



AUNZ REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2026

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ABOUT TSUSA

Global Partner Programming

Visitation to the USA. July 2026 i-94 arrival data (released September)

Australia:

- Australia recorded **69, 860 arrivals to the USA in August, down 11% year on year.**
- Australia **ranked twelfth among long-haul international markets in August**, compared with approximately 11th place during much of the year to date.

Ports of Entry – Australia to the USA:

- California Arrivals were down 7% in August
- Texas continues to record the strongest percentage growth among the major gateways, with arrivals flat in August, up 12% YOY .

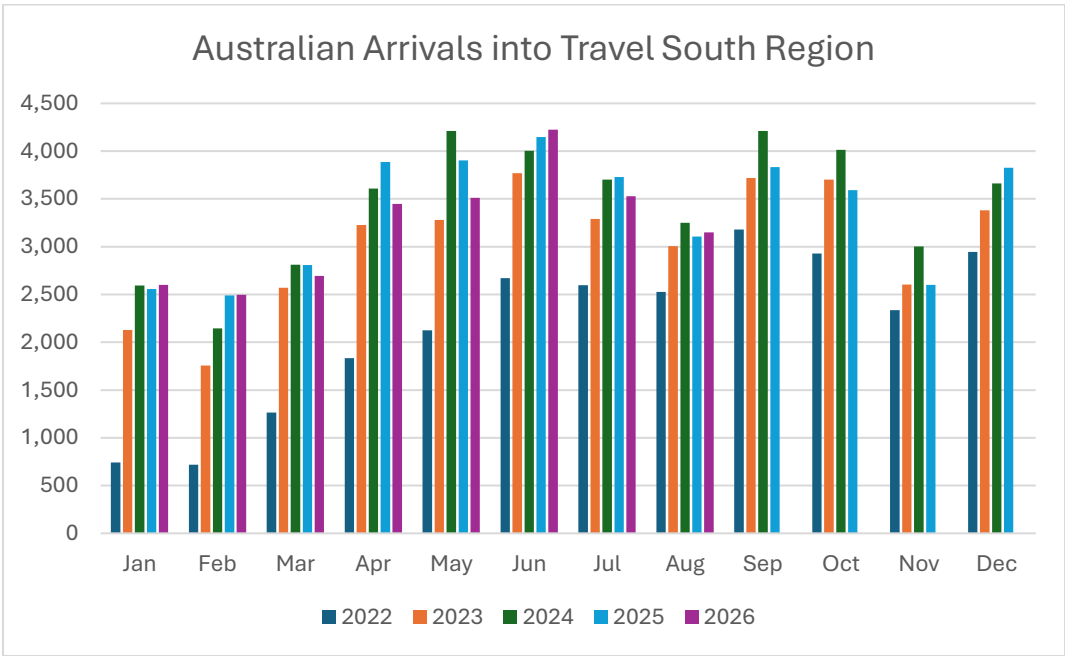
Port of entry	August arrivals	July 2026 vs 2025 difference	YTD Arrivals (Jan – July)	YTD, YOY difference
California	31,093	-7%	271,074	-7%
Hawaii	6,862	-23%	68,364	-16%
New York	6,767	-25%	48,083	-14%
Texas	7,617	0%	70,603	12%
Florida	1,127	-33%	18,107	-16%
All other ports	16,394	-7%	110,032	-6%





First intended address – Travel South

- A total of 3,150 Australians listed a Travel South state as their first intended address in June, up 1.5% for August
- Travel South has maintained its share of 5% of Australians choosing it as their first intended address.



New Zealand:

- The USA recorded **16,770 arrivals from New Zealand in July**, down **19% year on year**.





Global Travel Demand from Australia.
July 2026 data was released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showing where returning residents spent most time abroad.

Just over 1,250,580 Australians returned from an overseas trip in July, an increase of 3.8% YOY.

The top 10 countries as follows:

Rank	Country	June Visits	Percentage growth YOY
1	Indonesia	188,850	+6.8%
2	New Zealand	133,640	+6%
3	UK	79,840	+8%
4	USA	70,470	0%
5	Thailand	64,010	+5%
6	Vietnam	58,990	+19%
7	China(b)	55,970	+9%
8	Japan	52,030	-3%
9	Italy	49,650	+2%
10	Fiji	46,770	+7%





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Travel Managers Program
- Route 66 Webinar with Helloworld
- International Showcase logistics
- Visit USA New Zealand Planning
- Helloworld Reservations Training
- September Newsletter – Trade & PR Database
- Media Meetings & Famil Requests
- GMM Journalist Discussions & Planning
- Proactive Pitch: Why Halloween Hits Different in American South





		July	August	Sept	Q3 TOTAL		
9 partners AL/KY/LA /MS/MO/ NC/SC/TN /ROTS	Australia						
	Trade						
	Trade Meetings/Trainings	22	10	16	48		
	Number of Agents Trained	30	18	36	84		
	Travel Trade Newsletter Recipient	N/A	N/A	3,598	3,598		
	Trade Newsletter Open Rate	N/A	N/A	38.85%	38.85%		
	Media						
	Media Meetings	2	7	5	14		
	Total articles published	2	5	93	108		
	Impressions	8,475,371	9,325,331	4,240,576	37,522,754		
	PR Newsletter Recipient	N/A	N/A	342	342		
	PR Newsletter Open Rate	N/A	N/A	48.54%	48.54%		
	Social						
	Facebook						
	Facebook Page						
	Followers	9,114	9,082	9048	9048		
	Page Likes	9,114	9,082	9048	9048		
	Social Posts						
	Reach	336	264	145	745		
	Views	136	178	254	568		
	Likes	3	11	1	15		
	Comments	0	0	0	0		
	Shares	0	0	0	0		





	Instagram						
	Reach	11	22	18	51		
	Views	82	383	198	663		
	Followers	28	2	31	31		
	Likes	4	11	20	35		
	Comments	0	0	0	0		
	Shares	0	0	0	0		



II. COMMUNICATIONS & PR

PR Coverage

Earned Media [Coverage Book](#)



All jazzed up in the Big Easy

It would be a shame to 'sail past' this southern gem without tuning in to its beat, writes *Katrina Lobley*.

LISTEN up! Can you hear the soulful strains of a saxophone drifting through the steamy mid-morning air, punctuated by the rat-a-tat-tat of a snare drum? That's the soundtrack of New Orleans, one of the world's most musical cities. NOLA - a snappy abbreviation of New Orleans, Louisiana - is committed to good times, at all times of the day. Whatever you do, don't skip its one-of-a-kind vibes by jumping straight onto your river or ocean cruise. Spend at least two or three nights here (and you'll still wish for more). Here are the best ways to loosen up, swing those hips and fully embrace the fun-loving southern gateway known as the Big Easy.

All that jazz

If you touched down at the city's Louis Armstrong International Airport, you'll have worked out that New Orleans is the birthplace of jazz. In the French Quarter, you'll encounter musicians performing on street corners (don't be stingy - give them a tip!). Keen for a deeper dive? Grab tickets for a gig at Preservation Hall - a storied venue that famously has no air-con and no drink service but atmosphere aplenty. The Court of Two Sisters offers a daily live jazz brunch under its wisteria canopy (at its prettiest in March-April) in the open-air courtyard. Service can be brusque but it's a great starting point for taste-testing Cre-

ole cuisine: the buffet includes fried catfish, jambalaya, gumbo, turtle soup au sherry, red beans and rice, and steamed okra. Just beyond the French Quarter and the craziness of Bourbon Street is Frenchmen Street, lined with atmospheric clubs such as The Spotted Cat that hosts nightly performances. One of the most surprising places to hear music? That'd be the National Park Service's French Quarter Visitor Centre, which hosts free jazz performances in a dedicated space. courtofthesisters.com; spottedcatmusicclub.com; nps.gov

Dose of whimsy

Make the most of your Frenchmen Street explorations by booking a slot at JAMINOLA - an interactive 'cultural funhouse' (IAM stands for Joy, Art and Music). Wander through 29 spaces that showcase the theatrical handwork and unleashed creativity of 100-plus artists and collaborators, chat with the resident storytellers and snap some unforgettable selfies. jammola.com

Best eats

While New Orleans slings plenty of iconic carb-forward cheap eats - think po' boys and muffuletas (sandwiches) and Cafe Du Monde's beignets (square doughnuts crowned with a mountain of icing sugar) -

it's also the place for a splash-out dining experience. Head to Antoine's - where Oysters Rockefeller was created - and save room at the end for its signature Baked Alaska (between courses, check out the displays

of Mardi Gras memorabilia). Ride a streetcar to the city's moss-draped Garden District to while away hours at the striking teal-and-white Commander's Palace. Its "haute Creole" menu includes cognac-flambéed crawfish tails and, from Wednesday to Friday, 25-cent martinis to accompany your long lunch. antoiness.com; commanderspalace.com

Speaking of drinks

New Orleans knows a thing or two about inventing cocktails - it's the birthplace of the herbaceous, rye whisky-based Sazerac and the creamy Ramos gin fizz. Learn more about the drinks' origins on a cocktail tour or slide onto one of the 25 seats at Hotel Monteleone's rotating Carousel Bar - where another libation, the Vieux Carre, was invented - and take yourself for a spin through the city's creative cocktail history. Also, don't

“Unusually for an American city, it's permitted to carry alcoholic drinks in a plastic 'go cup'.

be surprised to see merry-makers wandering the streets of New Orleans with cocktails in hand - rather unusually for an American city, it's permitted to carry alcoholic drinks in a plastic "go cup" here. hotelmonteleone.com

It's always festival time

Time your visit to coincide with one of the city's 130-plus festivals. The big one is Mardi Gras (which kicks off on January 6 and runs until Fat Tuesday, which can fall from February 3 to March 9). Jazz Fest unfolds over two long weekends (April/May) - or point yourself at the free French Quarter Festival (April) or Satchmo SummerFest, which takes place in early August to honour the birthday of home-grown legend Louis Armstrong.

