

# Qantas & Brand USA Mega Famil



Washington DC lives up to its cool tagline .....	2
Monuments and museums—with a twist .....	3
NYC: Brooklyn beats, Broadway and Beacon .....	4
Cowboys, cheerleaders and ice hockey in Dallas .....	5
Famil highlights; A380 comfort on the world's longest flight.....	6





## WASHINGTON

# Qantas and Brand USA Mega Famil

TABS ON  
**TRAVEL TODAY**

Thu 13 Nov 14 p2

## A Taste Of Washington DC Cool



From former presidents to ‘The Boss,’ agents enjoyed the best of Washington’s history as well as getting a taste of why the city positions itself DC Cool on the Brand USA and Qantas Mega Fam on Tue. DC has been working to show the world that as impressive as it is there’s more to it than just museums and politics, and recently launched its new DC Cool tagline.

In fact DC has been so successful in its quest that it was recently named the Coolest City in America by *Forbes*, while Lonely Planet has

named the city the top in the entire world to visit in 2015, recognising its accessible culture, diversity and value.

“The pomp commemorating the 150th anniversary of Lincoln’s assassination makes next year big for DC. Add that to its hip neighbourhoods, incredible eats, venerable performing arts scene and iconic museums, like the Smithsonian Institution, and the nation’s capital is looking more epic than ever,” the publisher said.

As well as the Lincoln commemorations, among the big events next year is the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Smithsonian’s first new museum in more than 10 years.

### Agents Hit The USA

A group of Kiwi and Aussie agents are exploring the USA this week as part of the Qantas and Brand USA Mega Fam. They’re in Dallas, Tennessee, Utah, Denver, Colorado, and one group is taking in both Washington DC and New York. The groups will all then meet up in Dallas at the end of the week. For highlights of the DC and NYC trip, as well as the finale in Dallas, keep an eye on *Travel Today*.

### Cooliest Cupcakes

Georgetown Cupcakes has become something of an institution after a television show aired about the sisters who opened the bakery, and as a consequence there’s often long queues of tourists waiting to buy the cupcakes. Don’t bother, say the locals—the city’s best cupcakes actually come from Baked and Wired. Agents on the famil were treated to a taste of the latter’s cupcakes and they went down a treat. See [bakedandwired.com](http://bakedandwired.com)

### Getting Around

Washington DC is a relatively small city and it’s an incredibly pretty one—a law limiting building heights means there aren’t any skyscrapers, and it’s covered with stunning architecture, parks and monuments, all of which means it’s great for walking around.

DC is laid out in a grid pattern, with all the streets in one direction numbered (starting with 1st St at the Capitol building), while the streets that run perpendicular on the grid are given letters. If someone says they’ll meet you at the ‘corner of 21st and L’, for example, it’s where the two streets meet—kind of like a giant game of battleships.

For those who aren’t up for walking, there’s also regular buses, a metro system, and the Capital Bikeshare bike hiring system. See [capitalbikeshare.com](http://capitalbikeshare.com)

### Gastronomic Delights

For a true taste of American cuisine, the Food Tour Corp offers both public and private tours giving visitors a chance to meet local chefs and producers, as well as learn about local culture, history and architecture—and of course, sample some of the food that the US is famous for. The famil group was welcomed to the city with a Gastronomic Georgetown pub crawl, which included tasting cheeseburgers and cornbread at local institutions Old Glory and Clyde’s. The knowledgeable guide was all too happy to point out historical quirks and artefacts in the area, and to share her own tips of where to go on a night out. They include:

**Dupont Circle** has great nightlife.

**Lucky Bar** or **Buffalo Billiards** offer a more sports bar feel.

**Dirty Martini** for chic cocktails.

**Georgetown** is a great place for younger visitors as it’s close to the university.

**The 14th and U area**—definitely the hottest place to go out right now. Visitors who wander the 14th St corridor can check out the new bars and restaurants opening and should easily find something to their taste. The gastronomic pub crawl was a tailored event for the famil but Food Tour Corp also offers public tours, see [foodtourcorp.com](http://foodtourcorp.com)



### Washington Monument

Pictured at the top of the Lincoln Memorial overlooking the Washington Monument—a scene familiar from many movies, especially *Forest Gump*—is Ruby Tai Tin of Lifestyle Holidays.

