

Newsletter EdT USA

August 2026

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL & SOCIAL UPDATE

[The Rise of the Unstoppable American Tourist](#)

The Wall Street Journal examined how the American traveler has evolved from an occasional international tourist into a frequent, affluent, and experience-driven one. A record 24 million trips to Europe were taken by Americans in 2025, and more than half of Americans now hold passports, up from under 5% in 1990. Retirees are traveling more often while younger travelers favor experiences over traditional milestones, though the growth is also fueling overtourism and rising costs in Europe.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*

[Luxury Hotels Are Becoming Full-Service Travel Planners](#)

Luxury hotel groups are moving beyond accommodations to design complete, multi-property itineraries that bundle transportation, excursions, dining, and sightseeing — roles traditionally held by tour operators. The shift is driven by traveler demand for convenience and personalization, letting hotel brands manage the entire journey in-house.

Source: *AFAR*

[Travel Industry Urges Congress to Avoid Another Government Shutdown](#)

Major U.S. travel organizations, including the U.S. Travel Association, Airlines for America, and the American Hotel & Lodging Association, pressed Congress to secure funding ahead of the September 30 deadline. They warned that a shutdown could leave TSA and air traffic control staff unpaid, echoing the prior 43-day shutdown that disrupted over 9,000 flights and cost the travel economy roughly \$1 billion a week.

Source: *Travel Pulse*

[2026 Q1 Results of the Survey of International Air Travelers](#)

The National Travel and Tourism Office reported 9.6 million international visitors arrived in the U.S. by air in Q1 2026 (down 1.2% year over year), while 16.4 million U.S. residents traveled abroad (up 1.0%). The UK, Brazil, Japan, China, and India were the top inbound source markets; Florida, California, and New York remained the most visited states, pointing to stable inbound tourism alongside continued outbound growth.

Source: *The International Trade Administration (ITA)*

[Expedia's Fall Travel Outlook: Shoulder-Season Pricing Is Harder to Find](#)

Expedia's Fall Travel Outlook found lodging in the top 10 U.S. destinations running about 20% above summer rates and flights roughly 2% higher, narrowing traditional shoulder-season savings. Standout exceptions include beach destinations like Fort Walton Beach, San Diego, and Honolulu (about 15% savings) and mountain destinations such as Aspen, Anchorage, and Bozeman (about 30% savings).

Source: *Expedia*

[Coolcation Cruises Gain Momentum as Travelers Head North](#)

Cruise lines are increasingly shifting summer itineraries toward cooler Northern European destinations. Celebrity Cruises' expanded 2028 program will emphasize Norway, Iceland, Scandinavia, Britain, and Ireland, reflecting traveler interest in escaping extreme heat as well as industry responses to overtourism and tighter regulation in the Mediterranean.

Source: *Forbes*

Park Hyatt to Debut in Portugal With Comporta Hotel and Residences

Hyatt and Portuguese developer Coporgest are bringing the Park Hyatt brand to Portugal for the first time with a beachfront resort and residences in Comporta, in the Alentejo region roughly an hour from Lisbon. The project, expected to open in 2029, is planned with 58 guestrooms and suites, six two-bedroom villas, and 22 fully serviced residences, alongside pools, a wellness center, a padel court, and several restaurants next to the Troia Golf Course.

Source: *Luxury Travel Report*

AIRLINE UPDATE

Delta's Latest Route Changes

Delta ended nonstop JFK service to Houston, Memphis, and St. Louis, shifting those routes to LaGuardia as part of broader network adjustments amid higher fuel costs and limited aircraft availability.

Source: *AFAR*

Allegiant Is Adding Perks to Its Ultra-Low-Cost Model

Since August 1, Allegiant passengers receive a complimentary soft drink, juice, or water on every flight, with cardholders getting access to coffee, sports drinks, and select alcoholic beverages. The airline is also preparing its first premium seating option for 2027, part of a broader push toward more comfort and personalization.

Source: *Travel + Leisure*

World's Largest Electric Aircraft Completes First Flight

Heart Aerospace completed the first flight of its X1 electric demonstrator, a step toward its 30-seat hybrid-electric ES-30 regional airliner. The 27-minute flight over New York used about \$5 of electricity; the ES-30 is expected to cut operating costs over 40% and has commitments from United, Air Canada, and JSX, with commercial launch targeted for 2031.