Tours de force

Although you could take a short cruise on the Mississippi via steam-powered paddle-wheeler, if you're about to depart on a multi-day cruise, there are better ways to spend your time here. Go see the 'gators on a bayou tour through mysterious cypress swamps - those otherworldly water-scapes are surprisingly close to the city. The spooky-minded can take a voodoo tour or explore the intriguing above-ground tombs in cemeteries known as "cities of the dead". Boo.

The writer was a guest of Travel South USA

TRIP NOTES

Getting there: Fly to New Orleans from Australia via Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston or Dallas Fort Worth with Delta, United or Qantas/American Airlines.

Cruising: The cruise terminals are about a 10-minute drive from the French Quarter. Carnival, Norwegian and Royal Caribbean offer western Caribbean cruises of four to seven nights from New Orleans to destinations such as Jamaica, Mexico, Honduras and Belize. American Cruise Lines operates five river ships, carrying between 150 and 190 passengers, on seven- to 21-night Mississippi River journeys. Viking carries up to 386 passengers on seasonal eight-night river cruises from New Orleans to Memphis. portnola.com

Staying there: Hampton Inn and Suites New Orleans Convention Centre doesn't board the most exciting locale but this inexpensive, spacious hotel puts you near the cruise terminals, Mardi Gras World (where you can learn about the themed parade floats and how they're constructed), the well-regarded National World War II Museum and a Walmart Supercentre. The French Quarter is a streetcar ride away on the Riverfront line. If you're pressed for time before your cruise departs, here's a hot tip - Cafe Du Monde has a handy port branch where you can bite into those famous beignets and give yourself an icing-sugar moustache. hilton.com

Explore more: neworleans.com

From top: Catch a show at Preservation Hall; tour an above-ground cemetery; a float at Mardi Gras. Pictures by Shutterstock; Getty Images





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25-cent martinis and street jazz: inside America's ultimate music city

It would be a shame to 'sail past' this gem without tuning in to its beat.

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Catch a show at Preservation Hall. Picture by Shutterstock

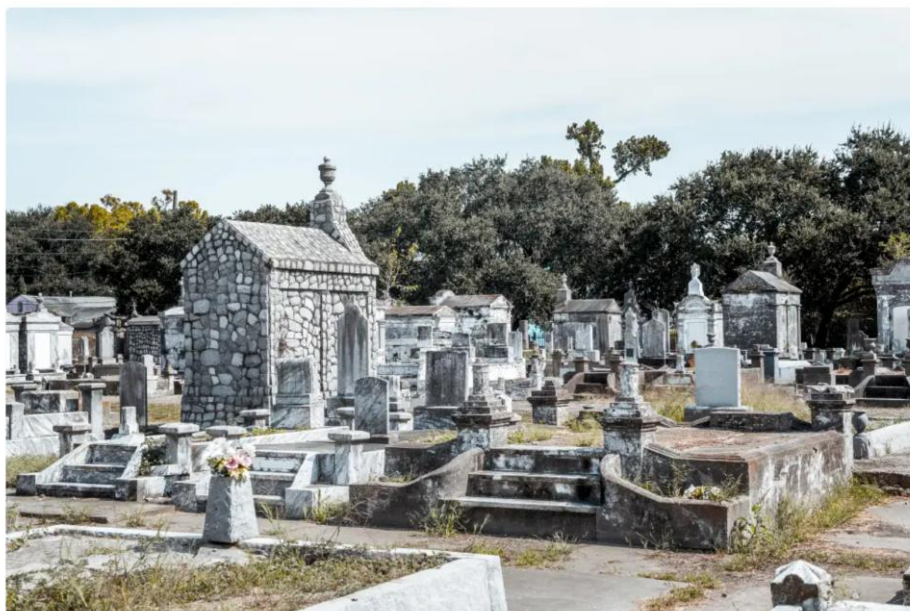
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Tour an above-ground cemetery. Picture by Getty Images





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A float at Mardi Gras. Picture by Getty Images

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Explore more: neworleans.com

The writer was a guest of Travel South USA





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Travel South spotlights nine road trip routes for 2027

| ROAD TRIPS / DAILY NEWS / USA |

 AUTHOR: Staff Writer | 11/09/2026 | 1 min. read



Travel South USA is promoting a series of themed road trip itineraries across nine Southern states, giving agents new material to build multi-stop driving holidays beyond the region's major gateway cities.





Routes span natural landscapes, music cities and public art



In Missouri, the Ozarks offer a natural water park experience at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, alongside Elephant Rocks and Taum Sauk Mountain, Missouri's highest point, with treehouses and rustic cabins supporting overnight stays. A three-city route through Atlanta, Nashville and New Orleans pairs each city's distinct character, from Atlanta's skyline views to Nashville's live music scene and New Orleans' jazz on Frenchmen Street.

South Carolina's Lowcountry route runs from Charleston's Rainbow Row through Johns Island's Angel Oak and Botany Bay's driftwood beach to Hilton Head's Harbour Town Lighthouse. Mississippi's Blues Highway follows the Crossroads in Clarksdale south to Vicksburg, Tupelo and Oxford, with the Natchez Balloon Festival adding a seasonal drawcard in October.





Public art and scenic byways anchor other state routes



Tennessee's route is built around its statewide mural trail, turning city and small-town streets into stops for public art discovery. North Carolina's road trip features the Tail of the Dragon, packing 318 curves into 18 kilometres, alongside the 98-mile Waterfall Byway passing more than 200 cascades, including Dry Falls, where visitors can walk behind the water.

Alabama's north-to-coast route connects Decatur, birthplace of Alabama White Sauce, through Birmingham's murals to Gulf Shores' beaches. Kentucky's western route centres on Paducah's floodwall murals and National Quilt Museum, while Louisiana's route covers West Monroe's Antique Alley, Natchitoches' meat pies and Baton Rouge's Old State Capitol, finishing at Honey Island Swamp.

For agents selling USA road trip itineraries, the nine featured routes give a structured way to build multi-day driving holidays around specific themes such as music, public art, food or natural landscapes, offering an alternative to standard fly-drive packages centred on major cities alone.

For more information, visit Travel South USA

[ROADTRIPS](#) [SOUTHERN USA ROAD TRIP ITINERARIES](#) [TRAVEL SOUTH USA ROUTES](#) [USA](#) [USA ROAD TRIP DESTINATIONS](#)





Saturday, October 10, 2026

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Nine southern states turn the road trip itself into the destination

| ROAD TRIPS / ROAM WILD / USA |

 AUTHOR: **WildOnes** | September 10, 2026 | 3 min. read



The best stretches of the American South are not measured by how quickly you get somewhere, but by how often you pull over. Across nine states, scenic byways, mountain backroads and small-town main streets are turning ordinary drives into something worth lingering over, whether that means floating a spring-fed river, tracing a mural trail through a forgotten downtown or watching sunset from a rooftop bar.

Travel South USA has mapped out a run of road trips through the region that reward slow travel and a willingness to detour, with each state offering a distinct reason to keep the windows down.





Water, rock and wilderness through the Ozarks



Missouri's Ozarks pack an unexpected amount of natural drama into one drive. Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park uses ancient volcanic rock to carve out natural chutes and swimming holes, while nearby Elephant Rocks scatters granite boulders more than a billion years old across the landscape. From Taum Sauk Mountain, Missouri's highest point, the route continues to the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, where wild horses roam free through Shannon County and the water is calm enough to float for hours. Treehouses and rustic cabins along the way make it easy to turn the drive into an overnight trip rather than a day out.

Three cities, three very different soundtracks

Atlanta, Nashville and New Orleans each offer a distinct version of a Southern city road trip. In Atlanta, the Jackson Street Bridge, made familiar by *The Walking Dead*, and the sunset views from 9 Mile Station give the skyline its own photogenic angle. Nashville trades skyline for neon and live music along the Cumberland River, while New Orleans swaps postcard shots for beignets, rooftop cocktails and jazz drifting down Frenchmen Street. Strung together, the three cities read less like a checklist and more like a study in how differently the South sounds from one state to the next.