### DC Cool Like A Local

The DC Cool campaign aims to link travellers with local experts who give them tips on where to eat and drink, what to see and do, and where to stay. There’s everything from five easy-to-plan date nights to updates on the one-year-old panda at the Smithsonian’s National Zoo. See [dcool.com](http://dcool.com)



### Celebrity Spotting At Concert For Valor

After a night watching performances by artists including Rihanna, Eminem, Bruce Springsteen, Dave Grohl, Metallica and the Black Keys, DC had no trouble convincing Kiwi and Aussie agents of its cool cred. Destination DC managed to wrangle VIP passes to the inaugural Concert for Valor on Tue night, dedicated to the country’s veterans and also featuring appearances by celebrities like Meryl Streep and Jamie Foxx. While President Obama was in Brisbane for the G20, he did send a personal video message to the crowd—and vice president Joe Biden was spotted sitting just a few metres away from the group. Pictured is Ruby Tai Tin of Lifestyle Holidays, Brand USA’s Ollie Philpot, and Destination DC’s Lindsay Hill.





## WASHINGTON

# Qantas and Brand USA Mega Famil

TABS ON  
**TRAVEL  
TODAY**

Fri 14 Nov 14 p3

## Agents Solve Crimes At DC Museums



**Washington DC is famous for its museums but they're not all about ancient relics and American history.**

Like the city itself, many of the museums have thrown off old conventions and taken on a more modern approach, with interactive exhibits that really aim to get their visitors involved.

They include the Crime Museum, which agents on the DC famil vis-

ited this week, where visitors are given clues and challenged to solve a murder (Ruby Tai Tin of Lifestyle Holidays is pictured making blood spatter with a hammer, which is later inspected by Ollie Philpot of Brand USA). The museum features three levels of exhibits and information on famous crimes and how they're solved, including morbidly fascinating relics like serial killer Ted Bundy's car.

Best of all, the 16 Smithsonian museums in the city are free—including the Smithsonian's National Zoo, home to a young panda which is a star attraction. See [nationalzoo.si.edu](http://nationalzoo.si.edu)

### Free Shows

Every night at 1800 the city's JFK Center for Performing Arts hosts a free show, including opera and Broadway. See [Kennedy-Center.org](http://Kennedy-Center.org)

### DC By Trolley Tour

A great way for clients to get their head around DC is on an Old Town trolley tour—with the sides down it's easy to take photos without a window in the way, but you're more sheltered than in an open-top bus. The drivers tell funny and quirky stories, and there are 20 places to get off along the way, including the White House. See [trolleytours.com](http://trolleytours.com)

### DC Agent Deals

Aug is Travel Professionals Month in Washington DC, with 34 hotels as well as attractions, theatres, restaurants, retailers and tour companies offering special discounts for the travel industry. To register, see [washington.org/travel-professionals-month](http://washington.org/travel-professionals-month)

### DC Cool For The Kids

Kids are definitely catered to in Washington DC, but they're more likely to spend a night in a museum or have a go at being a reporter than hit up a theme park.

Washington DC's numerous museums and attractions have plenty of fun things to do to keep the kids entertained—and many of them are free, says Destination DC. They include getting lost in a gigantic maze at the National Building Museum, enjoying a sleeperover at the National Museum of American History or Natural History, and recording their own newscast at the Newseum. For older children, Operation Spy at the International Spy Museum lets you see if you've got what it takes to do everything from decoding messages to escaping a high-security compound. To download a DC Cool Kids Activity Guide, see [washington.org/dccoolkids](http://washington.org/dccoolkids)

### Riding The Amtrak

Most Kiwis who travel to DC will do so as part of a trip to New York, and catch the train down—which is what agents on the Brand USA famil did on Wed.