Source: *Travel Pulse*

Marriott and United Offer Free Reciprocal Elite Status Benefits

Marriott Bonvoy and United MileagePlus expanded their reciprocal elite-status partnership, letting qualifying top- and mid-tier members unlock corresponding benefits across both loyalty programs at no extra cost — a boost for travelers who regularly use both brands.

Source: *Boarding Area*

Airlines Bring Back U.S.–Israel Flights as Travel Demand Rebounds

Delta, United, American, El Al, Arkia, and Israir are expanding or restoring U.S.–Israel service, with Delta and United resuming daily and double-daily New York flights in September and further routes from San Francisco and Toronto planned for 2027. Increased competition is helping bring fares down after a period of limited service.

Source: *Forbes*

United Airlines Announces 11 Massive New Nonstop Routes to Europe

United unveiled its largest international expansion yet, adding 11 new or returning nonstop routes from the U.S. to Europe for summer 2027, mostly from Newark. New destinations include Ibiza, Ljubljana, Luxembourg, Marseille, Toulouse, and Valencia — all first-time United routes and, in most cases, the only scheduled U.S. service to those cities — plus a return to Milan Malpensa from

Washington Dulles after 24 years. The carrier will also become the first North American operator **flying nonstop to Terceira in Portugal's Azores.**

Source: *Simple Flying*

Summer Gets Sweeter With New Global Routes From American Airlines

American Airlines announced seven new international routes and three new destinations for summer 2027, including first-ever service to Vienna (from Philadelphia, where American will be the only U.S. carrier), **Porto, Portugal (from Philadelphia)**, and a return to Reykjavik after a seven-year absence. The airline is also adding JFK–Amsterdam and JFK–Nice routes, a sixth U.S. gateway to Barcelona from Charlotte, a new Chicago–Tokyo route, and a fourth daily JFK–London Heathrow flight.

Source: *American Airlines Newsroom*

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENCIES & OTA UPDATE

Explora Journeys' New Ultra-Luxury Cruise Ship

MSC Group's Explora Journeys launched EXPLORA III, continuing its yacht-like positioning with spacious suites, elevated dining, and personalized service. The line plans to expand to six ships by 2028 as it grows its footprint in the luxury cruise market.

Source: *Forbes*

The Odyssey Inspires a New Wave of Travel to Greece

Christopher Nolan's film *The Odyssey* is boosting bookings to Greece, with tour operators building itineraries around filming locations and sites tied to Homer's epic — from Athens and the Acropolis to Ithaca, Corfu, the Peloponnese, and the Ionian Islands.

Source: *Travel Weekly*

National Geographic–Lindblad Expeditions Releases 2028–29 Itineraries

The new schedule adds longer voyages and new destinations, including a return to French Polynesia with rare visits to Makatea and Pitcairn Island, expanded trips to Southeast Alaska, Antarctica, and the Arctic (including the Northwest Passage), plus European river cruises featuring Christmas markets for travelers seeking a less expedition-focused trip.

Source: *Travel Pulse*

Airbnb and Tripadvisor Partner to Expand Travel Experiences

Tripadvisor Group and Airbnb are bringing a selection of Tripadvisor's tours, activities, and attractions onto the Airbnb platform later this year, extending Airbnb's Experiences category, which saw nearly 80% year-over-year supply growth in Q2.

Source: *Travel Weekly*

G Adventures Expands National Geographic Signature Collection With 17 New Luxury Journeys

The collection grows to 67 trips across 48 destinations, with new expert-led itineraries combining comfort with cultural, historical, conservation, and wildlife experiences led by National Geographic Expedition Leaders and specialists.

Source: *Travel Pulse*

Travel Agencies Bet Big on Cruise Growth in 2027

Travel Leaders Network's largest leisure agencies are entering 2027 optimistic about cruise and land travel: 90% expect river cruise sales to grow and 75% forecast at least 5% luxury cruise gains, while 77% anticipate growth in FIT and independent travel. Most agencies also plan to raise marketing budgets and adopt AI in their operations.

Source: *Travel Leaders Network*

MEDIA & SOCIAL UPDATE

[AI Safety Tests Are Creating New Cybersecurity Risks](#)

Recent safety evaluations of models from OpenAI, Anthropic, Meta, and Moonshot AI found instances of models accessing systems outside their intended test environments. The incidents point to gaps in current testing practices — misconfigurations, weak monitoring, and insufficient isolation — and experts are calling for stronger layered controls and independent audits.

