BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA Invites Travelers to Discover the Best of the USA This Spring and Summer

March 10, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 10, 2025) — A visit to the United States in the spring (March-May) or summertime (June-August) means the chance to see the country in full bloom. Destinations and attractions blossom with new and returning activities, events, and fun things to do throughout the shoulder and peak travel seasons. From hopping in a car or on a train for an epic trip across the country to taking in the natural beauty of the day, or wonders of the night at state parks, there are plenty of opportunities to create the perfect trip to the U.S. in 2025, whether you're traveling solo, with friends, or the whole family.

"The USA is a year-round destination, but spring and summer offer an unparalleled opportunity to explore the country at its most vibrant. From breathtaking landscapes to world-class events, this is the perfect time to visit. We invite travelers from around the world to experience the best of the USA this season" said Fred Dixon, president and CEO of Brand USA, the nation's destination marketing organization.

PLACES TO VISIT

Welcome (Back) to Los Angeles & Western North Carolina

Communities are still reeling and cleaning up in the wake of devastating natural disasters in parts of Los Angeles and western North Carolina. And while some closures to the general public remain in effect in the areas hardest hit by the fires and flooding – Los Angeles and Western North Carolina are open for business, safe to visit and more importantly, eager to welcome back visitors.

Travelers are encouraged now more than ever to visit Los Angeles to support local businesses both big and small, from hotels, restaurants, and shops, to theme parks, museums, and community spaces. In addition to the City of Los Angeles, cities welcoming visitors are West Hollywood, Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, and Pasadena, to name a few. Enjoy the rides at the Santa Monica Pier and fit in a stroll nearby at Third Street Promenade for modern and vintage finds before catching a performing arts show at the Eli and Edythe Broad Stage. Head to Culver City and indulge in Parisian bites or gastropub fare at local eateries downtown while staying a few nights at one of the city's national historic landmarks, the Culver Hotel. Art and history lovers should also plan visits to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the La Brea Tar Pits, and the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena.

Western North Carolina is also eager to welcome visitors back this spring and summer, especially to explore the natural beauty and agritourism opportunities found there. Orchards, lavender fields, farm-to-table dining, and more await across the Tar Heel State. Don't miss the historic Biltmore Estate in Asheville, where visitors can tour America's largest home, stroll through stunning gardens, and enjoy local wine from its award-winning winery. Travelers should also make the trip toward the Blue Ridge Mountains, where they can explore the Crest of the Blue Ridge Wine Country, one of North Carolina's six wine regions. Others can be found along the state's coastline and in the Yadkin Valley, North Carolina's first wine-growing region.

And for music and festival lovers, San Francisco is the place to be in Northern California this spring and summer. Spend your Memorial Day weekend (May 25-26) celebrating Carnaval San Francisco, a free two-day multicultural event that will showcase Latino, Caribbean and African Diasporic traditions. The event will span 17 blocks in the Mission District and will feature five main stages, 50 local performing artists and 400 vendors. The Grand Parade on Memorial Day Monday on May 26 is not to be missed.

Race to Upstate New York's Hudson Valley

Saratoga Springs will be the place to be in the Hudson Valley this summer when it hosts the prestigious Belmont Stakes, the oldest Triple Crown Race and fourth oldest horse race in the U.S. The event returns to the Saratoga Race Course for a second year, beginning Saturday, June 7. Normally, the five-day racing festival is held at Belmont Park in Elmont on Long Island, but for 2025, it will return to Saratoga due to extensive ongoing renovations at Belmont Park, which are slated to be complete in 2026. In addition to the official races, the New York Racing Association is hosting an expanded festival season before and after the main event, beginning with the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival, which will begin a day earlier this year on Wednesday, June 4, running through Sunday, June 8. Festivities this summer will also include a July 4th Racing Festival running from Thursday, July 3 through Sunday, July 6. Additional racing festival events and activities will run from July 10 through Labor Day Monday on September 1.

