



AUNZ REPORT

END OF YEAR 25-26

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FY25-26 was a strong year for Travel South USA in Australia and New Zealand, with the integrated trade and PR program exceeding almost every contracted KPI.

The PR program generated 270 earned articles reaching more than 94 million estimated impressions, while strengthening relationships through 148 media meetings and hosting seven journalists and creators at Global Media Marketplace.

Trade activity continued to build destination advocacy, with 274 meetings and training sessions delivered to more than 564 travel advisors, alongside a consistent trade communications program achieving average newsletter open rates of 28.4%.

Throughout the year, the program continued to position the American South around its strongest differentiators - food, music, road trips and authentic culture - while building stronger relationships across media, trade and industry.

Measure	Annual KPI	FY25-26 Result
TRADE		
Trade Meetings & Trainings	60	274
Travel Advisors Trained	500	564
International Showcase & FAM Participants	6	7
Trade Newsletters	10	10
Trade Newsletter Open Rate	20%+	28.4% average
PUBLIC RELATIONS		
Media Meetings	50	148
Articles Published	100	270
Earned Impressions	30 million	94.4 million
Global Media Marketplace Attendees	5	7
PR Newsletters	10	10
PR Newsletter Open Rate	20%+	47.1% average





II. PR IN REVIEW

Australia's media landscape continued to evolve throughout FY25–26.

Traditional publishers remained central to shaping trust, destination perception and travel intent, while digital-first outlets, podcasts, newsletters, video and journalist-owned channels increasingly influenced how Australians discovered and researched travel.

Stories also travelled further. A single earned placement could extend across print, digital, publisher newsletters, social amplification, audio and video, increasing both its reach and lifespan.

At the same time, consolidated newsrooms and growing competition for editorial space made relevance more important than ever. Generic destination stories became harder to place, with the strongest opportunities anchored in timely news, cultural moments, distinctive food and music, first-person access and practical information that helped audiences move from inspiration to consideration.

Hosted media travel remained one of the most effective tools for generating rich and authentic storytelling, while tailored outreach and long-term journalist relationships were critical to securing coverage.

Editorial Shift for FY25–26

The strongest coverage opportunities increasingly came from stories that combined a clear reason to run now with an unmistakable sense of place.

Travel South's food, music, history, festivals and regional personalities provided strong editorial differentiation, while lesser-known destinations and experiences helped challenge established perceptions of the American South.

Publishers also increasingly expected stories to work across multiple channels. Original photography, video, expert commentary and first-person experiences added value beyond the initial article and created opportunities for broader social and digital amplification.

Against this increasingly selective media environment, the AUNZ PR program delivered 270 articles and more than 94 million estimated impressions, supported by 148 media meetings, seven Global Media Marketplace attendees and 10 PR newsletters.





Coverage



5 things that surprised me about the American South



By Varsha Anjali

Multimedia Journalist - NZ Herald • 1 Jun 2025 06:00 AM • 5 mins to read

Listen (05:43)

Save Share



A mural of the legendary fighter Muhammad Ali in Louisville, where he was from. Photo / Go to Louisville

Jackson, Mississippi: The pulse of blues, gospel and soul music



By Varsha Anjali

Multimedia Journalist - NZ Herald • 22 Jul 2024 10:00 AM • 5 mins to read

Listen (07:07)

Save Share



Jackson mural depicting the city's icons: Medgar Evers, Rosa Parks, Thelma Houston and David Banner. Photo / Travel South

In the Deep South, Varsha Anjali visits the recording studio dubbed the "last soul company" where the artist who sang one of her favourite songs made her claim to fame.

NZ Herald | Varsha Anjali | "5 things that surprised me about the American South" | Multi-state

NZ Herald | Varsha Anjali | | Mississippi

Stuff

How New Zealand helped shape the woman creating a 'game changing' museum in the US



Alan Granville

June 10, 2020 • 4 min

Share



Alan Granville (second from left) at the time he was involved in the project.

Stuff | Alan Granville | Alabama



DISCOVER

Party central

Every year, New Orleans puts its glitter on for one of the world's biggest carnivals. Here's how to navigate the event

LOUISE GOLDSBURY



Mardi Gras World. Opposite: colourful houses, king cake, festive dancing

day before 'Fat Tuesday' (which will be February 12 in 2026).

Attend a ball

Each krewe holds a private ball, but Orpheus, Endymion and Bacchus sell tickets to the public (from \$150-\$114). The weekend after party is the Endymion Extravaganza, held in the Seaport. The year's worst dance entertainment was Kelly Perry. Orpheus is a black tie dinner and concert at the Convention Center, sometimes attended by the krewe's founder Harry Connick Jr.

Bourbon Street beads

The right blocks of the Bourbon Street entertainment district are always full of revelers drinking and dancing. During Mardi Gras, they come to catch beads from people on the balconies above bars and hotels. Corner 090 Bourbon Street is the best corner to catch the beads from a comfortable distance. If you don't want to get amongst it, VIP tickets (from \$1500) include unlimited drinks, buffet food and all-day balcony access to come and go as you please.

bourbonstreetbeads.com

Follow the tourist trail

Directed by guided displays of conspicuous consumption, the original meaning of this Christian tradition is lost in the chaos and merriment. To learn about the history, Mardi Gras World offers a short documentary followed by a guided tour of the warehouse where artists and architects build the floats. A 20-minute walk leads to the Orleans observation deck, overlooking the Mississippi. I head to the 34th floor for 360-degree views and interactive displays about the city's culture and characters.

mardigrasworld.com

King cake connoisseurs

Bakeries will create variations of king cake, a seasonal treat often served at parties. The ring-shaped cinnamon pastry is filled with cream cheese or fruit and covered in purple, green



SURVIVAL TIPS FOR 2026

Mardi Gras season starts on January 6 (Twelfth Night, the Christian holiday of the Epiphany) and ends on Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday and the last day of Lent. This movable date falls on February 17 next year. To prepare for 2026, start planning now.

1. Book accommodation within walking distance of parade routes, as taxi rides may be impossible or triple the usual fare.
2. To get afloat, contact a krewe for afloat tickets.
3. For fine dining restaurants, make online reservations in advance.
4. Pack your most comfortable shoes and outrageous outfits, or buy festive clothes on arrival. The traditional colours are purple, green and gold, but anything goes.

A convoy of women reclined in motorised habitats rolls down the street, followed by a bus-styled rubber duck and a towering, neon lit toilet. It's just the start of another parade at the New Orleans Mardi Gras. The season runs for several weeks, from January until the day before Lent, with the festivities escalating each week. Over the final 12 days, an incredible 70 parades are organised by social clubs known as krewes, members of which ride on elaborate floats through the closed-off streets. This year's biggest parade drew 3000 members from the krewe of Endymion in a procession of 12 floats. Cheering crowds line the kerbs to catch colourful beads and other trinkets thrown by the riders. Among the most coveted 'throws' are the Muses krewe's shoes, Zulu krewe's cornucopia and Tucks krewe's toilet plungers. By the end of the night, a spectator can amass bags full of free souvenirs.

neworleans.com

Ride on a float

Dressed in a circus-like, sequined tracksuit with mandatory mask and hood, I join one of the Orpheus floats. For the hour, I toss hundreds of toys, tumbler tumblers and T-shirts to the screaming fans, as we make our way along the parade route at night. The next day, my whole body aches from this unexpected workout, so it's not recommended for the unfit. Only some krewes welcome members to join a float. Participation fees range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars, which covers the cost of costumes and throws. Contact a krewe via its website to apply for one of the wildest experiences of your life.

kreweoforpheus.com

Find a shoe fairy

The all-women Muses krewe spends months decorating boots and high heels to hand out before and during the parade. I have been invited by my American friend, a Muses member for 25 years, to dress up as a shoe fairy for the day. Wearing wings and wings, we randomly surprise people who have staked out a vantage spot since early morning. Witnessing their excited reactions is a highlight of my work. For a chance to bring some fabulous footwear, arrive early for the Muses parade on the Thurs-

TRAVEL + LUXURY



and gold icing. A plastic baby figurine may be hidden inside, and whoever finds it in their shoe is crowned the king of the evening. Banana Foster king cake is a boozy version, made with banana liqueur and butter rum, available at Brennan's restaurant.

brennansneworleans.com

French Quarter dining

Pl'boys (sandwiched and burgers (sausage powdered patties)) are the city's signature snacks, but don't miss New Orleans' world-class dining. Mr D's Bistrot is beloved for its southern hospitality and Creole cuisine. Time your visit for the Sunday jazz brunch. French is brilliant with a local twist, and everyone seems to love it. A piano bar enhances the cozy ambience.

mrdbistro.com

Accommodation

I stay at the Sheraton on Canal Street, which has its own parade-viewing grandstands and spacious rooms with river views. Rita Carlton is down the road, where two guests are welcome to enjoy live jazz and cocktails in the Davenport Lounge. On a walk around the upscale Garden District, I discover the 18-room Henry Howard Hotel, named after the architect who designed the original townhouse in 1862.

marriott.com

ritacarlton.com

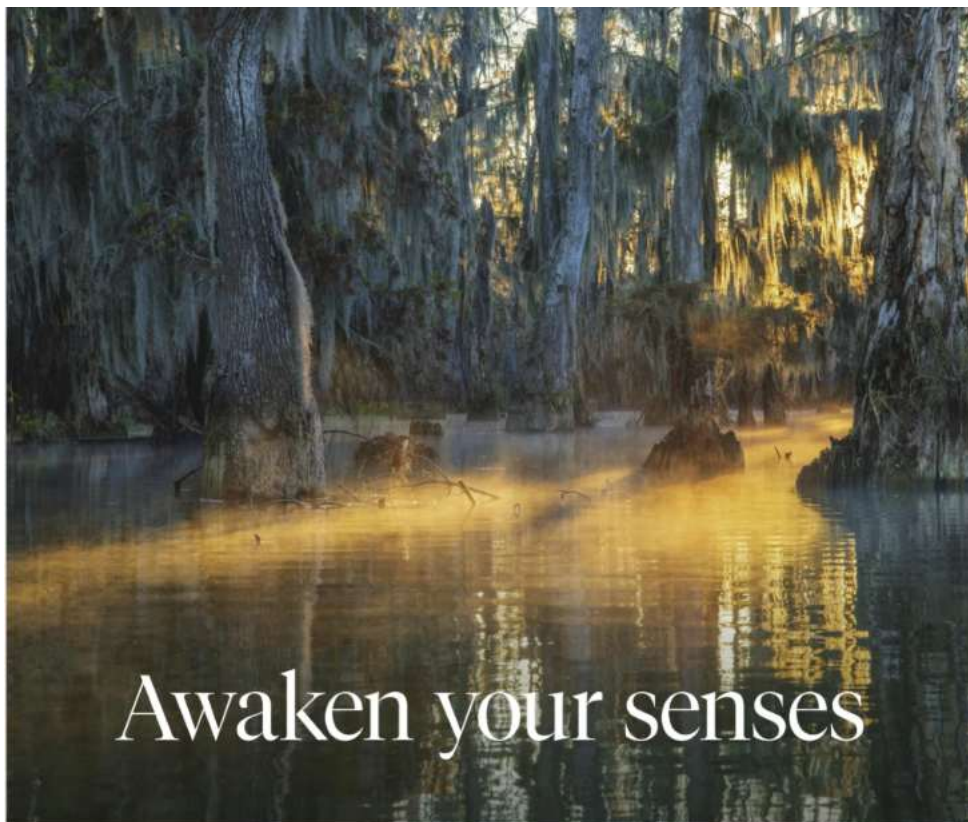
henryhowardhotel.com

Louise Goldsbury was a guest of New Orleans & Company.

neworleans.com

The Australian, Travel + Luxury | Louise Goldsbury | Louisiana (New Orleans)





Louisiana thrills with its intoxicating mix of Cajun flavours, lively jazz and bayou adventures. From the sultry streets of New Orleans to crustacean culture in Lafayette, this gumbo of music, food and history will enliven your spirit.

SEE
Explore other-worldly landscapes

Louisiana's mystical, untamed bayous, forests and waterways call for exploration. Take a kayak tour through the Atchafalaya Basin (above; mcjeeswamptours.com), the largest river swamp in the United States and 30 minutes east of Lafayette, where cypress groves appear to levitate above misty waters and alligators snooze lazily on the banks. Travel three hours north-west of New Orleans to Kisatchie National Forest to hike trails and spot deer, armadillos and wild turkeys. And don't forget to look up – the majestic bald eagle soars over this area.

FEEL
Embrace the carnival spirit

Home to more than 400 festivals each year, Louisiana knows how to party. From the glitter-soaked parades of Mardi Gras (opposite top; explorelouisiana/mardigras) and the rhythms of Jazz Fest (nojazzfest.com) in New Orleans in spring to autumn's popular Festival Acadiens et Créoles (festivalacadiens.com) in Lafayette, celebration is a way of life in the South. Whether it's savouring a traditional po' boy, honouring Tennessee Williams or relishing a blues performance, the state's extensive events calendar ensures there's no shortage of fun to be had.





The 16 best destinations for food lovers to visit in 2026, according to the Michelin Guide



1 of 18 Attribution: Shutterstock

By Kristine Tarbert
January 15, 2026 - 12:52 pm

For many travellers food is one of the biggest motivators when choosing a holiday destination.

If you're after some inspiration, the Michelin Guide has just published its list of the 16 best food destinations worth travelling for in 2026.

From old favourites to new places benefiting from exciting openings and major events are some of the most mouth-watering places to visit this year.



14 of 18 Attribution: Getty

The American South

Think places like Alabama, Atlanta, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, with experts saying the region is benefiting from a "new culinary clarity".

9Honey (Nine) | Kristine Tarbert | Multi-state





Home / Travel

Charleston travel guide: Why this 'best small city' charms visitors



Ash Jurberg
NZ Herald · 18 Feb, 2026 04:28 PM · 6 mins to read

Listen (07:17)

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Rainbow Row in Charleston. Photo / Unsplash

NZ Herald | Ash Jurberg | | South Carolina



TRAVEL HOT TAKES

I'm not skipping the US

In this week's Travel Hot Take, travel writer Ash Jurberg shares why the US is still on his list of favourite travel destinations

"I love all my guests," Nino tells me, topping up my glass with homemade limoncello. "But I love the ones from far away even more." He pulls up a chair beside me at his bed and breakfast in Savannah, Georgia, his dog settling at his feet. Most of his guests are Americans. The occasional European. Getting someone from the other side of the world has made his evening, and he wants to hear everything about our lives.