Agents took the Acela Express, a three-hour journey popular with business travellers. There's a lounge for premium travellers to wait in but Union Station offers plenty of shops for clients who aren't travelling up front, including H&M, MAC and cafes to buy food for the train. On the train, there's a café, power points and free Wi-Fi for all passengers. Luggage is stored on overhead bins in the train but if clients have large bags there is storage space at the back of the cabin—urge them to board early so it's not a struggle to fit their bags, as the space is shared. Agents should head to [amtrak.railagent.com](http://amtrak.railagent.com)



### Monumental DC

Washington DC is also famous for its monuments, and while the thought of traipsing around looking at stone structures is boring to many people, they're actually well worth a look.

Highlights include the Washington Monument itself, recently re-opened after last year's earthquake; and the more recent but equally cool Martin Luther King memorial.

Then there's the giant Abraham Lincoln inside the Lincoln Memorial—definitely a must-see for any visitor to DC. Ruby Tai Tin of Lifestyle Holidays is pictured above with Abe.



### History Through The Headlines

One of DC's most popular museums is the Newseum, a seven-storey building that tells the history of the world as seen through the eyes of the media.

You can check out newspaper front pages from events like the Boston Bombing right back through history to the Titanic, and there's a very moving gallery of Pulitzer Prize-winning photographs. Visitors can practise their own news broadcast in the news room, and there's an entire section dedicated to the events of Sep 11—including a warped section of one of the towers. Other artefacts include a news chopper and section of the Berlin Wall. Next year the Newseum will introduce a new FBI exhibit getting behind the headlines of some of the most infamous crimes of the past 100 years.

The Newseum also offers the best view of the Capitol building from the sixth floor (although the Capitol's dome is currently covered in scaffolding). The Newseum opens at 0900 daily, clients should allow at least three hours per visit (they can return the next day on the same ticket). Entry is from USD22.95 adults, USD13.95 children aged seven-18. See [newseum.org](http://newseum.org)



## Brooklyn Borough Tour With A Twist



The neighbourhood of Brooklyn has played a critical role in hip hop but it can be pretty intimidating to try and trace those roots without a little help from an expert.

Hush Tours offers an in-depth look at the neighbourhood through guides who are in the business themselves, and who are keen to get clients involved.

The Where Brooklyn At tour takes in everything from the best place to take a photo of Manhattan to the projects where Jay-Z grew up. Our guides were Johnny Famous (who has worked with stars including Notorious BIG) and Razor, both of whom kept the tour flowing with stories and video clips showing the part Brook-

lyn has played in hip hop history. Clients don't need an understanding or interest in hip hop to enjoy the tour—but they should come with a sense of fun. Hush Tours also has other neighbourhood tours including Harlem, see [hushtours.com](http://hushtours.com)

### ... Best Cheesecake

The Brooklyn tour included a stop at Junior's, home of the famous cheesecake. While Junior's is also a restaurant, it's the cheesecake most people come for. It costs around USD7 a slice (which is plenty for two people). See [juniorscheesecake.com](http://juniorscheesecake.com)

### NYC Tourist Tips

New York's subway system is unique in that it doesn't charge by distance or number of stops—clients buy a pass, swipe in at the station and get off wherever they like. A seven-day pass is USD30 and can get you all around the city. Locals suggest using the HopStop app to help figure out which line to take—or just ask a local, they're a lot friendlier than everyone makes out. See [web.mta.info/nyct/subway](http://web.mta.info/nyct/subway)

Meanwhile, for a close-up view of the Statue of Liberty, clients need to take a tour or cruise—or the next best option is to hop on the Staten Island ferry with local commuters. It's free to ride and takes about half an hour each way, take the subway to South Ferry station. See [nps.gov/stli](http://nps.gov/stli)

### Broadway Inbound

A trip to New York isn't complete without a Broadway show, and the famil group took in A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder. The show tells the story of Monty Navarro, an heir to a family fortune who wants to get rid of the eight relatives who stand in his way. It's one of six new shows to join Broadway Inbound's collection recently, which features favourites like Aladdin, Chicago, Jersey Boys and Matilda. Broadway Inbound specialises in industry and wholesale tickets for US events, agents should contact their wholesaler or see [broadwayinbound.com](http://broadwayinbound.com)

### Hotel Beacon

The Hotel Beacon, is a very popular option with Aussies and Kiwis and was home to the agents on the Qantas Brand USA Megafam.

