



TRAVELWRITERS*café*

Roadmap #50

Media Kits—Your Secret Keys
to Assignments and Press Trips

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“The dreams and passions stored within hearts are powerful keys which can unlock a wealth of potential.” —John C. Maxwell

What if you could unlock a document that told you everything you need to know about a publication?

What if you had a crystal ball that told you what destinations and travel topics would be featured in each issue, including deadlines?

Would it be useful to know the demographics of a pub’s audience—the number of readers, age range, education, marital status, and household income?

That crystal ball is a media kit—a package of information showing the publication’s profile, reach, editorial calendar, advertising rates, and other information about the magazine and publisher.

Perusing a media kit can give you direction for pitching. You can learn what is to be covered in upcoming issues. You’ll learn about the readers. Details like age-range, gender, and income can be used when developing an angle.

Once you have an assignment from a publication, the reach and demographic information will move you to the top of a destination marketing organization (DMO)'s media visit list. Visitor bureaus and PR companies want as many eyes on a story as possible.

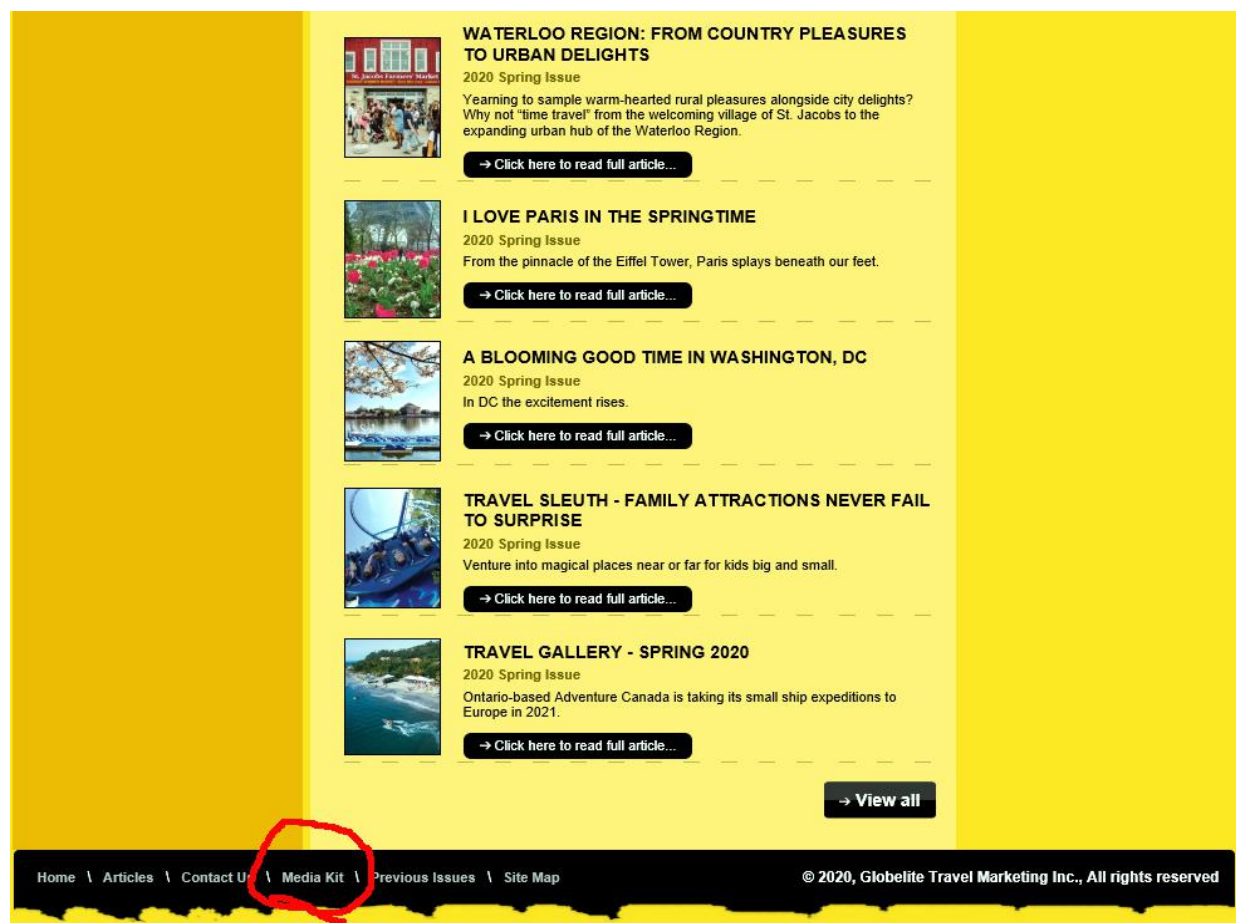
This Roadmap will tell you everything you need to know about media kits. Let's dive in.