Coastlines, moss and quieter backroads



South Carolina's Lowcountry rewards a slower pace, from Charleston's Rainbow Row to the sprawling, centuries-old Angel Oak on Johns Island and the bleached driftwood scattered across Botany Bay. The route continues through Beaufort and Bluffton to the moss-covered ruins of Old Sheldon Church, finishing at Hilton Head's Harbour Town Lighthouse, with Spanish moss, Gullah cuisine and waterfront seafood filling in the gaps between stops.

Further west, Alabama's north-to-coast drive moves from Decatur, birthplace of Alabama White Sauce at Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q, through Birmingham's murals and Auburn's horse country, before finishing on the Gulf Coast, where Mobile's sunsets give way to Gulf Shores' sugar-white sand.

Murals, music history and unexpected detours



Tennessee's cities and small towns have quietly turned themselves into open-air galleries, with large-scale murals reflecting local music, food and history at every turn, offering a reason to build an entire road trip around public art rather than the state's usual landmarks.

Mississippi's stretch of the Blues Highway carries its own soundtrack, from the legendary Crossroads in Clarksdale and live blues at Ground Zero to Vicksburg's riverfront murals, Elvis's birthplace in Tupelo and Faulkner's Oxford. Come October, the Natchez Balloon Festival adds hot-air balloons to the mix. In western Kentucky, Paducah's more than 60 floodwall murals trace the city's history alongside the National Quilt Museum, while Purple Toad Winery and pit-smoked barbecue further west give travellers reason to slow down and stay a while.





North Carolina takes a different approach entirely, turning the road into the main event. The Tail of the Dragon squeezes 318 curves into just 18 kilometres, while the 98-mile Waterfall Byway passes more than 200 cascades, including Dry Falls, where visitors can walk behind the curtain of water. Further north, the Highlands of the Roan offer rare high-altitude views of autumn colour, and Cheoah Dam adds a detour familiar to fans of The Fugitive.

Louisiana closes the loop with its own set of surprises: Antique Alley in West Monroe, meat pies at Lasyone’s in Natchitoches, contemporary art at Alexandria’s River Oaks Art Center, and Baton Rouge’s 176-year-old Old State Capitol rising like a Gothic castle above the Mississippi River. Honey Island Swamp adds a wilder final chapter, with wildlife and folklore replacing the state’s earlier main streets and galleries.

Plan a slower route through the South with **Travel South USA**.

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Niche experiences add depth to standard itineraries

| ASIA / DAILY NEWS |

 AUTHOR: Staff Writer | 01/09/2026 | 1 min. read



Gate 7's global destination portfolio is highlighting a set of unconventional attractions and experiences that agents can layer into existing client itineraries, spanning Japan, the US, Mexico and Canada.

US destinations add after-dark and underground experiences

In Greater Palm Springs, guided desert stargazing experiences can be paired with a Joshua Tree excursion for an after-dark itinerary addition. In New Orleans, guided visits to St. Louis Cemetery No. 3 explore the city's above-ground burial traditions and jazz funeral history. In Kentucky, Mammoth Cave National Park offers underground tours ranging from historic walks to the demanding Wild Cave Tour, spanning more than 426 miles of mapped cave passages.





I visited Dolly Parton's Nashville exhibition. Here's what surprised me

Few have loomed larger over Music City than Dolly Parton.



Dolly Parton in Nashville last year. Picture by Getty Images

In Nashville, music is impossible to escape. Wander downtown – cowboy boots, mandatory, thank you very much – and almost every doorway releases the dulcet tones of another astonishingly good singer.

Can everyone in this town hit perfect pitch?

But few have loomed larger over Music City than Dolly Parton.





At Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame, I visited *Dolly Parton: Journey of a Seeker*, an exhibition exploring more than six decades of her extraordinary career. Rather than simply cataloguing the hits, rhinestones and fabulous costumes, it focuses on the moments when Parton ignored the doubters and pushed beyond what others thought possible.



A whole wing of Nashville's Country Music Hall Of Fame is devoted to Dolly. Picture by Kate Cox

Yes, there are those wonderfully glamorous frocks, guitars, movies, awards and reminders of songs including *Jolene*, *9 to 5* and *I Will Always Love You*. Walking through the exhibition, another Dolly emerges: a woman who repeatedly backed herself, made smart business decisions and refused to be confined by other people's expectations of her. Dolly's story is also one of formidable entrepreneurship, philanthropy and generosity.

She turned her fame into a business empire that includes Dollywood, while her Imagination Library has given hundreds of millions of books to children. She also famously encouraged other performers: when Whitney Houston's recording of *I Will Always Love You* became a global phenomenon, Dolly celebrated rather than resented another artist making her song their own.

Then there's her great love story. She met Carl Dean on her first day in Nashville; they married in 1966 and remained together until his death in 2025.





Dolly's Butterfly Bar at Assembly Food Hall. Picture by Kate Cox

Dolly was still building. Her new 12-storey, 245-room SongTeller Hotel, conceived as a love letter to Nashville, is set to launch downtown in a few weeks, alongside *Dolly's Life of Many Colors*, billed as the world's largest exhibition devoted to her life.

My own Dolly pilgrimage naturally also included the gloriously sparkly Butterfly Bar in the Academy Food Hall, where I sampled a lovely, buttery Dolly Wines Chardonnay.

Because with Dolly, apparently even a glass of wine needs a little glamour.

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A pottery-mending workshop in Osaka taught me an important lesson about life





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Want to explore the US Deep South? These are the best tours

There are plenty of great operators offering tours of this extraordinary region.



Dilvin Yasa

September 11, 2026 - 9:30AM



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I've always dreamt of visiting America's Deep South (yes, I'm an Elvis fan). Can you recommend a reputable tour company?

What fun! I finally had the chance to visit [Memphis](#) a few years back and loved it. There are plenty of great operators offering the kind of tour you're looking for. Insight Vacations has a nine-day Soul of the Deep South tour, which kicks off in Nashville before heading to Memphis, Jackson and New Orleans, while Travelmarvel has a 13-day Tracks of the Deep South rail journey from Charlotte to New Orleans via the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad, Nashville and Memphis.

Given you're after a small-group trip, you may want to consider Intrepid Travel's 14-day Best of the South: Atlanta to New Orleans. It includes all the sights you're keen to visit, but you'll only have a handful (maximum of 12) of like-minded travel companions.

Picture: iStock





Media Meetings & Engagements

Media Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up/Next step
Nadia Bailey, Travel Editor, Broadsheet	Connected with Nadia Bailey to discuss editorial priorities, trends and potential story opportunities for Travel South. Given Broadsheet's independent, culture-first approach, there is potential alignment across the South's food and drink scene, music, arts and cultural experiences, and distinctive local stories.	Soph to share press releases and keep Nadia in the loop across any new hotels, arts and culture activities that might resonate with the Broadsheet audience.
Kate Allman, Freelance Writer	I connected with Kate to discuss her travel plans for next year. Kate has a strong personal interest in college football and would be keen to explore New Orleans or other destinations across the South through a sports-led travel story. She is also planning a family ski trip to Colorado next year, presenting a potential opportunity to explore sporting events and the region's broader food, culture and destination experiences as an addition to her itinerary.	Soph to reconnect with Kate early next year once she has had her baby to discuss her travel plans and identify any opportunities we could leverage.
Belinda Jackson, Freelancer Writer (Traveller, The Canberra Times, Stuff)	Connected with Belinda to discuss potential interest in the South. While she is not currently exploring stories for the region, she is keen to return to the US in the future. Belinda also highlighted her podcast, The World Awaits, which she co-hosts with Kristie Bedford, travel writer at Karry On, as a potential additional channel for future content and storytelling opportunities.	Soph to maintain the relationship and keep Belinda in mind for future story and potential podcast partnership opportunities.
Dan Kinsela, Head of Global Partnerships, Luxury Travel	Had a call with Dan from Luxury Travel, who presented a paid campaign proposal for Travel South. While the proposal was comprehensive, our recommendation would be to explore other paid media partnerships if budget becomes available, with Luxury Travel a lower priority given its comparatively smaller reach.	Soph has shared the recommendation to politely decline this opportunity but will continue to pitch editorial opportunities to the title.





Trent Ellen, General Manager, ARRIVAL Travel	We met with Trent, General Manager at ARRIVAL, an online, social-first experiential travel platform, to discuss potential opportunities. Trent shared some interesting insights into the platform and the crossover between trade and PR, with bookable travel packages built around social media content creation to help drive destination awareness. With social media playing an increasingly important role in how audiences discover, plan and book travel, this is a channel worth considering as part of the media mix as it continues to evolve.	Soph to follow up with Trent to learn more about the available packages and assess how the platform could be useful for our partners.
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PR & Trade Newsletter

TRADE Newsletter – Recipients: 3,598 Open Rate: 1290 (38.85%)

PR Newsletter – Recipients: 342 Open Rate: 166 (48.54%)

TravelSouth USA



Hidden Jukebox Joints & Honky-Tonk Nights Across The South, USA

Some of America's most influential music venues don't have velvet ropes or sold-out stadium tours. They are historic jazz halls, neon-lit honky-tonks, cash-only blues jams and neighbourhood bars where locals still gather long after dark.

