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An Insider's Travel Guide to Charleston

A new crop of restaurants, hotels, and shops adds to the city's charming vibe.



By Brooke Porter Katz
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Photography by: Courtesy of the Charleston Area CVB, ExploreCharleston.com

This old South Carolina city sparkles with history and natural beauty, but a new generation of hotels, restaurants, and shops has infused it with fresh energy. Hit our favorite spots to get your fill of culture and style.

Where to Stay

Book an Inn

86 Cannon: Choose from a handful of light-filled rooms; sip tea in the salon or on one of two porches. *From \$325 per night, 86cannon.com.*

Go Luxe

The Spectator Hotel: This place boasts butler service -- they'll unpack bags, shine shoes, and bring morning coffee -- and hand-painted wallpaper in the lobby. *From \$278 per night, thespectatorhotel.com.*

Embrace Art

The Vendue: Seven historic warehouses now house elegant rooms and public spaces filled with contemporary art. *From \$192 per night, thevendue.com.*

Make the Scene

The Dewberry: This newcomer has handmade furniture, marble bathrooms, and a chic bar. *From \$345 per night, thedewberrycharleston.com.*

Feel at Home

The Restoration: Settle into apartment-style accommodations at this all-suite hotel, which also has a cozy library, rooftop terrace, and cafe serving Toby's Estate. *From \$299 per night, therestorationhotel.com.*



Photography by: Chris Hackett / Getty Images
St. Michael's Church, completed in 1761.

Best Ride in Town

Palmetto Carriage Works: Clippety-clop around downtown as a guide shares local lore. palmettocarriage.com



Photography by: Andrew Cebulka

Where to Eat

Feast on Ribs

Lewis Barbecue: Texas 'cue is new to town, courtesy of top pit master John Lewis, an Austin transport. lewisbarbecue.com

Taste the Lowcountry

Hominy Grill: This down-home spot is known for classics like fried green tomatoes and shrimp and grits. hominygrill.com

Wine and Dine

Chez Nous: Duck into a hidden gem with a daily-changing menu of Spanish, Italian, and French foods. cheznouschs.com

Go Big at Brunch

Cannon Green: On Sundays, a DJ sets the stage for eggs with pork shoulder and fried-chicken sandwiches. cannongreencharleston.com

Restaurateur Brooks Reitz's Picks

The owner of Leon's Oyster Shop and the new Little Jack's Tavern shares his go-to joints.

Xiao Bao Biscuit

“This high-energy spot ushered in a funkier type of dining here. It serves dishes from all over Asia, and there's always something new on the menu.” xiaobaobiscuit.com

Minero

“At Sean Brock's casual restaurant, try the catfish tacos and grilled chicken wings, tossed tableside with hot sauce in a paper bag.” minerorestaurant.com

Leyla

“Head here for fresh and lovely Lebanese food. It has an amazing lentil salad with pomegranate, almonds, and avocado.” leyla-charleston.com



Photography by: Courtesy of the Charleston Area CVB, ExploreCharleston.com
Pineapple Fountain in Waterfront Park.

Save the Date

May 26 to June 11 marks Spoleto Festival USA (spoletousa.org), a celebration of top-notch classical, jazz, dance, and theater performances.

Take It Home

Get a handmade sweetgrass basket from Charleston City Market (thecharlestoncitymarket.com).



Photography by: Wendy Elliott / Getty Images

What to Do

Cross the Cooper

For breathtaking views of downtown and beyond, walk or bike over the **Ravenel Bridge**. cooperriverbridge.org

Time Travel

Magnolia Plantation and Gardens: See the pre-Revolutionary War main house, slave dwellings, and the country's oldest public gardens. magnoliaplantation.com

Learn As You Go

Area native **Alphonso Brown** sheds light on the language, customs, and sites of the Lowcountry's early black residents. gullahtours.com



Photography by: Julia Lynn

Where to Shop

Fulfill Decor Dreams

Fritz Porter: Antique dealers and a design showroom sell fabric, furniture, and lighting in a revamped cigar factory. (Stop by The-Commons for locally made small-batch home goods.) fritzporter.com

Spoil Your Guy

Indigo & Cotton: This stylish menswear boutique sells Billykirk belts and jeans from Raleigh Denim and Imogene + Willie. indigoandcotton.com

Go Global

IBU: Pick up an indigo poncho, embroidered clutch, or earrings made by female artisans in 34 countries, including Ghana and Peru. ibumovement.com

A Local Says...

“There is so much to love about Charleston -- its history, its mutant magnolia and oak trees, the sweet smell of tea olive and gardenias, and the diversity of the people.” —*Carol Perkins, founder and president of Harry Barker, an eco-friendly pet-product company*

Before You Go...

Read

"South of Broad," by Pat Conroy, a story of friendship set in the Holy City.

Listen To

Eartha Kitt, James Brown, and Dizzy Gillespie, who all hail from the state.

Watch

"The Notebook" -- shot at the Calhoun Mansion and Boone Hall Plantation.