Finding Media Kits

Fall and winter are the time of year many pubs are circulating next year's media kits. The kit's information is aimed at advertisers, but it's a writer's secret key.

Print and web publications maintain websites these days. That means that you can usually media kits in a magazine's "Advertise" or "Advertise With Us" section. Advertising menus are generally on the homepage of a publication's website, either at the top or the bottom. There are some exceptions.

[Dreamscapes](#), for example, has a "Media Kit" menu rather than the usual "Advertising" page. It's located on the bottom of the Home page.



If you don't find an advertising menu on the homepage, try the headings "Contact Us," "Information," "About Us," or anything similar, or check the site map.

Can't find a media kit online?

If you've searched high and low to no avail, email the advertising department, and ask for a copy. To find an advertising contact, first look at the "Advertising" menu.

If there is no "Advertising" menu, or it doesn't contain a contact name, look in the "Contact Us" menu. You may find a list of department contacts or a form that can be filled out where you can make your request.

Smaller pubs or those that don't accept advertising may not have a kit at all. But it's worth the effort to search.

Analysis of a Media Kit

While not all media kits are alike, most have comparable information: a profile of the periodical, what they publish, audience profile and demographics, editorial calendar, and advertising rates. Read the entire media kit, not just the editorial calendar. There is so much to be learned. Let's look at [Budget Travel's Media Kit](#), page by page.




The cover of the media kit has some information that I couldn't find anywhere else on the website—the name and email address of the ad sales rep. Reaching out to sales on questions of readership and subscriber numbers can give you faster results than asking an editor. Advertising works with this data daily.

Overview page

Budget Travel

Overview



Overview

***Budget Travel* inspires and empowers American travelers who want to travel smarter.**

Budget Travel, part of the Lonely Planet network, is the premier American travel brand focused on providing readers with practical advice to get the most out of every travel experience. *Budget Travel* focuses on gems that can be found in our own backyard and abroad. We deliver the best vacations, long weekends, and road trips in the U.S. and beyond.

We introduce our audience to vacation-worthy destinations and share tools & tips on how to make the most of their trips.

150k unique website visitors/month
450k email subscribers

I learned that *Budget* is owned by the [Lonely Planet](#) network, one of the oldest and most respected travel publishers. They publish guides and magazines. They also have a TV channel. They have a significant need for content of words, photos, and videos. I added *Lonely Planet* to my publishers database.

The “Overview” page explains *Budget Travel*’s mission to provide practical advice for travelers, for “the best vacations, long weekends, and road trips internationally and domestically.”

Budget Travel “focuses on gems that can be found in our own backyard or abroad.” This is an excellent guide for a story angle.

Example: Your local community has just opened a new hiking trail to a formerly inaccessible mountain lake where hike-in campsites are available. Get that query ready!

Check out their remarkable number of visitors to the website and for email subscriptions. Any DMO would love to have that potential number of eyes on a story about their destination. When pitching for a media visit, include these statistics.

What do those numbers mean?

These numbers are often referred to as “reach.” They show the number of readers, followers, and subscribers. In other words, the potential number of views for your story, photo, or video.

“150k website visitors/month,” means 150,000 different people visit *Budget Travel*’s website each month. That’s 5,000 a day, or 208 per hour. Those are sets of eyes that have the potential to read your story if published by *Budget Travel*. If your social media or website links are shared, it means those eyes could be checking you out.

“450k email subscribers,” means they have 450,000 individual email addresses that receive a monthly newsletter from *Budget Travel*. Those are 450k sets of eyes that can read your story if it is featured in the newsletter.

