Charleston / West

On James Island, historic McLeod Plantation is open for tours. ccpprc.com

Stroll: Encompassing more than 36 acres on James Island, recently-opened McLeod Plantation (www.ccpprc.com) boasts a riverside outdoor pavilion and avenue of oak trees, including the McLeod Oak, which is believed to be more than 600 years old. The plantation is open for tours and pays tribute to the enslaved Africans who had lived on the grounds from the 1800s. Among the many opportunities to learn about the relationships between those who lived and worked on the plantation, guests may also tour homes built for enslaved families and view a display of antiques owned by former slave owners.

Magnolia Plantation (www.magnoliaplantation.com) the 17th-century estate of the Drayton family in 1676. holds groves of azaleas and camellias that are among the largest collections in the nation. The oldest public gardens in America (circa 1680) showcases the rich horticultural history, with different nature tours aboard a train and a boat.

Folly Beach County Park (at www.ccpprc.com, type “Folly” in the search window) is Charleston’s closest beach and strolling there is a favorite pastime. Picnic shelters provide shade for post-stroll picnics, while outdoor showers wash the sand and crumbs away.

The landmark 1,045-foot Folly Beach Fishing Pier (www.ccpprc.com) features saltwater fishing, walking, birding, dining and breathtaking views of the Atlantic. Special events and tournaments are held seasonally.

Shop: First up when driving onto Kiawah Island (www.kiawahresort.com) is Freshfields Village, anchored by Newton Farms, a gourmet food market with deli service and an upscale grocery selection. Other shopping stops there include Java, Ladies Homemade Soups, Marble Slab Creamery, Vincent’s Soda Foundation, Hege’s Bistro, Carolina Clay Gallery, Indigo Books, Islands Mercantile, Kiawah Fine Jewelry and The Resort Shop.
Hike: James Island County Park (www.ccprc.com) offers 643 acres of possibilities, including miles of paved trails for hiking, biking, and skating. There’s also saltwater fishing and crabbing, pedal boat rentals, picnic areas, a campground, vacation cottages, and the state’s highest climbing wall. Kiawah Beachwalker Park (www.ccprc.com) is an oceanfront park ideal for beachfront hiking with or without boots. Keep an eye out for dolphins in the river adjacent to the park.

Bike: Kiawah Island’s Kiawah Resort (www.kiawahresort.com) has miles of paved biking trails, while the island’s Kiawah Beachwalker Park is also great for biking on packed sand (especially at low tide).

_Lynn Seldon_

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**EAT**

Varied dining options at Kiawah Resort (www.kiawahresort.com) include oceanfront Jasmine Porch – where chef Jason Cote offers a seasonal menu using fresh seafood and garden-fresh produce sources from farms located nearby. Near the beach and Folly Beach Fishing Pier, Rita’s Seaside Grille (www.ritasseasidegrille.com) has a menu that overflows with the area’s freshest seafood whenever possible, including local fish and shrimp tacos and crab cakes. Located at The Tides Hotel on Folly Beach, oceanfront BLU Restaurant and Bar (www.blufoolleybeach.com) features local favorites and seasonal specialties.

**SIP**

Kiawah Island’s Cherrywood BBQ & Ale House at Osprey Point (www.kiawahresort.com) pairs tasty ‘cue and views with an extensive beer list. King Street Grille/cq Kiawah (www.thekingstreetgrille.com) is an upscale sports bar with another lengthy beer list. Lean more toward wines? The Ocean Room at The Sanctuary (www.kiawahresort.com) showcases 1,000-plus. For more spirited options, head to Wadmalaw Island’s Firefly Distillery (www.fireflyvodka.com), including their trademark sweet tea-flavored vodka. Also on Wadmalaw Island, teetotalers and tea enthusiasts will enjoy a visit to Charleston Tea Plantation (www.charleston-teaplantation.com).

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**MORE TRAVEL**

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Charleston / East

A bird takes flight off the top of a shrimp boat at sunset on Shem Creek. MIC SMITH - THE POST AND COURIER

Stroll: The wide beaches of Sullivans Island and Isle of Palms are perfect for sandy strolls. From tidal tributaries to the Atlantic, the pristine waters surrounding Charleston produce a bounty of fresh seafood, including shrimp, fish, oysters, clams and crabs. Picturesque Shem Creek in the town of Mount Pleasant is home to a fleet of hard-working shrimp boats that ensure fresh seafood is abundantly available in the Charleston area. You'll want to stroll both sides of the creek in search of the restaurant featuring the freshest catch.

