

Travels with Amy

Just a hint of Charleston reveals history, beauty



Photos by Brian Sirmaturos

By Amy Bertrand St. Louis Post Dispatch Aug 19, 2016 (0)



Carriages, abundant in historic Charleston, stop to admire historic homes, photo by Brian Sirmaturos

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Charleston, S.C. • About 30 minutes away from Kiawah is the city of Charleston, also known as the Holy City for its historic churches. We had only a day and half to spend here, but it could take a week to soak in the history, the flourishing culinary scene and the beauty.

I couldn't possibly get into all the highlights of the town in such a short stay, but what we did do left us wanting more.



A carriage driver at Palmetto Carriages takes his horse and carriage through the streets of Charleston, photo by Brian Sirmaturos

Brian Sirmaturos

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Just a hint of Charleston reveals history, beauty

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A carriage ride: About a half-dozen companies offer carriage rides through Charleston's historic district. It's a great way to see the city, perhaps as it was seen years ago. The city actually monitors how many carriages can be on the streets at one time. We went with Palmetto Carriage Works, which operates out of a big red barn with free parking. The driver made a point to tell us how well they treat the horses. He took us on an hour tour, past the grand mansions along Battery Park, past the houses of Rainbow Row and along the City Market, full of vendors selling food and sweetgrass baskets and in operation since 1788.

• \$25 adults/\$15 children. palmettocarriageworks.com



Cannons at Fort Sumter help tell the story of the Civil War and the battles there. photo by Brian Sirimaturos

Brian Sirimaturos

Ferry ride and tour of Fort Sumter: Most of us know that the first shots fired in the Civil War came when Confederates fired at the Union garrison at Fort Sumter. You may not realize there was a second Battle of Fort Sumter in 1863 when the North tried to retake the fort in Charleston Harbor. You can learn all about Fort Sumter's history in a tour. It is now the Fort Sumter National Monument operated by the National Parks System. You board a ferry (plan to spend time before or after at the South Carolina Aquarium right next door) and head out on a 30-minute ride to the island. It's a beautiful space (but steamy as there are no trees), and we spotted dolphins jumping in the water off the back of the fort. A museum (it's nicely air-conditioned) on the property tells the story, but there are also ranger talks. Even if you aren't a history buff, you can feel the history in the rubble, the preserved cannons, the battlements and the remains of the living quarters.

• \$19.50 adults/\$12 children. fortsumtourtours.com





Boone Hall plantation, which has been featured in many TV shows and movies, is open for tours. photo by Brian Sirimatueros

Brian Sirimatueros

Boone Hall Plantation: In junior high school, I fell in love with the miniseries "North and South." For years, it's been my goal to visit "Mont Royal," played by Boone Hall Plantation in the series. Driving up the one-mile path lined with Southern oaks with Bill Conti's score playing in my car, I got goosebumps. Ahead lay Orry Main's (Patrick Swayze) famous mansion. Boone Hall has actually been used in a number of TV shows and movies, and today it serves as a living history museum. You can tour the house (built in 1936 after a fire in the original), take a tram tour of the 738-acre property and walk through a series of former slave cabins, now outfitted with sound and video to tell the story of African-Americans from the Civil War to the civil rights movement.

• \$24 adults/\$12 children. boonehallplantation.com

Where to stay: We stayed at the Embassy Suites Charleston. It offered the convenience of a respected chain hotel and the history Charleston deserves. It was once home to the Citadel Military College. With Spanish influences and a cavernous atrium, it offered just enough ambience in the heart of the historic district. The complimentary evening drinks and the best free breakfast I've had at a hotel made it a great place to stay.

• Rooms run about \$175 a night. embassysuites.hilton.com/Charleston



TRAVEL

Travel to South Carolina: Kiawah Island resort and Charleston

South Carolina's Kiawah Island offers a naturalists' dream with alligators to see (or avoid!), and dolphins while enjoying the resort life. In...



Klawah Island: A natural paradise

I didn't really expect so much wildlife on our beach vacation, but thanks to naturalists and Klawah Island's dedication to preservation, I found it.

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