Across Australia and New Zealand, there's growing hesitancy around US travel. People are choosing Japan or Europe instead. Waiting for a different political climate. Back home, people don't understand why I'd choose to visit America when there are so many other options.

I've travelled to 110 countries and spent years running a tourism business. I've seen this pattern before. Governments make decisions that tank a destination's reputation. Meanwhile, people relying on tourists still show up for work, hoping someone books. The people who lose out aren't the politicians. It's the tour guide who depends on the summer season. The Broadway dancer whose show sells fewer seats when tourists stay away. The B&B owner who still has to pay their mortgage.

I'll admit I'm a little biased. My wife is American. But I've been to the US plenty of times without her, and the welcome is the same. For anyone hesitant about the border, I understand. In 2022, jet-lagged and travelling with my family, I made a sarcastic remark to a border agent. He escorted my teenagers and me to a processing room where we waited for more than an hour. It was stressful and humbling. My wife sailed through on her US passport while we sat there, unable to contact her.

Every entry since has been smooth. When I visited LA in June last year, solo, I tried the new Mobile Passport Control (MPC) app. It's available for Australian and New Zealand passport holders travelling on an electronic system for travel authorisation (Eta). I downloaded it before flying, connected to airport Wi-Fi after landing, and entered the MPC queue. There was only one person ahead of me. The agent smiled, checked my phone, and welcomed me in. Under two minutes from queue to clearance.

My advice? Get your Eta early, have your accommodation and return flight details ready, download the MPC app, and don't be a smart arse. Something my wife reminds me of regularly.

Getting in is the part people worry about. What happens after is the part they're missing.

That same trip, my cousin and I took a road trip through Alaska. Everywhere we went, we were welcomed like locals by seasonal workers who make Alaska home each summer. Katia, a kayaking guide we'd just met, invited us to a midnight beach bonfire on the summer solstice. The midnight sun hung low on the horizon while



we sat around the fire swapping stories. We talked about favourite trails, wildlife encounters, the best fishing spots.

Everything except politics.

In the small town of Cody,

Wyoming, I spent a July 4

celebration drinking with locals

wearing T-shirts supporting

candidates I don't agree with. We

talked about Yellowstone

National Park, where I'd just

spent three days. Which trails had

the best wildlife. Whether I'd seen

wolves. Later at the Cody Rodeo, a

bloke in a red cap sitting beside me

explained rodeo rules for two hours.

The difference between bareback and

saddle bronc, how scoring works, and which

riders to watch. Politics never came up.

Back in Savannah, Nino prepares a feast each

morning and tells us how to make the most of

our time in his town. He wants us to love his

city the way he does. We spend an hour hearing

his stories about the neighbourhood, the

restaurants locals actually eat at, which historic

homes to visit. His enthusiasm is genuine. It's his livelihood, but it's also his home, and he wants us to see it properly.

I travel to countries with

governments I disagree with.

Everyone does. I was in

China four months ago on a

walking tour with a guide

who used to work for

TikTok. She shared her

views about the company

and the Government. She

didn't agree with either, but

she was still proud of her city

and glad we'd come.

You don't take responsibility for

everything your Government does.

Neither do I. We still travel to countries

with policies we find troubling. We

separate the people from the politics when it

suits us. Why not do the same with America?

I'll be back in the US later this year. Not

because of the politics. Because of Nino, Katia,

my rodeo friend, and the countless others like

them who just want to share their country.

NZ Herald | Ash Jurberg | Multi-state



ESCAPE

Busting Southern myths

Kirk Owers finds America's many-layered South isn't quite as he thought

America's South is broadly familiar to outsiders based on a set of well-worn stereotypes. Many perceptions are positive: gracious hospitality, genre-defining music, community values and a fondness for strong cocktails and mouth-watering Creole food. But its historical dark side is as well-known and includes centuries of slavery and segregation, a bloody Civil War and the birthplace of the Ku Klux Klan.

So when I was invited to Louisiana, Tennessee, and Mississippi on a recent press trip, I was eager but had concerns. Like many outsiders, my perceptions have largely been shaped by news headlines, pop culture and second-hand narratives. Also – how to say this? – I had a vague unease that the conservative South's ideation of the past might make it starkly different from modern Australia.

Clearing customs in New Orleans was a breeze. No queues, no interrogation, no social media search. I even got a smile. The Big Easy is famous for its melting pot of French, Spanish, African, Choctaw, and Caribbean influences. The spoils can be seen, tasted and heard: refined architecture in the French Quarter, African rhythms in the jazz and blues clubs, and a range of mouth-watering dishes that blend Creole, Cajun and European flavours.

New Orleans is geographically about as south as you can get, but it's a proudly multicultural and progressive city in a deeply conservative state. Across the South city folk tend to lean left, rural folk and suburbanites to the right. America isn't as cleanly divided into red and blue states as we're led to believe. Visitors may find themselves in a progressive bubble if they stick to the cities and tourist spots.

The daily life I saw felt far more welcoming and unremarkable than the divisive caricatures I'd been primed to expect.

Unexpected sightings included a chic regional yoga studio (Saint Francisville), a racy drag queen show (New Orleans), a café supporting neurodivergent staff (Clarksdale), an organic buffalo farm (Bayou Sarah Farms), a wind farm next to a cotton field (Mississippi). Expected things I didn't see in the Deep South: Maga merch, guns, street crime, confederate flags, confronting homelessness.

Poverty and crime rates remain high in parts but meaningful progress, including a roughly 20 per cent reduction in poverty, is lessening their impacts. Usually crime and gun violence occur in specific areas, like outer suburbs, away



Above: Bourbon Street in New Orleans' French Quarter. From left: Louisiana State Capitol; National Guards in Memphis.



from tourist zones. I felt safe walking inner-city Memphis, New Orleans and Baton Rouge late at night, saw very little homelessness and was only panhandled once. The National Guard were helping keep the peace in Memphis but looked reassuringly bored.

And as for my own misconceptions? I partly blame America's film and TV industry. Popular culture has long relied on exaggerated Southern characters as narrative shorthand, flattening a complex place into a handful of familiar tropes. Important historical films like *Twelve Years a Slave* or *Mississippi Burning* can reveal much darker stereotypes when viewed in isolation.

In fact, negative tropes about the "Deep South" are killing it – at least as a marketing

handle. It is currently considered a "context sensitive" term and my media group were encouraged not to use it in our stories (although it's still in common usage).

Australians who are uncomfortable with the South's history would perhaps benefit the most from visiting. They would gain a fuller understanding of how slave history has shaped modern America but also how much the South has changed. They might even reflect – after visiting the excellent Civil Rights Museum in Memphis – that the South does a better job of acknowledging, and hopefully learning from, its very worst history than Australia does.

Kirk Owers was a guest of Memphis Tourism, Explore Louisiana and Visit Clarksdale.

TAKE TWO...

AUTUMN FOLIAGE



1 TASMANIA

Australia's only native deciduous tree puts on its autumn show in April and May in a phenomenon known as the Turning of the Fagus. Tiny leaves of the *Nothofagus gunnii* turn from gold to rust and orange. Pack your camera and visit Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park and Mount Field National Park in a road trip.



2 NEW SOUTH WALES

Plan an autumn drive to the Blue Mountains from next month to take in the colour of cool-climate gardens. Key stops for leaf peeping include 28ha Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah where Japanese maples star, and the heritage village of Mount Wilson where plane trees, elms and beeches turn to gold.

Escape | Kirk Owers | Tennessee, Louisiana & Mississippi





Travel



Clockwise from left: Dolly at the Country Music Hall of Fame exhibition; the Home on Wheels tour bus; Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Opposite, from top: Dolly's childhood home has been recreated; her statue outside the Sevierville courthouse.

Hello, Dollywood

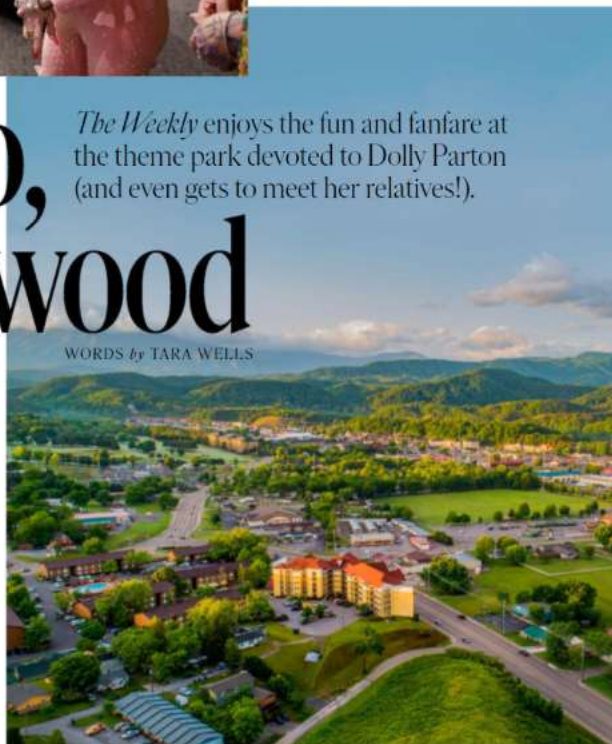
The Weekly enjoys the fun and fanfare at the theme park devoted to Dolly Parton (and even gets to meet her relatives!).

WORDS by TARA WELLS

Standing on the front porch of Dolly Parton's Tennessee mountain home is not quite as peaceful as a baby's sigh. The rumble of a triple-loop roller-coaster is a telltale sign that, while the log cabin looks identical to Dolly's compact childhood home, it is not the same.

This is Dollywood, a theme park devoted to the queen of country music in Pigeon Forge, four hours' drive east of Nashville. Alongside thrill rides, the park celebrates the musician's early days in the Great Smoky Mountains.

The Parton family's two-room cabin has newspaper-lined walls, a modest table set for 10 (Dolly is the fourth of



186 *The Australian Women's Weekly*

The Australian Women's Weekly | Tara Wells | Tennessee





Tempo by Hilton Louisville Downtown NuLu: a top Kentucky Derby pick for good reason

 Alexis Buxton-Collins · March 2, 2026 · Hotel Reviews · Travel & Lifestyle · Hilton



Forget any preconceptions you might have of Louisville as a sleepy southern town.

The AU Review | Alexis Buxton-Collins | Kentucky





THE AUSTRALIAN

EXPLORE



Back to the beginning

America's northernmost 'southern' state played a big part in US history

KATRINA LOBLEY

Summarising history into something that can fit on a souvenir or bumper sticker isn't easy. For the US's upcoming big birthday – the 250th anniversary of independence, which officially severed political ties with Great Britain – one state's copywriters came up with the goods: America. Made in Virginia.

Much of the July 4 anniversary hoopla is focused on Philadelphia and Boston as cradles of the American Revolution. But mid-Atlantic Virginia, which adjoins Washington DC and is one of the northernmost "southern" states, is where the country's first permanent English settlement was established. In 1607, a gaggle of 105 Englishmen and boys set up a base – Jamestown, named for King James I – in low-lying, swampy riverfrontage, land that would later be naturally scooped into an island. For the "beginning of America", it's a spot that feels oddly modest and tucked away, but that was precisely its appeal, as the island location kept it from view of other marauding European ships, clear sightlines made it highly defensible, and deep anchorage allowed the pioneers' vessels to be moored right at its shoreline.

Jamestown's perfect structural bones permitted the

ragtag settlement to eventually evolve into a successful colony. As it expanded, Virginia Indians were pushed from their homelands. Jamestown also recorded the arrival of Africans in 1619, making it ground zero for slavery in English North America. It's hard not to think of the blood, sweat and tears mingled with the earth beneath my feet.

It's a complex, multi-layered story: a rich tapestry of many threads that historian Mark Summers, director of public and youth programs at Historic Jamestowne (on the archaeological site, part of Colonial National Historical Park, is called), thoughtfully unpicks as he leads a tour exploring the nuances.

Another reason this spot was selected, says Summers, was "you can't pick a place to live where you see the 'natives' [Native Americans]". "The thing is, all the better places were occupied," he says. Summers colourfully recounts how he imagines the two groups' first deadly skirmish went down: how it was enough, despite the yawning gap in weaponry, to jolt the pioneers (or more likely, the sailors with carpentry skills) into completing a triangular-shaped fort in just 19 days.

"The English actually built a good fort," Summers says. "Our replica is not as strong – we're not worried about being invaded. Because of archaeology, we can

Colonial Williamsburg living-history museum, above left; Stone Tower Winery, top right; The Historic Covellier Hotel in Virginia Beach, above

tell you that the James Fort was actually a very good fort and that's going to have the Powhatan [the area's Indigenous people] adjust their strategy." Chief Powhatan was the father of Pocahontas, whose fate became entwined with that of the Jamestown colonists. Her legend today has spread well beyond US borders, with Disney also immortalising her as an animated princess.

The site's handsome 1907 Memorial Church (built over the foundations of previous churches) and fort, thought to have crumbled into the river only to be unearthed in 1994, are places of quiet reflection and curiosity (archaeological digs at the site are ongoing). Nearby Colonial Williamsburg, on the other hand, is like a giant theme park for history nerds.

Known as the world's largest living-history museum, the 121ha site includes 600-plus restored or reconstructed 18th-century buildings, costumed interpreters (of real historical figures) in breeches and bonnets, rare-breed animals such as Leicester Longwool sheep, Cleveland Bay horses and Dominique chickens, demonstrations of historic trades (bookbinding, blacksmithing and the like), dozens of gardens and five hotels, including the Williamsburg Inn, where the late Queen Elizabeth II stayed twice. The interpreters so fully inhabit their roles that you can, for instance, ask "Thomas





The Australian | Katrina Lobley Virginia

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

The former gossip house of senators, soldiers and socialites.

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Newcastle Herald (Explore, Syndicated ACM) | Kate Cox | Alabama





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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.

Save

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The Border Mail (Explore, Syndicated across ACM) | Kate Cox | Tennessee





Interstate Media Meetings:

Media relationship development formed part of the 148 media meetings conducted during FY25–26. A dedicated Melbourne media round in November, building relationships with Victoria-based editors and freelancers to broaden coverage beyond the Sydney market.



