

FIRST TIMER'S GUIDE TO CHARLESTON

A newcomer's guide to the best of Charleston

CHECK IN TO CHARLESTON

No matter your vacation style, your travel party size or your ideal itinerary, Charleston is home to alluring accommodations for every visitor. We wouldn't blame you if you extended your reservation once you arrive.

- **FOR THE FAMILY**

Set on the edge of the Atlantic, **Wild Dunes** offers a variety of family-friendly accommodations. Both parents and kiddos will rediscover the childlike joy of alternating between ocean swims, dips in the pool, strolls down the boardwalk and exploring the many neighboring restaurants and shops in downtown Charleston.

- **FOR THE TRENDSETTERS**

See and be seen at **The Restoration**, a beautifully restored boutique property in the heart of downtown. With just about everything at your fingertips – including innovative cuisine at The Watch Rooftop Kitchen & Spirits, locally roasted coffee at The Rise Coffee Bar, and a curated shopping experience at The Port Mercantile – you might find it hard to leave the hotel. That is, until you realize the best of King Street is steps from the front door.

- **FOR THE ROMANTICS**

Intimate, impeccably decorated, and set inside a historic home in Charleston's Canonborough - Elliotborough neighborhood, **86 Cannon** feels a thousand miles away from the city, even though a stone's throw is all that separates you. Slip on a bathrobe and slippers and settle into one of your room's many cozy nooks or tip toe into the library for a drink at the Honor Bar.

- **FOR THE MODERNISTS**

With a blend of Southern charm and socialite elegance, **The Spectator's** ambience is simply captivating. Its flapper flair, personalized butler service, and lobby library are a Roaring Twenties throwback but with beautiful modern touches including complimentary bicycles, a hotel bar with golden era-inspired spirits, and valet parking.

- **FOR THE EASY GOING**

Set at Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant, the **Cottages on Charleston Harbor** are just minutes from downtown. Revel in uninterrupted waterfront views from the comfort of your cottage's hammock, dip your toes into the oceanfront pool and hot tub or step out onto the private beach.

FLAVORS TO SAVOR

Perhaps the best way to get to know Charleston is through its cuisine. Between its heirloom recipes and innovative up-and-coming restaurants, Charleston is an exciting culinary destination.

- **GOSPEL SUNDAY BRUNCH**

Hall's Chophouse serves the best cuts in Charleston – from Grass Fed Filet Mignon to Dry-Aged Tomahawk Rib Eye. Dress in your Sunday best and stop in for Gospel Brunch to enjoy a morning full of live music with a steak omelet on the side.

- **SHE CRAB SOUP**

Centuries after the recipe for this simple seafood bisque recipe was concocted, it remains a Charleston mainstay. A beautiful blend of sherry, crab, and heavy cream, a cup of She Crab Soup is a bucket list dish. At **82 Queen**, the soup is ladled out all day long. Have a taste and you'll see why.

- **CRAB CAKES**

Charleston's powerhouse Chef Michelle Weaver keeps another Southern food tradition alive at **Charleston Grill**. Cozy up at the bar with an order Crab Cakes, topped with Creek Shrimp and Lime Tomato Dill Vinaigrette. Linger a bit longer and treat yourself to a front row seat for live jazz.

- **CHAR-GRILLED OYSTERS**

Travel a mile past the bustle of Upper King Street to reach the city's West Side enclave. Snag a spot outside at neighborhood favorite **Leon's Fine Poultry & Oyster** and order a half dozen oysters of the char-grilled variety. Polish off your meal with a cone of soft serve ice cream and jimmies to go.

- **BUTTERMILK PIE**

Home to James Beard Award-winning chef Robert Stehling, **Hominy Grill** is tucked in-between the Cannon and Rutledge Avenue. Full of Charleston charm, the once historic home has a fragrant jasmine-lined courtyard, outdoor bar, and to-go window – plus one of the city's most famed desserts, Buttermilk Pie.

EXCITING EXCURSIONS

Walk storied streets, peer into dazzling historic homes, take to the waters and island hop your way around the peninsula. Charleston is a playground waiting to be explored.

- **PLANTATION VISIT**

Plantations are deeply woven into American history and tell stories that connect our past and present. From the peninsula, ramble down Ashley River Road to experience a glimpse back in time at neighboring properties. Head across the bridge to Mount Pleasant for even more. Each blends beauty, botanics, architecture, and history – and many have cafes for a midday interlude.

- **HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDE**

Old South Carriage Co.'s horse-drawn ride through downtown kicks off a first-time trip with a history lesson and general lay of the land. Clip-clop past Instagrammable destinations like Rainbow Row, The Battery, and historic South of Broad homes while taking notes on where to return for a closer look.

- **BEACH DAY**

Catch a few rays at one of Charleston's five distinct beach towns. Trek to The Edge of America, better known as **Folly Beach** for its surf, beachside bars, food trucks, and outdoor activities. Take the family to **Isle of Palms** for a day of sandcastles and splashes. For pure serenity and relaxation, pack a great book and venture to the serene islands of **Kiawah**, **Seabrook** or **Sullivan's**.

- **HISTORY LESSON**

See where the first shots of the Civil War rang out over 150 years ago with a cruise along the Charleston Harbor to **Fort Sumter**. A ride on **SpiritLine Cruises** is also a seaside tour with a 360-degree view of downtown and its surrounding marshside suburbs. If timed just right, you'll catch a sunset dip into the horizon or watch a dolphin hitch a ride alongside.

- **HISTORIC HOME TOUR**

Imagine waltzing across a ballroom during the age of corsets and kid gloves at one of downtown's most historic dwellings. Exceptionally preserved in its structure, furniture, and décor, The **Aiken-Rhett House** illustrates what life was like for some of Charleston's most illustrious families during the 1800s.

SPECIAL SOUVENIRS

Save room in your suitcase. Charleston is home to delightful shops housing unique finds. Pick up one, or two, keepsakes to commemorate your first Charleston getaway.

- **SWEETGRASS BASKET**

Since 1807, the open-air sheds spanning Market Street have housed vendors peddling local wares like Charleston's prized sweetgrass baskets, a handcrafted Gullah tradition. Made from palm fronds and originally created to winnow rice on Charleston's plantations, sweetgrass baskets are now sought after souvenirs, and even have a spot at the Smithsonian Institution.

- **PLANTATION PEACH TEA**

Take a scenic 20-mile drive from the center of downtown and discover this tranquil commercial tea garden – the only in North America. Explore the 127-acre farm on foot or via trolley - and don't miss the factory tour to see the tea from leaf to bag. Before departing, stock up on Plantation Peach Tea for a sweet souvenir.

- **BENNE WAFERS**

A traditional treat that harkens back to the plantation age, these golden discs are made with little more than butter, sugar and sesame seeds. **Food for the Southern Soul's** perfectly portioned pack make for a great treat on their own – but for the adventurous home chef, Benne Wafers make great toppings for casseroles, desserts, and many dishes in between.

- **GOLDBUG BANGLE**

Charleston's infamous Palmetto Bug was given new life in the form this gold bangle from King Street fixture **Croghan's Jewel Box**. Helmed by two sisters, this family-owned shop has remained in the Croghan family for nearly a century, serving as a treasure trove of heirloom silver, estate jewelry, and classic gifts.

- **BRACKISH BOW TIE**

What started as a quest for the perfect groomsmen gift quickly turned into a thriving Charleston-based business. Every feather in these eye-catching bow ties are hand selected and assembled to create colorful, wearable art for any black tie affair. They've even been spotted on the suit of famous Charleston resident Bill Murray.