

WHETHER YOU'RE PLANNING A ROMANTIC weekend for two or a getaway with the girls, the charming inter-coastal city of Charleston, South Carolina may be the perfect place to relax, unwind or fall in love again.

It's known for its well-mannered hospitality and well-preserved history, but what you're sure to fall hard for are the unique shopping districts, celebrated restaurants and festive night life.

Take a horse-drawn carriage ride past stately centuries-old mansions, savor fresh-from-the-dock seafood and low-country cuisine, tour antebellum plantation homes, or stroll along gaslamp-lit cobblestone streets at night.

Spring is a great time to go; temps are enjoyable (summers can be sticky and hot), and many of the city's best festivals are in full swing, including the **Charleston Wine and Food Festival** (charlestonwineandfood.com) and the **Spoletto Theater Festival** (spoletousa.com).

For three years running, *Conde Nast Traveler* has rated Charleston as the "Top U.S. City" to visit, making reservations a must for the hottest tickets in town.

WHERE TO STAY
Wentworth Mansion ▶

King beds grace each of the uniquely designed rooms at this historic and beautifully appointed inn. Amenities

include complimentary breakfast and afternoon hors d'oeuvres and wine. Couples can spend a romantic evening with a massage for two in the intimate Wentworth Spa. 149 Wentworth St., 888-466-1886, wentworthmansion.com

Charleston Place Hotel

Stay in the lap of southern luxury in this grand hotel located in the heart of it all. Indulge in an array of body treatments and massages at The Spa at Charleston Place. 205 Meeting St., 843-722-4900, charlestonplace.com

WHAT TO DO
Palmetto Carriage

Upon your arrival, hop on a carriage ride to get the lay of the land and a fun, informative historical perspective on Charleston. Meet in the iconic "Big Red Barn" at Charleston's oldest carriage company where tours run on the hour and can be booked with a group or privately. 8 Guignard St., 843-723-8145, palmettocarriage.com



Take a Walking Tour

Daily tours are offered on the streets of downtown Charleston with knowledgeable tour guides who escort you down Rainbow Row, along the Waterfront Battery, and through hidden gardens, historic churches and spooky graveyards. *Bulldog Tours, Inc.* 843-722-8687, charlestonstrolls.com or tommydewswalkingtour.com

Sail Along the Harbor

Tour Charleston from the breezy waters of Charleston Harbor aboard one of several charter boats and tall ships. 800-979-3370, charlestonharbortours.com or schoonerpride.com

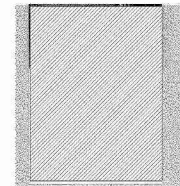
Take in a Museum

Your visit isn't complete without a stop at one of Charleston's many museums. Charleston houses some of America's most important neoclassical dwellings, so make sure to tour at least one historic home or plantation during your stay, like the Nathaniel Russell House on Meeting Street (historiccharleston.org/russell.aspx). Civil War buffs will want to see Fort Sumter, the site on which the first shots were fired in the American Civil War (fortsumtertours.com).

WHERE TO SHOP
King Street

Running for 16 blocks, this is the main artery for high-end fashion boutiques, large-scale commercial stores and antiques in Charleston. Be sure to visit the Charleston City Market, featuring local takeout foods, souvenirs and crafts made by local vendors, including Charleston's famous sweet grass woven baskets. Don't miss Lily

GUESTROOM PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WENTWORTH MANSION



Charleston (lilycharleston.com), **Worthwhile** (shopworthwhile.com) and **Nancy's** (nancysofcharleston.com), or head over to the historic **City Market** ([375 Meeting St., thecharlestoncitymarket.com](http://375MeetingSt.thecharlestoncitymarket.com)).

WHERE TO EAT:

Husk

James Beard Award-winning Chef Sean Brock cooks modern versions of traditional southern favorites. Have a classic cocktail in the cozy bar housed next door. *76 Queen St., 843-577-2500, huskrestaurant.com*

The Grocery ▶

A Lee Brothers favorite for brunch or dinner, this restaurant built in a former furniture warehouse evokes the warmth and familiarity of an old small-town grocery store. Chef/owner Kevin Johnson preserves fresh produce for year-round use with an in-house canning program. Don't miss the house-made charcuterie, pickled green tomatoes or fried oysters with deviled egg sauce. *4 Cannon St., 843-302-8825, thegrocerycharleston.com*

FIG

Chef Mike Lata's cooking proves "Food Is Good" at this local neighborhood bistro specializing in local and sustainable ingredients. His newly opened oyster hall and seafood restaurant, **The Ordinary**, is also garnering lots of love from locals and tourists alike. *232 Meeting St., 843-804-5900, eatatfig.com / eatattheordinary.com*

COCKTAILS WITH A VIEW

Pavilion Bar at the Market Pavilion Hotel

Watch the sun go down on Charleston at this sophisticated rooftop oasis complete with cascading pool—but be sure to

reserve a table in advance for privacy and a premium view. *225 East Bay St., 843-723-0500, marketpavilion.com/pavilionbar.cfm*

The Cocktail Club

Imbibe craft cocktails from the rooftop terrace or learn to infuse, shake and stir them yourself by signing up for a cocktail class, held the first Saturday of each month. *479 King St., 843-724-9411, thecocktailclubcharleston.com*

The Rooftop Bar At The Vendue

Enjoy great views of the Charleston Harbor at this award-winning cocktail bar on the rooftop of the boutique Vendue Hotel. *19 Vendue Range St., 843-577-7970, thevendue.com*

INSIDER TIP

Parking is at a premium in the historic district, so don't rent a car unless you plan to venture outside the city limits. Walking is the best mode of transportation in the historic district, but taxis are not easy to come by if your feet give out. So keep the number of a local taxi service with you at all times, or for fun, jump in a rickshaw! 📍