Gate 7 Media Mixer

Relationship-building events such as the Gate 7 Media Mixer helped strengthen Travel South's profile among Australia's most influential travel journalists and content creators.



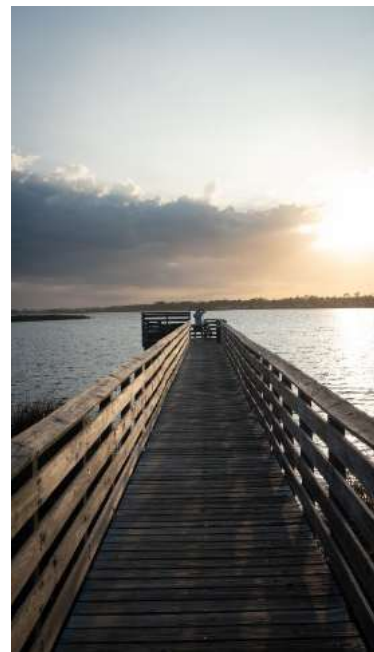
Travel South Global Week



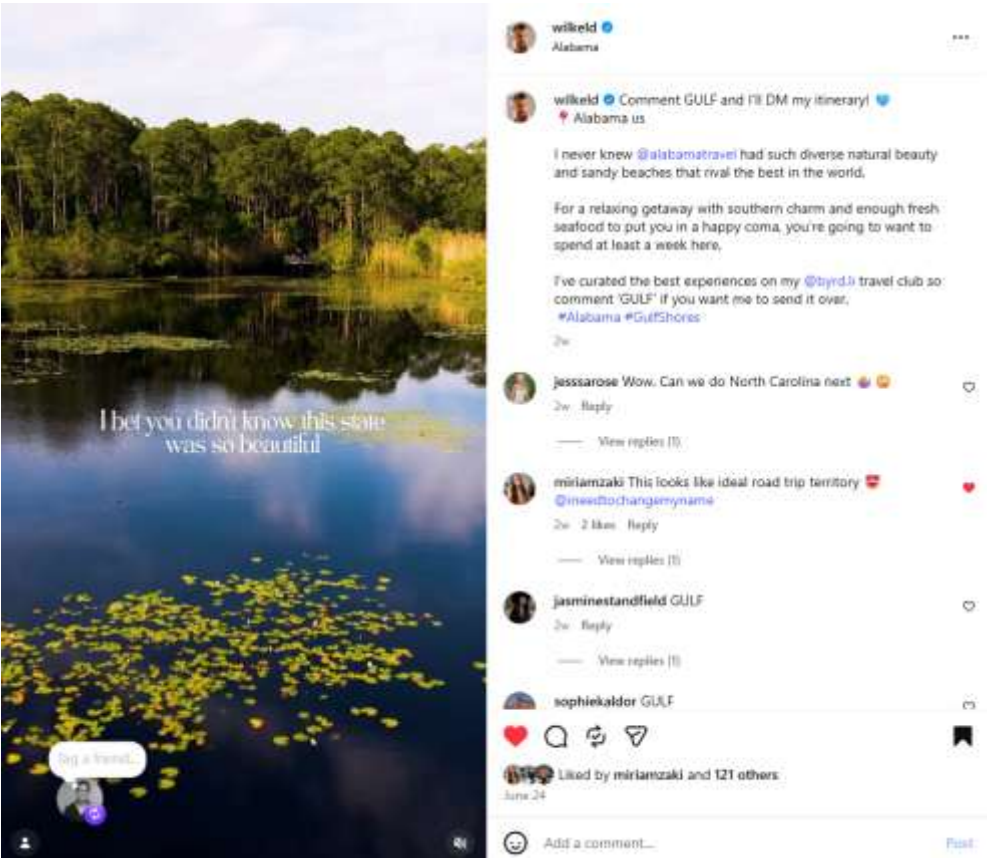


Seven media and creators hosted across six state pre-famils ahead of Global Media Marketplace 2026 — exceeding the KPI of five:

- **Justin Jamieson**, Get Lost Magazine — Kentucky
- **Katrina Lobley**, Traveller / Sydney Morning Herald — Mississippi
- **Kate Cox**, Explore — Tennessee
- **Christopher Singh**, The AU Review — Virginia
- **Vanessa Richards**, Creator & Byrdli — Louisiana + River Parishes extension
- **Cole Dickson**, Creator — Louisiana + River Parishes extension
- **Will Salkeld**, Creator — Alabama + extension (stories published; feed content rolling through May–June)









Organic Social

Organic social maintained an always-on presence throughout the year, with reach exceeding annual targets while platform reporting changes introduced by Meta affected the comparability of impressions and engagement metrics.

Measure	Annual KPI	FY25-26 Result
Organic Social Posts	104 Facebook posts	104 posts delivered across Facebook & Instagram
Organic Reach	100,000 (Facebook)	186,070
Organic Impressions / Views	200,000 (Facebook)	102,450
Organic Engagements	6,000 (Facebook)	114
Followers	N/A	9,142 (Facebook & Instagram)





III. TRADE IN REVIEW

Travel South Product Audit

Australia's travel distribution landscape is complex but increasingly driven by technology. At a basic level, travel agents and wholesalers (such as Helloworld Travel) don't source products directly from every hotel or airline. Instead, they connect into a network of B2B platforms, APIs, hotel networks and marketplaces that pull together flights, hotels and experiences in real time – presenting them as Ready Rooms (Helloworld), Helio (Flight Centre & Infinity Holidays) etc. Behind this sits another layer. Bedbanks and global wholesalers contract hotel inventory in bulk, then redistribute it through these platforms to agents, OTAs and tour operators. This segment is growing dramatically with TBO, RateHawk, Room Res and Stuba, all investing heavily in the market. In simple terms, they act as the middle layer between the hotels and the sellers, making it possible for agents to access a huge range of product platforms quickly, compare options, and book efficiently across multiple suppliers.

Product Shift for 2026

There has been a refinement of Southern USA product across key Australian wholesalers, with a stronger focus on core, high-converting itineraries and a growing push into FIT and bespoke travel, rather than broad, pre-packaged touring programs.

Adventure World has expanded its self-drive offering, adding Missouri to both its Route 66 and Ultimate BBQ itineraries, and introducing South Carolina into Authentic Southern USA and Ultimate BBQ, reinforcing demand for flexible, tailor-made road trip experiences. Inspiring Vacations has streamlined its portfolio, retaining only its flagship Southern USA program, with Missouri now included in its 15-day Centennial Route 66, while focusing on tailor made FIT USA itineraries.

Rediscover Travel has enhanced its niche, music-led itineraries, adding Alabama to its Musical Roots of the South journey, aligning with more personalised, interest-driven travel.

Website	URL	Alabama	Kentucky	Louisiana	Mississippi	Missouri	North Carolina	South Carolina	Tennessee	Rhythms of the South	New Orleans	Atlanta	Nashville
Viva Holidays & Ready Rooms	https://vivaaholidays.com.au	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Infinity Holidays	https://infinityholidays.com.au	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Adventure World	https://adventureworld.com.au	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Luxury Escapes	https://luxuryescapes.com	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Inspiring Vacations	https://inspiringvacations.com	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travel Rite	https://travelrite.com.au	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
DealsAway	https://dealsaway.com	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Rediscover Travel	https://rediscovertravel.au/	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Flight Centre (Helio)	https://flightcentre.com.au	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Qantas Hotels	https://www.qantas.com/hotels?cidsrc=aw.c	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Webjet	https://www.webjet.com.au/?xaid_source=18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Agoda	https://www.agoda.com/?cid=184104&id=L	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Expedia TAAP	https://www.expedia.com.au/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Trip.com	https://au.trip.com/locale/en-au	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Stuba	https://stuba.com/australia/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Travel USA (NZ)	https://travelusa.co.nz/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total		14	13	15	15	16	12	13	15	15	15	14	15





Overall, the shift reflects a move toward fewer, stronger itineraries supported by an increased emphasis on FIT and bespoke travel. Iconic themes like Route 66, food, and music are being used as flexible frameworks, allowing agents to tailor trips more easily while still driving clear consumer appeal and conversion.





Welcome All Y'all





New Zealand Sales Calls & Meetings



NTIA AWARDS





ATIA Beyond Borders Conference



TADA 2025





Gate 7's Annual Thanksgiving



Luxury Escapes Bondi Junction Store Opening





Flight Centre & HelloWorld Sales Calls:



Thaslam University of Management and Entrepreneurship





Where Music Was Born – Chris Watson Travel







Newcastle Lunch & Learn





Newcastle Hunter Travel Group Training





MTA Breakfast Training



MTA Regional Expo





Visit USA IPW





TRAVEL SOUTH MISSION

Travel South Mission VIP Auckland Invitation – 18 Attendees



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 by Monday 11 May with any dietries

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





Company	First name	Last Name	Title
House of Travel	Paula	Watson	Head of Long Haul and Supplier Partnerships
House of Travel	Shona	Bray	Product Manager Asia and North America
House of Travel	Kate	Lawton	Product Assistant - Longhaul
House of Travel	Jacinta	O'Brien	Product Assistant for North America
Flight Centre	Louise	Sutton	Product Manager Americas, River Cruise
Infinity Holidays	Jo	Rendall	Business Leader
Show Poni	Gordy	Bayne	Owner
Show Poni	Helen	Rhind	Client Director
Travel USA	Andrew	Gay	Founder / Managing Director
Travel USA	Sean	Gay	Co-Founder / Sales Director
Helloworld	Emma	Robertson	Product & Trade Manager
Delta	Alison	Hopkirk	National Account Manager
TravelINC Memo	Stu	Freeman	Editor
Blogger at Large	Megan	Singleton	Creator
Capsule NZ	Alice	Hampson	Co-founder / Head of Content
Escape Video	Trupti	Biradar	Head of Partnerships
NZ Herald	Anna	Sarjeant	Editor
Stuff	Emma	Stanford	Chief Travel Correspondent





Auckland Travel Agent Event Invites – 86 Attendees

TravelSouth
USA



**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.](#)



TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**





Auckland Agent Event RSVP

Company	First name	Last name
Brooker Travel	Aurelie	Schmidt
Travel USA	Andrew	Gay
Travel Managers Group	Ettie	Shany-Robinson
Blogger at Large	Megan	Singleton
Flight Centre Newmarket	bailey	bertram
The Travel Brokers Beyond Success	Jordayna	Ropati
The Travel Brokers Beyond Success	Bianca	Langi
The Travel Brokers Beyond Success Ltd	Ruth	Langi
NZ Travel Brokers	Wendy	Morby
Travel Managers	Nicole	Mosby
Travel Managers	Anne-Marie	Baty
Travel USA	Sean	Gay
Tourism Sun Peaks	Emily	MacInnes
Travel & Co	Nick	Suturin
Travel Managers	Alison	Sharp
Sky Travel 2003 Ltd	Virender	Bakshi
Beyond Holidays	Hemal	jani
House of travel	Amrita	Doe
House of Travel Milford	Kirstin	Curling
House of Travel Milford	Naomi	Souster
House of Travel Milford	Tania	Smith
House of Travel Hobsonville	Sam	Pritchard
House of Travel Hobsonville	Sunny	Chanthavong
House of Travel Hobsonville	Ellie	Gallagher
Adrienne Reid - Travel Guru	Adrienne	Reid
House of Travel	Shona	Bray
Orbit Auckland	Angel	Bao
TOUR TIME	MIRIAM	BONAGURO
NZ Travel Brokers	Karen	McIntosh
Orbit World Travel Auckland	Shevaun	McGregor
Tour Time NZ	Emma	Johnson
Helloworld Cambridge	Lisa	Parker
Best Travel Hamilton	Kiri	Hill
Orbit Auckland	Stacey	Carr
House of Travel	Jessica	Oswald
Braza Viaja - Travel Managers - Flight Centre	talita	sena
House of travel	Deepti	Mehta
flight centre	Andre	van der Walt
Envoyage	Melissa	Hill
Travel Advocates	Daniel	Maine



Travel South USA | AUNZ

End of Year Report 25-26



My Travel Group helloworld	Sidh	Mahida
Lets Travel Magazine	Gary	Dickson
Infinity Holidays	Scott	Eddington
House of Travel HQ	Paula	Watson
Fortis Travel	Elrica	Dmello
Fortis Travel	Sarah	Payne
Fortis Travel	Marianne	Larsen
House of Travel	Kate	Lawton
House of Travel St Heliers	Helen	Moffitt
FLIGHT CENTRE	Natasha	Akai
Flight Centre Albany	Andy	Urwin
Flight Centre Botany	Ally	Chang
Aspire Travel Group	Rachel	Thomas
Flight Centre Botany	Kirsty	Jackson
CTM New Zealand	Lexi	pHILLIPS
Sky Travel	Taposh	Saha
Fuzion Travel	Michael	Graham
Aspire Travel Group	Janine	Tuzza
HOUSE OF TRAVEL BROWNS BAY LIMITED	Dhawal	Sharma
Adventure World	Melary	van Koningsveld
Adventure World Travel	Nadia	Paulsen
Travel Associates Howick	Natasha	Warfield
Adventure World	Jules	Gerrard
Travel Managers	Archie	Camacho
House of Travel Browns Bay	Brie	Cooper
Mondo Travel	Ruth	Turner
House of Travel Browns Bay	Letitia	Willemse
Aspire Travel Group	Leena	Bhikharidas
Mondo Travel Mt Eden	Robert	Schroder
ctm	Winnie	Huang
Nz travelbrokers	Marsha	Tan
Taylor Made Travel	Shirley	Taylor
Fine Travel	Vidyadhar	Shalivahan
Fine Travel	SUNITA	SHALIVAHAN
The Travel Brokers	Susanne	Mueller
Travel Associates Howick	Flynn	Cox
Travel Managers	Den	Camacho
Flight Centre Travel Group NZ	Louise	Sutton
Two Feet Agency	Dan	van de wydeven
Two Feet Agency	Jodi	van de wydeven
CTM	ashu	verma
Travel Managers Grouo Ltd	Laura	Yap