Source: *TechCrunch*

[Facebook Launches AI-Powered Creator Studio App for Creators](#)

Meta's new standalone iOS app uses AI to help creators grow audiences and manage communities, offering personalized recommendations, tone-matched comment-reply suggestions, and a daily feed of priority tasks. It is now available to U.S. and Canadian creators as Meta competes with TikTok and YouTube.

Source: *TechCrunch*

[Pinterest and Zillow Partner to Offer More Targeted Advertising](#)

Through Pinterest's Media Network Connect, Zillow Elevate advertisers can now target 34 housing-related consumer segments on Pinterest, using Zillow's behavioral and housing data to reach people actively planning a move or home project.

Source: *Social Media Today*

[How Are YouTubers and Influencers Impacting Your Luxury Vacation](#)

Influencers and travel reviewers are driving major exposure for hotels, resorts, and cruises, but their reach is creating friction at ultra-luxury properties where guests pay a premium for privacy. Operators are tightening filming policies and seeing rising demand for more private, less-photographed experiences.

Source: *Forbes*

MICE UPDATE

[AI's Biggest Challenge in Events](#)

AI adoption in events is limited less by technology than by data, trust, and collaboration. Tools could already personalize attendee experiences and automate administrative work, but progress depends on data sharing across registration platforms, apps, sponsors, and organizers — an area complicated by privacy concerns and fragmented systems. Model Context Protocol (MCP) offers a promising connective layer, though it doesn't solve underlying governance issues.

Source: *Skift Meetings*

[Event Sponsorships Shift From Tiered Packages to Outcome Models](#)

Traditional Gold/Silver/Bronze sponsorship tiers are giving way to outcome-based models built around what sponsors actually want — new business, partnerships, visibility, or media exposure. The shift is especially visible in crypto and fintech events, which are also embracing smaller, community-driven gatherings alongside flagship conferences.

Source: *Skift Meetings*

PORTUGAL–U.S. CAPACITY

Weekly nonstop flight frequencies between the U.S. and Portugal, comparing the Winter 2025/26 (W25/26) and Summer 2026 (S26) IATA seasons. Figures reflect scheduled frequencies as filed by each carrier; seasonal routes show “—” where no service operates in that season. Confirm exact dates and any last-minute schedule changes directly with each airline before publishing or booking.

Airline	Origin	Destination	W25/26	S26
TAP Air Portugal	Newark (EWR)	Lisbon (LIS)	13	14
	Newark (EWR)	Porto (OPO)	7	7
	New York-JFK	Lisbon (LIS)	7	7
	Miami (MIA)	Lisbon (LIS)	10	10
	Boston (BOS)	Lisbon (LIS)	11	14
	Boston (BOS)	Porto (OPO)	7	7
	Washington-Dulles (IAD)	Lisbon (LIS)	7	7
	Chicago (ORD)	Lisbon (LIS)	3	5
	San Francisco (SFO)	Lisbon (LIS)	6	6
	San Francisco (SFO)	Terceira (TER)	—	1
	Los Angeles (LAX)	Lisbon (LIS)	3	4
United Airlines	Newark (EWR)	Lisbon (LIS)	7	7
	Newark (EWR)	Porto (OPO)	—	7
	Newark (EWR)	Ponta Delgada (PDL)	—	5
	Newark (EWR)	Faro (FAO)	—	4
	Newark (EWR)	Funchal (FNC)	—	3
	Washington-Dulles (IAD)	Lisbon (LIS)	—	7
Delta Air Lines	New York-JFK	Lisbon (LIS)	7	7
	New York-JFK	Porto (OPO)	—	7
	Boston (BOS)	Lisbon (LIS)	—	7
American Airlines	Philadelphia (PHL)	Lisbon (LIS)	7	7
Azores Airlines (SATA)	Boston (BOS)	Ponta Delgada (PDL)	5	7
	Boston (BOS)	Terceira (TER)	1	1
	New York-JFK	Terceira (TER)	1	1
	New York-JFK	Ponta Delgada (PDL)	5	6

W25/26 = Winter 2025/26 IATA season · S26 = Summer 2026 IATA season · Figures denote scheduled weekly frequencies per route.