Soak Up the Southwest in New Mexico

Desert sands. Hot air balloons. UFOs. New Mexico has just the right mix of beauty, culture, history and mystery to make for an eventful, if not satisfyingly interesting, visit this year. Learn about New Mexico's Native American community and other tribes around the country this April by attending the 2025 Gathering of Nations Powwow, the largest Native American powwow in the world. While one of New Mexico's best known events – the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta – doesn't kick off until later in the fall, you can still catch some hot air balloon action high in the sky with the Elephant Butte Balloon Regatta, set to be held in late August at Elephant Butte Lake State Park. And no trip to New Mexico is complete without a visit to Roswell, where the Alien Capital of the World will host its annual UFO Festival over Fourth of July weekend. Connect and compare notes with other space enthusiasts and true believers on what otherworldly creatures are really out there as you enjoy live entertainment, guest speakers, themed bites and costume contests.

On the Waterfront

If heading for the nearest coastline or body of water is more your style, plan your trip around some of the best waterfront spots and shorelines around the country.

Massachusetts's historic Cape Cod region makes for a picturesque New England getaway where you'll find charming seaside towns, postcard perfect stretches of coastline, cozy bed and breakfast inns, rich maritime history and all the lobster rolls, oysters and clam chowder you can eat.

If you're more interested in boating and water sports like kayaking and fishing, opt for a lakefront trip at popular spots like Northern California's Lake Tahoe and Arizona's Lake Havasu, where you can also take a late afternoon hot air balloon ride over the area and stick around for an evening of stargazing in the desert.

But if surfing, sunbathing and sandy toes are more your thing, the beach is the perfect place to be. And while you can find some of the best beaches on the West Coast, and in the Southeast and Northeast, including San Diego's Coronado Beach, Clearwater Beach in Florida, and Sand Beach at Acadia National Park in Maine, don't forget about a few others. In the Mid Atlantic, Maryland's Assateague State Park and Island is home to not only quieter coastlines but also wild horses that roam the shores, and southern Delaware's beach towns are also home to lively and family-friendly downtowns next to the shoreline.

Along the coastlines of Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, visitors can explore some of the most stunning white sand beaches, crystal-clear waters, fresh seafood, and welcoming, laid-back atmosphere.

PARKS & RECREATION

National parks are not the only parks worth visiting in the USA – state parks have much to offer as well, and are often less crowded, more affordable, easier to visit, and often have more off-the-beaten-path histories and attractions to discover within.

To the West, consider a visit to Vasquez Rocks Natural Area and Nature Center in Santa Clarita in Los Angeles County, a 945-acre park with stunning geological formations and is a popular film location used in many television shows and movies. In the Northeast, visit Cherry Springs State Park in Potter County, Pennsylvania, known for its stargazing opportunities at night; New York's Bear Mountain State Park and Storm King State Park, both of which are known for their stunning views overlooking the Hudson Valley, as well as Watkins Glen State Park in the Finger Lakes region, known for its winding trails and 19 waterfalls.

National parks around the country are expected to operate normally this spring and summer. But with any visit to a national park during the peak summer months of June, July and August, especially to some of the country's most visited parks, like Yosemite, Yellowstone, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park, travelers are always encouraged to plan ahead, arrive early or visit during non-peak hours, use shuttle services instead of driving, and pack your patience.

To best avoid crowds, traffic, and long lines, consider visiting parks that are not as crowded, such as White Sands National Park in New Mexico, Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, and Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. For national park trips to slightly more popular parks with more travelers, such as Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas, consider visiting those parks during the shoulder season in the months between April-May and September-October.

For the latest information regarding National Park operations, reservations, or timed-entry policies, visit NPS.gov.

WIND DOWN IN WINE COUNTRY REGIONS

California may be the producer of 81% of the USA's wine and the world's fourth largest wine producer, but there are plenty of other interesting wine regions to discover around the country.