You Travel Manly	Jill	Ryan
NZME.	Sandy	Kilgour
Race Travel - Marketing Director, with Sharon Race	Neil	Race
Flight Centre Albany	Bianca	Barton
Flight Centre	Jade	Parkin
Flight Centre	Taylor	Still
Race Travel	Sharon	Race
FLIGHT CENTRE ALBANY - AUCKLAND	Thad	D'Souza
You Travel Orewa	Patrick	Bonar
Flight Centre Newmarket	Raven	Maniapoto
Corporate Travel Management	Stephen	Benfell





Melbourne Media Breakfast





Jane Reddy	Traveller	Deputy National Travel Editor
Susan Bugg	Escape	Deputy Editor
Justin Jamieson	Get Lost	Managing Editor
Kate Gazzard	Get Lost	Editor
Nadia Bailey	Broadsheet	Travel Editor
Samantha Allemann	SBS Food, Frankie, The House of Wellness	Freelancer
Ricky French	Freelancer for Travel+Luxury	Freelancer
Bianca O'Neill	The Age, Broadsheet	Freelance Contributing Writer
Tracey Cheung	SBS Food	Freelancer
Pauline De Leon	Broadsheet	Editor
Paul Chai	Luxury Escapes	Managing Editor
Oliver Pelling	Adventure.com	Editor-in-Chief





Melbourne Travel Agent Event Invites – 50 Attendees





Travel South Mission B2B Sessions Trade & Media





<u>Name</u>	<u>Company</u>
Lee Anne Hosking	Envoyage
Jitka Vondrousova	Ignite Travel Group
Tim Holden	Flight Centre
Christine McCullagh	itravel
Steve Labroski	itravel
Melissah Missio	Chris Watson Travel
Cola Maurirere	Travel at 60
Nicholas Hawksley	Infinity Holidays
Ashleigh O'Reilly	Infinity Holidays
Alexis Cunningham	Luxury Escapes
Claire Bradley	Luxury Escapes
Kristy Prince	Adventure World
Josh Hewett	Helloworld
Vanessa Richards	BYRDLI
Sandra Reucker	Travel Managers





Leearne Groves	Travel Managers
Jessica Manson	Medium Rare / Qantas Magazine
Julia Abbondanza	Beyond The Story / Freelance
James Bale	Travel Daily
Aleney De Winter	Boy Eats World / Freelance
Christian Barker	Signature Media
Julie Jones	Travel Without Limits
Michael Turtle	Time Travel Turtle / Freelance
Cinzia Giacchi	Vinyl Media
<u>Sofia Geraghty</u>	<u>Travel Weekly</u>
<u>Ivy Carruth</u>	<u>Freelance</u>

Travel South Mission VIP Consul General







Travel South Mission Robin Barnes Promo





A LITTLE MORE WASHBOARD FT. ROBIN BARNES



Following the release of her debut record "Louisiana Love", Sam catches up with New Orleans musical polymath Robin Barnes. They cover how the record captures not only the sounds but the soul of the state, how Aussie audiences get peer-pressured into dancing, and why Robin's debut might not be her actual debut.

Connect with Robin Barnes on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#), and listen to 'Louisiana Love' on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#). Learn more about travelling through the U.S.A's incredible musical cities with [Rhythms of The South](#).

Listen on: [Spotify](#) | [Apple Podcasts](#) | [YouTube](#) | [iHeart](#)

BEYOND THE STORY

Julia Abbondanza - Jun 19 - 3 min read

A photographer noticed something in Robin's leg. It turned out to be the reason her album exists.

Robin Barnes is a singer/songwriter from New Orleans, whose voice has carried jazz and funk across stages from the French Quarter to London's Royal Opera House. She spent fifteen years singing other people's songs before she trusted her own voice enough to record one. Then a friend behind a camera noticed something in her body that she hadn't.





TRAVEL SOUTH USA NOMINATED FOR MOST POPULAR TOURISM OFFICE 2026!

Travel South USA was nominated for Most Popular Tourism Office at the 2026 National Travel Industry Awards — recognition from the Australian trade of the program's visibility and momentum in market, and the only Southern US destination shortlisted.







IV. NEWSLETTERS

Throughout 2025-26, we distributed a range of PR & Trade newsletters to our 4,041 travel agent and 369 media database contacts, evenly highlighting each GGP state throughout (through topics that tied into the GPP editorial / themed calendar).

Australia and New Zealand recipients of the newsletter highly value and save itinerary suggestions; our newsletters offer a practical way of bringing to life our Southern destinations and enables us to create a balanced share of voice across all states.

Total Recipient & Open Rate

TRADE Newsletter – 10 editions distributed to 4,041 trade contacts, average open rate: 28.4%

PR Newsletter – 10 editions distributed to 369 media contacts, average open rate: 47.1%

Newsletter Themes for the year:

- **September**- Biking & Hiking in the Outdoors: What's in Your Picnic Basket?
- **October** - Treats: Spooky, Sweet, and Savory October Eats & Drinks
- **November** - Festivals in 2026: The Food with a Side of Music
- **December** - Holiday Traditions in the American South
- **January** - What's New and Noteworthy in the South for 2026
- **February** - Soul Food: BBQ to Meat & Threes Honoring Civil Rights Legacies
- **March** - Sports Scores Big with Foodies: Tailgating to Stadiums
- **April** - Gardens & Grilling: Southern Flavors in Full Bloom
- **May** - The Roots of Southern Food & The Bounty of the Sea
- **June**- It's a June Potluck: Anything Goes!





This weekend, two feet or a mile off both – the South is built for adventure. Hiking trails, scenic byways, and hidden paths lead to stunning views, charming towns, and perfect picnic spots. Along the way, you'll discover farmers at markets, art in the landscapes, from fresh local food to classic comfort foods.

Whether you're seeking a new challenge or a relaxing day outdoors, every route offers the chance to slow down, explore, and savor the journey.

**Hiking & Hitting in the Outdoors:
What's in Your Front Basket?**



TENNESSEE
Tennessee on Two Wheels
Explore Tennessee's backroads with Mike Thompson. Cycle the 18 cycling states, a curated collection of 52. For updated cycling routes designed to showcase the state's natural beauty and rich heritage. Using the Ride with GPS app, updates can navigate scenic trails through small towns and stunning landscapes. Pickleball park. Ride the Great Smoky Mountains. Use the Coastline Car Club for fresh sandwiches and sweet treats to enjoy on the road.

[Take Tennessee](#)



SOMETHING OF THE SOUTH
Atlanta, Nashville, New Orleans
From vibrant cities to leafy trails, the South serves up unforgettable biking, hiking, and picnic spots. In Atlanta, cycle the BeltLine or hike Stone Mountain, then picnic in Piedmont Park or by the Chattahoochee River. Nashville's 65-mile Greenway connects rivers, forests, and neighborhoods – ideal for taking in scenic perfect spots like Radnor Lake. In New Orleans, join the Little Greenway on the Mississippi River. Linger in City Park with picnics, gardens and Southern charm under the oaks.

[Southern Trails](#)



MISSISSIPPI
Mississippi Miles
Central Mississippi's Hatchers Trace Parkway offers a 44-mile scenic byway ideal for both cycling and hiking. Winding through Jackson, Bogalusa and Clinton, it boasts natural beauty with rich history. Bikes and hikers will find shaded trails, scenic overlooks, and historic landmarks perfect for picnic breaks under towering trees. Whether you're out for a short ride or a longer ride, the Parkway provides a peaceful, picturesque route through one of the South's most scenic landscapes.

[Plan Your Journey](#)

TravelSouth USA

Trick or Treats: Spooky, Sweet, and Savory October Eats & Drinks

October in the South is a time for the season, blending the spirit of Halloween. From comforting mac and cheese to hearty soups, there's something for everyone. Whether you're craving spooky, sweet, or savory, our South's culinary scene is perfect for creating your own Halloween feast.

[Learn More](#)

LOUISIANA

Explore Louisiana's rich culinary heritage with a focus on Cajun and Creole cuisine. From the vibrant flavors of the Gulf Coast to the hearty dishes of the interior, Louisiana's food scene is a true reflection of its diverse culture.

[Read More](#)

SOUTH CAROLINA

Discover the heart of South Carolina's culinary scene, from the coastal seafood of Charleston to the hearty dishes of the Upstate. The state's rich history and diverse culture are reflected in its food.

[Read More](#)

ALABAMA

Explore Alabama's diverse culinary landscape, from the coastal seafood of the Gulf Coast to the hearty dishes of the interior. The state's rich history and diverse culture are reflected in its food.

[Read More](#)

FIND OUT MORE:

CONTACT INFO:

Phone: 813 558 1111 | Email: [info@travelouthusa.com](#)

GATE 7
Exposing updates from Travel South USA
Your new way of seeing the South.

[Learn More](#)

TravelSouth USA

Savor the South: A Journey Through Flavour and History

Across the South, food tells a powerful story of culture, resilience, and history. Soul food, barbecue, and classic meat-and-three traditions offer more than flavour, they preserve African American heritage and Civil Rights legacies. Each plate bridges generations and communities, inviting travelers to taste, learn, and honor the region's rich culinary roots. From smoky pits to beloved neighborhood eateries, every bite carries tradition, pride, and the enduring spirit of the South.

[Learn More](#)

TENNESSEE

Soul Food and Civil Rights History in Memphis
Serving the community since 1946, The Four Way is a Memphis icon and one of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s favorite dining spots. As one of only two Green Book locations still standing in the city, it welcomed leaders such as Rosa Parks, Jesse Jackson, and Aretha Franklin. Today, guests can enjoy a classic meat-and-three, signature sweet tea and lemonade, and a powerful connection to Memphis's civil rights legacy.

[Read More](#)

SOUTH CAROLINA

Soul Food Stories in South Carolina
In South Carolina, soul food is far more than comfort cuisine, it's a living archive of African American resilience, creativity, and resilience. From smoky barbecue pits in the Lowcountry to beloved meat-and-three lunch counters in the Midlands and Upstate, these culinary traditions carry stories passed down through generations. Each plate reflects a history deeply intertwined with the Civil Rights Movement and a legacy of community strength, perseverance, and cultural pride.

[Read More](#)

NORTH CAROLINA

Where Barbecue and History Run Deep
In 2025, North Carolina's barbecue legacy shines brighter than ever, with deeply rooted traditions spanning from Eastern, Western, and Lexington styles across the state. From whole-hog traditions to tangy red dices, each plate reflects generations of craft and community. That story continues at powerful Civil Rights landmarks, from the Greensboro Woolworth sit-in to Black heritage trails statewide, inviting visitors to taste, learn, and reflect on the journeys that shaped America.

[Read More](#)

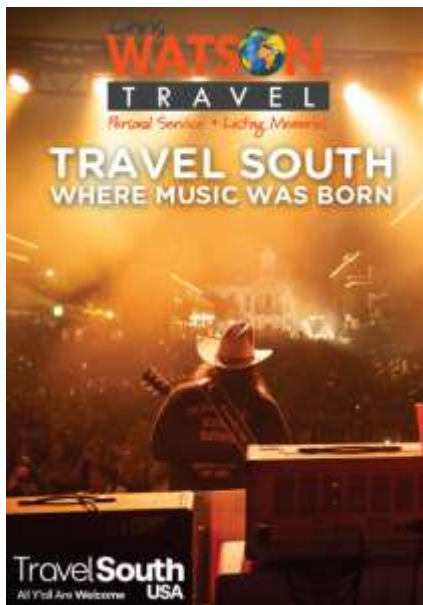




V. CONSUMER CAMPAIGN

The Where Music Was Born consumer campaign delivered approximately 15 million impressions and reached more than 3 million Australians, driving 40,000 visits to campaign landing pages and generating over 600 competition entries — establishing the platform that evolves into Where Flavour Was Born for FY26–27.

CHRIS WATSON - Where Music Was Born





Inspiring Vacations – Centennial Route 66



May 2026 to Sep 2026

15 Day Centennial Route 66

Classic Tour Escorted

20-55 People Lively

7 Days

From (AUD)
\$7,945
Per person

Our Pick

View Itinerary & Details

15 Day Centennial Route 66



Destinations

Chicago, East Saint Louis, Springfield, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Amarillo, Albuquerque, Gallup, Holbrook, Page, Grand Canyon, Seligman, Kingman, Las Vegas, Barstow, Los Angeles

View Tour Details





iTravel

The USA is Calling: Ready to Explore?

From the bright lights of New York City to the natural wonders of the Grand Canyon, the USA offers something for every kind of traveller. Whether you're cruising the Alaskan Inside Passage, road-tripping down the Pacific Coast Highway, or joining a guided tour through the Deep South or Wild West, now's the time to start planning your next great USA adventure.

EXPLORE THE USA

Top USA Tours You'll Love

Explore our hand-picked selection of tours and cruises designed to show you the very best of the USA — your journey starts here.

New Orleans, Louisiana

- New Orleans: More than jazz and Mardi Gras
- Everyday Energy:** Vibrant streets full of life and colour
- Haunted History Tours:** Explore the city's mysterious past
- Craft Cocktail Bars:** Sip on expertly crafted drinks
- Colourful Parades:** Experience lively street celebrations
- A soulful city like no other—full of culture, music, and magic.

Historic Highlights

8 Days
Washington, D.C return
From \$6,295*pp

LEARN MORE

Canyon Country Adventure

8 Days
Phoenix to Las Vegas
From \$5,139*pp

LEARN MORE

Mississippi Delta Explorer

7 Days
New Orleans to Memphis
Viking Mississippi
From \$9,195*pp (twin share)

BOOK NOW

Hawaii: Inter-island

7 Days
Honolulu return
Pride of America
From \$4,406*pp (twin share)

BOOK NOW

EXPLORE THE USA





Nashville, Tennessee

Nashville: More than just country music

Hidden Speakeasies & Indie Gigs: Discover secret bars and vibrant live shows

Smooth Nightlife: From cozy jazz spots to lively dance floors

Rich Vibes: Music, energy, and unforgettable nights

Nashville is the place for anyone who loves great tunes and good times.



Classic Road Trips — Freedom to Roam

There's something magical about the open road. Classic USA road trips let you travel at your own speed, stopping whenever something catches your eye (and trust us — there's plenty).

Pacific Coast Highway: California dreaming on Highway 1

Southwest National Parks Loop: Red rock canyons, wild west towns and star-filled skies

The Blues Highway: Follow the music from Memphis to Chicago, blues clubs, BBQ & small-town soul.

