

TravelSouth

All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**

Monthly Report – August - Benelux

Prepared by:



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About the Global Network Program

We appreciate the continued support of Travel South USA and are proud to serve as your Global Consultants. Having worked closely with the region for several years, we have built a strong understanding of what the region has to offer, and how to best represent the region in the Benelux market. Our overall goal remains to grow sales, exposure and awareness of the travel possibilities throughout the Travel South region, which will ultimately increase visitation from the Benelux and visitor spending. Storytelling will be at the heart of this approach, highlighting the key themes like: Food, Music, Culture, History and Outdoors

We look forward to another year of keeping the Travel South region top-of-mind among trade, media and potential travelers in Belgium & The Netherlands, while continuing to strengthen the presence of the GNP partners in-market. Included in this years' Benelux program are: **Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Rhythms of the South.**

What you may expect from us as Global Consultants:

- Management of the destination's in-market reputation, covering both the Travel South region as a whole, while also ensuring equal exposure for all GNP partners.
- Developing and maintaining media and trade relationships, with continued focus on product development.
- Execution of approved marketing activities
- Recommendations for effective marketing investments and identification of new opportunities.
- Monthly analysis and reporting on relevant market trends and developments, but also monitoring market sentiment

Why the Benelux market?

- 81% of the Dutch population (18.5 million) and 74% of the Belgium population (11.9 million) is vacationing at least once a year.
- A steady and stable market. Small, yet big in our number of travellers to the USA. 4 out of 100 people visit the USA yearly.
- High potential for 2nd and 3rd tier destinations and potential for the shoulder season
- Both the Dutch and the Belgians receive an 8% annual extra salary called "vacation payout"
- The Dutch have at least 25 vacation days and about 10 public holidays, the Belgians have at least 20 vacation days and also 10 public holidays.
- The average time spent in the USA is: 18 days.





I. Executive summary

Publications

Social media:

The Travel South region was featured in **30 social media posts** throughout the month August. *Amerika Only* shared 20 posts, featuring different parts of **Missouri** and **Atlanta**. *Tioga Tours* shared two posts highlighting art and history in **Memphis, Tennessee**. *America Magazine* shared two posts, one highlighting Paducah, **Kentucky** and the other about a food festival in **Lousiana**. *GoAmerika* highlighted Memphis and **Rhythms of the South** city Nashville, **Tennessee** in five posts. **Mississippi** was mentioned in two posts by *Visit USA Belgium*.

Publications:

The Travel South Region received media attention through **17 online articles**. News outlets *AD*, *NOS*, *NU.nl* and *Volkskrant* published a total of four articles about the passing of Dolly Parton, mentioning **Nashville, Tennessee**. *Het Parool* shared an article about the **Alabama Shakes**. **Tennessee** was mentioned by *TravEcademy* in a blogarticle. *Amerikaantje* shared two articles, one mentioning **Louisiana** and **Tennessee**, the other mentioning **Louisiana, Tennessee, South Carolina, Kentucky** and **Rhythms of the South**. Both *Visit USA Belgium* and *Visit USA The Netherlands* shared an article highlighting **Mississippi**. **Missouri** was highlighted in a print article from *NRC*. The Outer banks in **North Carolina** were highlighted in an article from *Serietotaal*. *The Headliner* shared two articles about Dolly, mentioning **Tennessee** and **Missouri**. *Elegance* also highlighted Dolly's imperium in **Tennessee**. **Tennessee** was mentioned by *GoAmerika* in a blog about Elvis in Memphis and Tupelo. *Hey!USA* wrote about **Rhythms of the South** city Nashville, **Tennessee**.

Newsletters

This month **2 newsletters** included the Travel South region. *Travel News* sent out a newsletter about **Alabama**. *Visit USA The Netherlands* shared a newsletter highlighting **Missouri** and **Mississippi**.

Travel Diaries

We are ahead of schedule as Travel Diaries was able to write the content for all GNP partner, based on their input. All content has been shared for review and will be published in September, on the website of Travel Diaries. All content will be grouped on a dedicated American South page. Later, the content is being used to create the E-book.



