



# How To Run a FAM Trip

AND GET THE MEDIA COVERAGE YOU DESERVE

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By Kyle McCarthy, editor of [Family Travel Forum](#) and veteran of dozens of FAM trips.

We know every travel destination wants publicity, and every tour operator and supplier wants their services recommended. Like most media outlets who cover travel, I've grown up with some rules about how FAM trips work. The trouble is, those rules keep changing, and travel hosts are often not aware of it.

You can avoid misunderstandings by building and maintaining a relationship with local media. Attend conferences, trade shows, and events to meet people. Send out email press releases to vendors, partners, newswires, and websites that cover your destination, and of course, don't forget to share news on social media. Most importantly, follow up on any requests for information. This way, you'll have some media 'friends' to invite on your next FAM trip.

If you're inviting media you don't know, here are some strategies for making sure a trip you host is well covered in the media.

## **1. Determine which partners you want to work with.**

If you're the local tourism office or DMO, ask which tour operators, hotels and restaurants want to increase their visibility to visiting media? In addition to offsetting costs, partnerships broaden the scope of the trip, making it more likely that the media will pick up and report on some part of it.

Keep in mind that roundups, or stories that include comparison reviews ("5 Best Hotels in Belgrade") are typically more popular than a thousand-word review of one hotel.

## **2. Set expectations.**

Once you've designed your trip, who will you invite? Review the past work of potential guests and let them know what you expect. Is it a 500-word blog post about each day? Three Instagram stories? A video? (Do NOT ask for a TripAdvisor review!)

Communicate politely prior to confirming their attendance to determine if there are deliverables that the media want to be paid for. This is a frequent source of frustration on both sides.

## **3. Make your trip newsworthy and exciting.**

As an editor getting pitches from many writers, my first question when deciding to publish a story is: "Why and why now?"

If your trip covers a special local festival: give your media great tips on how to attend the following year, a behind the scenes look, interviews with performers, or insider information to share with readers. If you're bringing media to the [Ennis Polka Festival in Texas](#) that I attended, for example, be sure to feed them different types of *kolaches*!

## **4. Go big with this trip!**

Make it as deluxe or exclusive as you can. In general, your guests will have more to write about if they stay at the most historic hotel in town, or at the most luxurious one. Any "most" will give your destination an edge. Do not expect media to write about a spa, however, unless you provide a complimentary spa treatment.

Making your media guests feel special and appreciated is always a good idea too!

## **5. Be authentic and experiential.**

If your company provides wilderness services, skip the fancy hotels. The media partners who join your FAM are interested in the wilderness, or have an audience who is. Don't just *show* them tents – let them *experience* a night in one.

## **6. Give media a choice of itinerary.**

Everyone understands some itinerary stops are required. However, offering a choice of activities is respectful of each media's interests. This will make your guests stakeholders in the trip, and guarantee more engagement from participants who come to each stop.

## **7. Feed everyone well.**

Media, even if they're not covering a culinary destination, will share a meal on social media just to make their colleagues jealous.

Ask your restaurant partner to provide samples of various cocktails and dishes, and make food presentations Insta-worthy. Maybe some will include local cuisine as a reason to visit the destination, especially if you provide a remarkable meal followed by conversation with the chef.

## **8. Make a realistic schedule.**

Your media guests may travel for a living, but that doesn't mean they are on vacation. Allow a few hours down time back at the hotel each day, so that they can check in with their offices, follow up on other assignments, talk to the babysitter, and organize your information.

## **9. Harness the internet's power.**

If your FAM requires a lot of driving, equip the vehicle with WiFi and encourage social influencers to post in real time as you travel. It is the best way to ensure that you get the most coverage for each place and partner visited.

Your trip itinerary must also list the website, contact information and social media handles for each of the places you visit so they can be tagged in posts. An easy hashtag lets you track the number of social media impressions earned by your FAM.

## **10. Provide information, in writing, as well as on USB flash drives.**

Many media no longer travel with a computer and can't read information on your USB sticks. So, in addition to a current media kit, provide Fact Sheets with statistics and fun facts, plus a few images with captions and credits that media can use. And, don't forget to provide everyone with a contact list of the other guests on your FAM so they can stay in touch.

And do I need to add, you stay in touch too? The most common mistake I see on press trips is that no one ever follows up, to find out what worked and what didn't, if there are questions, does the media need any more information etc.

Building and maintaining relationships with media can be very beneficial to your business as long as you keep it professional and productive for everyone involved.