Discover the places keeping Southern music traditions alive, from Louisiana jazz halls and Kentucky dance floors to the legendary sounds of Muscle Shoals in Alabama, Mississippi juke joints, and Kansas City's late-night jazz scene. The result is a music trail that takes travellers beyond the usual USA itinerary and into the heart of Southern culture.

[Discover More](#)





KENTUCKY

Boot Scootin' Kentucky

Kentucky's music culture extends far beyond bourbon and bluegrass. Join a Monday night blues jam at Lexington's Tee Dee's Lounge, catch a honky-tonk night at Louisville's Whirling Tiger or experience authentic bluegrass at the Rosine Barn Jamboree in Bill Monroe's hometown. For travellers embracing the line-dancing revival, venues including Austin City Saloon and PBR Louisville keep dance floors busy well into the night.

[Explore Kentucky](#)



SOUTH CAROLINA

Shag dancing, Sliders & Two-Stepping

South Carolina offers a different take on Southern nightlife. In Greenville, Seratonic pairs live music, Peach Bourbon Smash cocktails and pimento cheese in an intimate downtown setting. Columbia's Skyline Club brings honky-tonk energy with line dancing and Carolina BBQ sliders, while North Myrtle Beach's Fat Harold's Beach Club, known as the "Home of the Shag", keeps South Carolina's iconic shag dance tradition alive with nightly music, dancing and coastal charm.

[Explore South Carolina](#)



MISSISSIPPI

Where The Blues Plays On

Mississippi's music story begins where the blues was born. Catch live music at Clarksdale's Ground Zero Blues Club, slip inside the neon glow of Red's Lounge, or visit the Blue Front Café, recognised as the state's oldest surviving juke joint. From Elvis' hometown of Tupelo to Jackson's legendary Hal & Mal's and Bay St. Louis' historic 100 Men Hall, Mississippi offers a direct connection to America's musical roots.

[Explore Mississippi](#)



TENNESSEE

A Soul Burger & The Blues

Earnestine & Hazel's is the kind of place every music lover hopes to find. This Memphis institution pairs soul and funk from the jukebox with its famous Soul Burger, attracting locals and visitors long after dark. Equal parts dive bar, music venue and local landmark, it's a reminder that some of Tennessee's most memorable music experiences still happen in the places that haven't changed much at all.

[Explore Tennessee](#)





ALABAMA

The Muscle Shoals Sound

Few places have shaped American music like Muscle Shoals, where music legends including Aretha Franklin and The Rolling Stones recorded songs that shaped American music. Often known by the address, the iconic studio is at 3614 Jackson Highway in Sheffield; a mecca for music lovers. Visitors come from around the world to see and feel why Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones referred to Muscle Shoals and 3614 as "Rock and Roll Heaven".



[Explore Alabama](#)

LOUISIANA

Jazz Halls & Moonshine

Across the North, Central and South of Louisiana, the music venues come with stories attached. In Mandeville, the Dew Drop Jazz & Social Hall has hosted musicians since 1895 and is recognised as **America's oldest rural jazz hall**. Further north, Shreveport's J.O.S.H. Lounge keeps the dance floor moving with line dancing, live bands and karaoke, while in central Louisiana, Alexandria's Bootlegger's serves up the best Bloody Mary's, paired with moonshine cocktails to get you in the mood to groove.



[Explore Louisiana](#)

RHYTHMS OF THE SOUTH

Atlanta, Nashville and New Orleans

Three cities, three distinct musical identities. In Atlanta, blues clubs like Blind Willie's and Northside Tavern keep the city's roots alive. In Nashville, Honky Tonk Highway offers free live music across dozens of honky-tonks and local bars, from iconic spots like Robert's Western World and Tootsie's Orchid Lounge to venues owned by some of country music's biggest names. Meanwhile, New Orleans' legendary venues, from d.b.a. to Tipitina's, continue a tradition shaped by jazz, blues and brass bands. Together, they offer a journey through the sounds that define the South.



[Explore Rhythms of The South](#)





MISSOURI

Kansas City's Late-Night Jazz

Kansas City's Historic 18th & Vine Jazz District remains one of America's great music neighbourhoods. Explore the American Jazz Museum before heading to the Mutual Musicians Foundation, where a tradition of after-midnight jazz sessions dating back to the 1930s continues every weekend. Once frequented by Count Basie and Charlie Parker, it remains one of the few places where visitors can experience jazz exactly where the history was made.



[Explore Missouri](#)

NORTH CAROLINA

Beyond The Main Stage

North Carolina rewards travellers willing to venture beyond the headline venues. Dance the night away at Charlotte's Coyote Joe's, discover old-school blues at Wilmington's Rusty Nail Saloon or experience mountain music traditions at the Alleghany Jubilee, where bluegrass, clogging and square dancing remain a living part of local culture. From Asheville to the Blue Ridge Mountains, the state's music scene feels personal, intimate and distinctly local.



[Explore North Carolina](#)

GATE 7

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III. TRAVEL TRADE

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

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up /Next step
Angie Arathoon Senior Advisor Helloworld Winston Hills	Training and support with trip to Nashville through Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and into Louisiana and New Orleans.	N/A
Marc Ryan Sales Manager Leisure Destination Marketing Services	Training and support for Louisiana and Tennessee DMCs for small group touring.	N/A
Helloworld Route 66 Missouri Webinar	Route 66 Missouri Webinar with 21 registrations	N/A
Rebecca Henley Travel Agent Travel with Bec	Update and query on St Louis and Missouri for trip in May 27. Introduction to Megan.	N/A
Cat Chatfield Travel Consultant Helloworld Everton Hills	Info and referral from the Helloworld Route 66 Webinar to Megan	N/A
Cara Buhagiar Senior Travel Specialist Helloworld Travel Lower Templestowe	Update and training on Travel South product with training and links for client queries.	N/A
Sophia Cogan CX Training and Development Manager Luxury Escapes	Scheduled training with Luxury Escapes reservations staff for Thurs 8 th October	Ongoing





Joanne Miller Personal Travel Manager Travel Manager	Support & training with Southern Itinerary	N/A
Jake Hilbert Facilitator Flight Centre Travel Academy	Support & training with Southern Itinerary	N/A
Joanna Bailey Senior Travel Consultant TravelCall	Info and introductions on Tennessee and Nashville	N/A
Karryne Papenfus Owner Destination Adventures	Info on Southern music touring and introductions to local DMS's	Ongoing
Jacqueline Poulos Senior Trainer – Retail Helloworld Travel Academy	Update and info on the South, plus plans for ongoing training with the network	Ongoing
Annabel Pritchard Founder Thrive Travel VIP	Follow up with International Showcase Request and set up meeting and training for visit to NZ in Oct for Visit USA Regional Shows	Ongoing
Natalie Jeffers Owner Travel Advisor Central Coast Travel	Info and training for group cruising out of New Orleans NOLA Tour	N/A
Tracey Flower Mobile Travel Agent MTA	Info and training for her Trip through Tennessee, Missouri and Arkansas	N/A
Erin Beckford PTM Travel Managers Helloworld Reservations	Nelson Bay Expo assets, Facebook tiles, brochures and a few giveaways	N/A
	Travel South Training with Helloworld reservations team of 8	N/A





CAMPAIGNS & ACTIVITY

Visit USA New Zealand Regional Expos



TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome USA

TRAVEL SOUTH

Travel South USA invites you to discover a part of America where every mile tells a story, every meal creates a memory and every journey delivers exceptional value. From legendary music cities and world-class cuisine to breathtaking coastlines, scenic road trips and warm Southern hospitality, the South offers experiences that are rich, authentic and surprisingly affordable.

We believe the best holidays are about more than ticking off landmarks. They're about slowing down, connecting with local people, uncovering hidden gems and experiencing places with heart. Whether you're planning your first visit or returning to explore somewhere new, you'll find welcoming communities, diverse cultures and unforgettable adventures that offer more for your travel budget. Across our twelve states, you'll discover iconic experiences alongside unexpected moments, all connected by the freedom of the open road and the genuine warmth of the people who call the South home.

Travel South USA is where incredible journeys, authentic experiences and outstanding value come together, creating memories that last long after you've returned home.

