



Trade Show Report
International Inbound Travel Association
Salt Lake City, UT
February 9 –12, 2025

Montana Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard

Overview:

- IITA gathers international inbound receptive tour operators and suppliers to meet at its association summit to discuss the state of international inbound visitation to the US. These tour operators specialize in group travel, FIT, and fly/drive programs, and some also have MICE groups.
- There were roughly 30 inbound tour operators and 90 suppliers in attendance.
- WMGC met with 24 inbound receptive tour operators for 5-minute appointments. It was mainly a meet-and-greet and exchange of business cards.

Trends:

- International travel is back, and all the tour operators feel good about the future of international travel. More rural destinations are again on the back burner and the known cities and urban destinations are back on the minds of international travelers. However, national parks are still part of their must-see itineraries.
- The US Deputy Secretary of Commerce relayed progress to improve visa processing in vital inbound markets like Mexico, India, Brazil, and Columbia, which are looking forward to the World Cup Soccer in 2026.
- Geoff Freeman, President/CEO of US Travel emphasized the importance of inbound travel to the our economy and the overall health of the travel industry.
- The NPS is working with tour operators on a better system for CUAs, and everyone is happier. It will go into effect in 2026. Hotels and airfare prices are still an issue, the exchange rates make the US at least 30% higher than other destinations.
- Tariffs and Canadians boycotting the US were topics of discussion. Most are full momentum with Canadian campaigns.
- International visitors are attracted to Montana for our parks, wildlife viewing, wide open spaces, scenic drives, soft adventure and unique culture that includes cowboys and American Indians.

Recommendations for 2026 and beyond:

- Keep educating our WMGC partners on the international travel trade and working with international inbound (receptive) tour operators.
- International language pages, Spanish, German, French, Italian.
- Recognize the developing need for multi-lingual step-on guides.
- Attend IITA Summit every other year. Next up Niagara Falls, NY 2027.