

When and where hotels should see demand for FIFA World Cup 26

Hotel bookings expected to pick up in early December after official tournament draw



The first wave of ticket sales has begun for the FIFA World Cup 2026 in North America. A FIFA World Cup 2026 countdown clock next to Quincy Market in Boston is ticking down to kickoff. (Getty Images)

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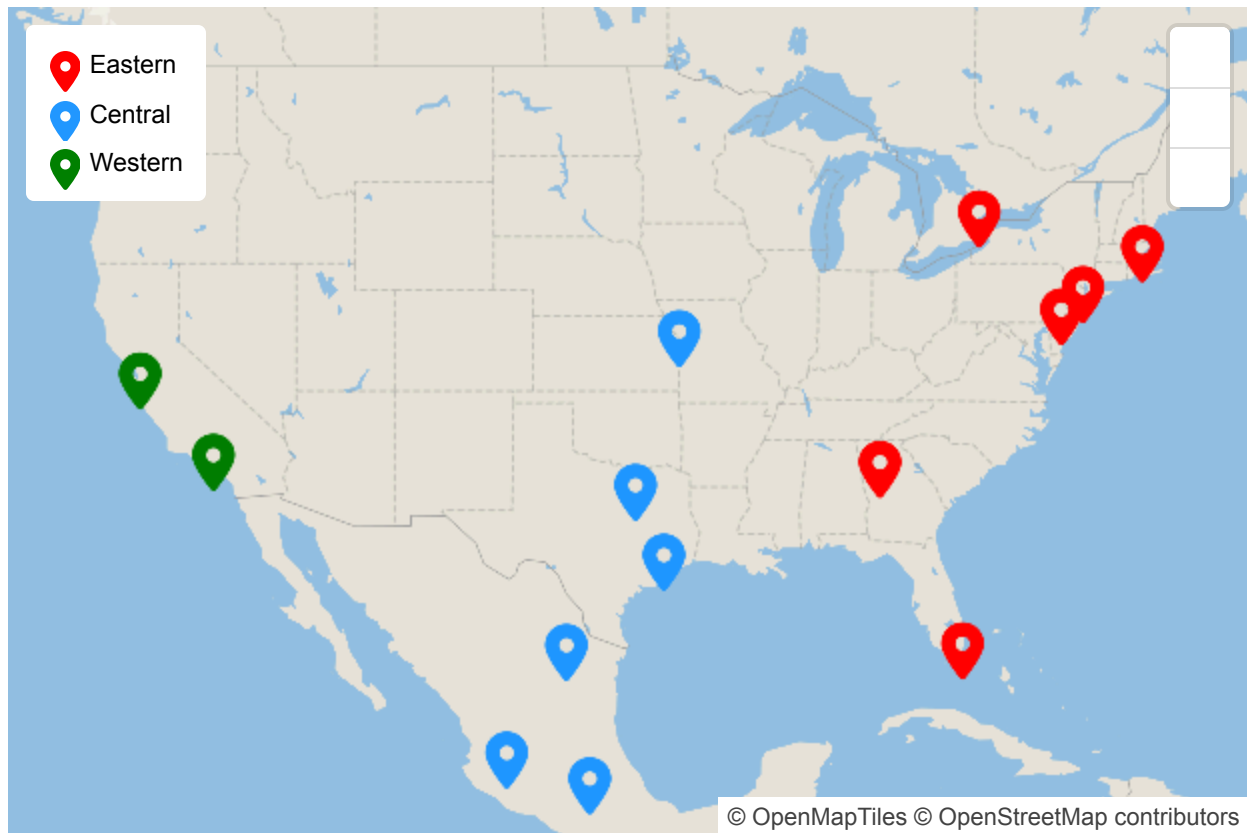
Kickoff for the 2026 FIFA World Cup still is several months away, but there are some key upcoming dates that hoteliers should circle on their calendars if they want to score their performance goals.

North America will host the quadrennial soccer tournament for the first time since 1994. It will span 39 days, beginning on June 11, 2026, and concluding on July 19, 2026, in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

This will be the largest World Cup in history both in terms of the field of teams — 48 — and total matches— 104. For reference, the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar had 32 teams and 64 matches.

Another key number: 16. Eleven of the 16 World Cup host markets are in the United States, three are in Mexico and two in Canada. The markets have been split into three regions — Eastern, Central and Western — with the intention of keeping the majority of group stage matches in one region to make travel easier from match to match.

FIFA World Cup 2026 host cities



Source: FIFA World Cup 26™



So why hasn't your hotel seen much activity yet, even though you're in a host market? It's all in the timing, says Jan Freitag, national director of hospitality analytics at CoStar Group.

"If I'm following a specific team, I need to go where the team is. I need to understand where the team is," he said.

And that's the unknown right now.

Although FIFA released the match schedule back in 2024, the teams playing in those games have still yet to be released — for the most part. The three host countries — Mexico, Canada and the United States — will play their three group

stage matches in their respective countries. Mexico will play in Mexico City and Guadalajara. Canada will play in Toronto and Vancouver. The United States will play in Los Angeles and Seattle.



Guadalajara is one of 16 host markets for the FIFA World Cup 2026. (Getty Images)

Fifteen of the 16 markets will host a match in the knockout stage, with Guadalajara as the only exception. The United States will host all matches from the quarterfinals through the final.

The official draw takes place Dec. 5 in Washington, D.C. That's when hoteliers can expect to see a pickup in demand. Until then, future bookings will likely be muted aside from fans who purchase a hospitality package or a ticket through one of the first ticket draws.

Yes, tickets for the event are available already, and the process of releasing more happens in waves.

The first wave, the Visa Presale Draw, was between Sept. 10-19. During this period, prospective attendees signed up to enter into a lottery for the chance to purchase tickets during a designated time slot starting on Sept. 29.

The next wave is the Early Ticket Draw, which will take place between Oct. 27-31. There will be another random selection draw in mid-December, after the field is announced. Closer to the start of the tournament, fans will be able to purchase single-match tickets on a first-come, first-served basis.

FIFA is also offering hospitality packages now that are split into three groups: single match, venue series and follow my team. In these packages, fans can select the locations and date of the match they'd like to attend as well as a hospitality experience such as VIP tickets or seating in a pitchside lounge.

World Cup dates to watch

Event	Timeframe
Visa presale draw	September 10-19, 2025
Early ticket draw	October 27-31, 2025
Final draw	December 5, 2025
Random selection draw	Mid-December 2025
Last minute sales	Closer to Tournament 2026
Group stage begins	June 11, 2026
Knockout stage begins	June 28, 2026
Final game	July 19, 2026

Source: FIFA World Cup 26



Once the tournament kicks off next summer, hotel demand will once again follow the currents of the top teams as the field narrows.

Demand will be at its highest in the later rounds, when the importance of each match is heightened, Freitag said. The knockout stage begins on June 29 and will run until July 19.

"You will have people who will come just because they know at that point the pretty strong teams have survived. And then there will be the people who follow their team," he said. "The later the round, the higher the impact."

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