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International metrics FY26-27



	July	Aug
Benelux		
Trade		
Trade Meetings/Trainings	8	5
Number of Agents Trained	0	0
Travel Trade Newsletter Receptient	/	/
Trade Newsletter Open Rate	/	/
Media		
Media Meetings	4	2
Total number of articles published	8	17
Impressions	577,810	1,143,853
PR Newsletter Receptient	/	/
PR Newsletter Open Rate	/	/
Social Media		
Facebook		
Followers	66	77
Likes	66	77
Facebook Posts	9	9
Reach	1,826	12,540
Views	2,524	25,059
Likes	258	183
Comments	7	5
Shares	3	3
Instagram		
Reach	1,980	2,106
Views	1,252	1,708
Followers	511	525
Likes	57	67
Comments	1	5
Shares	0	0





II. Communication & PR

Coverage book has been updated:

<https://app.coveragebook.com/29490/books/9aea807d50216ba7>

Home > Blog > Restaurant-tips gerangschikt per staat | Amerikaanse reisgids

Praktisch & handig

Restaurant-tips gerangschikt per staat | Amerikaanse reisgids

Gepubliceerd 18 augustus 2026



Beeld: American diner — John Margolis (Public domain) - via Wikimedia Commons

De Verenigde Staten bieden een enorme diversiteit aan culinaire ervaringen, waarbij elke staat zijn eigen specialiteiten en eetcultuur heeft. Of je nu door **Texas** rijdt tijdens een **roadtrip** of de westkust verkent, onderstaande restaurant-tips helpen je de lokale smaken te ontdekken. We rangschikken de belangrijkste eetadressen en gerechten per staat, zodat je nergens de culinaire hoogtepunten mist tijdens je reis door Amerika.

Oostkust: van seafood tot pizza

De oostelijke **staten** staan bekend om hun rijke culinaire tradities en internationale invloeden. Hier vind je zowel klassieke Amerikaanse gerechten als innovatieve fusion-keukens.

- **Maine**: Probeer lobster rolls bij de havens; de verse kreeft wordt traditioneel geserveerd op een warm geroosterd broodje met boter of mayonaise
- **Massachusetts (Boston)**: Clam chowder is hier een must, de romige zeevruchtensoep met aardappelen en verse mosselen
- **New York**: Iconische pizza bij de pizzeria's, bagels met roomkaas en lox, en ontelbare internationale restaurants in alle stadsdelen
- **Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)**: De cheesesteak is hier uitgevonden – dun gesneden rundvlees met gesmolten kaas op een broodje
- **Maryland**: Blue crab cakes en crab feasts, waarbij de krabben worden gekookt met Old Bay seasoning
- **Florida**: Cubaanse sandwiches in Miami, key lime pie in de Keys, en verse stone crabs langs de kust

Zuidelijke staten: comfort food en BBQ

Het zuiden van de VS staat synoniem met hartelijke comfort food, langzaam gerookt vlees en kenmerkende smaken die zijn doorgegeven van generatie op generatie.

- **Louisiana (New Orleans)**: Gumbo, jambalaya, po'boys en beignets bij de lokale eethuisjes in het French Quarter
- **Texas**: Brisket en ribs bij authentieke BBQ-restaurants, Tex-Mex gerechten, en chicken fried steak
- **Tennessee (Nashville)**: Hot chicken – pittig gebakken kip die de stad beroemd heeft gemaakt





III. Sales Calls

Media contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Hans Avontuur – WideOyster	Hans Avontuur, writer for WideOyster came to visit our office to finally retrieve his Ambassador Award, which he was awarded during Global Week this year. He received this noteworthy award for his publication in WideOyster Magazine. The five long-read articles The publication brings the Travel South region to life through high-quality articles, impressive photography and storytelling. Five long-read articles cover the entire region, from Louisiana's Cajun Country to the coastlines of the Carolinas. The publication also highlights several lesser-known cities and natural areas. It is a region best explored via its backroads and byways. Further Hans explained that it hasn't been easy to sell any US stories at the moment, as certainly publications are more hesitant with publishing content at this moment. But he remains confident, that with the right story, he can find a place to published. He pitched some story ideas surrounding Dolly Parton's passing, but without success.	
Boy Tijbosch – Amerika Only	Amerika Only is fully investing time and efforts into creating more video content. Their 'Route 66' and 'World Cup Cities' video campaigns have been a success. The third project he is working on this is 'Florida Revisited'. A long-term project in partnership with US specialists Amerika PLUS. Together they are creating an itinerary through Florida, also including New Orleans and Coastal Mississippi, as an extension of the route. Both Travel South partners are investing in this campaign and will receive significant video exposure starting fall 2026 all the way through 2027. Amerika PLUS is also publishing content and new route on their website.	

