

24 Hours in Charleston, South Carolina



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Where to eat, stay, and shop in the Southern city.

By Cator Sparks on August 15, 2018

[Charleston](#) has been having a moment for nearly a decade, and it shows no sign of slowing down. Its historical charm coupled with a vibrant culture and food scene (including a growing list of James Beard Award-winning restaurants) have earned it a [constant stream of accolades](#) and made it a go-to spot for long, luxurious weekends away. Read on for how best to spend 24 hours in the Holy City now.



Courtesy Basic Kitchen

9 a.m.: [Basic Kitchen](#)

Opened by the team behind the Fat Radish in [New York City](#), this airy, lively spot has a very Havana vibe. Located in a historic building right off King Street, it is the perfect place to get your day going with a fresh pressed juice or cold brew from local coffee maker Second State. For more fuel, opt for the Surfer's Delight bowl (two eggs, grilled kale, avocado, and sweet potato hash). If the heat isn't too oppressive, the space's lush little patio is a great place to perch. The restaurant is also very vegan-friendly.



Brennan Wesley

10 a.m.: [Gibbes Museum of Art](#)

Recently, this Beaux Arts building underwent a major renovation, so simply touring the space—and its dazzling stained glass rotunda—is almost as exciting as the art itself. The collections span four centuries and include everything from decorative arts to paper-based pieces to work by local artists from the 'Charleston Renaissance' of the 1930s. The Gibbes also has a vast collection of

American miniatures, palm-sized portraits that were first painted in Charleston in colonial times.

An added bonus: one of Charleston's favorite coffee shops, [The Daily](#), has an outpost on the ground floor so you can get your caffeine fix before strolling onto your next destination. If you have the time, take a quick trip down to Broad Street which is home to many galleries including two favorites, [The George Gallery](#) and [Corrigan Gallery](#).



Courtesy Chez Nous

12 p.m.: [Chez Nous](#)

Opened by a French-American couple, this wine-only enclave is a cozy retreat for an exceptional lunch or dinner. Located in a charming old home down a back alley in the happening Cannonborough-Elliottborough neighborhood, chef Jill Mathias offers only two appetizers, two entrees, and two desserts daily. (Each morning, guests can discover the day's menu on

the restaurant's [Instagram](#).) Mathias cooks up whatever she finds from the local farms—one day that could be rabbit with prunes, the next wreck fish with leeks. Book early.



Courtesy J. Stark

2 p.m.: Stroll Cannonborough Elliotborough

After lunch at Chez Nous, explore Charleston's coolest neighborhood. While many mom-and-pop shops have been priced out of the main tourist strip of historic King Street (although we still love the silver and estate jewelry at [Croghan's Jewel box](#)), stroll this neighborhood to support local shop owners.

Start at Cannon and King Street and head west to [Candy Shop Vintage](#), a great place to pick up a strand (or twelve) of Charleston's iconic rice beads. Next, head to local bag-maker [J Stark](#) and peruse their handsome range of totes, weekenders, and accessories. [Indigo & Cotton](#) is right down the street and offers a great selection of menswear from brands such as Gitman Bros. Vintage,

Raleigh Denim, and Shinola. If stationary is your thing, [Mac & Murphy](#) is right across the street and they carry a wide array of paper products and the cult favorite, Le Pen, in a plethora of colors. You can round out this walk with a Lime curd cupcake at [Sugar Bake Shop](#), a local favorite (Martha Stewart is a big fan, too).



Nik Wheeler/Getty Images

4 p.m.: [Nathaniel Russell House Tour](#)

If you're looking to see old Southern gilding and grandeur, a tour of this house is a must. Completed in 1808 at a cost of \$80,000 (when the average home price was \$262), the free-flying, three-story spiral staircase is a marvel and the decorative arts, plasterwork and formal gardens are all enviable. With ongoing restoration in process, every visit can reveal new discoveries.

The nearby [South Carolina History](#) museum is also worth visiting. Slated to reopen to the public on September 22 after a major renovation, the museum is

located in the historic Fireproof Building, designed by Robert Mills in the 1820s and believed to be the first of its kind in America. Here you can see letters from George Washington, Francis Marion's powder horn, and images and artifacts from the local Gullah culture.



Andrew Cebulka

5 p.m.: [The Living Room at The Dewberry](#)

After a full day of shopping and sightseeing, it's time to unwind with a proper cocktail. Head to the Living Room at the Dewberry hotel, which opened in 2016 in the landmarked L. Mendel Rivers Federal Building and has since become one of Charleston's favorite spots for an after-work martini. Bartenders are dressed in white coats and the space is large enough for everyone to find a plush sofa or mid-century modern chair to lounge in while sipping a cocktail. Don't just trust our word, though: the James Beard Foundation put the bar on its [Outstanding Bar Program long list in 2018](#).



Andrew Cebulka

7 p.m.: [Establishment](#)

This new seafood restaurant has residents and tourists alike booking booths to indulge in its sustainably-focused local offerings. While the menu changes seasonally, the razor clams have become a must-order, as have the heirloom tomatoes with roasted peaches and fresh cheese. Located in the historic James Gregorie House, the ambiance evokes modern Japan with wood-beamed ceilings, grey color schemes and pinpoint lighting so that every entrée seems like a work of art. The restaurant's wine selection is equally impressive—located in the former cistern, it's nearly two stories deep and full of good finds.



SeanPavonePhoto/Getty Images

9 p.m.: [The Vendue](#) at [The Vendue](#)

A short walk away is [The Vendue](#), Charleston's only hotel dedicated to art. If you go before the sun goes down, head up to the rooftop for a sunset cocktail and check out the panoramic views of the Lowcountry. If it's live music you're after, go to the Drawing Room, which offers small plates and craft cocktails and hosts a variety of local musicians including [Leah Suarez](#), who is known for her energetic jazz and breezy Bossa nova. If you stay late enough for a late-night snack, the pimento cheese burger will set you straight.



Courtesy 86 Cannon

Where to Stay

86 Cannon

Built in 1862 and originally called the Poinsette House, this is one of Charleston's newest and most luxurious boutique stays. With only five spacious rooms, all with marble bathrooms, 86 Cannon is the perfect place to find quiet respite after a long day on the town. Located in the Cannonborough-Elliottborough neighborhood, wake up to a continental breakfast and borrow a bike for the day. In the evening enjoy the nightly wine and cheese service on the two breezy balconies.



Courtesy Zero George Street Hotel

Zero George

This chic little cluster of buildings (circa 1804) is another great alternative to a larger luxury stay. Sixteen guest rooms are spread out between three historic residences and two carriage houses that surround a lush courtyard. Zero George also happens to have one of the best restaurants in town. Book a table outdoors and enjoy local dishes in your own backyard.



Courtesy Hotel Bennett

Soon: Hotel Bennett

With its grand opening this November, Hotel Bennett is the most buzzed-about building in town. King Street's newest landmark will be a dazzling addition to the hospitality scene with its pink marble Camellia bar, rooftop cabanas, and massive day spa right in the center of town overlooking Marion Square.