690	9%





Tour Operators & Travel Agencies

- **OTAs Now Control More Than Half Australian Tourist Attraction Traffic Online:** GetYourGuide, Viator and Klook now command 51.6 per cent of all top-100 category traffic. GetYourGuide alone added 700,000 monthly visits year on year, growing 56.3 per cent, backed by an estimated \$9.2 million in annual Google paid search spend. [Source.](#)
- **Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has revealed that leisure profits in Apr were impacted by the Iranian war to the tune of about \$10 million:** They confirmed that mass market customers have been the worst affected, with 25,000 bookings disrupted and around 6% of people cancelling trips. In some positive news however, the travel giant said “most” clients were rebooking travel after cancelling. [Source, page 1.](#)
- **Webjet has become one of the first major Australian travel brands to launch directly inside ChatGPT, signalling a shift in how online travel agencies expect travellers to search, compare and book trips in the years ahead:** The new integration allows users to search flights and hotels using conversational prompts rather than the usual filters and booking forms. Travellers can ask ChatGPT for ideas like “weekend flights to Tokyo in September” or “family friendly hotels in Queenstown with a pool”, with live Webjet pricing and availability surfaced inside the chat. [Source.](#)
- **Corporate Traveller has introduced CT Pay:** a consolidated payment and expense system as disconnected, legacy booking and expense admin systems cost small-to-medium travel businesses thousands in split supplier payments and FX fees. CT Pay captures travel spend at the time of booking and provides trusted, itemised monthly statements with traveller details, cost centres and booking data, ready for direct upload into accounting systems. [Source.](#)
- **itravel adds three new mobile advisors as network expands:** itravel has added three new mobile advisors to its network, with Kelly Bellion and Danielle Gregory joining from Queensland and Haas Saleh joining from New South Wales. [Source](#)
- **Flight Centre sees 20% rise in “reactivated” clients in first month of Iran war:** Flight Centre experienced a massive rise in “reactivated” customers during the first month of the US-Iran conflict, Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has revealed in a trading update. [Source](#)
- **ATIA and CATO propose merger in major shake-up for Australian travel industry:** The Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) and the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) are proposing a merger that would bring travel agents, tour operators, wholesalers and travel management companies under a single industry body from 1 July 2026. [Source](#)
- **Chris Watson Travel takes a bigger bite of America with two new U.S. brands:** Chris Watson Travel Group is expanding its U.S. product range with two new specialist brands, Taste of America and Taste of the South, by Chris Watson. [Source](#)
- **Brand USA effort to combat misperceptions:** Brand USA has launched an initiative entitled Get Facts. Get Going., providing updated information on visa and entry policies, fees, and more, specifically to combat misperceptions.







Traveler Insights

- **Expedia research highlights travellers as high-value retail consumers beyond bookings:** Travellers are emerging as high-value consumers beyond core travel purchases, with new research from Expedia Group showing significant spending across retail and lifestyle categories linked to trips. The study found travellers spend an average of more than USD \$500 per trip on non-travel items, highlighting a growing opportunity for cross-industry engagement. [Source.](#)
- **FCTG lauds luxury as resilient in latest update:** Demand is resilient with luxury travellers rerouting rather than cancelling - that is the perspective of Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) in its latest market update released 5 May. The appetite for travel hadn't been dampened at all, with rerouting the most popular option for the demographic, despite the leisure market suffering a \$10 million impact to profits in Apr. [Source, page 6.](#)
- **AI Tourists Are Travel's New Big Spenders:** The travel industry has spent decades chasing the elusive "high-value traveller", that mythical creature who travels often, spends freely and rarely complains about airline seat pitch. Now, according to fresh research from Phocuswright, the industry may finally have found them. [Source](#)
- **Neon masks, funk fusion & BB King's vibes: Memphis Tourism shows the travel trade its city knows how to surprise:** When MonoNeon walked out on stage for Memphis Tourism's annual travel trade event dressed in something resembling a technicolour patchwork quilt, complete with neon yellow mesh balaclava and oversized visor glasses, many guests were taken aback. [Source](#)
- **Australian international travel surged during the first month of the US-Iran war:** Geopolitical tensions between the US, Israel and Iran erupted into near full-scale conflict at the end of February, throwing millions of travel plans into chaos as Middle Eastern airspace shut down and Gulf carriers were forced to dramatically scale back operations through March. [Source](#)
- **Australian international travel surged during the first month of the US-Iran war:** Geopolitical tensions between the US, Israel and Iran erupted into near full-scale conflict at the end of February, throwing millions of travel plans into chaos as Middle Eastern airspace shut down and Gulf carriers were forced to dramatically scale back operations through March, but Aussies continued to travel in record numbers in March 2026, with short-term resident returns (for trips less than a year) totalling 910,450 – an increase of 8.4 per cent year-on-year. [Source](#)
- **TikTok launches in-app travel booking service:** TikTok users can turn scrolling for travel inspiration into booking their latest trip with the launch of TikTok GO. Launched yesterday in the United States, TikTok GO allows users to tap destination videos to instantly compare rates and book hotels, tours and experiences. [Source](#)
- **US reinvigorates brand:** Brand USA has announced two new initiatives aimed at boosting visitor confidence, marking an expansion to its 'America the Beautiful' campaign [Source - page 3](#)
- **US cools social crackdown:** US CUSTOMS and Border Protection (CBP) is considering toning down its controversial proposal of asking visitors to provide five years worth of social media history [Source - page 2](#)