CONTACT:

Penny Brand - Account Director

Phone: +61 0423 638 744
Email: penny@gate7.com.au



TravelSouth

All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**



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Deal

Rhythms of the Road Tour

9 nights from \$3,579* per person twin share

Save up to \$250* per person. Plus, guided sightseeing, Graceland audio tour, live performance at the Grand Ole Opry, and more

Follow America's musical heritage on a journey through the Heartland, visiting destinations that helped shape the nation's soundtrack. Begin with two nights in Chicago before travelling through St. Louis to Nashville, the home of country music. Continue to Memphis, the "Home of the Blues" and "Birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll," stopping en route at the Tina Turner Museum in Brownsville. Explore historic Beale Street, known for its influence on blues music, and tour Graceland, Elvis Presley's iconic estate. Journey into the Mississippi Delta to visit the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center. Then head to New Orleans for guided sightseeing of the "Big Easy".



Your tour includes:

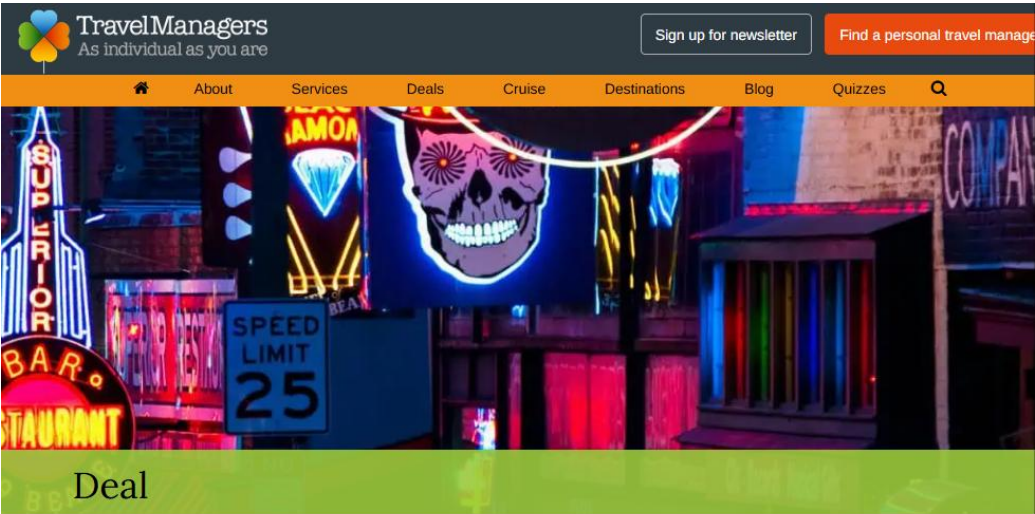
- 9 nights accommodation at hand-selected hotels
- 1 x breakfast
- Guided sightseeing
- Services of expert Cosmos Tour Directors and local guides
- Private, first-class, air-conditioned motorcoach with free Wi-Fi (where available)
- Seamless transportation between destinations

Tour highlights:

- Guided city sightseeing in Chicago, Nashville, and New Orleans
- Visit to Gateway Arch National Park
- Orientation tours of St. Louis and Memphis
- Tickets to a live performance at Nashville's legendary Grand Ole Opry
- Visit to the Tina Turner Museum
- Audio tour of Graceland including access to Elvis Presley's private jets
- Admission to B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center

Valid for travel	Departing 30 August 2027. Subject to availability. Seasonal surcharges may apply. Ask your personal travel manager for a quote.
Offer expires	13 Sep 2026 unless sold prior





Tastes & Sounds of the South Tour

9 nights From \$5,108* per person twin share

Save up to 10%^ per person. Plus, breakfast daily, optional experiences, guided tours, and more

Enjoy a little jazz, home cookin' from local Southerners, country music and a whole lot of Rock 'n' Roll on this inspiring American South tour showcasing the rich culture of Memphis, Nashville, Natchez and New Orleans, plus a trip to Elvis' iconic Graceland.



Your tour includes:

- 9 nights accommodation in cherry-picked hotels
- Breakfast daily, and 4 x dinners
- Optional experiences and free time
- An expert Travel Director and professional Driver
- Audio headsets for flexible sightseeing
- Luxury air-conditioned coach with Wi-Fi in most countries
- All hotel tips, charges and local taxes

Activity level:

This tour has a Balanced activity level which typically features up to 1.6-4.8 kilometres of walking per day and might involve uneven walking surfaces such as cobblestones or stairs.

Tour highlights:

- Explore RCA Studio B and Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Sun Studios and Backbeats Tour in Memphis
- Explore Frogmore Plantation in Natchez, and enjoy a guided tour in New Orleans
- Discover Nashville, Memphis, and New Orleans
- Visit Country Music Hall of Fame, Grand Ole Opry and the Johnny Cash Museum in Nashville, Graceland and the Rock 'n' Soul Museum in Memphis

Valid for travel Departing 28 May, 11 June 2027. Subject to availability. Seasonal surcharges may apply. Ask your personal travel manager for a quote.

Offer expires 28 Sep 2026 unless sold prior





Itinerary	Collapse all
Day 1 Chicago, USA Welcome to the "Windy City." Your Tour Director is available from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. to answer any questions. Once settled, perhaps begin exploring Chicago with a stroll along the 2-kilometre Riverwalk that follows the Chicago River through the heart of downtown. Or browse the shops, restaurants, and attractions along Michigan Avenue, better known as the Magnificent Mile.	
Day 2 Chicago, USA Chicago is known for its iconic architecture, world-class museums, and beautiful lakefront setting. Your sightseeing tour features landmarks such as the Wrigley Building, Willis Tower (formerly the Sears Tower), and Navy Pier, followed by an afternoon at leisure. Perhaps enjoy an optional river cruise for a closer look at the city's remarkable architecture or visit the renowned Art Institute of Chicago. Then treat yourself to a slice – or three – of Chicago's famous deep-dish pizza.	
Day 3 Chicago - St. Louis, USA Travel across the fertile farmlands of Illinois to St. Louis, known as the "Gateway to the West." An orientation tour includes Gateway Arch National Park, which commemorates the city's important role in America's westward expansion. Visit the museum beneath the Arch, where exhibits explore the stories of Lewis & Clark, westward migration, and the people who helped shape the American frontier.	
Day 4 St. Louis - Paducah - Nashville, USA Recross the Mississippi River and travel southeast to Paducah, Kentucky, situated along the banks of the Ohio River. Enjoy time for lunch and perhaps visit the National Quilt Museum, home to an impressive collection of quilts that showcase extraordinary artistry and craftsmanship. Continue to Nashville, arriving in the late afternoon.	
Day 5 Nashville, USA Enjoy a sightseeing tour of Nashville, the "Country Music Capital of the World." See landmarks including Centennial Park, home to a full-scale replica of the Parthenon, and Music Row, where generations of artists have recorded some of country music's biggest hits. Join an optional excursion featuring historic RCA Studio B, birthplace of the "Nashville Sound" where legendary performers such as Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley, Willie Nelson, and the Everly Brothers recorded. You'll also visit the Country Music Hall of Fame, home to an extensive collection of memorabilia, costumes, instruments, and Elvis Presley's famous "solid gold" Cadillac. Tonight, enjoy reserved seating at a live performance at the world-famous Grand Ole Opry, one of country music's most celebrated stages.	
Day 6 Nashville - Brownsville - Memphis, USA Depart Nashville and travel to Brownsville, Tennessee, to visit the Tina Turner Museum, housed in the one-room schoolhouse once attended by a young Anna Mae Bullock, later known around the world as Tina Turner. Explore exhibits celebrating the life and career of the "Queen of Rock 'n' Roll," including costumes, awards, photographs, and personal memorabilia. Continue to Memphis, the "Home of the Blues," where an orientation tour introduces you to iconic Beale Street and the former Lorraine Motel, site of Martin Luther King Jr's assassination, and now part of the National Civil Rights Museum. Later, consider an optional excursion to legendary Sun Studio, where Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, B.B. King, and other music icons recorded followed by dinner.	
Day 7 Memphis, USA Spend time today exploring Graceland, Elvis Presley's iconic estate. Your self-guided audio tour includes the 1,394-square-metre mansion and the Meditation Garden where Elvis Presley and other members of the Presley family, including his daughter Lisa Marie Presley, are laid to rest. Step aboard Elvis' custom jets and see a collection of his favourite automobiles and personal memorabilia. Return to Memphis mid-afternoon and enjoy free time to experience the city's famous barbecue, vibrant music scene, and legendary Beale Street.	
Day 8 Memphis - Indianola - New Orleans, USA Today, travel through the heart of Mississippi to Indianola, hometown of legendary blues musician B.B. King. Visit the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center to learn about his remarkable journey from humble beginnings in the Mississippi Delta to international fame. Discover how the Mississippi Delta helped shape the development of blues music and influenced generations of American musicians. Later, continue to New Orleans, arriving in the early evening with free time to begin exploring the "Big Easy" on your own.	
Day 9 New Orleans, USA This morning, discover the sights and sounds of New Orleans on a guided tour featuring the French Quarter, St. Louis Cathedral, Jackson Square, and one of the city's distinctive above-ground cemeteries. The afternoon is free to explore on your own. You may choose an optional excursion to one of southern Louisiana's historic plantation homes, where impressive architecture and compelling stories offer insight into the region's past. Or join an optional Louisiana Swamp Tour and cruise through bayous lined with moss-draped cypress trees in search of local wildlife, including alligators. This evening, consider an optional Mississippi River dinner cruise featuring live jazz—the perfect finale to your musical journey through America's Heartland.	
Day 10 New Orleans, USA Your holiday ends this morning.	