In fact, it's so popular, the two-bedroom suite books out two years in advance from New Zealand, such is its popularity.

The hotel is located in an area full of locals, away from the tourist hub—but it's just a 15-min. subway ride to Times Square on the express train. It's especially popular with the antipodean market due to the supermarket across the road.

Celebrity chef Annabelle White is a regular guest and has cooked up several gourmet dishes in her suite, says manager Tom Travers. Wholesalers have details or see [beaconhotel.com](http://beaconhotel.com)

### Macy's Shopping

Agents were welcomed to New York with a tour and shopping trip at Macy's Herald Square, the largest shopping centre in the world. The store revolutionised the shopping industry and is home to firsts like the world's first escalator. But all clients need to know is come prepared and allow plenty of time, with nine floors of serious shopping ahead of them. Inside the store is also the official NYC information centre, where clients can use touch-screen information kiosks that feature Google maps and can print directions, plenty of guides and maps, and tickets for attractions. See [visitmacysusa.com](http://visitmacysusa.com)



### 9/11 Memorial

The space where the Twin Towers once stood has been turned into a memorial park featuring two giant fountains marking the spaces where each tower was, inscribed with names of those who died. The square is open 0730-2000 daily and entry is free. Lifestyle Holidays's Ruby Tai Tin is pictured at one of the fountains. Next to the park is the new 9/11 Memorial Museum, which opened in May. Admission is USD24, and entry is free every Tue 1700-2000. Towering over the park is the new One World Trade Centre, soon to claim the title of the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere. Next year a three-storey observation deck will open on levels 100-102. See [oneworldobservatory.com](http://oneworldobservatory.com)

### Perfect Picnics In NYC

Perfect Picnics, treated the famil group with bags full of baguettes and snacks all sourced locally. Perfect Picnics has a store on Manhattan's Lower East Side, and deliver custom picnic and gift baskets throughout Manhattan. See [perfectpicnicnyc.com](http://perfectpicnicnyc.com)



### Minus5 Ice Bar Near Times Square A Hit

A highlight for agents on the New York famil was getting rugged up in fur coats and Russian-style hats for the Minus5 Ice Bar. Located at the New York Hilton Midtown, close to Times Square, the bar features walls, chairs, tables, cups and carvings all made of ice. Prices start at USD20 to enter. Pictured in the bar is Ruby Tai Tin, Lifestyle Holidays; Aussie agents Kara Lipscombe, Yazmin Gurbuz, Loretta Farrelly, Jessica Mai and Gemma Toole, and Brand USA New Zealand and Australia director Ollie Philpot. See [minus5experience.com](http://minus5experience.com)



## FORT WORTH

# Qantas and Brand USA Mega Famil

TABS ON  
**TRAVEL  
TODAY**

Tue 18 Nov 14 p5

# Warm Texan Farewell For Mega Famil

Texas gave Kiwis and Aussies on the Brand USA and Qantas mega famil a very warm welcome on the weekend as the agents gathered in Fort Worth and Dallas for the famil finale.

The state already sees around 76,000 Kiwis and Aussies visit each year, 'and y'all spend USD100 million dollars each year here', says Texas Tourism's Tommy Woods.

With the launch of Qantas' new A380 on the Dallas-Sydney route—mean-

ing the world's largest passenger aircraft now flies the world's longest route—the state is forecasting continued visitation growth. "That was before the new direct flights, so we're expecting big numbers for 2014," says Woods.

### ... Cowboys And Cities

Visitors were given a taste of everything from cowboy culture to big city life on their final two days, starting with an exploration of Fort Worth—

the best place for a dose of whips and spurs.