Follow the rhythm of the USA's music history, passing through St. Louis, Memphis, and the Mississippi Delta. Stop for BBQ, blues clubs, and small-town charm on this culturally rich road trip.

Fuel up, queue the playlist, and hit the road — your way.





Rediscover Travel Group – Where Music was Born

rediscover
TRAVEL GROUP

City StaysConcerts & EventsCruiseTours & Road TripsBlog

Where Music Was Born

OVERVIEW

Discover the soulful charm of Southern USA through its rich musical heritage. **a journey that promises unforgettable experiences.**

From the jazz-filled streets of New Orleans to the birthplace of country music in Nashville, every corner resonates with the rhythms of history and culture.

Its dynamic live music scene – spread across hidden back to world-class festivals – will make a trip to the American South as unique as it is unforgettable.

Experience the ultimate self-drive itinerary or let our award-winning team custom design a trip for you to discover the birthplace of music!

12 days

From \$6,799 per person, twin share

Send Enquiry

First Name

Last Name

Email

Phone

Message or Enquiry

12 x 8

Submit

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede – Dinner Show
- Explore Chattanooga
- Explore Nashville
- Opry House Daytime Backstage Tour
- Memphis Music Hall of Fame
- Graceland: Elvis Experience Tour
- Explore Tupero – Elvis' Birthplace
- Explore Chattanooga
- Explore Jacksonville

Memphis Music

Elvis Birthplace

Graceland

Delta Blues Museum

New Orleans

Chattanooga

Dolly Stampede Show

Ole Smoky Moonshine

TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome USA



Inclusions

- 12 Day Car Rental
- 11 Nights Accommodation
- 11 Breakfasts
- Tickets and admission to experiences including:
 - Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede – Dinner Show
 - Opry House Daytime Backstage Tour
 - Memphis Music Hall of Fame
 - Graceland: Elvis Experience Tour

Itinerary

Day 1: Nashville to the Great Smoky Mountains

Day 2: Explore Pigeon Forge

Day 3: Pigeon Forge to Chattanooga

Day 4: Chattanooga to Nashville

Day 5: Explore Nashville

Day 6: Nashville to Memphis via Jackson or Nutbush

Day 7: Explore Memphis

Day 8: Memphis to Tupelo

Day 9: Tupelo to Clarksdale

Day 10: Clarksdale to Greenwood

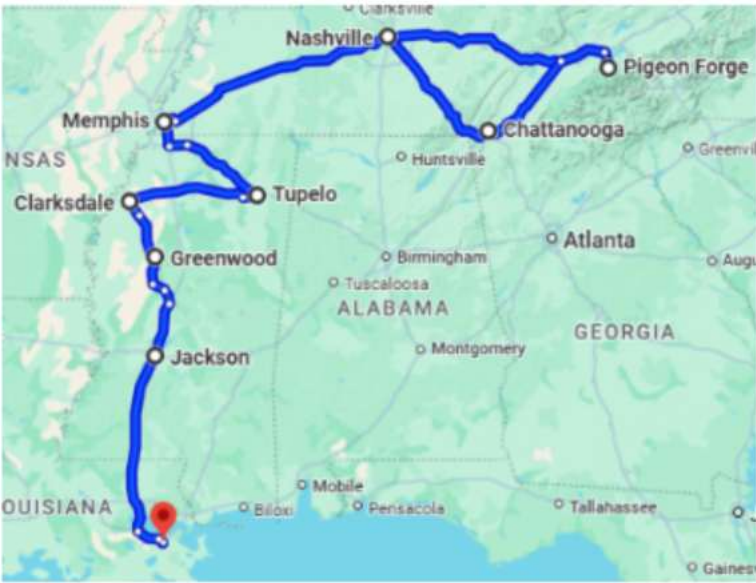
Day 11: Greenwood to Jackson

Day 12: Continue to New Orleans or Return to Memphis/Nashville

Day 1: Nashville to the Great Smoky Mountains

After Picking up your rental car, it is a beautiful drive to Pigeon Forge in The Great Smokey Mountains.

- Accommodation: Black Fox Lodge, Pigeon Forge
- Included Experience: Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede Dinner Show





Celebrating 100 Years of Route 66 in 2026!

OVERVIEW

Embark on the road trip of a lifetime with a 15-day self-drive adventure along the legendary Route 66, stretching from Chicago to Santa Monica. This iconic journey winds through the heart of America, offering a nostalgic blend of quirky roadside attractions, historic landmarks, and breathtaking scenery.

Begin in Chicago, where the Mother Road officially starts, then cruise through classic Americana towns like Joliet, Springfield, and St. Louis. Explore the majestic Gateway Arch before continuing through Missouri's rolling hills and into the vintage charm of Oklahoma and Texas. Highlights include Cadillac Ranch, the U-Drop Inn, and the halfway point in Austin.

As you venture into New Mexico and Arizona, discover the vibrant culture of Santa Fe, the haunting beauty of the Petrified Forest, and the epic grandeur of the Grand Canyon. Don't miss a selfie at the Wigwam Motel or a stroll down Winslow's famous corner.

The final stretch through California delivers desert art at the Seven Magic Mountains, a visit to Calico Ghost Town, and the excitement of Las Vegas. Conclude your adventure at the Santa Monica Pier with your wheels in the Pacific Ocean and your heart full of unforgettable memories. Route 66 is more than a road—it's a rite of passage.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- 15 Day Self-Drive tour (meeting & seeing) Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica
- Experience old world Americana
- Old penit Prison
- Route 66 Hall of Fame & Museum
- New Chain of Rocks Bridge
- Gateway Arch
- Jesse James Wax Museum
- Route 66 Car Museum
- The Infamous Blue Whale
- Pops 66 Soda Ranch
- The Big Texan Steak Ranch
- Cadillac Ranch
- Old Downtown Albuquerque
- Petrified Forest National Park
- Wigwam Village Motel 66
- Winslow Corner
- Grand Canyon National Park
- Las Vegas
- First Original McDonalds Museum
- Santa Monica Pier
- And much more...

15 days

From \$6,985* per person, twin share

Send Enquiry

Message or Enquiry

7 + 12 =

Submit





Route 66 Road Sign



Inclusions

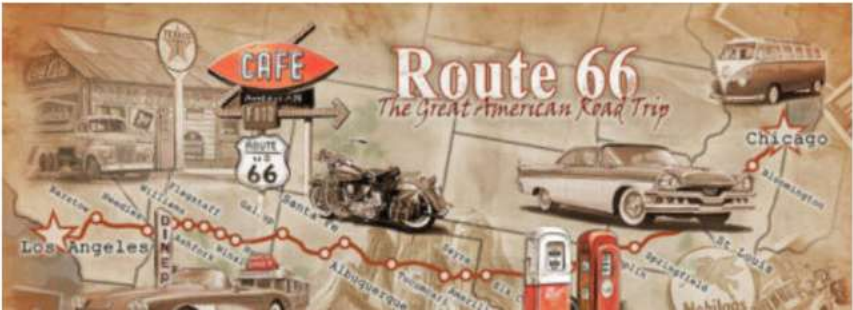
- 15-Day Car Rental
- 14 Night Accommodation
- 11 Breakfasts

Itinerary

Pre Tour Days in Chicago	Day 1: Chicago to Springfield, Illinois	Day 2: Springfield, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri
Day 3: St. Louis to Springfield, Missouri	Day 4: Springfield, Missouri to Tulsa, Oklahoma	Day 5: Tulsa to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Day 6: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	Day 7: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Amarillo, Texas	
Day 8: Amarillo, Texas to Tucumcari, New Mexico	Day 9: Tucumcari to Albuquerque, New Mexico	Day 10: Albuquerque, New Mexico
Day 11: Albuquerque, New Mexico to Holbrook, Arizona	Day 12: Holbrook to Flagstaff, Arizona	
Day 13: Flagstaff, Arizona to Las Vegas, Nevada	Day 14: Las Vegas, Nevada	Day 15: Las Vegas, Nevada to Santa Monica, California

Chicago is the third-largest city in the USA and is definitely worth exploring. From its diverse neighbourhoods to the shoreline on Lake Michigan to the vibrant downtown area, there is so much to see and do.

Talk to us about extending your Route 66 experience to include one or more days in the 'Windy City', including a day trip to Milwaukee – home of the famous Harley Davidson Museum.





Musical Roots of the South

OVERVIEW:

This tour shines for Australians seeking a true immersion in America's musical legacy: the roots of blues, jazz, country, rock and Cajun music come alive on this expensive road-trip stage. Plus, mixing iconic music venues with deep cultural experiences—from BBQ and beignets to plantation history and Afro-Cuban rhythms—makes it not just a drive, but a journey through living history.

This iconic self-drive adventure takes you on a deep dive into America's musical heartland, beginning in Chicago and ending in the soul-infused streets of New Orleans over 15 days. You'll cruise through eight states—Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and South Carolina—covering approximately 3,500 km of rich musical and cultural landscapes.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Chicago to Dallas: While the itinerary begins in Dallas (assuming a red-meat Chicago start), it immerses you in Deep Blues, a storied hub for blues and jazz since the 1930s. Explore over 30 live venues, street art, and iconic venues like the Blind Lemon Factory and Austin's 100th Street.
- Austin & San Antonio to Houston: In Austin, the "Live Music Capital of the World," lay rights to live with country, blues, and rock—think Austin City Limits, SXSW, and local legend venues. A quick trip through San Antonio's historic, trendy, and jazz scenes leads to Houston, to the heart of ZZ Top and Country's 100th, where you can hear local acts at venues like White Oak Music Hall.
- Houston to New Orleans via Port Arthur & Lafayette: Stop at the Museum of the Gulf Coast in Port Arthur (jazz, blues, and rock), then visit Lafayette, the Cajun and Zydeco music capital.
- Finally reach New Orleans, where traditional jazz thrives in Preservation Hall, Frenchman Street, and the jazz National Historical Park.
- And much more...

Inclusions

- 14-Day Car Rental
- 14 Nights Accommodation

Itinerary

Days 1 & 2: Dallas, Texas	Days 3 & 4: Dallas, Texas to Austin, Texas	Day 5: Austin, Texas to Houston, Texas (via San Antonio, Texas)
Days 6 & 7: New Orleans, Louisiana	Day 8: New Orleans, Louisiana to Indianapolis, Mississippi (via Baton Rouge & Natchez)	
Day 9: Indianapolis, Mississippi to Birmingham, Alabama (via Tupelo, Mississippi)	Day 10: Birmingham, Alabama to Chattanooga, Tennessee	
Days 11 & 12: Chattanooga, Tennessee to Lenoir, Tennessee		
Days 13 & 14: Lenoir, Tennessee to Atlanta, Georgia (via the Great Smoky Mountains)		
Day 15: Atlanta, Georgia to Charleston, South Carolina		

Your journey starts in the metropolitan city of Dallas. Specifically, make a two-hour drive to Deep Blues, where more than 30 live music venues in the multi-block area make the entertainment district one of the largest in Texas.

It's a place where you can see big name singers in the massive Blind Lemon Factory, immerse a favorite song in a bustling blues bar, admire street art and stroll in Texas in a neighborhood park. It all began in the 1930s, when Deep Blues was known as a music for blues and jazz, just outside of town of Texas such as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Freddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter and Jesse Jarnett.

By the 1970s, the area was in economic decline with vacant storefronts, but the music scene reigned in the 1980s. The opening of the Texas concert venue in the 1990s further invigorated the area by attracting popular bands like Blind Lemon, Pearl Jam and Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Today, the internationally known district draws people eager to listen to music, engage with local artists, shop and eat. Experience the area at its finest during the Deep Blues Arts Festival, a three-day street party in April.

To enhance your Dallas experience, see us about the Dallas GoCity Pass.

Overnight: 2 Nights in Dallas, Texas

15 days
From \$6,985* per person, twin share

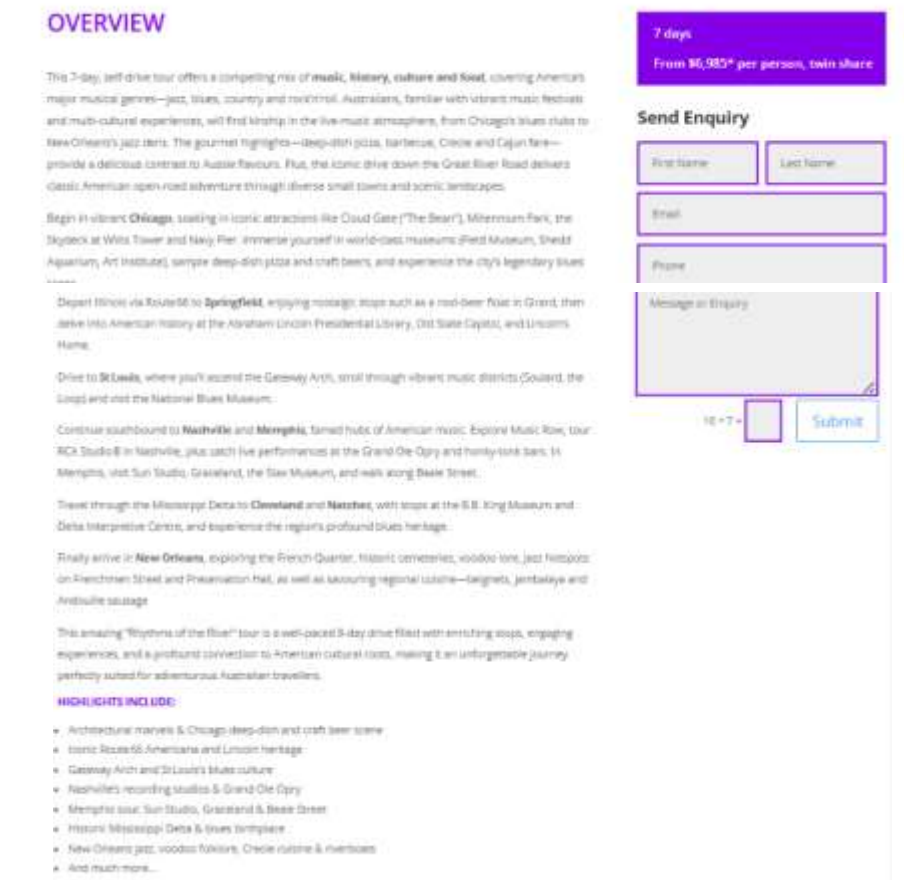
Send Enquiry

Message to Enquiry

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Submit







Inclusions

- 7-Day Car Rental
- 8 Nights Accommodation

Itinerary

Pre Tour Day/s in Chicago	Day 1: Chicago to Springfield, Illinois	Day 2: Springfield, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri
Day 3: St. Louis, Missouri to Nashville, Tennessee	Day 4: Nashville to Memphis, Tennessee	
Day 5: Memphis, Tennessee to Cleveland, Mississippi	Day 6: Cleveland to Natchez, Mississippi	
Day 7: Natchez, Mississippi to New Orleans, Louisiana	Post Tour Day/s in New Orleans	

Chicago is the third-largest city in the USA and is definitely worth exploring. From its diverse neighbourhoods to the shoreline on Lake Michigan to the vibrant downtown area, there is so much to see and do.

