BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA Celebrates 250 Years of the United States With 50 Family-Friendly Travel Experiences

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Featured Image: *Visit Virginia Beach*

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA (February 23, 2026) — As families increasingly prioritize shared experiences and meaningful time together when choosing where to travel, the United States continues to stand apart for the breadth and variety of experiences it offers across generations. As part of Brand USA's America the Beautiful campaign, the organization today unveiled 50 family-friendly travel experiences across the country, highlighting destinations and activities designed to inspire discovery for travelers of every age, from toddlers to grandparents.

"There's never been a better time for families to enjoy the best of the USA," said Fred Dixon, president and CEO of Brand USA. "With once-in-a-generation experiences on tap like the events of America's 250th, epic road trips for Route 66's Centennial, and the FIFA World Cup matches, fanfests and watch parties, combined with more than 60 spectacular national parks, dozens of thrilling theme parks, beach resorts and culture packed cities, the USA is the top family choice for 2026."

The featured experiences span all regions of the country, showcasing how families can tailor trips to different interests, ages, and travel styles while exploring the United States together.

NORTHEAST

COASTAL MAINE BOTANICAL GARDENS – Boothbay, Maine
This sprawling baby- and toddler-friendly garden has walking paths, a lawn maze, and interactive exhibits at the Alfond Children's Garden. Check out puppet shows, meet the resident chickens, and bring your own food and blanket for a picnic – onsite bathrooms make logistics a breeze.

OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE – Sturbridge, Massachusetts
A living history village depicting 19th-century New England life, with artisans, historic homes, and period demonstrations. Some buildings are wheelchair accessible, but assistance may be needed in older structures.

CLARK'S BEARS – Lincoln, New Hampshire
A stroller- and wheelchair-accessible wildlife theme park that opened in 1928, featuring shows, train rides, and museums with unique historical artifacts like horse-drawn fire engines.

BUDDY PAW SLED DOG KENNEL – Jefferson, New Hampshire
Wheeled rigs allow this family-friendly kennel to offer sled dog adventures year-round, including "snowless" tours. Children aged 2 and up can meet, greet, and join 2- or 5-mile tours with rescue sled dogs.

BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM – Woodstock, Vermont
A working dairy farm and museum with demonstrations and animal interactions for children, and wheelchair-accessibility for the Visitor Center, barns, and exhibits, restrooms, and partial accessibility for the historic Farm Manager's House.

BEN AND JERRY'S FACTORY TOUR (AND FLAVOR GRAVEYARD) – Burlington, Vermont
A highlight of a tour of this famed brand's ice cream factory includes the physical Flavor Graveyard, with tombstones that memorialize

dozens of discontinued ice cream iterations.

MID-ATLANTIC

FAMILY HISTORY CENTER – Ellis Island, New York
At the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration, the Family History Center lets visitors research ancestors who arrived through Ellis Island using 65 million records that include passenger records, ship manifests, and historical databases.

NEW VICTORY THEATER – New York City, NY
This 30-year-old family?friendly theater in the Broadway district features limited-time plays, circus acts, and mesmerizing performances from all over the world, with clear age-based guidelines to help families choose the right shows and occasional free activity days.

AMERICAN DREAM MALL – East Rutherford, New Jersey
Housed in the American Dream Mall, Toys "R" Us – the biggest toy store in the United States – features an endless selection of toys, games, and play zones, climbing structures, interactive displays, and a train ride make this a must-visit for families. The nearby Nickelodeon Universe is the largest indoor theme park in the Western Hemisphere, with over 30 Nickelodeon-themed rides, coasters, and year-round attractions in an 8.5-acre space.

NATIONAL AVIARY – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Birds! Big and small, in a unique, walkable, enclosed environment to experience these feathered friends, as well as the occasional sloth, up close – check feeding schedules!