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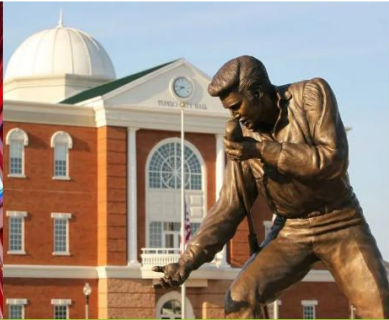
Deal

Music & Legends with Elvis and Dolly Tour

10 nights From \$3,869* per person twin share

Save up to \$250* per person. Plus, guided sightseeing, admission to Graceland, city orientation tours, private transport, and more

Follow the lives and legacies of two American music icons—Elvis Presley, the “King of Rock ‘n’ Roll,” and Dolly Parton, the “Queen of Country”—on a journey through the American South. Visit Elvis’s birthplace in Tupelo, Mississippi, and explore Memphis, where his career flourished. Tour Graceland, view his personal aircraft and famous costumes, and visit the Meditation Garden. Stop at the Tina Turner Museum in Brownsville, Tennessee, celebrating the “Queen of Rock ‘n’ Roll.” Continue to Nashville, “Music City USA,” and enjoy an orientation tour featuring Music Row. In Louisville, discover the city’s connections to Muhammad Ali, Thoroughbred racing, and bourbon. Travel to Sevierville, Dolly Parton’s hometown, to see her bronze statue before overnighing in Pigeon Forge. Explore Great Smoky Mountains National Park and optionally visit Dollywood. Conclude with a stop in Chattanooga to see the famous Chattanooga Choo Choo before returning to Atlanta with unforgettable memories of America’s musical heritage.



Your tour includes:

Tour highlights:

- 10 nights accommodation at hand-selected hotels
- Guided sightseeing
- Services of expert Cosmos Tour Directors and local guides
- Private, first-class, air-conditioned motorcoach with free Wi-Fi (where available)
- Seamless transportation between destinations

- Orientation tours of Atlanta, Tupelo, Memphis, Louisville, Nashville, and Pigeon Forge
- Visit to the Tina Turner Museum, celebrating the life and legacy of the “Queen of Rock ‘n’ Roll”
- Explore Graceland with an audio tour, including access to Elvis Presley’s private jets
- Stop at the Colonel Harland Sanders Café & Museum and learn about the origins of Kentucky Fried Chicken
- Scenic drive through Great Smoky Mountains National Park, America’s most-visited national park

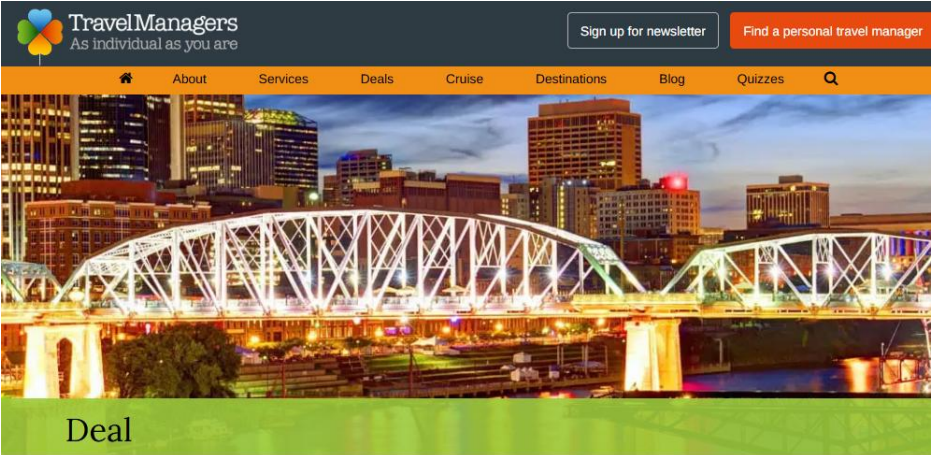
Valid for travel

Departing 9 September 2027. Subject to availability. Seasonal surcharges may apply. Ask your personal travel manager for a quote.

Offer expires

13 Sep 2026 unless sold prior





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Offer expires 13 Sep 2026 unless sold prior





5

MEMPHIS— MUSCLE SHOALS, ALABAMA



Sweet Home Alabama

Depart Memphis and travel into northwest Alabama, following the Tennessee River into “The Shoals.” Discover the area’s rich cultural and music history on a guided tour of  FAME Recording Studios, an unassuming space that became one of the defining studios of the American South. Explore the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area, where music, civil rights history, and Indigenous heritage intersect along the river landscape. Continue to the Wilson Lock and Dam for dramatic views of the Tennessee Valley Authority’s largest hydroelectric facility, a National Historic Landmark. Enjoy regional specialties while dining at a local restaurant tonight.

 Breakfast  Dinner

LOCAL FAVORITE

FAME is the home of the world-famous “Muscle Shoals Sound.” Since the 1960s, many legends recorded landmark hits at FAME Recording Studio, including Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Etta James, The Rolling Stones and more. Tour the legendary studio and hear the unique Muscle Shoals sound – a blend of country and soul mixed with rhythm and blues.

Helloworld Missouri Route 66 Webinar – 11 Registrations

Registration First Name	Registration Last Name	Registration Email
Alarna	Briggs	alarna.mtgambier@helloworld.com.au
Alexa	Calcopietro	alexa.richmondsw@helloworld.com.au
Brayden	Kemble	brayden.gladstone@helloworld.com.au
Chloe	Smith	chloe.chadstone@helloworld.com.au
Deepa	Srivastava	deepa.geelongwest@helloworld.com.au
Isobel	Young	isobel.young@racttravel.com.au
Jacqueline	Haney	jacqueline.noosa@helloworld.com.au
Jennifer	Townrow	jen.echuca@helloworld.com.au
Juanita	Lane	juanita.brokenhill@helloworld.com.au
Kat	Chatfield	kat.evertonhills@helloworld.com.au
Katherine	McNeill-Shaw	katherine.helensvaleplaza@helloworld.com.au
Kimberley	Thomas	kimberley.portmachortonst@helloworld.com.au
Lucy	Suhr	lucy.helensvaleplaza@helloworld.com.au
Michelle	Mackinnon	michelle.southland@helloworld.com.au
Kim	Owen	richmondsw@helloworld.com.au
Shannen	Leach	shannen.dalby@helloworld.com.au
Ann	Ip	amazingconnectiontravel@gmail.com
BettyAnne	Durheim	bettyanne.lismore@helloworld.com.au
Mordecai	Winters	mordecai.dalby@helloworld.com.au
Sasi	Sims	sasi.sims@racttravel.com.au
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Discover the USA's Deep South, experiencing its culture, heritage & landscapes in Memphis, Jackson & beyond

Includes Return International Full-Service Flights

Dates: 12 Apr - 11 Oct 2027

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\$5,999

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Discover the USA's Deep South, experiencing its culture, heritage & landscapes in Memphis, Jackson & beyond

Dates: 12 Apr - 11 Oct 2027

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10 nights of hotel accommodation

Visit the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, the B.B. King Museum in Indianola, Graceland in Memphis & more

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Use Qantas Points

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Per person twin share

Valued up to \$11,630* **SAVE 48%**

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FEATURED

ROAD TRIP

GET YOUR VIBE ON I-65

17 days / 16 nights from NZ \$7,699 per person

Get your vibe on I-65 on an iconic self-drive journey from Chicago to New Orleans. Travel through America's Great Lakes, Heartland and Deep South, with stops including Chicago, Indianapolis, Nashville and New Orleans. Experience live music, Civil Rights history and French Quarter atmosphere on a classic American road trip, with legendary attractions, fascinating cities, Southern flavours and plenty of unexpected discoveries waiting along the way ...

[VIEW PACKAGE](#)



ALABAMA

FEATURED

TENNESSEE

SOUNDTRACKS OF THE SOUTH

11 days / 10 nights from NZ \$5,299 per person

Follow the rhythm of America's musical heartland on a journey through Nashville, Muscle Shoals, Clarksdale and Memphis. Featuring iconic music experiences and legendary cultural landmarks, this Southern journey blends country, blues and rock'n'roll history with authentic regional culture into one unforgettable road trip, taking in legendary recording studios, famous music venues, the Mississippi Delta and the stories behind the songs along the way ...

[VIEW PACKAGE](#)





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NORTH CAROLINA

EXPLORE NORTH CAROLINA

14 days / 13 nights from NZ \$4,379 per person

Embark on a 14-day adventure across North Carolina! Experience vibrant Charlotte, drive the stunning Blue Ridge Parkway and explore the Outer Banks using their unique car ferry system. Tour the USS North Carolina Battleship in Wilmington, then visit Fayetteville before returning to Charlotte ...

