The Charlotte Observer

Road Trips

WINTER ESCAPES

2013 TRAVEL GUIDE

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Charleston

Charleston is known for rich history, celebrated restaurants and great shopping. Keep these allures in mind, turn down the temperature a little, and it’s ready for your winter visit.

The city’s varied venues are offering packed schedules this winter. For instance, Woolfe Street Playhouse (www.woolfestreetplayhouse.com) is the new theater home to the Village Repertory Co., an award-winning professional company.

The holidays are a special time in and around Charleston, with events including the Holiday Festival of Lights at James Island County Park, the 30th Annual Spirituals Concert, and Christmas B&B at the Edmondston-Alston House. Details on these and other happenings can be found on one website: www.christmasincharleston.com.

Elegance and history will be on display at Middleton Place (www.middletonplace.org). Besides its Family Yuletide program, the plantation attraction’s Grand Illumination will be staged Dec. 19-20; Lighted torches in the gardens will evoke Dec. 14, 1792 as re-enactors – portraying Middletons as well as Revolutionary War soldiers – re-create the family’s celebration of its reunion at their home, and the arrival of American troops following the British evacuation of Charleston.

Other great upcoming events include the Garden &

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Gun Jubilee food-sport-antique shopping event (Dec. 6-8; www.gardenandgunjubilee.com), Charleston Restaurant Week (Jan. 8-19; www.charleston restaurantassociation.com) and the Lowcountry Oyster Festival (Jan. 26; www.charleston restaurantassociation.com).

Charleston is beloved for its world-class dining, and there are always new and interesting restaurants opening. The menu of new possibilities this winter includes Bay Street Biergarten (www.baystreetbiergarten.com), Charleston Harbor Fish House (www.charlestonharborfishhouse.com), Craftsmen Kitchen & Tap House (www.craftsmenkitchen.com), High Wire Distillery (details on its Facebook page), Indaco (www.indacocharleston.com), Kitchen 208 (www.kitchen208.com), Republic Garden & Lounge (www.republicreign.com) and Verde (www.eatatverde.com).

The opening of Southern Season (www.southernsseason.com) is one of many highlights of the Holy City’s shopping scene this winter. Southern Season is famed in Chapel Hill for the wide variety of culinary-oriented merchandise, and there’s now a location across the Cooper River in Mount Pleasant. Renovated and better than ever, Historic Charleston City Market (www.thecharlestoncitymarket.com) is a great place to find that perfect Charleston souvenir or present. Look for famed sweetgrass baskets and culinary offerings from Food for the Southern Soul (www.foodforthesouthersoul.com), where sauces, rubs, lunch (including a great barbecue sandwich) and more are on the menu.

There’s an organized tour for practically everything in Charleston. New options include Free Tours by Foot – a “pay what you like” tour company (www.freetoursbyfoot.com) – and Your Call Private Boat Tours (www.privateharbortours.com). Bulldog Tours (www.bulldogtours.com) offers a variety of Charleston tours, including a special Holiday Walking Tour starting Dec. 1 – 15.

Don’t miss the magnificent 60-foot Tree of Lights at Marion Square.
Charleston Culinary Tours has added a Chef’s Kitchen Tour, Thursdays evenings on upper King Street and Friday evenings in historic downtown Charleston.

Middleton Place celebrates with a Family Yuletide program and the plantation’s Grand Illumination.