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTIONS – Washington, D.C.
All 17 Smithsonian museums in the area, plus the National Zoo, are free – some popular spots may require timed tickets. Highlights include the National Air and Space Museum, National Museum of Natural History, and unexpected gems like the National Postal Museum, which has one of the largest stamp collections in the world. Stay even longer with Smithsonian Sleepovers, a program that lets kids and chaperones spend the night at the museum.

MIDWEST

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF INDIANAPOLIS – Indianapolis, Indiana
Five stories of treasures, including a steam engine, historical carousel, dinosaur bones, theatrical performances, and science workshops await at the largest children's museum in the world, which has an ever-changing roster of permanent exhibits and scheduled activities.

THE RABBIT HOLE – Kansas City, Missouri
An immersive, storybook-themed wonderland where children can step into fantastical worlds filled with interactive experiences, whimsical decorations, and imaginative play areas, all inspired by their favorite books.

CITY MUSEUM – St. Louis, Missouri
A four-story larger-than-life playground built from salvaged materials, featuring slides, tunnels, climbing structures, and imaginative installations like a treehouse, a hall of pinballs, and the world's largest pencil.

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR – St. Paul, Minneapolis
Home to of the nation's best-attended rodeos and state fairs, the Minnesota State Fair or as locals call it, "The Great Minnesota Get-Together" features 12 days of livestock competitions, live entertainment, and food vendors with a carnival-like atmosphere.

WISCONSIN DELLS – Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
Known as the "Waterpark Capital of the World," Wisconsin Dells features multiple indoor and outdoor waterparks. Highlights include America's largest inflatable water park (at the Land of Natura), a 9-foot wave pool, the country's tallest water slide, Medusa's Slidewheel, the world's first rotating water slide (all at Mount Olympus Park), and go-karts.

LOUISVILLE MEGA CAVERN – Louisville, Kentucky
An entire adventure park housed inside a former limestone mine, this one-of-a-kind adventure includes the world's only underground zip lines, aerial ropes obstacle courses, and guided tram tours.

SOUTH

DISNEY WORLD – Lake Buena Vista, Florida
Each of the four theme parks at Disney World (Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios, and Disney's Animal Kingdom) offer a range of 'any height' attractions that are perfect for the youngest and oldest visitors. For example, in Magic Kingdom, It's a Small World is a colorful boat ride that takes visitors past scenes representing world cultures, while the Disney Railroad offers a scenic train trip that gently circles the park and its multiple landscapes.

WEEKI WACHEE SPRINGS STATE PARK – Weeki Wachee, Florida
Famous for live mermaid shows with mesmerizing underwater acrobatics, the park also offers picnic areas, kayaking, and riverboat cruises along the crystal-clear Weeki Wachee River.

DOROTHEA DIX PARK – Raleigh, North Carolina
In "a park for everyone built by everyone," look for Thomas Dambo's larger-than-life troll sculptures, which are crafted entirely from recycled materials, a 2.5 acre dog park for the furry family members, and the Gipson Play Plaza – the largest adventure park in the southeast, with a 91-foot mega-swing, a sensory maze, water feature and seemingly endless surprises.

GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN – Linville, North Carolina
Anyone can take an elevator to the 228-foot long Mile High Swinging Bridge at Grandfather Mountain. Shuttles make the Blue Ridge Mountains even more accessible for tourists.

CLOTILDA: THE EXHIBITION - Mobile, Alabama
In partnership with the History Museum of Mobile, Clotilda: The Exhibition tells the story of the Clotilda — the last known slave ship, which illegally brought 110 enslaved Africans into the United States — and the people connected to that history. Housed inside the Africatown Heritage House in the historic Africatown community, it was featured by National Geographic among the best new U.S. museums to visit in 2023, and is a living memorial that connects historical events with the descendants who carry on the legacy.

DACHSHUND DERBY - Starkville, Mississippi
Long strides are made in a short time at the annual award-winning (and award-giving) Starkville Dachshund Derby – the largest dachshund charity race in the world despite being founded just in 2023. Picture 256 wiener dogs racing down a green carpet just steps away from snacks, art, and a fair-like fiesta.