[VIEW PACKAGE](#)



SOUTH CAROLINA

ULTIMATE MYRTLE BEACH

5 days / 4 nights from NZ \$699 per person

Discover Myrtle Beach—a coastal escape filled with Southern charm, sun-soaked beaches, and vibrant culture. Enjoy oceanfront stays, dolphin cruises, top golf courses, Lowcountry cuisine, and lively boardwalks, all perfectly balanced with relaxation and fun. Tee off on world-class golf courses, explore Gullah-Geechee heritage, and take in a live show. Myrtle Beach is where sunshine, stories, and Southern soul come together in one unforgettable getaway ...

[VIEW PACKAGE](#)





FEATURED ROAD TRIP

ROUTE 66 - THE MOTHER ROAD

24 days / 23 nights from NZ \$7,975 per person

Celebrate the 2026 centennial of Route 66 on this epic 24-day adventure! Roll from Chicago's deep-dish pizza to California's sun-soaked beaches, discovering neon diners, quirky roadside attractions, retro motels, and classic Americana across eight states. From Chicago blues to the Grand Canyon's awe and Pacific sunsets at Santa Monica, this once-in-a-lifetime road trip lets you experience the full magic, nostalgia, and free-spirited fun of America's iconic "Mother Road." ...

[VIEW PACKAGE](#)



MISSOURI

ULTIMATE KANSAS CITY

5 days / 4 nights from NZ \$1,599 per person

Discover Kansas City with our 5-day, 4-night Ultimate Kansas City package! Enjoy return airport transfers, 4 nights in a central hotel, a BBQ and brewery tour, and explore top attractions like the National WWI Museum and the American Jazz Museum. With your 3-day KC Attractions Pass experience other historic sites and museums ...





KENTUCKY

EXPLORE KENTUCKY

13 days / 12 nights from NZ \$3,699 per person

Explore Kentucky on our 13-day suggested self-drive road trip. Stay at the historic Brown Hotel, explore the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, visit iconic horse farms in Lexington, and marvel at natural wonders like Natural Bridge, Red River Gorge, Cumberland Falls and Mammoth Cave. Adventure awaits ...

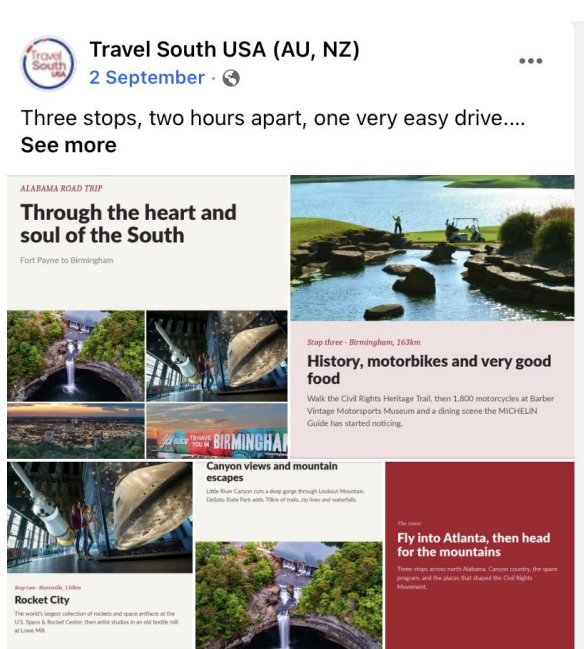
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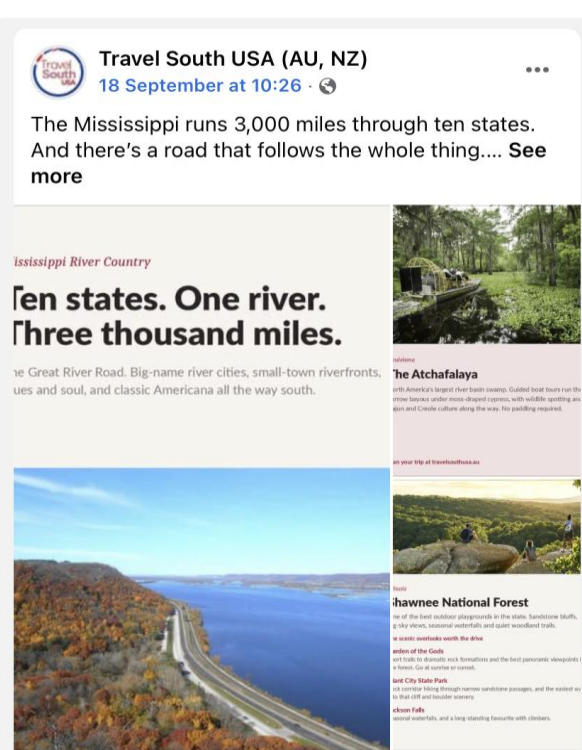
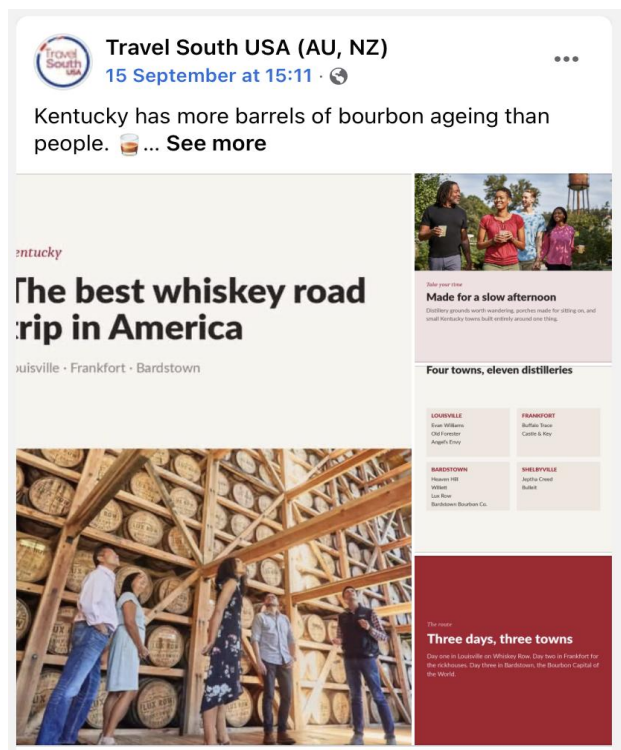




SOCIAL CONTENT UPDATE

Instagram and Facebook Posts by Gate 7





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



Gate 7 Private AU/NZ Travel Trade Community





Market Update

Market Update

Australia Market & Economic Snapshot: July – September 2026

Australia's economy continued to grow through the third quarter, although conditions became more challenging as higher inflation, interest rates and cost-of-living pressures weighed on households. Consumer spending continued to grow, but discretionary spending remained subdued outside vehicle purchases, with international travel particularly affected with the Middle East conflict.

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) increased the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.60%, citing the need for higher interest rates to ensure inflation returns to target. The increase adds further pressure to household budgets and reinforces a cautious outlook for discretionary spending. Inflation increased during the quarter. Annual CPI rose from 3.5% in July to 4.0% in August, while trimmed mean inflation remained at 3.6%. Rising rents, food and energy costs contributed to price pressures, while the RBA noted that higher global energy prices and domestic cost pressures were adding to inflation risks.

The labour market remained relatively resilient but continued to soften. Unemployment increased marginally to 4.6%, while the employment-to-population ratio remained steady at 63.9%. Labour market indicators remain broadly stable, providing some ongoing support for household confidence.

Economic growth remained modest, with GDP increasing 0.4% in the June quarter and 2.1% over the year. Household consumption also grew 0.4%, although much of the increase in discretionary spending came from strong vehicle sales. Other discretionary categories remained subdued as cost-of-living pressures constrained spending, while domestic and international tourism were particularly weak amid disruption from the Middle East conflict.

The Australian dollar strengthened during the quarter, reaching around US72c, before falling back to approximately US69c by the end of September.

What this means for international travel: Australians remain willing to spend, but are increasingly selective and value conscious. Higher interest rates, renewed inflation pressures and a weak Australian dollar create additional headwinds for outbound travel. Destinations that clearly demonstrate value, compelling experiences and strong reasons to travel now will be best positioned to convert demand.





Visitation to the USA. 1July 2026 i-94 arrival data (released September)

Australia:

- Australia recorded **69, 860 arrivals to the USA in August, down 11% year on year.**
- Australia **ranked twelfth among long-haul international markets in August**, compared with approximately 11th place during much of the year to date.

Ports of Entry – Australia to the USA:

- California Arrivals were down 7% in August
- Texas continues to record the strongest percentage growth among the major gateways, with arrivals flat in August, up 12% YOY .

Global Travel Demand from Australia.

Global Travel Demand from Australia.

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

Just over 1,250,580 Australians returned from an overseas trip in July, an increase of 3.8% YOY.