Trade contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Brussels Airport	Brussels Airport reported nearly 2.6 million passengers in July, representing a 2.8% increase year over year and marking its busiest month since 2019. July 20 was the busiest travel day, with more than 92,000 passengers passing through the airport. Spain was the most popular destination, followed by Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Morocco. The United States also ranked among the top 10 destinations and, together with Morocco, was the only non-European destination represented.	
Raymond Reedijk – KLM Netherlands	Where Marjolein is responsible for al marketing campaigns with KLM Netherlands, Raymond is responsible for al communication and activities with the trade (agents and tour operators). We had a call with him where he	



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	mentioned that the USA is still KLM's most important destination in terms of revenue, also still after a year without growth.	
Gerald Ponsard - Gérald en Amérique	Bookings are good, they are receiving requests for 2027 with departures in summer. Canada is doing better than the USA but also USA bookings are coming in.	
Anne Raamsteeboers - Victoria Camper Holidays / &Olives	Their office is organizing a small consumer event (approx. 80 visitors) at their office in Alkmaar in September. We were invited to give a presentation but unfortunately our agendas didn't match, nor did we have ad-hoc budget available. We did send them the region materials and the outdoor and culinary videos to play on loop at the event.	
Irene Lipper - USA Canada Reisbeurs	We met with Irene to discuss the future direction of the USA & Canada Travel Fair. Travel South will not participate this year but may consider participation next year. The organizers are planning to move the event to a new location and introduce a new setup next year, with the ambition of establishing the fair as a key source of inspiration for USA and Canada travel. They are committed to investing in the event's growth and increasing its relevance and reach.	Monitor event's development and consider participation for next year





IV. Newsletter

Newsletter to the trade & media

We will resume with the newsletters in September, based on the input from the GNP partners. Each newsletter will feature all 9 partners and is based on the following topics.

Month	Topic
September	Sunrise to Sundown: Photo Ready Road Trips in the South
October	Hidden Jukebox Joints & Honky-Tonk Nights Across the South
November	Local Flavor Trails: Markets, Makers & Culinary Experiences
December	Southern Stars & Storylines
January	Blues, BBQ & Backroads: Following the Soundtrack of the South
February	Historic Main Streets: Southern Towns Worth the Detour
March	Water Adventures of the South: Rivers, Springs & Coastal Escapes
April	The Southern Sandwich Trail: Po'boys, BBQ & Biscuits
May	The South's Most Scenic National & State Parks
June	Authentic Southern Experiences Travelers Can't Get Anywhere Else





V. Social media

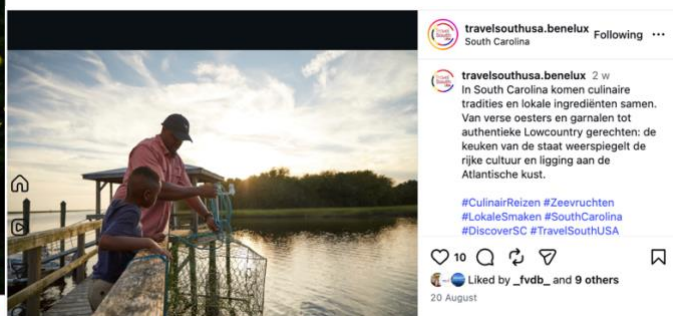
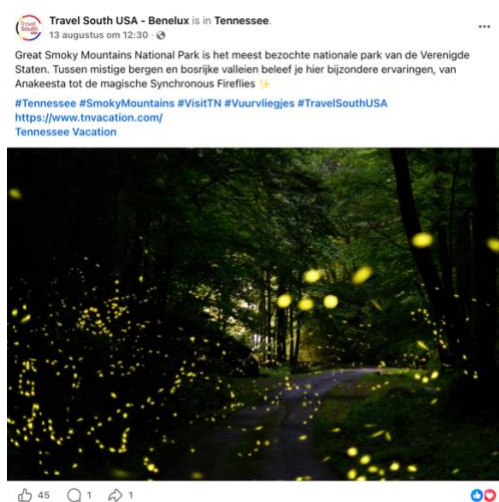
Social media posts are shared continuously throughout the year. Every month 9 posts are shared, both on Facebook and Instagram, highlighting each of the GNP partners in each post. For the Rhythms of the South posts, we rotate between the three cities each month. This month Atlanta was featured.