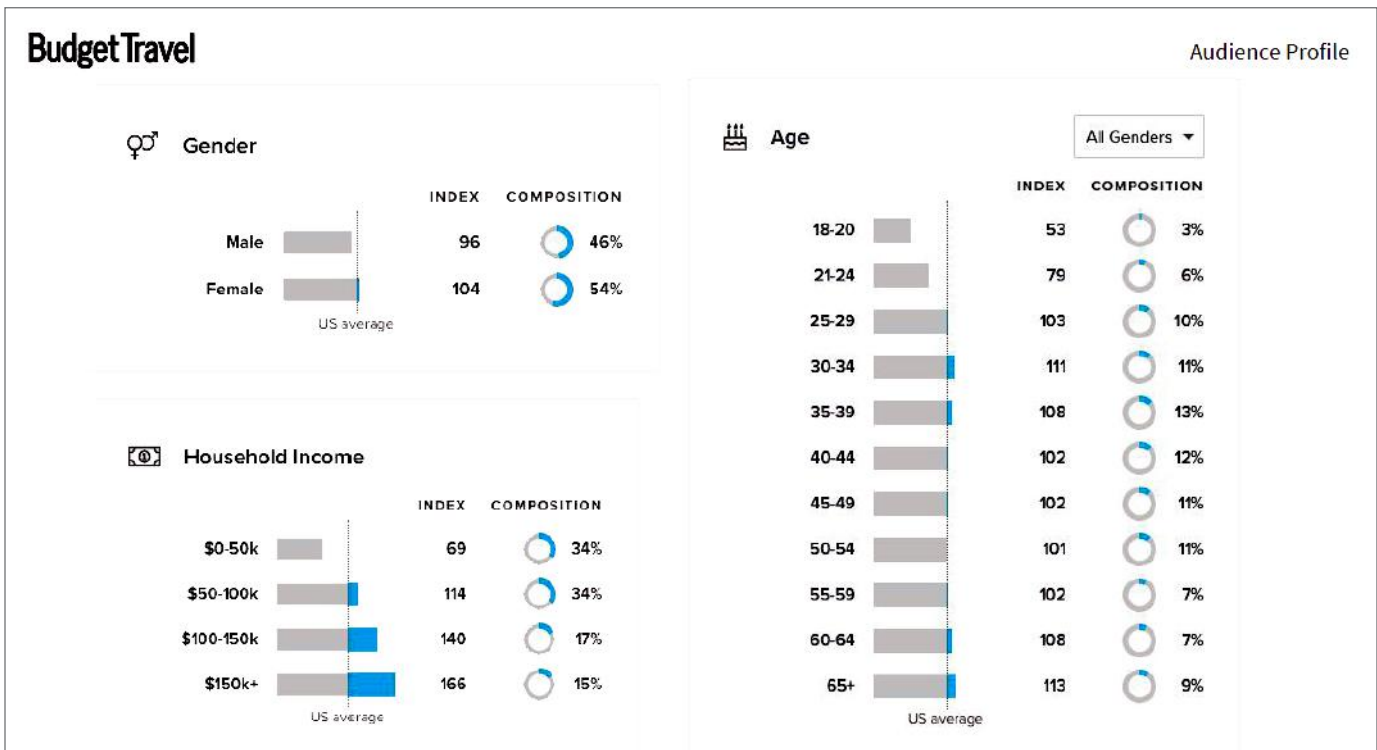
BudgetTravel		Social Media
Budget Travel has an Active & Engaged Audience of Over 4.5 Million!		
Platform	Audience Size	
BudgetTravel.com	150,000 unique users	
Budget Travel Email Newsletter	450,000 subscribers	
Facebook	285,000	
Twitter	218,000	
Pinterest	3,800,000	
Instagram	89,000	

There are also reach numbers for *Budget's* social media pages. Each number represents actual followers for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. Follow the publisher on each of their social media platforms. Be sure to use their hashtags when you post on your social media sites. This can bring new readers to your social media pages.

Any DMO would love to have *Budget's* large number of eyes on a photo, post, or tweet about their destination. When pitching for a media visit, include these audience statistics. When working with the publisher, ask for your story to be shared on the pub's social media sites.

Audience profile—who are the readers?

The “Audience Profile” shows *Budget Travel's* reader demographics. Demographics are the statistical characteristics of *Budget's* audience. Information compiled, such as age and income, is used to identify readers to advertisers (and writers). Advertisers want to reach a specific market they believe will book their hotel, try a tour, or order luggage.

