BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA and Lufthansa Group host travel agents from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland on annual U.S. MegaFam

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Brand USA – the destination-marketing organization for the United States – has again partnered with Lufthansa to arrange its fourth annual large-scale, multi-itinerary U.S. familiarization trip, or MegaFam, for 80 travel agents from Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

The MegaFam, which runs Sept. 27 through Oct. 4 Tuesday, Oct. begins with a pre-trip event at the Lufthansa training and conference center in Seeheim-Jugenheim, Germany, a short distance from Frankfurt Airport. Agents will get a preview of their U.S. destinations at the center. They will have convened in Frankfurt after traveling aboard Austrian Airlines, Lufthansa and Swissair.

After leaving from Frankfurt and arriving in the United States on Thursday, Sept. 28, the agents will travel in groups of 10 along one of eight individual U.S. itineraries, which collectively include 10 states. Lufthansa Group will host additional presentations for each group during the U.S. trips.

“Our MegaFam program – a first for the U.S. travel industry – is one of the most effective ways to promote travel to both urban and rural areas, to destinations and attractions beyond the traditional gateways,” said Christopher L. Thompson, Brand USA’s president and CEO. “And, we know that it’s extremely important for travel agents from Germany, Austria and Switzerland to be familiar with the limitless, diverse range of travel opportunities that exist in the USA.”

“Lufthansa Group greatly values its partnership with Brand USA,” said Jürgen Siebenrock, Lufthansa’s vice-president, sales, for home markets and global key-account management. “By virtue of our 420 weekly flights to U.S. cities, we continue to invest in the appeal of the USA for our European customers.”

In 2016, 2 million German travelers came to the United States, making Germany the sixth-largest source market for inbound, international tourism to the United States. Those visitors spent $8 billion during their U.S. trips.

MegaFam destinations

The eight individual itineraries on the upcoming MegaFam span these states:

- **Arizona** – This “Canyons, Cactus and Cowboys” tour starts at a Phoenix golf resort, The Wigwam, which was established 86 years ago. On the route, a stop at Superstition Meadery in Prescott, then a visit to the Grand Canyon with Arizona Outback Adventures. On to Horseshoe Bend. Overnight at Lake Powell Resort, followed by a drive to Wupatki and Sunset Crater national monuments. Flagstaff and Scottsdale are also on the route.
- **Colorado** – Starting in Denver, the agents tour the downtown area, visit the Denver Art Museum, and later travel to Cheyenne Mountain State Park, where they try their hand at archery the next morning. They also go to Alamosa, Great Sand Dunes National Park and stay overnight at the Heaton Bay Campground, located at an elevation of 9,000 feet in the White River National Forest.
- **Florida** – Agents stay at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa in Bonita Springs, on Florida’s west coast, along the Gulf of Mexico. They go to Captiva Island, where Captiva Cruises takes them island hopping. After a stop at South Sea Island Resort, the agents are off to Outrigger Beach Resort at Fort Myers Beach on Estero Island. Next, the town of Fort Myers, Tampa and Orlando, with visits to Busch Gardens Tampa, then Universal Orlando Resort and SeaWorld Orlando.
- **Georgia and Alabama –** First stop is Atlanta. Agents tour CNN, World of Coca Cola and Georgia Aquarium. They move on to Birmingham, Ala., where they visit Barber Motorsports Park, and pedal their way to several local breweries. It’s breakfast at the original Pancake House and a visit to the Alabama Music Hall of Fame the next day. Other stops: Helen Keller Home and Birthplace, and U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville.

- **Illinois –** In Chicago, the agents visit the 108-story Willis Tower, also known as the Sears Tower. Then, they see The Field Museum, one of the world's largest natural-history museums, and the Shedd Aquarium, where 32,000 animals (1,500 species) reside. Moving on to Pontiac, the agents get a downtown walking tour. The Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum is here. Next, they go to Springfield, Lincoln's hometown. And, in Galena, they soar by zipline above Chestnut Mountain Resort.
- **Philadelphia and upstate New York** – Sightseeing in historic Philadelphia and a trip to the galleries at the Barnes Foundation start the trip. Next, agents are off to Corning, N.Y., home of the Corning Museum of Glass. A hiking tour in Watkins Glen State Park precedes a journey to Rochester that includes stops at wineries in the Finger Lakes region. Agents see George Eastman Museum in Rochester, then head to Niagara Falls.
- **Tennessee** – After landing in Charlotte, N.C., the agents head to Chattanooga to start their trip. At Ruby Falls, they make their way to a subterranean waterfall. They take the Lookout Mountain Incline Railway. Then, on to Knoxville for a walking tour. In the Smoky Mountains, they have a barbecue, moonshine testing and even, go ziplining. And, of course, the Dolly Parton's Smoky Mountain Adventure (dinner show) is on the route.
- **Texas** – First stop is Space Center Houston, a Smithsonian affiliate and the official visitor center of the NASA Johnson Space Center. In San Antonio, agents have a dinner cruise and visit The Alamo. They also tour the 750-foot-high Tower of the Americas and stop by the Buckhorn Museum. On to Fredericksburg, an area with more than 40 wineries. Luckenback, a hub of country music, is nearby.

As with all Brand USA and Lufthansa Group MegaFams of the last four years, the agents took part in a three-week online raffle of Lufthansa eXperts to qualify for the lottery to win one of the 80 places for the MegaFam.

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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.