We also set up a separate monthly advertisement to generate more page followers on Facebook. This month we reached 10,726 people, generated 402 Facebook page-visitors and 10 new followers.

The contents of the posts are based on each month's newsletter theme but is carefully adapted for the Benelux audience. We focus on creating an inspiring and varied content mix that highlights the unique character of each state and showcases the diversity of the Travel South region.

Although no newsletter was published in August, we remained active on social media by repurposing content from previous newsletter themes to keep the region top of mind.

The best performing [Facebook post](#) highlighted fireflies in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, **Tennessee**, generated 537 impressions and 33 interactions. On Instagram, the strongest performance came from the [post](#) featuring culinary traditions and local produce in **South Carolina**, reaching 182 people and securing 10 interactions. See posts below:



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Followers

We closely monitor follower growth across both social media platforms, with particular attention given to our new Facebook page. Our KPIs for the upcoming fiscal year are:

- **Facebook:** reach 300 followers by the end of June.
- **Instagram:** reach 700 followers by the end of June.

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Facebook	66	77										
Instagram	511	525										

* Follower count is noted at the end of the month.

Based on the numbers above, we suggest fully transitioning to the new Facebook page and hiding the Travel South USA (NL) page, so any new interested follower, will follow the new page. We will continue to focus our efforts on the new page and monitor the page growth.





VI. Market Update

Artificial intelligence becomes part of the travel advisor's toolkit

Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming part of the travel industry, shifting from an emerging technology to a practical tool for travel professionals. Rather than replacing personal service, AI is increasingly being used to improve efficiency, allowing travel advisors to spend more time on customer relationships, personalized advice, and business development.

Travel Counsellors recently introduced its proprietary AI platform, TC Co-Pilot, designed to support advisors with tasks such as creating travel proposals, improving customer communications, generating marketing ideas, and answering commercial questions. The company also emphasizes the importance of training advisors to use AI effectively, recognizing that the quality of the output depends on how the technology is applied.

TikTok continues to strengthen travel influence in the Netherlands

TikTok is expanding its role in travel beyond inspiration with the introduction of TikTok GO, a new in-app booking feature for hotels, attractions, and experiences currently launching in the United States. While the recently introduced TikTok Shop enables users to purchase physical products directly within the app, it does not support travel bookings. However, its success demonstrates consumers' growing preference for fast, visual, and seamless purchasing experiences.

The development also reflects a broader shift in consumer behavior. According to TikTok Netherlands, 77% of Dutch users use the platform for travel inspiration. In addition, users are increasingly using TikTok as a search tool for specific travel needs, such as family-friendly hotels, luxury accommodations, and destination recommendations. This creates new opportunities for travel companies to tailor their content to travelers' search behavior and increase visibility during the inspiration and planning stages of the customer journey.

Dutch summer travel trends 2025

CBS data (Statistics Netherlands) shows that Dutch travelers took 21.9 million vacations during the 2025 summer season, with international travel accounting for the majority. Of these vacations, 12.9 million were abroad, compared with 9 million domestic trips.

Europe remained the dominant international destination. Outside Europe, the most popular long-haul destinations were Turkey, the United States, and Indonesia.





VII. Activities overview

This chapter provides updates when activities have been executed, what the status is, and whether there are any action points.

Travel Diaries

The confirmed activity with Travel Diaries consists of 2 parts

1. Dedicated Travel South E-book + dedicated Travel South landingpage

Destination landing page

A dedicated page about the Travel South region, in the form of travel guide, to inspire excited travelers with tips, activities and places to stay to plan their next trip. This page will also link to the E-book.

Includes: introduction of the destination, practical information, logo, top activities, 9 SEO-optimized blog posts (one per GNP partner), overnight stay tips and mention of Ambassador tour operators.

Dedicated E-book

Approx. 45 pages, designed by their professional content team, to inspire travelers. Their users and readers can download it free of charge, and we can offer it on our own website and social media as well.

2. E-book Chapter inclusion in E-book 'Unique Destinations'

All input for the dedicated E-book will be repurposed for a 6-10 page chapter in 'Unique Destinations' E-book.

- Focus on key themes: outdoor, food, music, history & culture
- Highlighting all GNP partners

July 26	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July 27
	Collecting input	Writing content	Publishing digital content & indexing		Creation of dedicated E-book + Release of Unique Destinations E-book	Release E-book & meta campaign	Distributing E-book via Benelux newsletter, social media and via Tour operators					

Currently we are ahead of schedule. The content has been written and is sent to all partners for review.