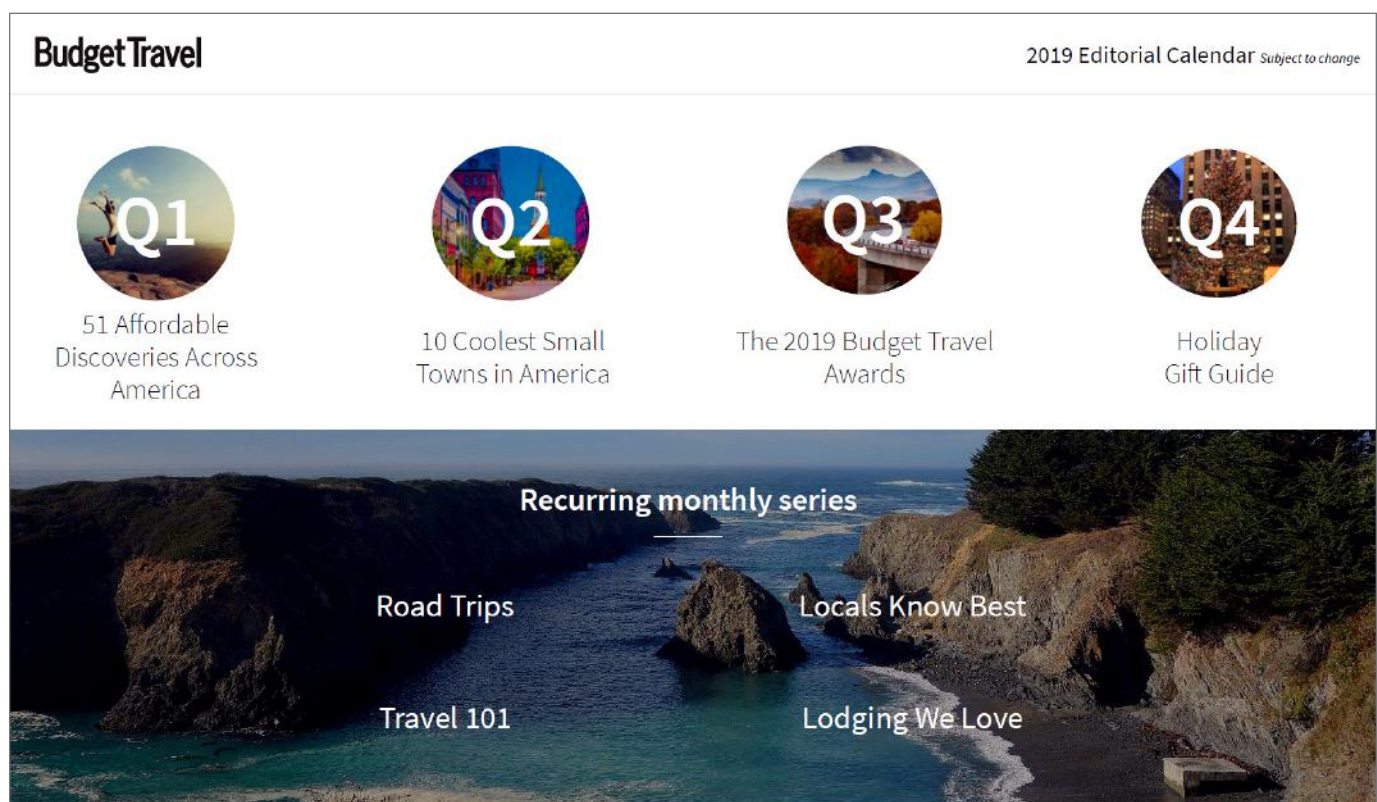


Budget is close to even when it comes to gender, with 46% male and 54% female. Stories aimed at men or women travelers would do well in this pub. Household income shows 68% of readers are under \$100,000. Reader age indicates 68% are 25 to 54, with the highest percentage, 13%, aged 35 to 39.

These numbers are valuable to you when crafting and pitching a story. Is this audience right for your article about Atlanta’s best teen music venues? Will readers connect with the story about medical travel? Are they likely to be interested in an adults-only cruise?

They’re also useful when pitching a DMO for a media visit. When you have your assignment and begin to seek hosted travel, give the DMO all the ammunition you can find about the publication. The most important are the reach numbers and demographics. Your potential host wants to know how many eyes can view the article and who those folks are.

Editorial Calendar—a Writer’s Best Friend



The “Editorial Calendar” is the writer’s secret key to what content the editor wants. You’ll learn what stories the editor has planned for each issue.