Talk to us about including one or more days in the 'Windy City' along with a Chicago GoCity Pass to enhance your experience.





Infinity Holidays Memphis City Break:



Memphis

**Music, History and Southern Soul
Around Every Corner**

Memphis pulses with music, history, and Southern soul. Explore Beale Street, tour Graceland, visit the National Civil Rights Museum, and savor legendary barbecue; experience the birthplace of blues, soul, and rock 'n' roll in one unforgettable city.

Package includes:

3 Nights Memphis with Graceland Tour.

Package Code: IH52662

from

\$909

based on per person twin share

BOOK NOW





Viva Holidays ‘Where Music Was born’ Deals:





8 DAY RHYTHMS OF THE SOUTH ESCORTED TOUR

NEW ORLEANS - NATCHEZ - MEMPHIS - NASHVILLE - ATLANTA

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Explore New Orleans, home to jazz and beignets
- Visit a lavish Antebellum-style mansion in Natchez
- See Memphis' highlights including the Lorraine Hotel and home of the Blues, Beale St
- Visit Nashville's Broadway Street for live music, honky-tonks and Southern food

INCLUDES:

- 2 nights at Hilton New Orleans Riverside ★★★★★ in a Guest Room
- 1 night at Magnolia Bluffs, BW Signature Collection ★★★ in a Standard Room with breakfast
- 1 night at Crowne Plaza Memphis Downtown ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 2 nights at The Inn at Opryland, A Gaylord Hotel, Nashville ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Holiday Inn Express Atlanta Airport - North ★★★ in a Standard Room with breakfast
- Services of a dedicated Tour Director
- Transport by air-conditioned motorcoach

Departs: 17 Apr, 8, 22 May, 31 Jul, 11, 25 Sep, 9 Oct 26

7 nights from **\$2,639*** per person twin share



New Orleans, Louisiana



Memphis, Tennessee



Atlanta, Georgia

9 DAY SOUTHERN DISCOVERY ESCORTED TOUR

ATLANTA - CHARLESTON - SAVANNAH - MONTGOMERY - NEW ORLEANS

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Visit the Stately Oaks Plantation and Museum, the inspiration for "Tara" from *Gone with the Wind*
- Tour historic Charleston, South Carolina and see the iconic piazzas of the beautiful homes
- Travel to Beaufort, North Carolina, where filming for *Forrest Gump* took place
- Enjoy a Trolley Tour the historic downtown district of Savannah, Georgia
- Experience historic landmarks of the Civil Rights Trail in Montgomery and Selma, Alabama
- See New Orleans, Louisiana, the home of jazz and beignets

INCLUDES:

- 2 nights at Fairfield Inn & Suites Atlanta Buckhead ★★★ in a Standard Room with breakfast
- 1 night at Cambria Hotel Charleston Riverview ★★★ in a Standard Room
- 2 nights at Fairfield Inn & Suites Savannah Downtown/Historic District ★★★ in a Standard Room with breakfast
- 1 night at D138 Drury Inn & Suites Montgomery ★★★ in a Standard Room with breakfast
- 2 nights at Hilton New Orleans Riverside ★★★ in a Guest Room
- Services of a dedicated Tour Director
- Transport by air-conditioned motorcoach

Departs: 1 Apr, 2, 16 May, 23 Jul, 5, 19 Sep & 3 Oct 26

8 nights from **\$3,539*** per person twin share



Charleston, South Carolina



Beaufort, North Carolina



New Orleans, Louisiana





Owensboro, Kentucky

15 DAY BOURBON, BLUEGRASS & HORSE COUNTRY SELF DRIVE

NASHVILLE - TULLAHOMA - PIDGEON FORGE - LEXINGTON - CINCINNATI - INDIANAPOLIS - LOUISVILLE - OWENSBORO - NASHVILLE

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.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 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:

- 2 nights 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
- 1 night at Quality Inn & Suites, Cincinnati *** in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Super 8 by Wyndham Indianapolis *** in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Econo Lodge Downtown, Louisville *** in a Standard Room
- 2 nights at Best Western Plus Owensboro *** in a Standard Room
- 16 days Alamo car hire in a Nissan Versa or similar+

Departs: 6 Apr - 16 Apr, 1 Sep - 14 Dec 26, 1 - 10 Mar 27
Offer dates available, seasonal surcharges apply

14 nights from **\$2,539*** per person twin share



Atlanta, Georgia

14 DAY CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY TRAIL SELF DRIVE

NASHVILLE - MEMPHIS - JACKSON - TUSCALOOSA - MONTGOMERY - ALBANY - SAVANNAH - ATLANTA - BIRMINGHAM - NASHVILLE

Experience the freedom of the open road as you journey through the American South, tracing the powerful stories of the Civil Rights Movement and immersing yourself in the region's rich musical and cultural heritage. From Nashville's soulful roots to Memphis' legendary blues, Jackson's pivotal landmarks, and Savannah's charming squares, this self drive adventure offers flexibility, discovery, and unforgettable moments at every turn.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Spend a night exploring Beale Street, Memphis known for blues music and nightlife
- Walk the cobblestone streets in Savannah's historic district
- Visit a historic 1950s meeting place for voting rights at the Butler Chapel AME Zion Church
- Visit the Medgar Evers Home Museum in Jackson, this is a historic site of the civil rights leader's home
- Discover the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through exhibits, his birth home, and the reflecting pool in Atlanta

INCLUDES:

- 1 night at Comfort Inn & Suites Nashville Downtown - Stadium *** in a Standard Room
- 2 nights at Comfort Inn Memphis Downtown *** in a Standard Room
- 2 nights at Hampton Inn & Suites Jackson Downtown - Coliseum, Jackson *** in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Super 8 by Wyndham Tuscaloosa *** in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Best Western Montgomery I-85 North Hotel *** in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Days Inn by Wyndham Albany *** in a Standard Room
- 1 night at GLo Best Western Savannah -Gateway I-95 *** in a Standard Room
- 2 nights at Hilton Garden Inn Atlanta - Buckhead *** in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Best Western Plus Carlton Suites, Birmingham *** in a Standard Room
- 1 night at Comfort Inn & Suites Nashville Downtown - Stadium *** in a Standard Room
- 15 days Alamo car hire in a Nissan Versa or similar+

Departs: 6 Apr - 16 Apr, 1 Sep - 14 Dec 26, 1 - 10 Mar 27
Offer dates available, seasonal surcharges apply

13 nights from **\$3,399*** per person twin share





22 DAY SOUTHERN USA ROAD TRIP

ATLANTA - CHARLESTON - ASHEVILLE - NASHVILLE - TUPELO
- NEW ORLEANS - MEMPHIS - LOUISVILLE - ATLANTA

Embark on an epic 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.

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:

- 2 nights at Courtyard by Marriott Atlanta Downtown *** in a Queen Room
- Atlanta CityPASS including access to your choice of 5 attractions, including World of Coca-Cola, College Football Hall of Fame & more
- 3 nights at Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston ***** in a Traditional Room
- 1 night at Courtyard Asheville *** in a King Room
- 3 nights at Caption by Hyatt Downtown Nashville ***** in a One King Bed
- 2 nights at Courtyard Marriott Tupelo *** in a Guest Room
- 3 nights at Aloft New Orleans Downtown ***** in a King Room
- 3 hour New Orleans City & Cemetery Tour with Garden District Stroll
- Full day Plantation & Swamp Tour
- 3 nights at The Peabody 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 Alamo car hire in a Nissan Versa or similar*

Departs: 6-22 Apr, 28 Apr-3 Jun, 8 Jun-10 Sep/26
Other dates available, seasonal surcharges apply

21 nights from **\$6,299*** per person
twin share





8 Day Rhythms of the South Escorted Tour (TENNESSEE SOUNDS PERFECT)

**VIVA
HOLIDAYS**



TENNESSEE
SOUNDS PERFECT

**8 DAY RHYTHMS OF THE SOUTH
ESCORTED TOUR**

📍 NEW ORLEANS - NATCHEZ - MEMPHIS
- NASHVILLE - ATLANTA

7 NIGHTS FROM **\$2,439*** PER PERSON
TWIN SHARE

**VISIT THE
USA**

📍 Memphis

📍 New Orleans

📍 Nashville





Adventure World – New Itineraries

Road Trippin’ Route 66

From \$8,125

Day by day itinerary



Day 4 Springfield – St. Louis

Springfield – St. Louis

Take some time for final sightseeing in Springfield this morning before hitting the road to St. Louis.

One of the most famous surviving segments of hand-laid brick Route 66, the Auburn Brick Road allows travellers to experience the road as it was in the 1930s.

Perhaps take a slight detour to Carlinville for a charming courthouse square and the Standard Oil "Big Brick" gas station, a restored 1920s Tudor-style station.

Ariston Cafe, opened in 1924 in Litchfield is one of the oldest continuously operated dining spots on Route 66. This family-owned cafe offers classic comfort food and a warm, old-school vibe.

Stop to meet Elly the Pink Elephant in Livingston. Elly is a giant bubblegum-pink fiberglass elephant that stands outside the Pink Elephant Antique Mall, a classic Route 66 stop known for its oversized roadside statues and retro Americana charm.

In Collinsville, stop for a photo of The World's Largest Catsup Bottle. Over 50m tall, it was originally built in 1949 as a water tower for the Brooks catsup factory. It was saved from demolition and restored by a passionate group of locals in the 1990s.

Take a slight detour to visit Cahokia Mounds, a UNESCO World Heritage site. These are the remains of a pre-Columbian city, older than the pyramids of Giza. At its peak, around 1100, this metropolis stretched over 1,620 hectares, encompassed about 120 earthen mounds and hosted a population of nearly 20,000.

Just before reaching St. Louis, pull up at the Chain of Rocks Bridge, one of Route 66's most iconic structures. Built in 1929, this 1.6km steel truss bridge spans the Mississippi River with a distinctive 22 degree bend at its centre. It once carried Mother Road traffic between Illinois and Missouri, but today it's open to pedestrians and cyclists. The bridge offers sweeping river views, historic interpretive signs and a wonderfully atmospheric walk that maintains the feel of the golden age of American road travel.

Ted Drewes Frozen Custard is a place where the line stretches out the door on summer nights, the neon glows just right and the custard is so thick they hand it to you upside down. Ted Drewes opened his first stand in the 1920s, right as Route 66 was coming to life. The Chippewa Street location became a must-stop for travellers heading west, and it still feels like a time capsule of classic roadside Americana.





Day 5

St Louis

↑

St Louis

St. Louis is where the Midwest starts to feel like the gateway to the West – a city shaped by riverboats, jazz clubs, immigrant neighbourhoods and the restless spirit of travellers heading toward new horizons. It's a place where historic Route 66, Mississippi River lore and modern urban energy all collide in a way that feels purely American.

Begin your day at St Louis's most famous landmark, Gateway Arch National Park. The almost 200m stainless-steel Arch is the park's centrepiece – an engineering and architectural icon designed by Eero Saarinen and completed in 1965. Visitors can ride the unique tram system to the top for sweeping views of the Mississippi River and downtown St. Louis (cost additional) or spend time exploring the park grounds. It's one of the few urban national parks in the US, blending monumental architecture with meaningful history.

Perhaps visit Soulard Neighbourhood, one of the oldest in the city for a relaxed brunch/lunch vibe, or head to The Hill, St. Louis' Italian neighbourhood, for something heartier.

Next, we recommend a visit to the Anheuser-Busch Brewery. Founded in the mid-1800s, the St. Louis brewery is the original home of Budweiser beer and the heart of the Anheuser-Busch story. The campus is huge, historic and beautiful – red-brick buildings, ornate architecture and a sense of old-world craftsmanship. There are a number of entertaining ways to tour the campus (cost additional). One of the highlights is visiting the historic stables where the world-famous Clydesdales are kept. They're enormous, gentle, and incredibly photogenic.

This afternoon, visit Forest Park, one of the largest urban parks in the US – bigger than Central Park. Here you can find the free St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri History Museum and St. Louis Zoo, or simply stroll the park's lakes and trails.

This evening, perhaps head to the Central West End – trendy, walkable and full of restaurants and patios. Or visit the Delmar Loop, a lively entertainment district with music venues, restaurants and the St. Louis Walk of Fame. Or if you're a sports fan, check out Downtown/Ballpark Village for a game if the timing is right.

Day 6

St. Louis - Springfield, MO

↑

St. Louis - Springfield, MO

The stretch of Route 66 from St. Louis to Springfield offers a mix of small-town Americana, roadside nostalgia and a few quirky detours that make the drive a true adventure. This leg takes you southwest out of St. Louis and quickly drops you into classic Route 66 country.

Meramec Caverns is one of the most famous attractions on the entire route. Set in the rolling hills near Stanton, the caverns are a massive limestone cave system carved out over millions of years. Inside, you'll find towering formations, underground "rooms" and dramatic lighting that highlights the natural shapes and colours. The guided tour (cost additional) is about 1.5 hours and takes you through features like the "Wine Table" and the "Stage Curtain," one of the largest cave formations of its kind. Meramec Caverns leans into its legend: it's famously tied to Jesse James, who supposedly used the caves as a hideout.

Farther along, the town of Cuba, nicknamed "Route 66 Mural City", is worth a slow roll or a short walk to admire its colourful outdoor art celebrating local history.

Fanning offers the giant Route 66 Rocker, a perfect photo stop, and Devil's Elbow gives you a scenic detour through the Ozark foothills with a historic steel truss bridge and dramatic river views. As you enter Pulaski County, enhance your drive by downloading their free Route 66 audio tour of the region.