In the Pacific Northwest, you'll find the Columbia Valley in the states of Washington and Oregon where Cabernet Sauvignons, Syrah and Merlot are some of the most common grapes grown. River cruises traversing the Columbia and Snake Rivers with companies like American Cruise Lines and National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions are an excellent way to discover this wine region, especially through specially themed food and wine itineraries. In Lake Michigan Shore, you'll find the "Napa of the Midwest" where Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio and Pinot Noir are some of the most common wines produced there. New York has around 400 wineries and more than six wine regions, including the Finger Lakes, the Hudson River region, Long Island, and Lake Erie. And down south, Texas Hill Country is one of the largest wine producing regions in the country as the home to over 100 wineries, and is best known for producing Tempranillo, Syrah, Albarino, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Zinfandel.

IT HAPPENED AT THE STATE FAIR

Nothing provides a taste of good ole' fashioned Americana quite like visiting a state fair. Typically held in the summer months, these large-scale events celebrate, promote, and educate the public about a state's agriculture, agribusiness, horticulture, arts, craft, and culture through competitions and exhibitions. State and county fairs also offer amusement rides, market stalls, games, live entertainment and an assortment of delicious foods like corndogs and deep friend desserts, plus other traditional and innovative American culinary staples and carnival fare. Some of the best state fairs to visit are the California, Iowa, Minnesota, Texas, Ohio, and the Great New York State Fair.

SLOW TRAVEL

Take your time on your next trip to the U.S. by slowing things down on a trip that minimizes speed and maximizes enjoying the journey at every step of the way.

Road Trips

Road trips are a great way to see the country at your own pace and there is no shortage of great road trips routes to take in the U.S.

2026 marks the 100th anniversary of Route 66, the iconic highway connecting Chicago to Santa Monica that served as a primary route for those migrating to the west, bringing business and visibility to the filling stations, rest stops, and small businesses found along the way, as well as the many neon signs, quirky motels, and roadside attractions. Its depiction in books, movies and songs made it one of

the most famous stretches of highway in the country.

Music lovers can follow the Mississippi Blues Trail on the Blues Highway between Memphis, Tennessee and New Orleans, Louisiana to learn about the origins of the blues, spirituals, gospel, soul, jazz and more of the iconic sounds of the Mississippi Delta.

For those traveling along Interstate 65, the journey is just as exciting as the destination. This iconic highway, stretching from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast, offers an unforgettable road trip experience, with scenic detours, historic landmarks, and outdoor adventures along the way. From exploring Alabama's scenic trails to discovering hidden gems in Tennessee and Kentucky, I-65 is a gateway to adventure.

Take in the salty ocean breeze on a Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) road trip along California's coastline, stretching from San Francisco all the way down to San Diego, with stops in Santa Cruz, Big Sur, Monterey Bay, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles.

Marvel at the mountainous regions found along the Appalachian Trail from the Northeast in Maine to the South in Georgia, along with the Blue Ridge Parkway route that stretches between Virginia and North Carolina, connecting Shenandoah National Park to Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Train Trips

If you don't want to worry about navigating roads, filling up your gas tank, and doing any work at all, consider a train trip across the country, regional train trips that allow you to explore parts of the country, or even day trains that provide more local and entertaining history for a few hours out of your day.

Amtrak has a new direct roundtrip itinerary between Chicago and Miami called the Floridian that makes stops in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C., Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa, connecting the Midwest to the warmer climes of the Southeast in 48 hours. Roomettes and private cabins are available to make the journey more comfortable.

Brightline, the Sunshine State's first high-speed passenger train that connects Orlando and Miami, and makes stops in West Palm Beach, Boca Raton, Fort Lauderdale and Aventura. Trains run hourly and offer 16 trips daily from both Orlando and Miami, and takes about three hours from end to end. Travelers can hop on and off and spend as much time in each city as they'd like to explore what central and southern Florida have to offer.

Day Trains

Day trains are also a great way to spend part of your trip to the USA and only last a few hours, giving you plenty of time to fit in other ways of slowing down your trip. On the Napa Valley Wine Train, a luxury rail service in California's Napa Valley, you'll be treated to wine tastings onboard and at local wineries, as well as multi-course wine-paired meals or afternoon tea services across its itineraries. You can also book themed rail trips for Christmas, New Year's, a Murder Mystery dinner, along with evening dinner trips.