Budget has theirs broken down by quarter. Do you live in a cool small town? Pitch a story for Q2. How about a great travel gadget? The holiday gift guide in Q4 needs content. There isn’t much detail here, but what most editorial calendars do include is due dates for ad material.

AD CLOSING DATES & MATERIAL DEADLINES

2020 ISSUES	CLOSING DATE	MATERIAL DUE	DISTRIBUTION DATE
WINTER/SPRING	January 8	January 10	February 7
SPRING	March 2	March 5	April 3
SPRING/SUMMER	April 20	April 23	May 22
FALL/WINTER	September 21	September 24	October 23
WINTER	November 2	November 5	December 4



2020 EDITORIAL SCHEDULE

1. WINTER/SPRING

Florida Feature, Caribbean Feature, Canada, Visit The USA, Asia/Oceania, Europe/Mediterranean, Weddings & Romantic Getaways, Spring Break Holidays, Adventure Travel, Cruising, Recreational Real Estate, Shopping

2. SPRING

Canada Feature, Visit The USA, California Feature, Australia/New Zealand, Caribbean, Emerging Destinations, Driving Holidays, Shopping, Loyalty Programs, Cruising

3. SPRING/SUMMER

Canada Coast to Coast, Visit The USA, Europe/Mediterranean, Central & South America, Adventure Travel, Asia, Driving Holidays, Shopping, Cruising

4. FALL/WINTER

Canada, Florida Feature, Visit The USA, Caribbean Feature, Cruising, Europe/Mediterranean, Asia, Central & South America, Loyalty Programs, Emerging Destinations, Shopping

5. WINTER

Florida Feature, Canada Winter, Caribbean, Cruising, Visit The USA, Australia/New Zealand, Adventure Travel, Travel Gear, Recreational Real Estate, Asia, Shopping

REGULAR FEATURES

Travel Gallery
Travel Sleuth
Celebrity Travel Corner
Web Listings at a Glance

The editorial schedule is subject to change.

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Above is *Dreamscapes*' nicely detailed editorial schedule. Each of the seasonal issues has specific features listed for publication. It's so lovely to know what an editor wants.


Above the "2020 Editorial Schedule" heading are "Ad Closing Dates" and "Material Deadlines." These dates are for advertising materials, but editorial deadlines will be similar. You can use them as a guideline for your submission date. You can always write to the editor and ask the specific date for manuscript submissions for an issue.

Example: Issue 3, the Spring/Summer release is covering Europe/Mediterranean, but I'm too late as it closed in April. The same destination is on for #4, Fall/Winter. The closing date is in September. It's August as I write this, so I'll pitch my Malta story.

What About the Advertising Rate Information?

Advertising rate pages may not seem to have much useful information for a writer. But read careful—there may be more than the cost per inch. On the three advertising pages of *Budget Travel*'s media kit, I found seven potential writing and photography opportunities. How many did you find?

Budget TravelCustom Native Content



Native Content

Budget Travel's editors can create a custom feature article or slideshow highlighting your destination or brand, curated specifically for the Budget Travel audience of avid travelers.

Native Articles include:

- "Sponsored by" logo
- 100% SOV display advertising
- Hyperlinks back to your site
- Promoted via Budget Travel's social media channels with handshake
- Editorial newsletter promotion

Packages start at \$5k

This page tells me *Budget* sells advertorials. Advertorials are an advertisement for a product or destination. They look like an editorial or regular article. They are written to the advertiser's specs. Someone must write and photograph these pieces. It might as well be you.

Budget Travel

Instagram Takeover

Social Photo Takeover

Highlight your destination on the Budget Travel social accounts, reaching over 4M followers and linking back to your social handles.

- Instagram posts & feature in Instagram story
- Photo promotion on Budget Travel's Twitter and Facebook accounts
- Pinned photo to relevant Budget Travel Pinterest board.

Packages start at \$5k

Here are three chances to sell photography for Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest in social photo takeovers. Here's a potential home for all those B-roll shots from your last destination.

Budget Travel

Exclusive eNewsletter

Exclusive eNewsletter

Budget Travel's Exclusive eNewsletters are sent to 450K+ opt-in subscribers that have chosen to receive our promotional eNewsletters and are eager to know about exciting destinations and travel deals.

