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The Perfect Three-Day Weekend in Charleston

By Sean Patrick Flynn

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As part of a new series, Travel + Leisure is exploring America one three-day weekend at a time. Here's what to do on a short trip to Charleston, South Carolina.

It would be easy to spend a long week exploring Charleston. Its architecture, history, and food scene have earned the city a reputation as the quintessential Southern city — not to mention the top spot on Travel + Leisure's World's Best Cities list. You could spend day after day making your way from one amazing restaurant to the next and walking the scenic city streets every night — but sometimes a long weekend is all you have.



That's why we've put together an itinerary for a quick weekend getaway to make sure you've hit all of the best spots. Read on.

Day One

A carriage ride is a pleasant way to get your bearings in a new city. From here you can pinpoint your "must-go" spots, ensuring that you make the most of your time. Historic Carriage Rides offers hour-long guided tours throughout the city center.

After the tour it's time to hit the beach. Start at City Market and head out along the coast, savoring the warm breeze as you make your way to Rainbow Row — a series of colorful historic buildings that date back to the late 18th century. If a self-guided walking tour is a little too daunting you can join a group through Lowcountry Walking Tours for a more focused itinerary.

While walking the cobblestone streets, take in Charleston's notable architecture; the city boasts the largest collection of historic buildings in the world, outside of Rome.

That doesn't mean things in Charleston are stagnant. The restaurant scene is flourishing. My recommendation? *10th*, which is innovative chef Sean Brock has made a name for Southern-style cooking.

For a post-dinner cocktail head next door to *The Bar at Hook*, or walk down the street to *The Gin House*.

Day Two

Grab a hearty breakfast at *Planters' Patch* before hitting the pavement again. This spot offers traditional dishes like fried chicken and waffles and shrimp and grits, perfect for giving you the energy you'll need for exploring the town.

The city boasts a collection of restored, centuries-old mansions like The Wentworth Mansion, Joseph Allen Mansion, Nathaniel Russell House, and Calhoun Mansion, all of which shouldn't be missed. You'll need about an hour to tour each house so it's good to stop at one or two before heading to lunch, and then visit the others afterward.

For a quick midday meal, check out *Big Ray* in the city's French Quarter. You're guaranteed one of the best seafood dishes in town — which is really saying something in a city that's built on the water. They offer a wide selection of oysters on the half shell, but the real treat is the scallop po' boy, which is nothing short of amazing.

For dinner, check out the *Charleston Grill* in the newly renovated *Belmond Charleston Place* — the hotel wrapped up a \$75 million renovation earlier this year. It's the perfect spot to unwind after a long day walking about the city, as you'll be surrounded by a live jazz band as you dine. The restaurant, perfect for a romantic dinner, features live jazz and a menu split into four distinct offerings so you don't have to make too many decisions.