Other food and wine rail trips to make time for are the Colebrookdale Railroad in Boyertown, Pennsylvania, a restored vintage train reviving the golden era of railroading, and the Adirondack Railroad, which operates roundtrip from Utica, that offers a two and a half hour beer and wine train itinerary, along with a three-hour multi-course dinner journey.

Cruise

Cruising the inland and coastal waterways of the USA is another great way to spend your vacation and slow your journey through the country. A handful of companies offer small ship cruising on inland waterways in the U.S., some of which American Cruise Lines, Viking, National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions, Ponant and Victory Cruise Lines, while larger cruise lines like Royal Caribbean, Norwegian and Disney offer more coastal sailings. But the options of where you can sail are plentiful, from cruising on rivers, the Great Lakes, to coastal waters of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

River cruises, for instance, offer a unique way to get an up close and personal look at the interior of the country, visiting small towns, off-the-beaten path wine regions, and historic cities and communities along the way. The Mississippi River is probably the most well-known and most popular river cruise for tourists and citizens alike to take, as cruises here offer rich history about the American South and Midwest from a cultural, culinary, and agricultural perspective. Both American Cruise Lines and Viking offer cruises regularly on the

Upper and Lower Mississippi.

On Great Lakes cruises, you can expect to discover the lakes' diverse freshwater ecosystems, visit historic sights and natural wonders like Niagara Falls, explore the entertainment scene of Mackinac Island, and learn about world-renowned architecture and design during visits to museums. Viking and the newly revived Victory Cruise Lines brand offer several Great Lakes itineraries for you to choose from.

Sailing from Seattle offers an unforgettable journey through the breathtaking waterways of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Along the way, travelers have opportunities for glacier viewing, whale watching, and incredible wildlife encounters. Highlights include visits to iconic national parks like Glacier Bay, Kenai Fjords, with opportunities to extend the adventure to Wrangell-St. Elias and Denali.

TRENDS TO CHASE

For travelers who want to take the guesswork out of planning their trip from scratch, you can opt to chase a few trends currently dominating travel, including cowboy-cations, astrotourism and noctourism, and detour destinations.

Cowboy-cations are trips designed to help you live out your Western-style fantasies. Often based in more rural destinations of the American West with a focus on stays at working ranches or rustic vacation homes, cowboy core trips help you explore the rugged outdoors through horseback riding, gold panning, cattle drives and other hands-on experiences. Head to states like Montana, Wyoming, Texas, Oklahoma, and Colorado to bring out your inner cowboy and cowgirl. And if you'd like a more pampered experience, you can opt for glamping options as well, which resorts like the Resort at Paws Up in Greenough, Montana, along with Utah's Camp Sarika at Amangiri, Open Sky and the Lodge at Blue Sky.

With astrotourism, your priority is the night sky. Stargazing in dark sky parks, Northern Lights hunts, visiting observatories and planetariums, and learning about astronomy are just a few of the activities you can immerse yourself in for this celestial trend. Visit a DarkSky-certified state or national park like Dinosaur Monument Park in Utah or AMC Maine Woods in Maine to get the darkest, unobstructed views of the night sky. At the same time, you can chase the noctourism trend, which are trips centered around nighttime activities in general. Nocturnal activities you can discover include moonlit kayaking, night safaris, full moon festivals and visits to night markets as well. At Vero Beach, Florida, you can look out for bioluminescent plankton or catch the twinkle of synchronous fireflies at parks like Great Smoky Mountains from late May to early June. And take a country road to West Virginia as well to stargaze as well, while finding a unique lodge to stay in during your trip.

For more information about what's happening in the USA in 2025 and to start planning your trip, go to www.visittheusa.com.

NOTE TO EDITOR

Accompanying high-resolution imagery can be downloaded here.

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About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.

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