The top 10 countries as follows:

Rank	Country	June Visits	Percentage growth YOY
1	Indonesia	188,850	+6.8%
2	New Zealand	133,640	+6%
3	UK	79,840	+8%
4	USA	70,470	0%
5	Thailand	64,010	+5%
6	Vietnam	58,990	+19%
7	China(b)	55,970	+9%
8	Japan	52,030	-3%
9	Italy	49,650	+2%
10	Fiji	46,770	+7%

First intended address – Travel South

- A total of 3,150 Australians listed a Travel South state as their first intended address in June, up 1.5% for August
- Travel South has maintained its share of 5% of Australians choosing it as their first intended address.





Tour Operators & Travel Agencies

- **TTC moves to ensure Trafalgar has the power.** TRAFALGAR is about to enter a new era, with parent company The Travel Corporation (TTC) announcing plans to unify Insight Vacations and Cost saver under the Trafalgar brand next year. [Source page 2](#)
- **Expedia goes large** EXPEDIA Group has unveiled new partner products and features across its rental brand Stayz, and property management software Escapia. [Source page 2.](#)
- **Flight Centre Travel Expo brings big deals back to Sydney for the first time in 6.5 years.** Flight Centre Travel Expo returns to Sydney for the first time since 2020, returning with exclusive deals on flights, cruises, tours, rail, hotels, packages, insurance and more across two days. [Source](#)
- **The future of travel is human:** Helloworld lines up 14 stores in 18 months. Fourteen stores opened, announced or committed in 18 months is a fairly emphatic answer to anyone writing off the bricks-and-mortar travel agency. [Source](#)
- **Globus goes North** GLOBUS has launched two new North American itineraries for 2027 covering New England and British Columbia. [Source page 4](#)
- **Luxury Escape's to Qld.** Luxury Escapes is set to unveil its third physical store in Westfield Chermside in Brisbane in Nov, founder and CEO Adam Schwab has revealed exclusively to Travel Daily. [Source page 2](#)
- **REVEALED: Which Destinations Will Be Hot, Not Hot, For 2027?** Intrepid Travel has released its annual Not Hot List, spotlighting 10 lesser-known destinations that are ready to welcome more visitors in 2027. [Source](#)
- **California's sporting moment is here:** How to turn game day into a Golden State road trip. From the FIFA World Cup and Super Bowl to the LA28 Olympic & Paralympic Games, California will be one of the world's biggest sporting stages. [Source](#)
- **Ultimate Playground:** California forecasts \$2 billion Aussie spend rebound by 2027 as visitors stay longer. Australian visitor spend in California is forecast to return to growth at USD\$1.35 billion (around AUD\$1.89 billion) this year and rise to USD\$1.43 billion (around AUD\$2 billion) in 2027, as Aussies stay longer, visit more destinations and spend more in the Golden State. [Source](#)
- **US Travel Association CEO warns government policies send wrong message.** US Travel Association CEO Geoff Freeman has warned that visa delays, higher fees and expanded social media screening risk undermining the country's ambitions to attract 100 million international visitors by 2030. [Source](#)
- **Borg: Modern luxury with Signature** Luxury travellers are increasingly looking for freedom to shape their holidays rather than simply adding more inclusions. Borg said the evolution of





luxury was now well-established, with personalisation, flexibility and the ability to choose how a trip unfolds becoming central to the modern proposition. [Source page 2](#)

- **Helloworld buys up CCE** Helloworld Travel (HLO) has entered into a binding agreement to acquire 100% of Crown Currency Exchange (CCE) for \$135 million, further expanding the group's retail footprint. [Source](#)

Traveler Insights

- **Holidays over homes:** Almost half of Aussies would spend on travel over property in 2026
Almost half of Australian non-homeowners (46%) would still choose travel over property in 2026 – a purchase preference particularly led by under-35s. [Source](#)
- **AI helping smaller players.** The increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) in trip planning has paved the way for independent and boutique hotels to gain greater exposure than larger brands. [Source page 6](#)
- **Agents gain a trust edge.** ONE in four Aussie travellers are more likely to use a human travel agent because of the proliferation of AI, according to new figures released by News Australia's The Growth Distillery this week. The data also showed that two-thirds of travellers want to engage a travel agent in at least some part of travel planning, as consumers remain wary of the trust they can place in AI. [Source](#)
- **Aussies eye local places for retirement travel plans, research says.** Nearly 70 per cent of the Australians said holidays or travel are essential or important to the retirement they would like to have. [Source](#)
- **RBA changes bad for business,** worse for consumers upcoming changes to credit card surcharging mandated by the RBA will not only have an adverse impact on travel businesses, but also consumers. [Source page 3](#)
- **Travel as therapy:** 80% of Aussies say an upcoming trip is a mood enhancer. Travel has gone from a "nice to have" to a necessity as almost three-quarters of Australian travellers say trip anticipation helps them cope with the demands of daily life and 80 per cent say having something to look forward to lifts their mood. [Source](#)
- **What Aussies now want as a worthwhile trip.** Food and drink and quality time with travel companions rank highly with Aussie travellers. Aussies gravitate towards natural scenery (30%), quality time with travel companions (28%) and good food or drinks (19%) as key drivers of satisfaction. Connection ranks highest of all with 48 per cent naming family trips as the most enjoyable. [Source](#)





- **Premium travel trend hits Oz.** Trip.Com's recent finding that Millennials and Gen X are fuelling demand for premium travel (TD 07 Sep 2026) appears to be reflected in the Australian market, with luxury operators reporting a similar trend. [Source](#)

Air Lift

- **US flights for under a grand:** New Fiji Airways sale launches. Fiji Airways is marking its 75th anniversary with an eight-day network-wide fare sale running from 1 to 8 September, opening with three days of the airline's sharpest fares before five days of anniversary deals. [Source.](#)
- **American Airlines brings new Flagship Suite to Sydney on retrofitted Boeing B777-300ER.** American Airlines has launched its first retrofitted Boeing B777-300ER jet carrying 144 premium seats, including the new Flagship Suite and Australian flyers can experience the carrier's "most elevated cabin" on the Sydney–Los Angeles route. [Source](#)
- **ACCC ticks QF-AA** Qantas and American Airlines have received draft ACCC approval to extend their trans Pacific joint business for five more years, with the watchdog citing increased connectivity, new routes and frequencies, improved loyalty benefits and lounge access among the reasons for approval. [Source page 1.](#)
- **North America on sale: Qantas discounts US and Canada fares across 7 destinations for 7 days** Qantas has dropped a seven-day USA & Canada Sale across its North America network with discounted airfares, including the new direct Sydney-Las Vegas route from \$1,249 return in Economy. [Source](#)
- **Qantas confirms Sydney–New York non-stop from mid-2028.** Qantas has confirmed non-stop Sydney to New York flights from mid-2028, the second confirmed route in its Project Sunrise ultra long-haul program, with tickets going on sale from August 2027. [Source](#)
- **United debuts most premium Dreamliner on Sydney-San Francisco route from December 2026.** United Airlines will operate its new Boeing B787-9 Dreamliner with the Elevated interior on the seasonal Sydney-San Francisco route from 4 December 2026, its second Australian service to gain the flagship UA Elevated 787-9 aircraft. [Source](#)

Media

- **Independent Publishing Platforms Continue to Gain Traction.** Substack continues to emerge as a growing channel for journalists, writers, and content creators to build direct relationships with engaged audiences. New research shows 39% of people regularly read at least one Substack publication, rising to 55% among Gen Z and 49% among millennials. News and politics remain the platform's largest content category (21%), followed by technology (18%), while nearly one in five users (18%) report increasing their usage over the past year. [Source.](#)
- **Sports Fans Are Becoming More Culturally Driven.** Australia's sports audience is evolving beyond the traditional diehard fan, with a younger and more culturally diverse "New





Wave Fan" audience now representing 42% of sports fans, or 7.2 million people, up six percentage points year-on-year. These fans engage with sport through personalities, social media, fashion, entertainment and fantasy leagues, and are more likely to travel for games, pay for hospitality and spend on sport-related experiences. [Source](#).

- Travel Trend Watch: "Grandma-Maxxing". Nine Travel has highlighted the rise of "Grandma-Maxxing", a trend centred on older women embracing travel, adventure and lifestyle experiences later in life. The trend reflects broader demographic shifts, with mature travellers increasingly seeking meaningful experiences, cultural immersion, and active itineraries. [Source](#).
- News travel play **NEWSCORP** has **redeveloped its News Travel Network**, adding new ways for tourism brands and travellers to interact with its mastheads, including Escape, Travel + Luxury and News.com.au. [Source. Page 7](#).

Actions

- TADA
- Beyond Borders
- Northern Beaches Cluster Training
- New Zealand Visit USA Shows
- America the Bountiful Foodie Event
- National Travel Industry Awards
- October - Trade & PR Newsletter
- Media Famils Requests
- GMM Targets & Planning