DOLLYWOOD - Pigeon Forge, Tennessee
Set in the scenic Smoky Mountains, this 40-year-old theme park offers more than 50 rides and attractions, from toddler-friendly options like the Dollywood Express steam train to mid-level coasters such as the Dragonflier, Firechaser Express, and this coming spring, the NightFlight Expedition for older kids and teens.

NORTH AMERICA'S LARGEST URBAN BAT COLONY – Congress Avenue Bridge, Austin, Texas
Every evening from mid-March to mid-October, Austin's Congress Avenue Bridge becomes a spectacular nature show as 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats fly into the sunset. Mid-July adds 750,000 bat pups, with kayaks and boat tours offering even more options for intergenerational crowds to see an intergenerational bat colony.

U.S. SPACE & ROCKET CENTER – Huntsville, Alabama
Often referred to as "Earth's largest space museum," the U.S. Space & Rocket Center offers hands-on exhibits, towering rockets, and real space artifacts, including the Saturn V moon rocket. With kid-friendly simulators, immersive planetarium shows, and Space Camp programs, this is where future astronauts (and their families!) come to dream big.

SOUTHWEST

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO – Houston, Texas
One of the largest rodeos in the world, with dedicated kids' carnival, livestock demonstrations, petting zoo, and the crowd-favorite Mutton Bustin', where young children ride sheep.

BUC-EE'S (WORLD'S LARGEST) – Luling, Texas
The world's largest Buc-ee's, with 75,000 square feet of unique snacks, barbecue, souvenirs, and spotless restrooms, along with the world's longest car wash (255 feet)!

INDIAN PUEBLO CULTURAL CENTER – Albuquerque, New Mexico
A vibrant cultural center celebrating New Mexico's Pueblo peoples, with traditional dance performances, rotating exhibits, hands-on cultural programming, and an excellent on-site restaurant with Indigenous staples like fry bread.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MUSEUM (MIM) – Scottsdale, Arizona
A stunning immersive museum with over 4,200 musical instruments on display from almost every country in the world. Interactive headphones and the occasional concert let visitors hear some of the sounds they make.

SHERATON GRAND AT WILD HORSE PASS – Chandler, Arizona
Owned by the Gila River Indian Community, this luxury resort showcases Pima and Maricopa culture, with Indigenous wellness traditions at Aji Spa, Native-inspired dining, and cultural programming about the land.

NEON MUSEUM – Las Vegas, Nevada
Home to the iconic Neon Boneyard, this outdoor museum preserves 250+ historic Las Vegas signs and glowing symbols of the city's past – a low-intensity experience that resonates strongly with older visitors and nostalgia seekers.

UNIVERSAL KIDS RESORT – Frisco, Texas
This all-new, first-of-its-kind theme park will feature seven imaginative lands, kid-friendly rides, character meet-and-greets, interactive shows, and sensory gardens, bringing Universal's beloved characters and stories to life for the whole family.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

RED HORSE MOUNTAIN RANCH – Harrison, Idaho
Activities like horseback-riding, a zipline, and an 3D archery course, in an all-inclusive setup – novel for a dude ranch – makes planning easy for multigenerational travelers.

804 TRAIL – Oregon Coast, Oregon
A fully wheelchair-accessible coastal trail that features a paved route with expansive ocean views, just one element of inclusive infrastructure in an accessibility-focused state.

SISTERS RODEO – Sisters, Oregon
Known for its welcoming small-town feel, this classic rodeo celebrates Western heritage with a festive parade and dedicated kids' rodeo.

APE CAVE – Cougar, Washington
An adventurous underground journey through the longest lava-formed tubes in the contiguous United States. Explore the cool, dark, uneven terrain with flashlights or headlamps.

PACIFIC COAST

CIRCUS CENTER – San Francisco, California
This nationally-recognized circus school offers instruction for kids (6+) and adults in juggling, tumbling, acrobatics, trapeze and more, as well as student and professional showcases.

