

# Charleston, South Carolina

Often considered the South's crown jewel, Charleston is a city that leads with its past. Here, refined manners, Southern hospitality and historic preservation reign supreme. "Charleston is a modern-day city that functions in an 18th-century environment," says John LaVerne of Bulldog Tours. "It is impossible to be in Charleston and not be aware that you are surrounded by history."

With its candy-colored antebellum mansions, centuries-old buildings and restored plantations, the city's three centuries of history are on display at every turn, making it a veritable living museum.

"In Charleston, history is not relegated to a plaque on a landmark," says Larry Spelts, manager at **Planters Inn**. "Instead, it is a sense of place—a connection to the past—that lives in the hearts of locals, is apparent in regional traditions, graces the facades of homes, punctuates the vernacular and seasons the food."

## CULINARY EXPERIENCES

"The key to Lowcountry cuisine is the heirloom ingredients that we've been using for more than 300 years," says LaVerne. Born of regional ingredients, such as Carolina Gold rice, grits, okra, heirloom tomatoes and seafood, Spelts recommends local favorites pimento cheese, she-crab soup, fried green tomatoes and tomato pie.

## HISTORY LESSON

The first decisive battle of the Revolutionary War was fought in Charleston, and Fort Sumter was home to the first shots of the Civil War.

## IF YOU HAVE TO PICK JUST ONE...

For views of the city from the harbor, Howard recommends a visit to **Fort Sumter**. "You get to be on the water and then you step onto the grounds, steeping in history from the Civil War."



Belmont Charleston Place in Charleston, South Carolina

## FIVE MUST-SEE ATTRACTIONS

- **Charleston Stroll Walk with History Tour:** "Since 1979, this tour has been the gold standard of tours in town," says LaVerne.
- **Home & Garden Tours:** Aly Howard, lead concierge at **Wentworth Mansion**, suggests attending the city's two homes and gardens tours—spring's Festival of Houses and Gardens and the Fall Tour of Homes.
- **House Museums:** Katherine Robinson, president of the Historic Charleston Foundation, recommends visiting the beautifully restored **Nathaniel Russell House** and the preserved **Aiken-Rhett House**.
- **Lower King Street Antiques District:** "Visiting these venerable antiques purveyors is one of the best ways to get a taste of Charleston's storied history," says Spelts.
- **Historic Plantations:** "Head down Highway 61 and experience historic plantations like **Drayton Hall** and **Middleton Place**, where time has stood still for 200 years," says Mike Vegis, director of public relations at **The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort**.



Wentworth Mansion in Charleston, South Carolina

## Area Alliance Partners

### South Carolina

#### Hotels

**Belmont Charleston Place;** Charleston  
**The Inn at Palmetto Bluff;** Bluffton  
**Planters Inn;** Charleston  
**The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort;** Kiawah Island  
**Wentworth Mansion;** Charleston  
**The Wilcox Hotel;** Aiken