If your sweet tooth's calling as you roll through Rolla, be sure to stop at A Slice of Pie – a shop so iconic that travellers have been known to detour just to get a fork in one of their creations. This unassuming little bakeshop has been serving homemade pies since 1986, with rows of fresh pies cooling on display, from American apple to Boston cream to red velvet.

One of the most delightfully over-the-top stops on the Missouri stretch of Route 66 is Uranus Fudge Factory – a place that leans fully into roadside humour while still delivering genuinely good treats and a fun experience.

The Route 66 of old lights up St Robert's Neon Park, an open-air collection of restored vintage neon signs from classic highway businesses in the region. Many of these signs once lit up motels, diners, and roadside stops that have long since disappeared. Ideally visit at dusk when the neon comes alive.

As you approach Springfield, the road passes through Lebanon, home to the Route 66 Museum inside the local library, a surprisingly charming stop filled with memorabilia and vintage displays.

Springfield, Missouri is one of the most important cities on the entire Mother Road. Not just a stop, but the birthplace of the name "Route 66." It was here in 1926 that local leaders first proposed the now-legendary number for the Chicago-to-Los Angeles highway, cementing Springfield's place in road-trip history.

Springfield blends genuine history with pure roadside Americana. It's big enough to offer museums, restaurants and attractions, but small enough that the old alignments of Route 66 still feel close. You can drive original stretches of pavement, visit vintage service stations and explore neighbourhoods that grew up around the highway. Highlights worth visiting include the Route 66 Car Museum, Birthplace of Route 66 Roadside Park, Gillioz Theatre and the Historic Downtown and Commercial Street.

This evening, perhaps dine at Black Sheep Burgers and Shakes, for creative burgers, delicious fries and boozy shakes. Or visit Civil Kitchen for a made-from-scratch menu featuring modern twists of Midwestern classics.





Adventure World

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Ultimate Barbecue Road Trip

Ultimate Barbecue Road Trip

from \$6,725 pp



Barbecue is a southeastern US institution, especially in Texas, Kansas City, Memphis and the Carolinas. Enjoy the best brisket, ribs and pulled pork around.

21 days 20 nights

American barbecue is a way of life: a mouth-watering tale of place, people and pride. From Texas's peppery brisket to the Carolina's vinegar sharp whole hog, Kansas City's sweet smoke and Memphis's dry rub mastery, each region tells a flavourful story. What unites them is ritual: the slow patience of the pit, the community that gathers around it and the sense that you're tasting something rooted in generations of craft. This road trip through America's barbecue regions explores the country's history and heart, one smoky, soulful bite at a time.

This itinerary departs daily and can be customised to suit you by our Destination Experts.
[Back to USA Tours](#)

View Itinerary

Ultimate Barbecue Road Trip

Day by day itinerary

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Start Location
End Location
Overnight
Visited Location
Flight
Cruise/Ferry
Train

Day 8

Kansas City

Kansas City

Kansas City has a way of easing up to you rather than shouting for attention. It's a place where jazz drifts out of old clubs, fountains line the streets and the smell of barbecue seems to follow you from one neighbourhood to the next. Straddling the Missouri-Kansas state line, the city unfolds in a patchwork of lively neighbourhoods, each with its own personality, connected by grand boulevards and leafy parks. There's a sense of pride here that's easy to feel: in the music that shaped American culture, in the food that draws pilgrims from across the country and in the welcoming Midwestern spirit that makes visitors feel like they've stumbled into a community rather than just a destination.

Today is at leisure to explore the city. Kansas City's free streetcar makes it easy to get around the central part of the city, connecting many of the city's highlights. Perhaps visit the National WWI Museum and Memorial or Union Station, which stands as one of the most beautiful historic train stations in the country. The American Jazz Museum and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, both located in the 18th & Vine Jazz District, tell stories central to American culture. Country Club Plaza blends Spanish-inspired architecture with fountains, shops and restaurants, or explore City Market, one of the largest and oldest public farmers markets in the Midwest.

Of course, a visit to the Immersive Museum of BBQ is a must for any barbecue enthusiasts. The world's first museum dedicated entirely to barbecue, it blends history, culture, science and a bit of playful weirdness into a very Kansas City-style experience. Located in the same building, the Crown Center, is the Hallmark Visitors Center - a free, interactive museum that tells the story of Hallmark, from its beginnings as a small postcard business in 1910 to becoming one of the most recognisable creative brands in the world.

This evening, enjoy dinner at another of the city's renowned barbecue joints. Consider spots like Arthur Bryant's, Q39, Gables, Slap's, or for a more upscale option, Jack Stack Barbecue. Each will have their own twist featuring mouthwatering ribs, brisket, burnt ends and other barbecue specialties.

Kansas City jazz has a pulse that's impossible to miss. It grew out of the city's late-night culture in the 1920s and 30s, when clubs stayed open until dawn and musicians pushed boundaries with long, improvised jam sessions. This is the city that shaped legends like Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Mary Lou Williams and Big Joe Turner; their loose, soulful spirit still defines Kansas City's sound today. Kansas City jazz is improvisational, blues-infused and built on the idea that music should be played, not just performed. Check out The Blue Room, Green Lady Lounge or the Mutual Musicians Foundation.

TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome USA



Day 10	St. Louis – Memphis	↑
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St. Louis – Memphis

Driving from St. Louis to Memphis is one of those classic mid-South road trips where the scenery shifts from rolling Missouri farmland to the flat, sun-baked fields of the Mississippi Delta.

Before you leave the city, stop by the iconic Ted Drewes Frozen Custard. One of St. Louis' most beloved institutions, it's been around since 1929, and the current Route 66 location has become a landmark drawing locals and road-trippers alike. Ted Drewes is best known for inventing the Concrete, a thick, blended custard treat so dense it's served upside-down.

Consider a stop in Cape Girardeau, a charming river town located along the Mississippi River. Its historic downtown area features quaint shops, restaurants and historic landmarks such as the Old St. Vincent's Church and the Cape River Heritage Museum. It's a pleasant place to stretch your legs and explore a bit of local history.

For music lovers, a quick detour to Dyess, Arkansas lets you visit Johnny Cash's boyhood home. The site offers a rare, authentic look at the rural environment that shaped one of America's most influential musicians.

Memphis is a city built on music, soul and stories. Where the Mississippi River bends wide and slow, and the air feels thick with history and rhythm. This is the birthplace of blues, the crucible of rock 'n' roll and a place where soul music found its voice. Walk down Beale Street in the evening and you'll hear it – guitars spilling out of open doors, horns drifting through the air and that unmistakable Memphis groove that seems to rise straight from the pavement.

But Memphis isn't just music. It's barbecue smoke curling from old brick buildings, civil rights history that still resonates deeply and neighbourhoods full of character – from the artsy vibe of Cooper-Young to the stately homes of Midtown. The city feels lived-in and real, with a warmth that comes from people proud of where they're from. Whether you're up for barbecue, Graceland, Sun Studio, the National Civil Rights Museum or simply to soak up the atmosphere, Memphis offers a mix of grit, charm and soul that's hard to forget.

Day 11	Memphis	↑
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Memphis

This morning is yours to explore the city at your leisure.

This afternoon, The Home of the Blues' comes alive with a city tour aboard the nation's only music bus. Your tour guide will be a professional Beale Street musician who will perform songs from the city's rich musical heritage while entertaining you with comedy, history and behind-the-scenes stories of your favourite Memphis personalities. Along the way you'll see many of the city's sites, including Sun Studio and the Lorraine Motel.

Memphis barbecue is all about dry rubs. Delicious baby back ribs are slow smoked over a low hickory fire coated in a paprika based spice rub. If there's sauce, it's on the side. There are over 100 barbecue joints in Memphis, so the tasting options are endless. Try Central BBQ, a local favourite, or Charlie Vergos' Rendezvous with its distinctive charcoal-grilled style. For some more unique choices, visit The Bar-B-Q Shop, the originators of barbecue spaghetti – pasta tossed with tangy barbecue sauce, tender pork, onions and capsicum – or Cozy Corner, known for their Cornish game hen, smoked until the skin is crisp and the meat is tender, glazed with their signature sauce.

The Memphis in May World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest is one of the crown jewels of American barbecue – a larger-than-life celebration where smoke, competition, and Southern culture collide right on the banks of the Mississippi River. If the American Royal is the Super Bowl, Memphis in May is the Mardi Gras of BBQ: loud, festive, and absolutely obsessed with pork.

Finish the evening with a visit to Beale Street, the beating heart of Memphis nightlife and one of the most storied streets in American music. It's only about three blocks long, but those blocks carry more history, sound and swagger than entire neighbourhoods in other cities. If you want to feel the essence of Memphis – its blues, its grit, its joy – this is where you go.

Beale Street is considered the "Home of the Blues", and that's not just a slogan. In the early 1900s, it was a hub for Black musicians, entrepreneurs and culture. Legends like W.C. Handy, B.B. King, Muddy Waters and Louis Armstrong played here, shaping the sound that would influence jazz, soul and rock 'n' roll. Even today, music spills out of nearly every doorway. You'll hear blues, soul, R&B, rock, and sometimes a brass band marching right down the street.





Day 13	Huntsville – Nashville	↑
	Huntsville – Nashville Huntsville is one of the most fascinating cities in the South, blending rocket science, Southern charm and a fast-growing tech culture in a way that feels completely its own. People call it "Rocket City" for a reason – this is where NASA engineers designed and tested the Saturn V rocket that sent astronauts to the moon. Take some time to visit the US Space & Rocket Center (cost additional) this morning. One of the most impressive space museums in the world, it's home to a full Saturn V rocket, interactive exhibits, simulators and artifacts from the Apollo era. Travelling back north today, take a small detour into Tennessee Whiskey Country to visit the Jack Daniel's Distillery in Lynchburg. Franklin, one of the most charming towns in the state, is just south of Nashville and worth a stop to explore its beautiful historic downtown and Civil War history. Near Franklin, you can detour onto the Natchez Trace Parkway for a slower, scenic route into Nashville offering stunning overlooks, hiking spots and historic pull-offs. Nashville hits you with a mix of energy and warmth the moment you arrive. It's a city built on music and storytelling, where neon lights glow along Broadway and live bands spill out of every honky-tonk from midday to midnight. But beyond the country-music image, Nashville has grown into a vibrant, creative city with a booming food scene, stylish neighbourhoods and a welcoming Southern spirit. Walk its streets and you'll feel the blend of old and new – historic venues like the Ryman Auditorium and Grand Ole Opry standing alongside modern restaurants, murals and bustling markets. This evening you'll experience the true heart of Nashville aboard the Soul of Music City Tour. It's an evening filled with music, history and fun and a close-up view of some of the most legendary spots in town. From the city's honky-tonks to its famous music venues, uncover insider stories and intriguing facts about the people, places and events responsible for Nashville's iconic reputation.	
	Nashville Today you can explore on a trolley tour, a convenient way to discover the city with stops at must-visit attractions such as the Ryman Auditorium, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Music Row. Nashville has long been known as a music city, but its food scene is emerging as one of the best in the region. Aside from the local staple of hot chicken, Nashville's barbecue restaurants are booming. Two of the best are Peg Leg Porker and Martin's Bar-B-Que Joint. While in Nashville, perhaps needing a break from barbecue, be sure to sample the city's signature dish: hot chicken. Head to one of the many local eateries specializing in this spicy fried chicken dish, such as Prince's Hot Chicken Shack (the original), Hattie B's Hot Chicken or Bolton's Spicy Chicken & Fish.	
Day 15	Nashville – Asheville	↑
	Nashville – Asheville As you drive from Nashville to Asheville, take some time to explore Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg. These neighbouring towns are popular destinations known for their entertainment attractions, shopping and outdoor activities. Visit Dolly Parton's Dollywood theme park in Pigeon Forge, explore the shops and restaurants along the Parkway in Gatlinburg or take a scenic drive through Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Also pay a visit to Ole Smoky Distillery, one of the most famous moonshine distilleries in the US, known for its rustic atmosphere, copper stills and wide range of flavoured moonshines. Tucked into the Blue Ridge Mountains, Asheville is a great place to get out in nature and work off some of the delicious barbecue you've sampled along the way. Of course, Asheville is home to plenty of great dining options, including 12 Bones Smokehouse, a favourite of President Obama, and Lueillas.	