LUCAS MUSEUM OF NARRATIVE ART – Los Angeles, California
Coming soon to movie fans near you, this museum is set to open in 2026, promises to bring a wide range of narrative arts that reflect the power of storytelling and soaring architecture with dramatic, light-filled spaces.

SCHULZ MUSEUM – Santa Rosa, California
Explore the wholesome work of Charles M. Schulz, creator of the Peanuts comic strip, through original art, interactive exhibits, and memorabilia like his original work desk!

SAN DIEGO ZOO SAFARI PARK – Escondido, California
The newest addition to this beloved attraction includes the recently opened Denny Sanford Elephant Valley, which surrounds guests with elephants on multiple sides in an African-style savanna that includes 300 African-native plants, like the rare kokerboom tree.

DISNEYLAND RESORT – Anaheim, California
The 70th anniversary of this iconic park runs through August 9, 2026, celebrating seven decades as a world-renowned destination for family fun and imagination. Since opening in 1955, the resort has grown into a multi-park experience offering something for everyone.

MOUNTAIN

DINOSAUR RIDGE – Morrison, Colorado
Rated the nation's top dinosaur track site, Dinosaur Ridge offers 250+ fossil tracks – including the first-named Stegosaurus bones – along scenic foothills. Guided shuttle tours are available.

GARDEN OF THE GODS – Colorado Springs, Colorado
Paved trails and scenic overlooks showcase striking red rock formations in family-friendly ways. Explore them on segway, bike, e-bike, jeep, bus tour, or the old-fashioned way: feet.

UTAH OLYMPIC PARK – Park City, Utah
Explore the exhibits at the Alf Engen Ski Museum and 2002 Olympic Winter Games Museum. Younger kids (ages 2–8) can scale the walls of the nearby Action Tower. Older thrill-seekers can try ziplines, summer tubing, and the alpine slide. Don't miss the bobsled ride!

ALPACAS OF MONTANA – Bozeman, Montana
A hands-on farm experience where visitors can meet, feed, hold, and lead friendly alpacas along scenic trails, meet llamas, and pet the remarkable Anatolian dogs that guard the flock. The farm features an air-conditioned gift shop, perfect for kids who need a break from the sun. The nearest restroom is a short five-minute drive away, so plan accordingly.

BEYOND THE MAINLAND

TORO VERDE – Orocovis, Puerto Rico
Zipline through the lush landscapes of Puerto Rico and ride the "ToroBike," which is the Guinness World Record for the longest cable bike circuit in the world, with its longest single stretch measuring 1,057 feet in the air.

POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER – La?ie, O?ahu, Hawai?i
Explore authentic Polynesian culture across six island villages with hands-on activities, music, dance, and traditional storytelling that appeal to every generation. A highlight for families is Huki: A Canoe Celebration, the only water performance in Hawai?i, where performers on large double-hulled canoes glide along the lagoon with singers, dancers, and islanders sharing island heritage.

LATTE STONE PARK – Hagåtña, Guam
Short, easy, mostly level walking paths in a historic urban park in Guam's capital take younger and older visitors through impressive ancient Chamorro latte stones (massive stone pillars that once supported traditional homes). On Wednesday evenings, a 10-15 minute stroll leads to the famed, culturally immersive Chamorro Village Night Market.

MANAGAHA ISLAND DAY TRIP – Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands
A 15-minute boat ride to Managaha Island, where shallow snorkeling, calm waters, and picnic areas make it one of the most family-friendly excursions in Micronesia. Most tours depart from the island's famed Micro Beach, a central family-friendly spot with easy strolls and bathrooms.

Togetherness, connection, memories – this is why you take family vacations. In the USA, you'll create all three no matter where you explore. For trip planning inspiration or to learn more, visit AmericaTheBeautiful.com/family.

Note to the Editor
Accompanying high resolution imagery can be found 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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