Air Lift

- **Qantas named world's second-most punctual airline:** Fresh off securing a spot among the world's top 15 most valuable airline brands, Qantas has added another feather to its cap, ranking as the second most punctual major airline (more than 20,000 flights) globally in April. [Source](#)
- **Delta Air Lines hosts CT Partners on exclusive Atlanta famil:** A select group of Aussie travel industry leaders from CT Partners took Atlanta by storm on an exclusive famil hosted by Delta Air Lines. [Source](#)
- **US airfares on the up:** US AIRFARES in Apr saw a 20.7% YoY increase, according to Consumer Price Index data from the US Labor Department, released yesterday (TD 12 May). [Source - page 5](#)
- **QF brand recovery:** Qantas has risen three spots to become the 13th most valuable airline brand, according to Brand Finance's Airlines 50 2026 report, with its value growing 24% to US\$3.2 billion (A\$4.43 billion) over the past year. [Source - page 4](#)
- **Chicago O'Hare Airport maintains a strong interest in a direct flight from Australia:** with the hub hopeful that Qantas will look to make the connection under its Project Sunrise initiative. [Source, page 1.](#)

Media

- **Nine is undertaking a major transformation of its TV news operations,** simplifying an 800-person newsroom that currently operates across 120 systems and more than 100 job roles. The overhaul will move workflows from legacy tape-based processes to a cloud-based model, aimed at improving efficiency, speed and collaboration across the network's news division. [Source.](#)
- **ARN has announced a new multi-platform program, *The Long Weekend*, hosted by media personalities Karl Stefanovic and Eddie McGuire.** The weekly show will air across radio, podcast, social and vodcast platforms, reflecting the growing focus on talent-led content distributed across multiple channels. [Source.](#)
- **The Hollywood Reporter has launched The Hollywood Reporter Australia,** a Sydney-based edition of the entertainment trade publication, in partnership with Raine Media. The new title will provide English-language coverage of Australia's screen industry across digital, print and video formats, aligned with THR's global editorial standards. [Source.](#)
- **WhatsApp could be captured by Australia's under-16 social media ban.** The eSafety Commissioner warned WhatsApp may be reassessed if social-style features such as channels and communities continue to grow. [Source.](#)
- **TikTok has expanded further into the travel sector,** launching direct booking capabilities that allow users to book travel and experiences without leaving the platform. The move signals TikTok's growing ambitions in commerce and could create new opportunities for tourism brands, destinations and experience operators looking to drive conversions directly from content. [Source.](#)





- **Are Media launches My Weekly membership platform for the Australian Women's Weekly.** Are Media has announced a new direct-to-consumer strategy, including the launch of a digital membership offering for The Australian Women's Weekly. The initiative will provide subscribers with recipe plans, archive access, virtual masterclasses and exclusive events, as publishers continue to explore audience revenue opportunities beyond traditional advertising. [Source](#).
- **Meltwater and YouGov release 'Trust in the Age of Generative AI' report.** Meltwater, in partnership with YouGov, has released a new global report exploring consumer trust, perception, and expectations around AI-generated content. Key takeaways:
 - Scepticism outweighs excitement: While 39% of consumers are excited about the future of generative AI, a majority (51%) are not.
 - Trust is on the line: Nearly one in three (32%) say they would trust a brand less if they knew its content was AI-generated.
 - Transparency is non-negotiable: 86% of consumers expect brands to clearly disclose when AI has been used.
 - Misinformation concerns are high: 73% worry AI-generated content could be used for fake news or scams.
 - Context matters: Consumers are far more accepting of AI in entertainment and advertising than in news or political content.
 - Full report [here](#).





Actions

- Travel South Mission
 - Auckland VIP Event
 - Auckland Travel Agent Event
 - Melbourne Travel Agent Event
 - Melbourne Media Event
 - Sydney Trade and Media B2B Meeting
 - Consul General VIP Event
- International Showcase Recruitment
- Trade & PR Newsletter