The visit kicked off with some authentic Mexican fare and margaritas in the family-run Joe T Garcia's, and then it was off to cheer on the cowboys at the Cowtown Coliseum, where the Stockyards Championship Rodeo is held every Fri and Sat night year-round. Afterwards there was line dancing lessons and a spin around the floor at Billy Bob's Texas, the world's largest honky tonk.

Other highlights of the weekend included seeing the Fort Worth Herd in the Stockyards National Historic District, home to Western shops and the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame; watching a live ice hockey game; and learning about both cities' links with John F Kennedy, including seeing the spot where he was killed. On Sat night the finale at the W Hotel included visits from the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders and a 'butt sketcher' who drew portraits of guests from behind.



**1** Enjoying dinner at Joe T Garcia's in Fort Worth are the Kiwis on team Utah: Amber Thomas of United Travel Tauranga; Pearl Day, UT Courtenay PI Wellington; Kelly Capon, APX Travel Management Auckland; and Shirley Harris, United Travel Taradale. **2** Getting into the Texas swing at Joe T Garcia's in Fort Worth is Moira Walker, Harvey World Travel Auckland; Aleisha Wilson, HWT Napier; Natalie Langley, STA Travel Dunedin; Katrina Savage, STA Travel Auckland; and Cindy Palmer, APX Auckland. **3** Trying on Texas for size at Joe T Garcia's Mexican restaurant is Team Denver's Anna Seabourne of House of Travel Papamoa; Olivia Turner, Harvey World Travel Rotorua; Michelle Downey of Travel Managers; and Linda Smith, Searle Travel Taradale. **4** Tommy Woods of Texas Tourism gives Wayne Mitcham of Brand USA some Texas style advice at Billy Bob's Texas. **5** (Back) Linda Smith, Searle Travel Taradale and Wayne Mitcham of Brand USA with (front) Michelle Downey of Travel Managers, Anna Seabourne of House of Travel Papamoa and Olivia Turner, Harvey World Travel Rotorua. **6** Celebrating at the finale event on Sat in Dallas at the W Hotel is Brand USA's Jo Palmer, Ollie Philpot, Tahnee Dobson, Alfredo Gonzalez and Wayne Mitcham. **7** Shirley Harris, United Travel Taradale meets the locals at the historic Fort Worth Stockyards. **8** Butt sketching, which involves having a portrait taken of you from behind, originated in Dallas and has become a hit in the US. **9** Amber Thomas of United Travel Tauranga tries out some of the many cowboy boots for sale at the Fort Worth Stockyards. **10** Kelly Capon of APX Travel Management Auckland and Amber Thomas of United Travel Tauranga enjoy the rodeo at Fort Worth's Cowtown Coliseum. **11** Agents were given line dancing pointers before heading to Billy Bob's Texas, the world's largest honky tonk, on Fri night. Pictured is Natalie Langley, STA Travel Dunedin and Katrina Savage, STA Travel Auckland. **12** Twice a day at the Fort Worth Stockyards, the Fort Worth Herd of longhorns is driven through the area, and visitors can meet the drovers afterwards. The run takes place each day at 1130 and 1600. **13** The Kiwis in Team Denver were Michelle Downey of Travel Managers, Wayne Mitcham of Brand USA, Anna Seabourne of House of Travel Papamoa, Linda Smith, Searle Travel Taradale, and Olivia Turner, Harvey World Travel Rotorua. **14** Watching the Dallas Stars take on the Minnesota Wild from a suite overlooking the stadium in Dallas is Amber Thomas of United Travel Tauranga, Katrina Savage of STA Travel Auckland, and Kelly Capon, APX Travel Management Auckland. **15** The famous Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders were special guests at the finale event in Dallas on Sat night. Pictured with two of the cheerleaders is Ruby Tai Tin of Lifestyle Holidays.





DALLAS

# Qantas and Brand USA Mega Famil

TABS ON  
**TRAVEL TODAY**

Wed 19 Nov 14 p6

## Flying The Longest Flight On QF's A380

The Brand USA and Qantas mega famil ended on Sun evening with all 50 agents jumping on an A380 to take on the world's longest flight from Dallas to Sydney.