Mount Pleasant’s Patriots Point Maritime Museum (www.patriotspoint.org) makes for a great stroll, including the decommissioned USS Yorktown aircraft carrier that stands watch over the harbor. Vintage aircraft line the flight deck, while the Congressional Medal of Honor Museum is located inside the cargo bay. You'll also want to stroll to the USS Clamagore submarine, the USS Laffey and see the “Vietnam Experience” exhibit and the Cold War Memorial.

Shop: Mount Pleasant’s Southern Season (www.southernseason.com) is the perfect place for everything gourmet. The sprawling emporium features fresh foods, prepared items, gifts and gift baskets, coffee and tea, wine and beer, kitchenware, renowned cooking classes and a locally-focused restaurant.

Since 1967, Gwynn's (www.gwynns.com) of Mount Pleasant has been the ultimate, luxury shopping destination in the Lowcountry. The 25,000-square-foot store includes the best lines in men’s and women's clothing and accessories, cosmetics and skincare, and upscale gifts and home accessories. Also in Mount Pleasant, Elizabeth Stuart Design (www.escharleston.com) is a design emporium and eclectic boutique that features furniture, jewelry, home decor and more.
Hike: Among many options, Coastal Expeditions (www.coastalexpeditions.com) features a ferry trip to Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge (www.fws.gov/caperomain), a 62,000-acre maritime wilderness preserve that includes Bulls Island. More than 275 species of birds make the refuge their home, along with sea turtles, dolphins, bald eagles and much more. Bulls Island’s three-mile Bone-yard Beach make for a great beach hike, including hundreds of oaks, cedars, and pines that have been “skeletonized” by the salt and sun.

Barrier Island Eco Tours (www.nature-tours.com) offers a 3 1/2-hour boat excursion to Capers Island, one of the few remaining undeveloped barrier islands on the East Coast. You’ll cruise through winding tidal creeks to find diverse wildlife in this salt marsh environment. Common sightings include bottle-nose dolphin, osprey, pelicans, bald eagles, herons and egrets. Along the way, visitors employ various nets and habitat traps for an up-close look at some of the rarely seen marine creatures that thrive below the surface. On Capers, hike along pristine Bone-yard Beach and interior freshwater ponds.

Bike: Wild Dunes Resort (www.wilddunes.com) and the rest of Isle of Palms is a great place to bike, thanks to miles of bike trails and quiet streets and lanes. Sullivans Island is equally bike-friendly.

Lynn Seldon

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EAT

Southern Season’s Southerly (www.southerlyseason.com) is the place to head for a seasonal menu that highlights local fare from nearby waters and farms. Red Drum (www.reddrumrestaurant.com) offers up the creative South-by-Southwest cuisine of chef Ben Berryhill, with a lively local vibe in the restaurant and the bar. Charleston Harbor Fish House (www.charlestonharborfishhouse.com) has unparalleled views of the Charleston Harbor and downtown skyline from the main dining room or rooftop bar. The menu features a variety of options from both land and sea; a daily market board features seasonal fresh catches of the day. Inside the Boardwalk Inn at Wild Dunes Resort on Isle of Palms, Sea Island Grill & Lounge (www.wilddunes.com) is the perfect spot to enjoy a casual breakfast, lunch or dinner inside, alfresco on the terrace or pool deck, or at a new private poolside cabana.

SIP

In Mount Pleasant’s historic village, Old Village Post House (www.oldvillageposthouse.com) is part tavern, part restaurant and part inn. It a great place to head for a drink, a tasty meal, or the night (thanks to inn rooms upstairs). SOL Southwest Kitchen & Tequila Bar (www.solmtpleasant.com) serves more than 50 different tequilas, hand-crafted cocktails, and from-scratch dishes with Southwestern and Southern influences, plus hand-crafted cocktails. Liberty Tap Room & Grill (www.libertytaproom.com) features lots of beers on tap, including several of their own brews.
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