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Joker Reizen

Travel South will be main sponsor at the Joker Reisbeurs. The upcoming edition will take place on September 27th 2026 and they are expecting to welcome approximately 1,300 visitors. The main sponsorship includes:

- Booth + big backdrop
- Destination presentation during the show
- Agent training the night before
- Dedicated social media post (reel or carousel)
- Logo on reisbeurs webpage
- Signature roadtrip on reisbeurs webpage
- Film loop between presentations
- Dedicated newsletter item
- Poster or banner campaign
- Brochure distribution during the Joker Reisbeurs, as well as at regional roadshows and the Vakantiebeurs holiday fair (January/February 2027; approximately 150,000 visitors)

Product Survey

The collection of all data will take place in spring 2027, the final results will be shared before IPW.

Objectives

- Increase the number of tour operators that offer TSUSA product.
- Expand the number of overnight stays offered by tour operators.
- Encourage greater diversity in the cities featured within itineraries.

Visit USA Associations

Frequent and consistent exposure is generated through newsletter inclusions, which are a part of the continued membership that Travel South USA has with Visit USA The Netherlands and Visit USA Belgium.

Visit USA Belgium offers members the opportunity to give a webinar, as part of the membership. Travel South will again be making use of that opportunity this year.

Benelux Trade & Media newsletter

Every month, starting in September, a newsletter is sent out to the Benelux Trade and Media database. Each month focusing on a different theme, highlighting all GNP partners. Please view chapter IV for the monthly analyses.



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Benelux social media

Content on Facebook & Instagram will be published throughout the month, using the newsletter as a source of inspiration. Please view chapter V for the monthly analyses.

Out of Scope

Global Week 2026:

The initial progress report has been shared. An interim updated report will be shared in November 2026, with a final report to follow June 2027.

Global Week 2027:

The upcoming edition will take place from April 21 - 29 in Bentonville, Arkansas.

Travel South International Showcase 2026:

The Benelux delegation consists of 10 tour operators and 1 trade media. Both Rianne & Marjolein will be attending this years' edition.

	Company Name	Country	First Name	Last Name	Title	Post-FAM
1	Travel Trend	NL	Peter	van Veenendaal	Product Manager	Kentucky
2	Travel2America	NL	Edwin	van Delden	Managing Director	Georgia's Legacy
3	Go Amerika / Style in Travel	NL	Corrina	Flink	USA Specialist	Alabama
4	Ustravel	NL	Jose	Kraan	Product & Sales Manager	Georgia's Legacy
5	Exciting West	BE	Annaik	Temmerman	Sales manager	Tennessee Ties
6	Indelible Travel	NL	Paul	Van Harten	Managing Director	<i>tbd</i>
7	van Verre	NL	Irene	Dijkstra	Senior Product Manager	Mississippi
8	Travelhome	NL	Helmi	Ruigrok	Management Team	Arkansas
9	Aeroglobe International	NL	Thjis	Boogaard	Product manager	Arkansas
10	USA Travel	BE	Alyson	Kersten	Travel Consultant	Mississippi

11	Reismedia	NL	Rob	Somsen	Editor	Tennessee Ties
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12	Target Travel Marketing	NL	Rianne	van der Linden	Account manager	Alabama
13	Target Travel Marketing	NL	Marjolein	Fraanje	General manager	Kentucky



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Partner opt-ins

This year, we would like to introduce additional partner opt-in opportunities alongside the confirmed activities. Optional activities allow partners (e.g. cities or attractions) to further increase their visibility within the Benelux market. By offering these opt-ins as part of a larger proposed activity, we can ensure they are implemented in a strategic and effective way, rather than as a standalone or uncoordinated project.

Partner opt-in Joker Reizen

- Newsletter feature (75,000 subscribers)
- Inclusion partner slide in online travel presentation
- Part of content to win a travelvoucher of 2,500 EUR
- Paid & organic social media campaigns (1,000,000 targeted impressions)
- Extended length of stay in Joker itineraries for participating partners
- Brochure distribution at Joker Reisbeurs

Costs: 3,100 USD per partner

Partner opt-in Travel Diaries

- Dedicated partner blog
- Mention of tip/suggestion in dedicated Travel South E-book

Costs: 2,100 USD per partner