QF put its A380 on the route in Sep, increasing capacity on

the 10% and meaning the carrier can now fly direct to Sydney rather than via Brisbane—making it the world's longest flight at around 16 hours.

The extra capacity is good news for Kiwi travellers, with QF reporting an increasing number of New Zealanders opting to fly via Australia to the states.

“Our US services are very popular with our New Zealand customers. We’re seeing double digit growth in passenger numbers travelling to the US as of through to Mar next year,” says a spokesperson.

landing in Sydney suggested they were impressed with the extra space and the smoothness of the trip.

The introduction of the A380 means there's four classes on the route, with the Marc Newson-designed First Class Suites now available including lie-flat beds. The first suites are downstairs, along with economy seats, and upstairs there's business class, premium economy and economy seats.

Also available on the flight were some of QF's latest product enhancements, such as the new Kate Spade and Jack Spade amenity kits.

### ... Flying The A380

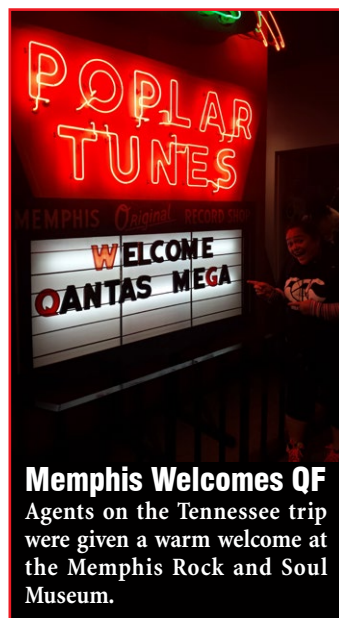
Agents on the trip were excited at the prospect of flying the superjumbo as many hadn't had the chance to travel on one before—and comments after

### More Famils Coming

Brand USA is hailing the success of its second annual mega famil, and the first to include Kiwis, and has hinted that any agents who missed out on this one won't need to wait too long before they get their own chance to experience the US.

The idea of the famil is to showcase the US and the people who make it special beyond the traditional (but important) gateway destinations, says Brand USA's Alfredo Gonzalez. After the last famil with Australian agents, US sales spiked around 15%, he says—so it's a no-brainer to continue hosting them. Eventually, they'd like to cover 100% of the country via the megafam programme, says Gonzalez.

More than 50 companies were involved in putting on the famil, and project manager (and Brand USA Kiwi rep) Wayne Mitcham received a huge thank you and a special medal for his efforts on the mammoth task.



**Memphis Welcomes QF**  
Agents on the Tennessee trip were given a warm welcome at the Memphis Rock and Soul Museum.

### Final Highlights From The Mega Famil

**1** A highlight of the trip for those on team Texas was visiting the Alamo, where the famous battle took place. Pictured outside is the team including Moira Walker of Harvey World Travel Auckland (second from left); Cindy Palmer of APX Auckland (sixth from left); and Katrina Savage of STA Travel Auckland (second from right). Team Texas also won the famil video competition, which saw each group tasked with making a video of their adventures. There was a \$200 shopping voucher for each team member up for grabs for whoever's video was judged the best by Brand USA and Qantas.

**2** Team Denver didn't let snow and temperatures of around -20° stop them from making the most of their time on the famil—as demonstrated by Brand USA's New Zealand rep Wayne Mitcham, who ventured out to make snow angels. **3** Team Utah also received a good dose of snow on their travels, which made for some beautiful pictures. Amber Thomas of United Travel Tauranga is pictured at the Stein Eriksen Lodge. **4** The Tennessee trip stopped in for an RCA Studio B Tour in Nashville, where they had the chance to record their own song. Pictured outside is Aleisha Wilson of Harvey World Travel Havelock North. **5** In Colorado, Team Denver watched the Denver Nuggets take on the Portland Blazers from the comfort of a private suite. Pictured is Anna Seabourne of House of Travel Papamoa; Olivia Turner, Harvey World Travel Rotorua; Linda Smith, Searle Travel Taradale; Michelle Downey, Travel Managers; and Brand USA's Wayne Mitcham.