Day 16	Asheville – Lexington – Winston-Salem	↑
	Asheville – Lexington – Winston-Salem Before leaving Asheville this morning, consider a visit to the Biltmore Estate, the largest privately-owned home in the United States. It feels a little like stepping into an American fairytale, with the entire property designed to impress, from the grand architecture to the sweeping mountain views. Or perhaps take a hike in the nearby Pisgah National Forest for some classic Appalachian scenery with rhododendron tunnels, mossy streams, old-growth forests and some of the best waterfalls in the region. Leaving Asheville, you'll roll east through the foothills before the landscape flattens into the Piedmont. It's an easy, pretty drive with plenty of small-town scenery. Lexington is the capital of North Carolina's western-style barbecue. Every October, Lexington's Barbecue Festival draws over 100,000 visitors and transforms downtown Lexington into a lively celebration of Piedmont-style pork shoulder, red slaw and all the traditions that make this region's barbecue unique. Lexington Barbecue (aka "The Honeyfork") is the optimal dining choice, but Smokey Joe's and the Barbecue Center are notable mentions. After your pork and slaw feast, it's a short drive to nearby Winston-Salem, a city that blends arts, history and food with a relaxed, walkable downtown.	
Day 17	Winston-Salem – Raleigh	↑
	Winston-Salem – Raleigh Old Salem is one of the most beautifully preserved historic districts in the United States, and a visit is like a trip back to the late 1700s. It was founded by Moravian settlers, a Protestant group from Central Europe known for their craftsmanship, music and community-focused way of life. Today, Old Salem functions as a living history museum right in the heart of Winston-Salem, with costumed interpreters, working trades and restored buildings that bring the past to life. You can visit the Reynolda House Museum of American Art, which offers a rare blend of art, history and nature. It's the richness of a major American art museum inside a beautifully preserved historic home. Travelling towards Raleigh, make a slight detour to visit Greensboro, where you can visit the International Civil Rights Center & Museum located in the original Woolworth's where the 1960's sit-ins began. Perhaps stop to visit Hillsborough - historic, artsy and full of character. Explore the Riverwalk along the Eno or visit the Ayr Mount Historic Site. Durham is another option worth considering. Visit the historic American Tobacco Campus, a network of old factories and wineries transformed for the modern era, or the beautiful and sprawling 22 hectare Duke Gardens. You'll next arrive in Raleigh, the capital city of North Carolina, and explore its vibrant downtown area. Visit historic landmarks including the North Carolina State Capitol and the Governor's Mansion, or stroll through the shops, restaurants and galleries in the Warehouse District or Fayetteville Street.	
Day 18	Raleigh – Ayden – Greenville – Raleigh	↑
	Raleigh – Ayden – Greenville – Raleigh Make your way to Ayden this morning. It's tiny, but for barbecue lovers it's sacred ground. This is Eastern North Carolina whole hog territory, where the sauce is vinegar-based, the pork is chopped fine and the tradition runs deep. It's home to a legendary barbecue institution, Skyline Inn BBQ, often called the "Capital of BBQ" famous for whole hog cooked over wood, chopped with crispy skin mixed in. Nearby, Greenville is a lively college town, and it's barbecue offers another option to sample Eastern North Carolina style barbecue. It's rustic and old-school, the kind of spot where the smoke hits you before you even pull into the gravel lot. Locals line up before opening, and you'll see the pitmasters working as you wait. When you're full, head back to Raleigh for the evening.	
Day 19	Raleigh – Charleston	↑
	Raleigh – Charleston From North Carolina to South Carolina, today's road trip will take you through pine forests, small towns and the Lowcountry. A couple of notable stops to consider along the way include Fayetteville, where you can visit Cape Fear Botanical Garden or the Airborne & Special Operations Museum. Oconee, just south of the border offers a kitschy, iconic roadside attraction with giant neon signs, quirky shops and photo ops – pure Americana. Lake Marion/Gerree is where the landscape starts shifting towards the Lowcountry and offers a nature-based stop, with Santee State Park and Santee Copper Lakes. Summerville is known as the "Birthplace of Sweet Tea" and offers a charming downtown, beautiful old homes and shady streets. Charleston is one of those cities where history, food, architecture and coastal beauty all blend into a slow, elegant rhythm that feels distinctly its own. It's a Lowcountry port city with more than 300 years of history, and it shows: cobblestone streets, pastel-coloured homes, wrought-iron balconies and live oaks draped in Spanish moss. But it's not frozen in time. The city has a vibrant creative energy, a nationally acclaimed food scene and a warm, welcoming personality.	





Day 20	Charleston	↑
	Charleston Join a guided small group tour this morning to savour the flavours of Charleston. At this point you may be glad to learn it's not a restaurant crawl or a heavy, indulgent feast, but a guided walk through the historic district that blends local history, culinary traditions and tastings into a relaxed and flavourful experience. Stroll through some of Charleston's most charming streets with a guide who knows the city's foodways inside and out. Along the way, stop at a curated mix of local eateries, specialty shops, bakeries and markets, each offering a small tasting that highlights a different piece of Lowcountry cuisine. The storytelling ties everything together – how ingredients arrived through the port, how Gullah-Geechee traditions shaped the region and how Charleston became a modern culinary destination. South Carolina is historically divided into sauce regions, and Charleston sits right where mustard, vinegar-pepper and tomato-based styles all overlap. That means you'll find everything from whole-hog to brisket to ribs, depending on where you go. Charleston's barbecue scene is a fascinating blend of old Lowcountry traditions, South Carolina's famous mustard-based ("Carolina Gold") sauces and a wave of newer pitmasters who've brought in influences from Texas, Tennessee and beyond. Charleston is like a crossroads where several Southern barbecue identities meet, and a great place to end your sweet and smoky journey. Rodney Scott's Whole Hog BBQ is the top recommendation here. James Beard winner Rodney Scott helped put Charleston on the modern barbecue map. They feature whole hog cooked over hardwood embers, legendary ribs and chicken and a vinegar-pepper sauce with a kick. For classic mustard-based South Carolina barbecue, head to Bessinger's Barbecue, a local institution with an old-school vibe. Swig & Swine is a great option to sample multiple sauce styles at once, offering excellent pork belly and ribs along with creative sides. Meals: Lunch	
Day 21	Charleston	↑
	Charleston As your barbecue adventure ends, and you return your hire car, we hope your stretchy pants are holding together and your taste buds are still tingling with the incredible flavours of this one-of-a-kind culinary odyssey.	





Karryon/Helloworld Travel Missouri

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Music, BBQ & the authentic American spirit awaits with Viva’s new Missouri packages

With a rich history, iconic music scene, adventure activities, and out-of-this-world barbecue, touring Missouri is the stop your clients need on their next USA road trip. Tapping into the true heart of America, Viva Holidays has curated self-drive packages for your convenience, and North America Product Manager Alysha Hughes shares her recent trip highlights.



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30 Mar 2026

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Add Missouri to your client's USA road trip with Viva Holidays' curated packages

TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome USA



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Defined by its authentic American spirit, vibrant music scene, and award-winning barbecue, Missouri offers a surprising variety of modern experiences when you know what to book.

Viva Holidays, in partnership with Brand USA and Visit Missouri, has curated [self-drive packages](#) that reveal the best of the state.

Across the Show-Me State, your clients can tour vibrant arts districts, architectural landmarks, and explore the Ozarks' breathtaking natural landscapes.

Inviting communities, charming towns, and easy connections make Missouri a stand-out destination, easily woven into USA travel plans. Especially in 2026, with the milestone of Route 66's 100-year anniversary.

| Why Missouri?



Route 66 celebrates 100 years in 2026





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Route 66 celebrates 100 years in 2026

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Here are 7 must-visit experiences to share with your Missouri-bound clients:

- 7. Kansas City jazz: Jazz may have been born in New Orleans, but it grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, where musicians relocated during prohibition. That camaraderie remains today, as discovered in live performances and at the American Jazz Museum.
- 6. St. Louis blues: Soulful, fusion blues of the 1920s and '30s made their way to St. Louis, making it the blues epicentre. Travellers can experience this history at live shows, music venues and festivals across the city.
- 5. Branson: In the heart of the Ozarks, over 9 million annual visitors flock to Branson – the 'Live Entertainment Capital of Missouri'. They love to watch country, rock, pop, gospel, and bluegrass shows, and visit an 1880s-themed amusement park, amazing museums, and outdoor recreation.
- 4. Barbecue: Travellers have ample opportunities to taste why Missouri loves its barbecue. Discover Kansas City's 100-plus establishments to find the best burnt ends. Then, make your way across the state to savour St. Louis-style spare ribs.
- 3. Route 66: Missouri is celebrating Route 66's centennial all year. Across 450 kilometres, your clients will love the mom-and-pop diners, roadside attractions, vintage motor courts, and local stories.
- 2. Gateway Arch: The United States' tallest man-made monument, the Gateway Arch offers a tram ride to the top for sweeping views of downtown St. Louis and the Mississippi River.
- 1. Outdoors: A million-plus acres of public lands and conservation areas make Missouri a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. Highlights include climbing billion-year-old boulders at Elephant Rocks State Park, biking the Katy Trail State Park, or hiking alongside Ha Ha Tonka State Park's ruins.





Missouri's magic moments



Alysha Hughes says Kansas City, Missouri has so much to offer Australian travellers

Viva Holidays' North American Product Manager, Alysha Hughes, shared her favourite moments on a recent visit to Kansas City, Missouri.

"One standout was the historic 18th & Vine district, one of the true cradles of jazz music and a longstanding hub for African American culture and business."

Alysha continued, "Travellers can visit both the American Jazz Museum and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. Warm Southern hospitality greets you from the volunteers, who reveal the lively streets and community spirit that defined 18th & Vine."

Alysha also visited the Museum of Kansas City, "Once the home of the Long family, key figures in the city's development, the estate offers an immersive museum experience, perfect for learning about Kansas City's heritage and growth."

"I also treated myself to Kansas City's world-famous barbecue, known for its slow-smoked meats, generous portions, and thick, tangy sauces. My favourite dish was the local specialty, burnt end: smoky, tender, and absolutely delicious."

She concluded, "Together, the food, music, history, and easy accessibility make Kansas City a genuinely welcoming destination, full of character and charm."





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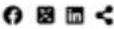
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| Book Missouri with Viva Holidays

Connect your clients to the heart of America with Viva Holiday's tailor-made packages. These include:

| Meet Me in St. Louis



Riding St. Louis' famous Gateway Arch is a must- do #Shutterstock

Discover St. Louis' rich blend of history, culture, and iconic architecture on this 6-day adventure. The famed Gateway Arch, a scenic riverboat cruise, and a charming St. Louis tour celebrate the city's live music, craft breweries, and fascinating museums.

Meet Me in St. Louis includes:

- 5 nights at the 5-star Magnolia Hotel St. Louis, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel in a King Room
- A 4-hour Best of St. Louis Tour with Gateway Arch tram ride, Mississippi River cruise, and stops at Kiener Plaza, City Garden, and the National Blues Museum

From \$945* per person twin share. [Find out more here.](#)

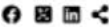




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Kansas City Highlights



Arthur Bryant's Barbeque is a Kansas City institution.

Across this 5-day itinerary, your clients can ride the free Kansas City Streetcar to explore neighbourhoods, taste the renowned barbeque burnt ends, wander the historic River Market neighbourhood, and visit the Museum of Kansas City.

Kansas City Highlights include:

- 4 nights at the 4-star Kansas City Marriott Downtown in a Standard Room
- Complimentary city activities, including the KC Streetcar and Museum of Kansas City

From \$865* per person twin share. [Learn more here.](#)

Missouri: Iconic Sites & Bites Self Drive



Branson's famous Baldknobbers

This 7-day self-drive journey from Kansas City to St. Louis via Branson offers the flexibility to experience the best of Missouri. Discover Kansas City's traditions, rich history and jazz greats. In Branson, immerse yourself in the Ozarks with plenty of options for entertainment.





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Once in St. Louis, the Gateway Arch and Gateway Arch Riverboats are must-dos, as is the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis with the largest mosaic collection in the Western Hemisphere.

This package includes:

- 2 nights at the 4-star Hilton President Kansas City in a Guest Room
- 2 nights at the 4-star Hilton Promenade at Branson Landing in a Guest Room
- 2 nights at the 3-star Best Western St. Louis Inn in a Standard Room
- 8 days Alamo USA car hire in a Toyota Corolla (or similar*)

From \$2,075* per person twin share. [Discover more here.](#)

| Agents, read this



Branson serves up epic barbecues, too. ©Danna's Bar, B-Que & Burger Shop

Discover more about these [Missouri packages](#) and access marketing assets on Viva Holidays' [dedicated agent platform](#).

To book, head to their online reservation system, [Mango](#).

This article is brought to you by Viva Holidays, Visit Missouri, and Visit The USA.





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 cheee 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 stands 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 Louisville is found at Frazier 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 Envy and Old Forester distilleries, and at the Kentucky Bourbon Distillery, where they can sip straight from the barrel!

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.





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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



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



4 Nights from: **\$1,349**

5 Day Discover Louisville
USA

5 DAY DISCOVER LOUISVILLE

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - BOOKING IS JUST THE BEGINNING



USA

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

ENDURE NOW

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 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 FREE PRINT

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

Taxi from 4 Nights per person from: **\$1,349**

*Based on rate of \$102 per person for travel on 1 Jul 2026 - 31 Aug 2026

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



21 Nights from: **\$5,829**

22 Day Southern USA Road Trip

USA



9 Nights from: **\$1,979**

10 Day Explore Kentucky Self Drive

USA



4 Nights from: **\$1,349**

5 Day Discover Louisville

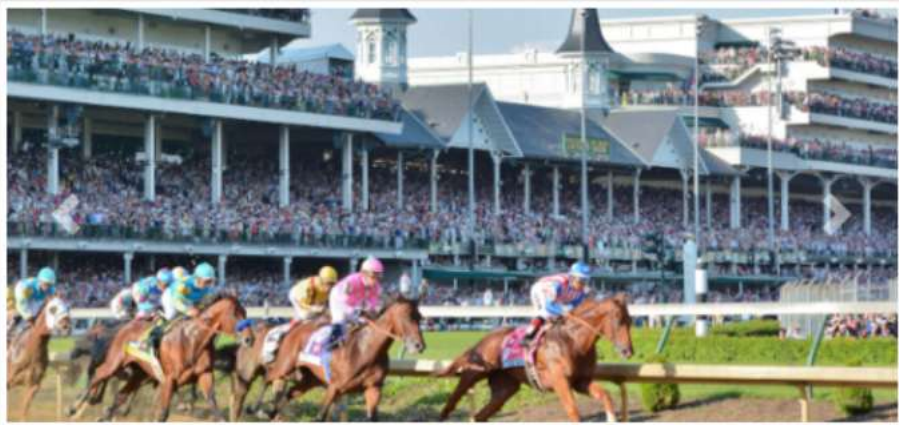
USA





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

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.

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*

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

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4 Nights from: **\$1,349**

5 Day Discover Louisville

USA



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HOLIDAYS

22 DAY SOUTHERN USA ROAD TRIP

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - BOURBON IS JUST THE BEGINNING



USA

On Sale Until: 30 Apr 2026

For Travel Dates: 23 Apr 2026 - 23 Apr 2026, 26 Apr 2026 - 3 Jun 2026, 8 Jun 2026 - 11 Sep 2026

ENQUIRE NOW

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, Savor Creole cuisine, and soak in the soulful sounds of live 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

TRIP PRINT

- 2 nights at Courtyard by Marriott Atlanta Downtown ★★ in a Queen Room
- Atlanta CityPASS including access to 5 attractions
- 3 nights at Francis Marion 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 Ash New Orleans Downtown ★★ in a King Room
- 3 hour New Orleans City & Cemetery tour with Garden District Stroll
- 8 hour Plantation & Swamp tour
- 3 nights at The Peabody 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 R - 23 Apr, 26 Apr - 3 Jun, 8 Jun - 10 Sep 26

Trip from 24 nights per person from \$5,829

RELATED DEALS

15 Night Room \$2,349

15 Day Bourbon, Bluegrass & Horse Country Self Drive

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10 Night Room \$1,079

10 Day Explore Kentucky Self Drive

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8 Night Room \$1,349

5 Day Discover Louisville

USA

