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SIX REASONS TO VISIT CHARLESTON



It's one of the USA's most historic cities, but [Charleston](#) is anything but old fashioned. It is – and always has been – a city of vibrant reinvention, from leisure to heritage, arts to gastronomy. And with a 350th birthday this year, and British Airways resuming [twice weekly direct flights](#) this month, there's never been a better time to visit

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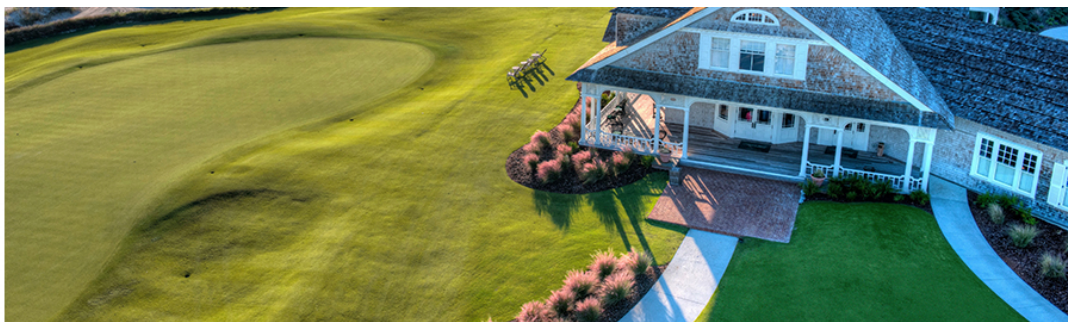
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1 Soul food

Talk of the farm-to-fork restaurant trend in Charleston and the locals might give you a confused glance. Because here, it's been a 'trend' for as long as people can remember, thanks to the city's bountiful harvests of fish, rice and fresh ingredients. You'll find this kind of cuisine at [Charleston Grill](#), where chef Michelle Weaver serves up Southern comfort food with a distinctly French style – don't leave without ordering the crab cakes. Or stop by the legendary [Hall's Chophouse](#) (*pictured*) on Sundays for their now iconic gospel brunch. Expect a menu of oysters Rockefeller, French toast with applewood-smoked bacon, and prime-cut steaks with a soundtrack of live music. Alternatively, try cooking up your own menu at a [cooking class](#) with celebrity chef Bob Waggoner.





2 The great outdoors

With more than 90 miles of coastline, it would be remiss not to enjoy Charleston's outdoor pursuits, whether it's in the marshes, creeks, or tidal flats, spotting wildlife on a [stand-up paddleboard tour](#), or a more leisurely [harbour cruise](#). If golf is more your thing, then nearby [Kiawah Island](#) is the place to take in a cool 18 – the resort is adding the final touches to preparations for hosting the PGA Championship in 2021. Try out the world-famous Ocean Course (*pictured*), home of the 1991 Ryder Cup, which offers stunning views of the ocean from the greens.



3 Cultural cravings

It's little wonder that arts' aficionados also flock to Charleston every year – the USA's first permanent playhouse, [The Dock Street Theatre](#), opened here in 1736 – when the internationally acclaimed [Spoleto Festival](#) comes to town each May. Artists and performers descend from far and wide, in such diverse fields as opera, jazz and dance, to take part in the 17-day performing arts festival spectacular hosted in venues across the city. Architecture buffs will be in their element, too, thanks to the many styles of buildings dating back centuries. Learn more with [Charleston History Tours](#) who'll also show you the best spots for snapping those Instagram-worthy shots.



4 Window shopping

A stroll along famous King Street could easily stretch to hours thanks to myriad boutiques and independent shops selling just about anything you could possibly hope to buy: antiques, clothes and accessories – men should flock to [Dumas](#), while [Croghan's Jewel Box](#) will kit out the ladies. For a non-touristy souvenir, stop by [Historic Charleston City Market](#) in the city centre to see a Gullah culture preserved through the making of the renowned sweetgrass baskets (*pictured*). Or do your bit to help maintain the city's unique architecture by snapping up locally made goods at [Charleston Preservation Society's](#) shop – you'll find everything from natty bow ties, to waxed canvas backpacks.



5 Heaps of history

When it comes to history, there's nowhere else quite like it in the USA. Every Charleston street corner has a story to tell, from the War of Independence – the city gets its name from Charles II, after all – and the American Civil War to the Antebellum age (check out the narrow houses around The Battery) and Hurricane Hugo. Just ask any local and they'll happily regale you with tales of ghosts, reinvention or simply a little slice of social history – and probably invite you in for an iced tea or a bite to eat. For a history lesson with splendid views and walks, head to [Middleton Place Plantation](#) with its majestic gardens (*pictured*).



6 Hot hotels

Charleston caters for all tastes when it comes to bedding down for the night, from the classic [Belmond Charleston Place](#) (pictured) to the newly opened [Hotel Bennett](#) with its impressive rooftop bar offering views of over the skyline to the ocean. Home to another spectacular pool is boutique bolthole [Market Pavilion Hotel](#), with its envious location minutes from the waterfront. Staying out in Kiawah Island Golf Resort? Check in to [The Sanctuary](#) or stay in [one of the luxurious private villas](#). For some valuable 'me' time, soak up those warm Kiawah nights from your poolside cabana at [Andell Inn](#) in Freshfields Village.

BA flies direct from London Heathrow to [Charleston](#) twice a week. Flight time eight hours.

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DESTINATION

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