Advertisers have complete creative freedom with a 600x600+ canvas for their messaging.

Packages start at \$2,500

10%	11%
Open Rate	CTR

The newsletter needs content of all kinds. Some link back to [BudgetTravel.com](https://www.budgettravel.com); others are original stories and advertorials.

In a Nutshell: What You Can Learn and How to Use it

Reach—the audience and/or subscriber size.

These numbers are of interest to you and DMOs, CVBs, and public relations companies that are considering you for a media visit (hosted travel). When you have an assignment and are reaching out for a media visit, include the reach figures.

Reader Profile—a statistical look at the average reader that can include age, income, marital status, homeownership, annual \$ spent on travel, and more.

Use these statistics when pitching for a media visit based on a story assignment.

Use this information to help you with the tone or angle of your article.

Editorial Calendar—a calendar of what content will be featured in each issue.

Use the calendar to target your story to an issue. If April will feature Mediterranean islands and you have content on Sicily, start pitching. In your query, indicate that you are offering the piece for the April issue.

Magazine profile—text that shares the magazine's style and mission. Use this information to assist you with story angles. If their mission is to help travelers on a budget, don't pitch the \$500-a-night hotel, unless you know how to get a room for a bargain. When a profile indicates sustainable travel is their #1 goal, I wouldn't pitch a story about private jets.

Advertising rate card—a listing of what different types and sizes of ads will cost.

Give this a glance—it can often be a wealth of information about different ad venues, print, and digital.

You may find that a print magazine also has a website, newsletter, and several social media sites. I frequently find more than one publication in a media kit. They all need content.

Contacts—names, titles, and email addresses for advertising-related folks can be found in most media kits. Typically, they are near the end of the kit. Sometimes you get lucky and find an editor’s name and address. Use advertising contacts for queries about reach and current editorial calendars. I’m sure you know what to do with an editor’s contact information.

Summary

Media kits are the secret key to assignments and media visits. An editor wants writers who are familiar with the magazine’s content and readers. DMOs want stories that will be seen by travelers in their targeted demographic.

Taking the time to locate or request a media kit will give you information that helps you make well-placed queries for assignments and media visits.

Not all publications have a media kit. Those that do won’t contain the same types of information. Not all will have a reader profile, some lack an editorial calendar, and others don’t include reach. When the information is not available but is essential to your work, write the advertising department or the editor and request what you need.

Take some time to browse through a few media kits. I’ve included web and print magazine kits below, so you don’t have to search for study material. You’ll see a variety of information and style used. Notice the different methods employed to show data. Did you get a picture of the reader? How about the editorial calendar? Did it inspire you to pitch a story?

When you’ve finished reviewing the media kits below, open your publishers database and see how many of your listings have a media kit. It may hold secret keys to your next assignment or media visit.

Study Material

Country Magazine has an informative [media kit](#) and has a detailed editorial calendar.

D Magazine has five publications focused on Dallas, Texas. Each has its own [media kit](#). All five are accessible from one location.

In **Dreamscapes'** [media kit](#), I learned the magazine is “distributed to subscribers in major Canadian markets as a supplement in *The Globe and Mail*, and is available in all Air Canada Maple Leaf Lounges.” The distribution information helps define the *Dreamscapes* audience.

Food Network has a flashy [media kit](#). It's not surprising, as they are the #2 newsstand magazine in the US.

Good Housekeeping gets the prize for the longest and largest [media kit](#). After getting all the way to the last page, on almost the last line, there was the name and email to get a copy of the editorial calendar.

HGTV Magazine's [media kit](#) gives you five different story angles on the first page.

While looking through **New Orleans Magazine's** [media kit](#), I discovered they are part of a publishing group with seven New Orleans-focused print publications. What a treasure. There are magazine profiles but no online media kits. There is an address to write to for a media kit. Give it a try if you have a New Orleans story.

Smithsonian Magazine has a short [media kit](#) that gets to the point. They have editorial calendars for print and digital.

Sunset Magazine has two media kits: [Sunset Travel](#) and [Sunset](#).

Travel and Leisure's [media kit](#) has a detailed breakdown of circulation by the month. They even include numbers for copies in public places.

Travel Weekly has a very informative and well-designed [media kit](#), including the longest and best-prepared [editorial calendar](#) I've seen.

Meredith Publishing has a treasure trove of [media kits](#) on one page, 26 in all.

Get studying!